

# *Aaron*

Channeled through Barbara Brodsky



Deep Spring Publications



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## Barbara's Foreword

Through the years, many of you who have heard Aaron have asked for transcripts of his talks. A folder three years ago was a start. This was intended to be another such folder, but has evolved to this larger, more convenient and permanent form.

For many years we've met as an open group at least once a week to talk with Aaron, anywhere between 5 and 30 of us. Another study group has met regularly every week for four years. There have also been countless sessions with him in cities across the country, indeed, across the world. All of these gatherings have been taped and many of his opening talks and answers to questions have been transcribed.

This folder represents an attempt to select from thousands of pages those which will most clearly and simply share Aaron's basic teachings, for it really is all very simple.

Everything in this book is offered as it was transcribed from tape and as Aaron first spoke it. One edits a disincarnate entity with great care and respect. Where there are additions, Aaron has made them to clarify a thought. Any editing is of a grammatical nature and has been approved by Aaron.

This is a beginning. There is much that was omitted for lack of space. While a large volume is beyond our resources at this point, we hope this book is just a start and that a longer, commercially published collection of Aaron's talks will be a reality in the future.

Even as I hope for that publication though, I'm aware of Aaron's message that everything we really need to know is within us, and the direction to explore is within. The best he can do is to be a guide, a "signpost" as he often calls himself, saying, "Try this way." That directional pointer may lead us to better understand the work each of us is here for, to learn what we came to learn, to heal that which cries for healing, to explore within as courageously as we are able. In that spirit, this book is offered as such a guidepost which Aaron and I hope will lead you deeper into your own wisdom.

Aaron has done most of the choosing, and it truly is his book. I feel profoundly grateful to have had the opportunity to serve as a channel for him, to have worked with him in this selection process, and to know him as beloved friend and teacher.

**Barbara**

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## Aaron's Foreword

So many of you have difficulty clearly seeing your own issues and choices. You become lost in self-criticism, judgment and fear. You create complexities where none exist.

I bring you a new perspective, that of love and of faith in that higher being that is your true self.

I help you see beyond the bounds of the physical being which is just the skin you choose to wear, to the higher self that is your essence and your birthright.

You are not a human being having a spiritual experience but a spiritual being having a human experience.

From this perspective the world looks different and many of your situations and choices may seem less difficult.

Your lives do not need to be painful. Each being is whole and perfect in its essence. You can learn to take the obstructions you have manifested in your lives and understand them as instruction for the spiritual being that you truly are.

As I help you to see things from a new perspective, I will not make your choices for you. Part of growing to mature compatibility with your Creator is learning to make your own choices.

Whether they be skillful or not, they are part of your path and are your tools for learning.

Your journey is your own. Another being can only serve as a signpost on your path.

With love, I offer you my guidance to help you find your way.

**Aaron**

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## Acknowledgments

No work of this size can come from just one, or even a few people. Aaron and I would especially like to thank those people whose energy, time, material resources and love have made this sharing of his work possible.

There are too many such friends to mention you all, but special recognition and loving gratitude must go to Karen Weber for countless hours of typing, transcribing, and editing and also to Aiji Piphoo for transcribing, and to David Rothbart for his frequent technical assistance. Ian Jaffray has undertaken the monumental task of final editing and design. This edition exists only because of his loving energy and work. For all their help, energy and loving support, a big hug to the entire Camman family. Also to John Orr and Mike Rothbart who have spent many hours opening their hearts and thoughts to Aaron and inspiring his sharing.

Many of these transcripts grew out of the hard work, commitment, and pure and loving energy of the 1990-92 weekly study group—Cailin and Cassie Cammann, John Gutoskey, Donna Hall, Dorothy Henderson, Barb Linderman, Aiji Piphoo, Mike Rothbart, Evan Strauss, Karen Weber, Doron Weisbarth and Dawn Yankou.

A warm thank you to all of you around the country who have joined us for evenings and workshops, lending your energy, enthusiasm, curiosity and inspiration. You'll find many of your questions and Aaron's answers here.

Finally, a thank you to my family—Hal, Peter, Davy and Mike—who have put up with an abundance of reheated leftovers and order-out pizza, and suffered the hours and weekends of losing me to a computer or meditation, to allow me more time to work.

Forehead to the floor and heart bursting with love, my most heartfelt gratitude and devotion to my guru, Neem Karoli Baba, without whose grace none of this work with Aaron could have happened.

And especially, to Aaron, my dearest, forever friend—with grateful appreciation for your loving and patient teaching.

My travels have led me to new friends in all parts of the world. Everywhere I go, people are "family," opening their hearts and their homes. I welcome your letters to me and to Aaron and try to answer every one. I cannot always personally channel Aaron's answers to your questions, but we will respond in whatever ways we are able. Please feel free to write.

**Barbara Brodsky**

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## Introducing Barbara and Aaron

Many of you have asked me how I met Aaron. I'd like briefly to share the story.

I lost my hearing in 1972, soon after my first child was born. I coped well with the loss, on the surface. I continued with my sculpture and teaching and had two more children. Through those years I was aware that although I did what I needed to do for myself and my family, I was very bitter about the isolation my deafness seemed to impose.

This anger didn't negate the fact that my life was full. I had a loving and beautiful family, work I loved, and caring friends. I honor in myself that I was able to cope well with so difficult a situation. But in striving to cope, I didn't allow myself to feel the pain of my isolation, which is real. Afraid that pain would overwhelm me, I denied it, and turned my anger to outward things. I couldn't see that it was the anger, not the deafness, that deepened my sense of separation. I was angry at people who talked near me when I couldn't understand, and angry at God. I lost all sense of a spiritual aspect to my life.

Slowly I became aware that I had to look at what was happening. It had been years since I'd attended Quaker Meeting; I began to go and to look forward to that weekly hour of silent communion with spirit. In time, I began to meditate again as a daily practice, although with no clear sense of direction. I also wrote daily in a journal, a tool that put me into deeper touch with my subconscious mind. I felt drawn to read from spiritual work, especially those ideas from eastern religions concerning reincarnation and karma. As I opened to myself and became more caring and forgiving, I found an increasing inner peace.

Despite all that I was learning, I began to feel rather stuck. I was still bitter, cut off from normal human communication, and blaming God for my situation. I began to pray for help, understanding that I just couldn't go any further on my own.

As the weeks passed, I began to notice that in the question/answer format I often used in my journal, the "answer" part was beginning to speak from a new perspective, pushing me to open myself to new ideas and ways of thinking.

Soon after that, I met Aaron. Suddenly, one day during meditation, I was aware of a figure standing just off to one side. I asked him who he was and very simply he told me he was Aaron, and was my guide.

I'm not going to suggest that I took this casually. The idea of a "spirit guide" was new to me; I wondered briefly if I was hallucinating. But every time I looked, Aaron was there, just patiently waiting for me to be ready to move ahead. It was important that I never felt any pressure to accept him. He made it clear from the beginning that we had all the time I needed to be ready for any learning that he offered. I wasn't frightened because I felt so much love, felt a gentleness and connection dimly remembered from some unknown past.

At first my rational mind tried to ask, "Who is Aaron?" Slowly I realized it didn't matter. I began to listen with my heart, and not play mind-games. I understood that it was irrelevant whether Aaron was simply a deeper part of my subconscious or was external. I was getting information that I needed for growth and to which I hadn't had previous



## Introducing Barbara and Aaron

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access. As I began to trust that information, and my own ability to hear it, I became clearly aware of Aaron's existence as a separate entity.

He tells me he is a being who has evolved beyond the need to return to the physical plane. He is from "beyond the causal plane." He defines himself as a "being of light," which he says we all are. I've come to know him as a being of infinite love, compassion and wisdom. He also has a wonderful warmth and sense of humor. He is a teacher.

As my trust deepened, Aaron led me on a beautiful journey into myself, into past lives to unearth the sources of some of the pains of this life, examining the questions of isolation and separation on which my deafness forced me to focus. Together we healed the suffering of that deafness and went on to investigate the origins of these issues of separation and isolation. The journey has been both painful and joyous, frightening and beautiful. Always, Aaron's love was there to help me through the rough places.

Yes, my deafness is still painful. I doubt that I'll ever be completely used to this silence. But I also embrace it. Twenty years of silence is a profound teacher, and I thank it for the ways it's led me to deepen in understanding. I no longer fight with it. I no longer feel this silence as *my* pain. It is *our* pain, the aloneness of us all, and its arising serves as a reminder for connection and compassion.

Constantly, I see Aaron's wisdom and compassion touching other's lives, as it has touched mine. Many others have come to love him and trust his guidance, first my friends, then their friends, and on in an expanding circle around the globe. It humbles me to see myself as part of this chain of sharing, to be permitted this part in it and to learn and watch others learning. It brings me much joy! I am in awe of the process.

And so, with great love, I offer you Aaron.

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## Aaron: A Channeled Introduction

**Aaron:** Greetings to you all. I am Aaron. Some of you may feel skepticism or discomfort at the idea of being addressed by a spirit. I ask you to look more deeply here. What and who am I? What and who are you? Understanding the emptiness of all form, what is the difference between us, or is there none?

I have taught that we are all beings of light. What does that mean? Some of you may be familiar with the meditative experience of the dissolution of ego and body. Those who have experienced this have ascertained that what they are left with is light. That's all; just light. There is no ego in this space. There is no sense of self or other. There is no permanence of form, no individual thought, no selfish will, no personal consciousness. Beyond all these attributes or "skandhas" there is pure awareness that the essence that was erroneously considered self is simply light and energy. This is what you are. This is what I am.

As we each evolve, we choose to materialize in whatever form is best suited to our growth and to our present learning needs. This earth is a schoolroom. You are here in material form because it is here that you will find the next lessons that you need. I have evolved beyond the need for material form so I have none. Nevertheless I am still learning and am in the form best suited to those lessons I now must learn.

Do not take my evolution beyond form to imply that I am better than you. All souls have equal worth. All! I do have a different perspective. I can call on the knowledge and wisdom of all of my past lives, as well as the wisdom I've gained in these 450 of your earth years since I passed from your plane. But what I teach you must be filtered through your own processes. I can only guide you. The real learning must come from your own experiences. If what I say is of help and provides guidance, that is fine. Use it. If it doesn't help, what matter where it comes from. Put it aside and follow your own inner wisdom.

On your earth plane the greatest lessons for most of you are faith and love. On my plane the most important lessons are wisdom and compassion, and beyond that, a deeper moving into Love and Light. Here we have passed beyond any illusion of the separate, small ego self. We communicate telepathically, one spirit with another or many others. As there is no ego, there is no need to protect the self from embarrassment or to cover up unskillful choices. Thus our sharing is complete and honest. Wisdom accrues rapidly, for each spirit shares its own wisdom and experiences completely and I can learn from another's experiences just as well as from my own. Thus there is no longer the need to "live" it all myself.

I also learn deeper compassion and it is partially for this learning that I choose to teach. You remind me of the pains of being human, remind me not to judge another, but to keep my heart open in love. A great teacher has said "Never put anyone out of your heart" but it is so easy to fall into that judgment on any plane. My contact with you reminds me that what I work toward is unconditional love.

I've said I have the advantage of the perspective of many lifetimes. My final lifetime on your human plane was as a Theravadin monk in Thailand, a Meditation Master. The wisdom and understandings of many lifetimes came together then, enabling me to

## Aaron: A Channeled Introduction

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find freedom for myself and also to help many beings to discover that path. Yet I do not teach you only as that Thai Master. I have been a monk in many, many lifetimes. I have wandered forests, dwelled in caves, and lived in magnificent temples. Through these lives I've practiced most forms of Buddhism. That is only a small part of it. I have been Christian monks in just as many lifetimes, priests, and positions that are higher in the hierarchy of that church.

I have been Muslim, Jew, Sufi, Taoist, and so many more. I have lived in all colors of skin, in male and female form, in many and diverse cultures. I have prayed in hovels and palaces. I have starved and lived in luxury while those around me starved. I have been a nobleman and a murderer. I have loved and hated, killed and cherished, in short, done just about everything in the realm of human experience.

So have all of you! What does it mean to have compassion for another? Can you see that the tyrant or the torturer is also you and move from judgment of him to compassion for his pain and situation? This does NOT mean condoning his acts. It means simple compassion, acceptance, unconditional love.

Remember that this learning is a process. If you were already arrived at that space of unconditional love and perfect compassion and acceptance you would not need to be here learning in a human body. Remember that I too am still learning this. Do not judge yourself here but be increasingly aware of your desire to judge another, that you may continue to learn and grow.

Let me return to my perspective that I've mentioned. I teach you as all of these beings that I was, the murderer and his learning so painfully gained as well as the beloved meditation master and his. Beyond that, I teach from my present perspective that knows the illusion of all form, that sees clearly that all any of us are is light and energy, slowly evolving to a brilliance and clarity as all self and ego are dissolved.

As such I do not teach Buddhism or any "ism" separate from the Truth. I know of only two truths here with a capital "T," God and Love. All formal religions are merely paths to the understanding of these two Truths.

Some of you may squirm at my use of the word God here. I do not imply a deity with a long white beard. Call it the Eternal or Absolute. If you are a follower of Buddhism, call it the "Unborn, undying, unchanging and uncreated" of the Udana Scripture. These are labels. You find it so difficult to remember that this body is not your essence, but merely the borrowed form of this lifetime. As "Aaron" or your own name are merely labels applied for convenience, so "God" is a label. We need some common way to discuss this Force which is the Source of all Light. Call it God, Goddess, Ram, Krishna, All that is, The Absolute, as you prefer.

This Essence, this Force, is beyond all attempts to label. It is truly Eternal and labels can only limit. This is why Buddhism attempts to label only in the negatives of what it's not—unborn, undying. This Absolute is the source of all love and all light. For simplicity's sake I prefer to use the label God. If that makes you uncomfortable, call it what you will. Be assured that your label is irrelevant. Can you build a fence around infinity?

Much of what I teach falls under the label "Buddhism." I had my greatest understandings as a Buddhist. I am not attached to this form, but do find it a useful tradition to use as a teaching tool. No pride is implied when I state that I was a wise

## Aaron: A Channeled Introduction

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teacher in that lifetime and my understanding of the tools of meditation helped many beings find their way. So it is natural that I again draw on that wisdom as I teach.

But I am not a Buddhist. I have a great love for that being who was known as the Buddha; also for he who was known as the Christ, and for many other great saints and teachers. I do not choose to label myself here.

I do stress the use of vipassana, not as an end in itself but as a teaching tool. The practice of this meditation will lead you to a clarity of understanding of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and anatta or impersonality of all things. This as an intellectual understanding is also not an end in itself. You are not here just to understand these three truths but to learn from this understanding, to grow in love and faith, in compassion and wisdom.

The Buddha taught that there is no soul, and I speak about a soul. Here I believe we have what we'd call a semantic difficulty. There is no word in your language that is suitable for what I describe. I borrow the word soul as the closest. By soul you imply an individual. By soul, I mean that essence of energy which is totally impersonal, even devoid of memory and certainly devoid of self, but which is unique to you and is of the same material, the same essence, as the Divine.

You have many aspects. One of these is the personal that you now experience. This aspect has form, thought, and so on, but of course it is impermanent. This is the conscious self. Then there is what might be termed the higher self or superconscious mind. This aspect retains the memories of all the forms in which you have manifested and the wisdom attained by all those forms. Within the same memory pattern, misunderstandings may also be retained until they are resolved through the physical life experience. Notice that I have called this aspect "higher self." It is still a self.

Beyond that is what I would term the soul. This aspect is pure light and energy. Some of you have had glimpses of this aspect through meditative experience. Thus, you can come to know that this is your true nature. There is no self here, and no possibility of such delusion. There is only energy, manifested as light. Thus we are all, in essence, beings of light.

This is our true essence. We begin as sparks of that perfect Light. Choosing material form as your way of evolution, that spark is increasing in its brilliance and clarity, losing all shadow, so it will shine as a small sun. If you were to take my essence at this phase of my evolution, and place it in front of that perfect Light, you would see the barest edges of human form and a gray shadow cast against that brilliance. If you were to take the essence of a perfectly evolved being such as the Buddha or the Christ and put them in front of that perfect Light, they would be invisible! That is what each of you is evolving to: Perfect Invisibility. Immaculate Emptiness. Oneness with God.

Your meditation practice is the way to come to know your true nature by experience. It takes you past the delusion of a separate self. It leads you toward compassion and away from judgment. I cannot over stress the importance of these paths of learning. From my many lifetimes of experience I've found that the most valuable forms of meditation to those beings who were in a place of readiness for greater responsibility on their path were a mixture of vipassana and devotional meditation. Vipassana is hard work and requires courage and faith. Devotional meditation inspires you, reminds

## Aaron: A Channeled Introduction

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you of the reason for this work, of the path of your evolution to unity with that perfect Light which I have called God.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak with you. I hope I have left you with more questions than answers. Perhaps one day we will meet and I can speak to some of those questions, but please remember that the answers are all already there, within your own hearts. Practice well and find them for yourselves.

Go with my love,

**Aaron**

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## The Journey

**Question:** We often hear the phrase "our journey" or "our path." Can you talk about this journey. Where are we coming from and where are we going?

**Aaron:** From the perspective of your human understanding, you are going home, to that sweetness and brilliant light that you once knew so well and now only dimly remember. From the perspective of your soul, you are going nowhere.

The whole journey is an illusion. How can you have ever left God, when He is within you and you within Him?

Do you really imagine you could leave that source of perfect light and love, and be alone and separate in the world?

You are children, camped in your parents' back yard, learning the skills and independence that lead to maturity. The illusion tells you that you are away from home. Do you see the necessity of that illusion? But your parents keep a watchful eye from the window and the back light shines brightly. You are never truly alone.

You began as a spark of God. Developing self-awareness, you chose the human path to maturity, accepting this illusion of separateness from God. The illusion was necessary to your growth, to become mature and responsible beings, that you might be ready to return to Him, no longer just a spark but a pure and shining light.

You agreed, with each birth, to live with this veil of forgetfulness, to have only dim memories of your origins and your home. The forgetting was necessary for the illusion and was part of your human learning.

Your past lives are the infancy and childhood of your soul. Now many of you are adolescents, and even approach mature adulthood.

Slowly the veil lifts, and you begin to remember who you truly are. You have reached a time for remembering.

What is this journey?

It is the slow unfolding of that which you must learn to return to your Creator as mature and compatible co-creators in the dance of life.

It is the blossoming of your beautiful self, from an ember into brilliance.

It is time to move beyond your fears, to acknowledge your true being and the oneness of all creation. It is time to penetrate the illusion.

You have never been anywhere, but the illusion has served its purpose. Now shed the illusion. Learn to acknowledge your perfection, your unlimited nature, your oneness with God and all things, the wonderful beauty of you.

Do you understand that fear is all that keeps you from knowing who you are? Let your fear go and feel the love that is your birthright. Love is the only truth. With love, there is no fear.

You ask "Are we all on the same place on this journey? Are we all ready to let go of the illusion?" No. You are each in your own place, and just where you should be.

## The Journey

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Only those who are ready will hear and accept this message. For others, who are not yet so far along, the message will be there when they are ready to hear it, perhaps in this life, perhaps in another.

There is no rush. You each move as you need to. Be assured that every being will find its way home and in time will understand the illusion of the journey. Each will find that sweetness of its non-separation with the perfect light and know the harmony of the universe.

Truly you are all home. You have only to discover this and know that it is so.

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## What Should I Believe In?

*(Aaron's answer to a thirteen year old boy.)*

**Aaron:** You have asked an extremely difficult question. What to believe in? I cannot wrap it up for you, Craig, and deliver it in a package. You must look into your own heart. The world lies before you. So many things seem to conflict. You look for truth with a capital "T," but truth cannot be spelled out for you. This life is your adventure. It is your chance to grow and learn. What learning would there be for you on this physical plane if all the answers were spelled out in a book? You would have no more need to experience and none of the joy learning brings. Yes, I have said joy. There is always the choice to make your learning joyful, to love this Earth you have been given and this physical experience. For your pain is balanced with happiness.

Craig, the only two truths I know with a capital "T" are God and love. All of those things that seem to be truth are either part of God or of love. Truly. God is love. Remember this if you will, and let it guide you. Whenever you have a doubt about what to believe in, return to this one truth—God is love and you are part of God.

You either act and believe in harmony with that love or in a manner discordant to love. All of your actions are one or the other. The more you move in harmony with love, the more peace and joy you find for yourself and bring to others.

When you find yourself acting in a disharmonious manner from what you perceive to be the flow of love, this does not mean in any sense that you are evil, or have done anything for which you should severely criticize yourself. When you condemn yourself because of your mistakes then learning becomes difficult. You become caught in a net of blaming and anger toward yourself and that anger moves outward to others. Be gentle to yourself, compassionate and forgiving.

When you have erred, accept responsibility for that mistake in yourself. Notice it and try to grow from it. This is how you learn. If you were already perfect you would have no need to be learning on this physical plane. Your mistakes are part of the plan. They are part of your lessons. Allow them to teach you.

Accept your humanness, but learn to believe in the perfection of your own, and of every soul. Listen with your heart and you will hear your soul's voice speak to you. At first it may be just a whisper. You will have to learn to listen well. Always it will speak of God, and of love! The more you allow these Truths to light your way, the less you will need to ask what to believe in. The answer will shine out from within, and you will know with certainty that you are part of God, and God is love.



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## The Universe According to Aaron

**Aaron:** Greetings to you all. I am Aaron. There are two general areas of frequently asked questions. One is the “Who are we?” and “Why are we here?” genre. The other and larger covers the area of how we may do the work we came to do. Tonight I’d like to address the “Who are we” as fully and clearly as possible. Hopefully those with that question in the future can read this transcript so we can get on to the work of learning and growth.

You are energy and light, what I have called a spark of God. This energy has chosen to incarnate into this wonderful schoolroom we call earth because here is given the opportunity for that small spark to evolve, to learn and grow and blossom into a brilliant sun.

Let us start at the beginning. First there was self-awareness, with which came the first delusion of separation from All That Is, the infinite perceiving itself! That minute bit of energy, experiencing itself as separate from God and the Universe, began the long journey back to full understanding of non-separation. In the course of the journey, it will come to know its true nature as part of all things, and to realize that it is both spark of the whole, and also a brilliant sun in its own right. It will not become these things; it will learn that this is what it has always been. It is a voyage of discovery of truth, not creation of truth.

This bit of energy had many choices as to how it would evolve. One possibility offered it was to move to material form on a place such as earth. Of course there are other ways to experience material form, and other paths to evolution beside the one of material form. But you are here on earth so we will speak now of this one path.

This energy that you are first materialized as gas, as mineral, as what you consider non-organic matter. Then it moved to plant life of one type or another, from simple to more complex. Next it experienced itself as animal, and finally human.

In each of these manifestations the materialization had a certain proportion of shadow to light, a certain density to its energy. I do not use density as related to the physical body, in the sense that you consider a rock to be physically denser than a butterfly, but use the term as descriptive of the density of the light body. Those of lower density possess a light body which contains more shadow. Thus, the density of the light itself is less. The lower the density of the light body and the more shadow therein, the lower is the frequency of the energy vibration of that life form; thus, it resonates to, and emits, a lower vibrational frequency. That does not mean it is inferior, only that the vibration differs. The frequency is that which is appropriate to that form into which the energy manifests.

In your manifestations you follow the law of karma which draws you back to new form, again and again, until that energy which you are expresses itself with enough clarity that it has no need to return to this schoolroom. Not all the lessons have been learned, but those demanding incarnation have been sufficiently mastered for the being to move on to the next step on its path, that is, learning beyond the earth plane.

## The Universe According to Aaron

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It is important to note that karma is never punishment. Rather, it is the opportunity to repeat the needed lessons until you learn what you need to learn. In this most perfect schoolroom everyone eventually passes. There is no failure, just the need to review lessons until they are mastered. The courses are ungraded and you may take each class as many times as you wish. When you think it's understood, the universe offers a quiz so you may verify the depth of that understanding. At times the final exams may seem rather tough, but ultimately, the material will be perfectly clear and the hardest exam will be passed with flying colors! After a brief rest, you resume classes. What is the next thing to be learned?

The word karma means action. All actions, words, thoughts lead to karma. Some of it adheres and some is non-adhering. The difference lies in both the act itself and the intention behind the act. Karma may be thought of as the planting of a seed. Simply put, if you want sweet fruit, you must plant the seed for sweet fruit. If you plant the seed for sour fruit, all the nurturing and wishing you can give it will not induce that tree to produce sweet fruit. Only sour fruit will grow there.

If you wish peace, harmony, joy, and love, those are the seeds that must be planted. When you plant hatred, fear and discord, that is what you reap. Essentially, your incarnations are the opportunity to learn how to plant the seeds of compassion, of acceptance and lovingkindness so that you reap those fruits. It's not as easy as it sounds, because even when there is a desire to plant a seed of generosity, for example, fear may arise and distort that intention, so that greed rather than generosity is planted.

Thus, your incarnations are a time to learn awareness of what is planted, to learn to live with increasing skill, to learn to offer love rather than anger or greed as a response to the stimulus of fear. The learning comes slowly, and painfully at times. Remember that you are not expected to be perfect. If you were already perfect, you'd have no need to be here incarnate in a body and learning on the earth plane. Your mistakes are part of the lessons. Allow them to teach you kindness and compassion for the being who errs, rather than contempt.

Those of you who have evolved fully through earth plane have reincarnated over and over, in one form or another. Your first lives on the earth plane were first density, in the form of mineral which includes water. The lesson on that plane is awareness. That spark moved into awareness at the moment of experiencing the illusion of separation. With this first incarnation there is the beginning of the experience of a pull to the light, not yet with self awareness, but always reaching for the light.

When the lessons of first density are sufficiently mastered, the being moves into second density. The forms that density takes on earth are plant and then animal. Yes, all of you who have evolved fully through the earth plane have been mineral, plant and animal in some of your many past lives. The main lesson of second density is growth into self-awareness. The rock begins to have awareness and then is ready to move into the simplest forms of plant life. Increasingly aware through many incarnations, there is first group self awareness, and finally individual self awareness. The ant or bee is aware on a group level. The pet dog or cat moves into personal self awareness. Those animals who are your pets are often in the final stages of second density.

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The third density is human. Your primary lessons on this plane are faith and love. These are NOT the only lessons, but the primary ones.

When you move beyond the need to incarnate in human form, you are still learning. There is simply no longer need for materialization as an aid to that learning. The fourth density lesson is compassion and the fifth is wisdom. Again, this does not mean you learn no wisdom and compassion as a human, but in higher densities you further develop those qualities.

There is an overlap between these lessons of wisdom and compassion. One cannot be learned entirely without the other. The focus in fourth is on compassion and the focus in fifth is on wisdom. To aid this learning, fourth density beings dwell in groups where sharing is at a much more intimate level, then move out from there in fifth density to find deeper wisdom.

I've spoken about group entities at length and will not elaborate on this now. Suffice it to say that when you first fully enter fourth density, you find yourself capable of full telepathic sharing and beyond the dictates of the emotional body that would lead you to feel shame or pride. Thus, all sharing is honest and you no longer need to live the experience yourself to fully understand and learn. As you share in this way with your peers, your beloved companions, you enter loosely into a group entity structure. By "loose" I mean that beings are free to come and go as feels appropriate. You always have free will. When the time is right, an entity will begin to move away from that group to better understand and find deep wisdom in its own being. When useful for its own learning or to teach others, it will return to a group, moving back and forth.

The sixth density ... I find it hard to put a label on this. A friend (*The group entity or "social-memory complex" Ra, in The Ra Material, channeled by Elkins, McCarty and Rueckert*) describes it as learning of love and light. I understand what Ra means but I'm afraid that's not clear to you. I lack the words to define it more accurately. Essentially, the end of sixth density is a movement to total knowledge and acceptance that you have never been separate, a moving back into such total unity with the One that, by the end of sixth density, you are ready to allow the dissolution of all memory and individual identity. This does not mean that you cannot put on a cloak of consciousness, cannot regasp those memories if need be, as I do. In order to teach, I need personality and memory, so I resume these past attributes. The difference is that there is no attachment to them, nor any delusion that this "Aaron" is who I am.

The seventh density has been described as a gateway. It is beyond my experience. I would assume the experience of that gateway to be similar to the gateway of enlightenment experience in third density, but far more profound. It is a gateway to the eighth density, and this I cannot describe to you at all. Let us simply label it as Mystery. It is God.

There is a wide range within each density. They do not have fixed borders; movement from one to another is a process of gradual transition. It is also important to remember that you are not forced into these densities. This is an open classroom school. But as the third grader will feel a bit bewildered when he sits down and listens to the teaching in a sixth grade classroom, and will eventually choose to return to a more appropriate class, so you tend to stay in the appropriate class because that is where learning

occurs. Remember there is no competition to move faster than another or to outdo another. You are most content to be where you learn.

Some of you disagree with that statement, feeling a pull to graduate from this density. Yes, and that is appropriate for your present level of learning. Does the able student about to finish her grade in the spring not look forward eagerly to the next grade? You know that movement beyond the veil of third density will give you fuller exposure to the Light for which you so yearn.

You do move around a bit, then, and may even choose to move to a lower density for some reason. We spoke of this once when watching a caterpillar. One of you asked me and I said a small bit of the soul energy could choose to incarnate as a caterpillar if it felt that was the best way of learning. You might choose to incarnate as a tree, for example, if patience was an issue you were having trouble resolving in third density.

You would not then have a self-aware tree or caterpillar. That bit of light and energy accepts the density into which it moves. Thus, that highly evolved being you call Jesus, accepting incarnation into human form, became a third density being for the time of that incarnation.

There is no formal graduation from one plane to the next, with examinations to be passed. Rather, graduation must be seen as a readiness to master the lessons of the next level, so that one knows that is where one wants and needs to be. One chooses the ideal spot to learn the lessons that one must learn, without concern for density.

I believe that is enough background information about densities. I call some of this "the furniture of heaven." There is curiosity and interest to have some understanding of the whole plan of which you are a part. But you are in third density now. You don't need to know the furniture arrangement in heaven; you are not there. There is a story told about the Buddha where he was asked if he taught all that he knew. The Buddha pointed to the surrounding forest, held out a handful of leaves, and said, "What I know is as the leaves of the forest; what I teach is only as this handful of leaves, but this is all you need to know to find liberation." Well, all you NEED to know is about this life and this density. So let us concentrate our inquiry there.

As a third density human you are made up of four bodies, the physical, emotional, mental, and spirit bodies. The physical is obviously the present manifestation. When you are no longer in this body, what remains are the other three, together in what we call the astral body. You continue to move in and out of material form, all the while working to clarify the shadow in the emotional body.

You are not working to become perfect, nor can you ever be entirely free of emotion while in human form or within third density. Rather, you are working toward what we would call equanimity with emotions, where the rising of an emotion no longer leads to reactivity.

I've just talked briefly about group entities and the totally honest and unselfconscious sharing of such entities. On the astral plane between lifetimes, you communicate telepathically, yet there is still emotion that is broadcast. Thus, third density beings feel some discomfort being with higher densities because they are aware that the broadcast emotions create some discomfort. You are like the young child who is aware the elders smile at his antics in loving tolerance; he soon returns to his friends where he

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can more fully be himself. He will have the opportunity to be an adult in later years; there is no need for him to perfect adult skills as a child.

So you keep returning to the physical plane, practicing faith and love, learning to move beyond reactivity to the emotional body. When you accept the arising of emotions nonjudgmentally, make friends with yourself let us say, then and only then are you ready to learn lessons of nonjudgment to others. This readiness is the gateway to fourth density.

Let us speak briefly of what lies beyond that gateway. The fourth density being still has an emotional body but has no need to broadcast it. Through fourth and fifth densities the emotional body dissolves completely, as the lessons of compassion and wisdom are mastered. The being ready to enter sixth density is only of mental and spirit bodies. This is often referred to as the higher self.

Yes, you all have this aspect as part of you, now in material form. Time is simultaneous, not linear. You are always all that you are; you are not becoming something new, only learning to know the fullness of what you are.

In third density, the emotional body is still experienced strongly in the conscious self, and is often in control. As the conscious mind relaxes the need to control, it may learn to communicate with the superconscious, or higher self. When you do so, you have access to far higher inner wisdom that the conscious, rational aspect of self usually shuts out.

The mental body is retained through sixth density. Within the mental body is the function of memory, and there is still some level of identification as self. Just as at the threshold of fourth density there is readiness to let go of the emotional body and no longer have it dictate action or thought, so at the threshold of the seventh density there is readiness to release the mental body.

As one moves into seventh density, the mental body begins to dissolve. What remains then is the spirit body. This is the pure soul, moving back to awareness of total nonseparation with all that is. It is that aspect of you that is the original spark of God, that bit of perfect energy and light. There is no self there, indeed no mental body capable of generating the concept of self. There is only that pure energy of Love, shining on for eternity.

So here you are, in this beautiful body and this perfect classroom. How do you learn? Where do you go from here? On the spirit plane between lifetimes, all I have shared above is clearly known. With each incarnation you agree to a forgetting. It is as if a veil dropped into place, separating you from the spirit plane. You frequently ask me why. My dear ones, you are here to learn faith. How could you learn that if all was clearly seen? Your growth would be a matter of will power and determination, like a mountain climber with an altimeter that measures how many feet yet to climb. You are NOT here to practice will, but love and faith. The veil gives you the constant opportunity for such practice.

At some times you have glimpses through the veil. A momentary, deep clarity is given as you peer through this fabric that has thinned in places. That glimpse is enough for experience to confirm belief so that faith is not blind faith but is built on a foundation of inner knowing.

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Beings at all levels of evolution are on earth. None is better than another. Is the wise adult better than the child or only more mature and experienced? The lessons being learned are varied. Some are learning about materialism, about grasping and generosity. Their concerns may be largely physical. Some of you are older souls and are moving to the lessons of nonjudgment, of acceptance of all within the human experience. By acceptance, I do NOT mean a condoning of reactivity and the suffering it may cause, but acceptance that within the human there is both love and fear. They are not opposites but a part of each other. Unconditional love accepts all of that without need to deny anything in the realm of human experience.

Those of you who are drawn to read this have reached that level in your growth where you are more aware of the spirit plane, where the veil is thinner. Your increasing experience with spirit helps provide a foundation of deeper trust from which you may do your work.

I say that none is better than another. Then what of good and evil, as you phrase them. These terms are laden with emotional connotations. Let us instead use "light" and "absence of light." Yes, there are those who act in ways to harm others, who make that choice with free will. These beings are responsible for their choices, derived from fear and deep misunderstanding. Their words, acts or thoughts may result in much suffering for themselves, other beings, and the earth itself. Nevertheless, the soul of such is not evil. All souls are pure and brilliant light. But the soul of such a one is connected to an emotional and mental body that are mired in misunderstanding. It may be young or very old. Regardless, it has far to go in learning the lessons of love for which it took birth.

It is not necessary to condone the acts and thoughts of such a one in order to move to compassion for it and for the suffering in which it dwells. You can not learn for another. You cannot truly teach another, except through the example of your own love. Your challenge is to move past your fear and judgment and allow the opening of the heart of compassion. You might even wish to thank it, for its misunderstandings provide a catalyst for your practice. How can you learn nonjudgment and compassion when there is nothing that you might tend to judge?

The same is true of the situations of your life. Everything is meant to teach you. You are always exactly where you need to be to learn what you came to learn. At times that learning is painful, yet learning does not need to be painful. It is not pain that teaches you, but awareness. Your pain screams "Pay attention!" and that attention teaches. As you become increasingly attentive, as you open the heart's door without judgment to all that moves through and past you, you will find that you learn with less pain.

Pain and suffering are also not synonymous. Pain is pain, unpleasant to be sure. Suffering grows out of resistance to what is, from wanting things to be different than they are. As you come to understand this, you will find the infinite space in your heart that allows the experience of pain, not your pain or my pain but pain, the world's pain, without hatred of that pain and resistance to it. Pain flows through you; joy flows through you. As you move beyond attachment and aversion and to what we call choiceless awareness, you will find that suffering does end.

We have moved on here from "Who are we?" to "Why are we here?" As for the third question, "How do we do the work we came to do?" let us save that for other talks. It is a vast subject and we'll approach it a little at a time. Only remember and trust that you

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are here to heal that which cries to be healed, within yourselves and within the whole earth. Trust this gift of incarnation, this life experience. Work with love, courage and faith. Practice awareness and mercy, for yourselves and all beings. Be gentle to all things, including yourselves. Know that you are loved beyond your capacity to comprehend that word. There is nothing more precious in the universe than each spark of the Eternal.

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## Wanderers

**Aaron:** You have all begun as what I call a “spark of God,” just a bit of that infinite Energy and Love of the Eternal. You are That. Moving into the first awareness of an illusory “self” as separate from all that is, you begin the long journey back to understanding of your true nature. Through this process of evolution, that spark burns with increasing clarity and brilliance, coming to know its own divinity.

The ways you may move through this process are varied. Many of you whom I address here chose to enter first density on the earth plane. This plane is only one of many paths that are offered. Others of you chose to evolve on other planes, some with physical form and some as disincarnate energy. There are myriad paths, beyond description. Energy knows no limits and may shape itself as it needs, ever moving to allow the optimum situations for its evolution.

The unique aspect of the earth plane route is that here you are given both the physical and emotional bodies. Those bodies offer a sharp learning, harsh at times, and best suited to those spirits who are a bit impulsive or impatient. You are those who, with a sense of joyful abandon, yearn to move faster through this process which does not know time! In human incarnation you are offered perhaps the most powerful of the catalysts for learning that the universe has to offer. These are your ignorance and suffering and the veil of forgetting that descends with each birth.

Some of you who chose other routes became stuck in one way or another. Perhaps there was a building up of reactivity to emotion due to misunderstanding. Perhaps there was just that impatience of the soul to come home. For whatever reasons, some of those beings who had not originally chosen earth plane learning decided to move into earth incarnation.

We call these beings “wanderers.” Once they have chosen to move to the earth plane and have incarnated into third density, they are fully human. They are most emphatically NOT space creatures, any more than any of us are. They are subject to the laws of karma and will remain enmeshed in this process of birth and death until they are ready to graduate from third density.

There are several differences in the way these wanderers experience their incarnations. First, many have dim memories of another plane, of existence as a light being. While those who have evolved fully through the earth plane may also have such memories, they are less vivid because they are remembered only from the first origins of that spark, or from the astral plane where there was still emotional body.

The other difference for wanderers is that some have been in fourth or fifth density on their prior planes and have had to return to third density to take human form. There are two requirements for one to become a wanderer. One is the willingness to expose oneself to earth, often to learn what it had been difficult to learn in the prior place of learning. Second is the eagerness to serve and that special abilities are brought to human form, with which that service may be rendered.

Thus, wanderers have some memories of that place from which they came, and at least vague awareness of the special abilities of healing, compassion, wisdom, or



understanding with which they incarnated. As human, these memories fade at birth, but are reawakened as life progresses, in meditation, in daily awareness and in dreams.

Such beings may be aware of the force of their energy, through their hearts or through their hands. They may be aware of a special knowledge that they can channel as they come into mature contact with their higher selves. They come to the incarnation with a deep sense of purpose beyond the ego-self.

Please note that not all such beings with that sense of purpose are wanderers. Those who have evolved through the human plane also arrive at that deep desire to serve. By the time wanderers have been able to define that purpose, they usually know themselves to be wanderers. Whether that knowing is conscious or not is irrelevant.

Also note that not all wanderers have come primarily for their own learning. For some, there was no sense of being stuck that brought them here, only a joyful willingness to move into incarnation, to offer the self as servant to help all beings move past suffering and ignorance.

Such beings offer service knowing well that they can become stuck in the cycle of karma and caught in this web of birth and death. They also know that, should that happen, they will learn from the experience. Can you picture a school child who is asked to take an examination before graduation. He had straight A's on his schoolwork; he thought he knew it. But in that examination he failed one section and was told he could not graduate; he must repeat the grade.

The foolish or rebellious child will grumble and curse about its not being fair, will mutter that he knows it. The wise youth will welcome the opportunity to learn something that otherwise would have slipped by. In this perfect schoolroom of ours, there is no hurry, and no need or desire to let anything slip by.

This is the way with wanderers who come just to serve and become caught in adhering karma that necessitates rebirth. The conscious being may grumble. The higher self, with its wisdom and perspective, understands that precious learning is offered and determines to make the most of that opportunity to further clarify its light.

All wanderers have some shared experiences, regardless of their original reason for choosing human incarnation. They usually have grown up and lived their lives with some indefinable sense of being different. Wanderers are often spiritually awake, with a clear sense of this life as part of their spirit's journey. They may have a deep sense of purpose, even if they've not been able to define it.

Many experience a seeing of other planes, especially in nighttime dreams where the scenery or architecture, let us say, is other than that experienced on the earth plane. They may occasionally dream of light rather than form. While awake, they may see auras and other energy more clearly. Wanderers often feel less at home in their bodies than as spirit. There may be a reluctance to be human, to deal with form, thought and emotion, to get the hands dirtied with the nitty gritty of life experience. Some may choose to escape into meditation or religious ritual. In line with this, many wanderers may find the upper chakras very clear and, for some lifetimes, choose not to want to work to open the lower chakras. There is an attachment to being spirit.

## Wanderers

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Finally, they may have a profound sense of being stuck, of knowing they came to learn something, perhaps of having seen unskillful patterns in this and even past lives, but not clearly understanding how to move beyond those patterns.

It is important to recognize that none of these qualities or experiences are proof that one is a wanderer. Truly, it doesn't matter. If you are here as human, you are here as human! You can use this incarnative experience to learn what you came to learn, or not. It is your choice. As long as you're here in human form, in this classroom, why not participate in the learning that is offered?

I offer this overview of the wanderer mostly to allow those of you who recognize yourselves to feel a bit more at ease, to open the curtain just a bit, and know your own truth. Perhaps this bit of a way-station for wanderers may give you a moment to catch your breath, to remember to smile before you plunge back into the zesty waters of the present earth plane incarnation.

My dear ones, you cry out that it's too hard, too painful. Bear with it; open your hearts. It is your fear of the class that creates your pain. In this moment, just this precious now, there is no fear and no pain, only the joyous heart gladly opening itself to Truth. Trust, and continue to be all that you are with the same willing gladness with which you first entered the process.

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## Light and Darkness

**Aaron:** My friends, many of you ask me, "Is there any such thing as evil?" You wonder about your own spiritual path and where you fit into the picture of the new world you see emerging. You ask me to define my concepts of "light" and "darkness."

Let me first express the fact that what I share with you here is not truth with a capital T. We each name God in our own language. I teach you only what I understand, as taught me by my teachers, through theirs before them. We each add what we can. Remember, I am not God; I am simply Aaron. These are truths with a small t because they're only what I see as true. That's all that I can give you. I do not have all the answers. Weigh it for yourself. I have more experience and a different perspective, but no more inherent wisdom or understanding than each of you do.

The only Truths I know are God and Love.

I have described myself as a Being of Light, as are all of you. You have each begun as a spark of God, moving on your own path to maturity. As you evolve to purer and purer light, you are ever more in harmony with the universe and with God. You have chosen this journey of so many lifetimes in order to evolve into mature compatibility with the one who is your Creator. We are all on the same journey, but follow a multitude of paths. Your path is your own and unique to your Self. But all paths lead to the same end. Every being will find its way home.

You ask me "What of those who are evil?" We are all Beings of Light: All! God is the creator of all forms and concepts. As this source of all love and all light, God cannot create a concept of inherent evil. Thus, you must come to understand the word "evil," not in terms of that non-existent "total darkness," but as an absence of light. We are all in different places on this journey, and while many beings are filled with a great deal of light, others are deep in darkness and mired in misunderstandings. From such beings, there may be real intent to harm on either a physical or a spiritual plane. These are the beings we commonly refer to as "evil." Please remember that the soul of a Hitler, the soul of a Gandhi, and your own soul have equal value. While we have chosen different paths to maturity, and are at different places on our journeys, we are all Beings of Light. We are all One.

As you begin to understand your own spiritual nature, to connect with your Higher Selves, you question the purpose of your lives, and where your own personal growth is leading you. First you must learn the law of Karma, and understand that each issue in your lives has a purpose, and has been wisely chosen by you for your own growth. You begin to realize the need for honesty within yourselves as you understand this unfolding process of your lives. You learn to look from a second perspective, that of your Higher Self, and realize that those difficulties your human self took as obstruction are instruction for your soul's growth. You learn not to blame, but to accept responsibility for your choices and learn from them. Often these choices seem harsh or cruel to those with only a human perspective, but they are always made with wisdom and love.

When you have reached this plane where you can usually view your life from the perspective of your Higher Self, then you are asked again to expand your consciousness. Can you begin to look at this now from a third perspective, a place

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where your own Higher Self blends with All That Is? Here is the place where each individual's growth profoundly effects the evolution of the entire universe into Light.

I have said that we are all Beings of Light, evolving into purer and purer light. There are also beings who live in great darkness and would pull us in that direction.

Remembering that they are also growing into perfect Light, you will understand that their pull creates no conflict unless you permit one. Allow a provocation to battle to become an invitation to love. In some distant day and time even the last soul will have become purest Light. This is the way it has been planned and no being can alter that basic plan. It is a process which is speeded or slowed by each being's commitment to Love, and its courage to honor its convictions.

We are all tools for light, or for darkness. You cannot have a foot in each camp. When you respond with love and compassion to any provocation, then you are allowing yourself to be a channel for light. Perfection is not expected. You learn from your mistakes. If you were already evolved to perfect light you would have no need to be here on the earth plane and learning in a physical body. What is asked is that you be honest with yourselves and manifest your energy as purely as possible. In this way you allow yourselves to learn, to grow, and to expand your own inner light and the light of the entire universe.

Simply put, when you respond with love and awareness, you add light to the total light of the universe. You tip the balance of light and darkness toward light. When you react in anger, fear or hatred, you become a channel for darkness. It is only asked of you that you be honest in your effort to do the best you are able. Remember to look from this third perspective, from that place where your soul unites with God and All That Is, and know that each act and word is of importance to the whole.

As we are each evolving toward perfect light, so the whole universe is evolving. Remember that each being will find its way home, and that in some distant day, all will be perfect Light. The process cannot be rushed, but your loving awareness will assure that it not be impeded. Continue to learn, to remain open to all that is, to greet each "now" with choiceless awareness, and of greatest importance, to love. Do not be afraid. Trust.

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## Free Will

**Question:** To what degree do we have free will and to what degree is our spiritual journey guided for us?

**Aaron:** Free will is an important element of your human journey. In your human form you are always given choices and asked to take responsibility for those choices. You can allow a fragmented self to make your decisions, directed by a brain that screams "Do this, do that," or you can learn to listen with your heart, to find a wholeness within yourself so that your choices become increasingly harmonious with the universe. When you make such choices guided by your heart's wisdom, then your path opens before you and the offered lessons are learned. When you fight this harmony, you often make unskillful choices. Then your learning becomes more painful.

You correctly understand that your lessons extend out to all others with whom you are in contact. Sometimes it may seem hard to comprehend the convolutions of the universe which join each of your separate paths, yet nothing is ever unplanned. You are offered choices which bring you together for shared learning. When this occurs, any of you can say "No," but perhaps you will be ready to trust the wisdom of your heart and your soul. Then the learning experience becomes a joyful sharing of love.

Always, your path is laid before you. You are given the choice, to follow or not to follow. If you choose not to follow, there will be a different path. It will eventually bring you back to the same place, but the way will wander a bit, and perhaps there will be steeper hills. If you've chosen the hill, it's because that steepness is necessary to your unique path, because on that rocky hillside you will find the lessons that you need. Again, you have free will, to learn those lessons, or to repeat them on the next hill. If you need to repeat them, that is fine. You are given all the time you need.

At times there may seem to be impossible obstacles, barriers to the path. Always you have chosen these, to teach you what you need to learn. Stop and look at this cliff side that looms before you. Ask, "What has brought me here?" If you listen with your heart, and search out the steps with love, you will find the learning there, and understand that you have willed this cliff into existence, just as you can will it away when your learning is complete. Your path is always your own choice, made with the wisdom of your soul.

Please remember that every path, no matter how smooth or steep, will eventually lead you home. Where you are on that path is exactly where you need to be, and the next step before you is always just the step you need to take. Listen with your heart and you will find yourself in harmony with the universe, and your steps will become increasingly joyous.

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## Sharing the Journey

**Question:** What I am learning about our spiritual journey is very beautiful. How can I share it with my parents (spouse/children/friends)?

**Aaron:** As you find your path opening before you, of course you want to share the beauty with your loved ones. This is fine. Tell them what you are learning, but be prepared for their less than enthusiastic response.

All beings are on this spiritual path. We are all on our way home. Remember that we travel by many routes, and are in different places, each on our own unique path.

You all tend to want to force your own understandings on those close to you. Do you see that this is a form of violence against your loved one? You can open a door for another, but you cannot force him through.

Trust that each being is exactly where he needs to be. If he does not accept your invitation to enter that door that you've opened, why can you not let it be? For whom are you opening that door, yourself or your beloved companion?

Examine your own need here. What must you prove? What ego is there that asks for approval of your own path? Explore these questions without judgment of yourself. Simply look at what's there, with love and compassion for your own human needs. Doing so will allow you the space to see that forcing your beliefs on another is a violence to that being.

We can teach one another, and lead one another, but only from a space where there is no ego need. When you lead from that place, you open up a space where another may follow when he is ready to do so. There is no need within you that the other being follow. There is compassion for his dilemma, and a sense of wholeness in yourself that needs no reassurance that you are on the right path. Your faith is strong within itself. It does not need to be bolstered by another. You have no need to prove anything to yourself or your companions.

From within that space you can truly teach, not by your words but by your very being. Your loved ones will see your growing sense of peace and wholeness. They will notice the changes in you. When they ask you, then you may share. Your loving actions will speak much louder than all your pleas of "Try this," or "Think about that."

To share is beautiful, but the only person you can work on is yourself. Each being must learn the lessons for himself. You may serve as a guide, a road sign pointing the direction, but each must walk the path themselves, in their own time and at their own pace. Walk your own path with love, faith, courage, and humility, and you will be a glowing beacon that lights the way for others.

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## Predicting the Future

**Question:** Many channels today are prophesying great changes and some are being very specific. Why do you refuse to predict the future?

**Aaron:** My dear one, you are asking an important question here. Why won't I predict the future? Most of you have heard me say that yours is a plane of free will. At any moment, each of you have an infinite number of possible futures, each dependent on the next choices you make. There is also a collective future, which depends on the choices made as a race.

What happens when one future is predicted over another? It's like telling two players which one will win before they start to play the game. Disheartened, the prospective loser does play to lose. Assured, the prospective winner plays to win. Thus the results are as predicted, but these results have been created by the players because of the predictions. If there had been no prediction would it have turned out that way?

We on the spiritual plane always have your growth in mind, and all the hopes for the evolution of each of your souls. But it is immoral to influence your choice by telling you the future. You must always have complete free will or the growth is not really yours, but shaped by another.

It is acceptable to guide you, to help you explore the possible futures that may occur when you make one choice or another. Through this exploration you learn, and increasingly are able to make wiser choices as your hearts move away from fear and open to love. This learning is what you are here for. We may not deprive you of this opportunity by making your choices for you.

You ask why some on my plane do predict the future. Some who are newer to this plane become rather fervent in their announcements of what they see to be the truth. They have not yet learned the lessons of patience. We cannot force our understandings on you; you must learn at your own pace, both individually and collectively.

Spirits predicting the future are like the parent telling his child what will occur if he does this or that. If a parent tells a child often enough that something will occur as a result of his actions, perhaps it does—a self-fulfilling prophecy. But the child has not really learned his own truth here, but his parent's truth. Do you see the difference? You each must discover the truth for yourselves. It is only in this way that there is real growth.

Those spirits who teach in such a way act out of love, as does the parent trying to protect a child from the consequences of unskillful behavior. The child cannot always be protected if he is to learn to be responsible for the consequences of his choices. Similarly, although those spirits mean well as they offer predictions and attempt to guide you to more skillful choices, when their predictions begin to shape your choices for you, you are no longer learning responsibility. It is only with acceptance of your responsibility that you really begin to mature and this is your whole purpose, to evolve and grow. Often your mistakes are your greatest teachers. Those who would deprive you of your lessons act out of love, but unwisely. They, too, have learning to do.

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## Why Choose a Handicapped Body?

**Aaron:** Many factors determine our choice of body. Before the soul incarnates much thought goes into the decision of what the specific focuses of growth will be for the given lifetime. A choice may be made to correct the misunderstandings of prior lifetimes, for growth in new areas, or for both. In any case, the spirit involved consults with its guides, and loved companions from prior lifetimes on the direction for growth. While each spirit receives loving guidance, you are always ultimately responsible for making your own choices.

We have said that much thought goes into this decision. The choice of body is never determined by convenience or pleasure. After the focuses for growth are decided, then the spirit, in consultation with its guides, determines the optimal physical plane situations for the growth that is desired. Factors considered here range from the choice of body, to aspects such as culture, living situation, and family.

Much care is taken to be sure the optimum conditions for learning are available. Please understand that by "optimum conditions" here I do not mean wealth, high rank, or even high intelligence or special gifts. I simply mean a choice of physical attributes and cultural and living situation that is best able to enhance the soul's opportunity to achieve the desired growth. Remember that the physical plane is a schoolroom for your soul. Also remember that the soul itself is never handicapped. With these ideas in mind you will see that a handicap that you, in your physical form, may consider as an obstruction is chosen as a form of instruction.

It is important to remember that the final decision is made with careful thought and with love. Always with love. The end result may seem cruel to a being on the physical plane who has forgotten the spiritual reasons for the choice. And, my dear ones, you do forget so easily. Sometimes a being who has chosen a difficult physical situation, such as a severe handicap, may completely lose sight of the reasons for this choice and become mired in bitter misunderstanding. He may blame outside circumstances for his discomfort rather than recognizing his own responsibility for his choice. When entrenched in this kind of distortion, the soul can obviously not make use of the chosen physical situation to attain the desired growth.

Sometimes, even with guidance, this forgetfulness and misunderstanding continues throughout the being's physical lifetime, both accruing new karma and necessitating the planning again toward the hoped for growth of that lifetime, in another physical body, in a new lifetime. Your resistance to learning causes you to manifest those experiences you need to teach you. What you are unwilling to learn in one lifetime, you will learn in another. Each lifetime brings new light to areas that previously were dark. Sometimes it is only a glimmer, at other times a brilliant glow. Always, your soul is growing back toward that Light which is its source and its home.

There is one more situation in which a being may choose a handicapped body. This choice involves both the soul's own growth and its willingness, in love, to become the fulcrum for another being's growth. Occasionally a being may choose to incarnate in a body such as one that is so severely retarded that little personal growth is possible in that lifetime. This is done to aid another or others, perhaps the parent or a sibling, who



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in its relationship with the handicapped being is able to gain important understandings, usually about love and giving. Here, the handicapped being serves as a catalyst. While love is the force behind all learning, the decision to incarnate in such a body is not entirely selfless. Remember that during this stage of repeated physical reincarnation your learning is not just on the physical plane. You learn on another plane while between physical incarnations. Thus, a being who has made such a choice, out of love and service to another, has expanded his own capacity for love, by the giving of his own self in love.

It may take a being many lifetimes to learn something that has become difficult for that being. In each new lifetime the optimal learning situations are chosen and you may try again. There is never any rush. You have all the time that you need. With each lifetime you add light. With each step you find your way, guided by love, when you are able to open your heart to that love. You are all on this path together. While the specific path is unique to each of you, the process is the same for all beings, and is one of those things that unites you into your oneness. Be patient. Find the reality of love, and follow it. Be as aware of your choices as possible and be responsible for them. Be assured that every being will find its way home.

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## Karma, Reincarnation, and Schoolroom Earth

**Aaron:** Your earth is a schoolroom and you are here to learn—it is as simple as that! Before your decision to move into birth, and with the guidance of your beloved companions, you form a blueprint for the proposed lifetime. What is it that you most need to learn? What life situations will make that learning most accessible? That decided, you move into incarnation in this most perfect schoolroom where the lessons you need are always offered.

This is a school where no one fails. If the lesson is not learned the first time, opportunity is offered to repeat it. This is not punishment but kindness. It is as if you had studied some mathematics and taken an examination. Half of your answers are incorrect. The teacher invites you to come after school and review that work which you don't understand. When you both think you are ready, a new exam is offered. Still one third wrong? Let's try again! And again. When you've mastered the material, you will be ready to move on.

In your fear of the pain that sometimes accompanies the lessons, you view karma as punishment. Can you see that it is a gift of the universe, to offer just the lessons you most need at the pace you find appropriate?

Let us speak a moment of this pain. Yes, often there is pain in your learning. Pain does NOT teach you anything; it is just pain. Pain reminds you to pay attention and paying attention teaches you. Your lives do not have to be painful. When you learn to pay attention without the pain, you will no longer need pain.

Please do NOT interpret that statement as suggestion that your pain is your fault or choice and that you need feel guilty for it. Paying attention is hard. There is a desire to hide from difficult learning. Rather than understanding how difficult the material may be, so often you move to fear and see yourselves as inadequate, judging yourself with scorn. This is part of your humanness. You are learning that you have conscious choice, to notice fear arising and then to choose love.

A vital lesson here is compassion for this divinely imperfect human, and by extension, for all humans, not judgment for him or her. So you practice this compassion, this mercy to the self while also being as honest with yourself as you can be. No, it is NOT simple. Yes, it is possible. The Buddha is quoted as having once said, "If it were not possible, I would not ask you to do it." You may wish to carry that quote in your hearts.

There is a difference between pain and suffering. Pain is uncomfortable, but it is just pain, nothing more nor less. You cannot always avoid it, no matter how hard you try. Suffering is different. It grows from your resistance to pain.

Suffering is your expression of dissatisfaction with the way things are, your aversion and attachment, wanting things always to be different than they are. As you lessen your resistance and allow your life to touch you and to teach you, your suffering diminishes. Then you may come to the pain with an open and spacious heart that has room for it, without fear. The wonder is that within that newly opened heart, you find that your capacity for joy and love is as infinite as your capacity for bearing with pain.

So you are here on this earth plane. Through your life there are countless mind moments, endless acts and thoughts. Each one carries a seed. If, in any moment, you respond with love and an open heart, you plant a sweet seed of gentleness, caring, and connection. If you react with fear and anger or greed, you plant a bitter seed of separation, hatred and fear. That, in effect, is karma. Let us look closer.

The word karma means action. All acts, words and thoughts carry karma, some of it "adhering" and some of it "nonadhering." Karma is a law that says, "You reap what you sow." If you plant sour apple seeds, my dear ones, there is no way you can get a sweet apple tree, no matter how much you wish for sweet apples. The fruit grows from the seed. The only way to get sweet apples is to plant sweet apples.

Karma is never punishment but learning, like that teacher who invites you back because you still haven't understood the lesson. After a lifetime, the karma which adhered in that lifetime invites you back ... says, "This and that need to be worked on." Maybe not in the next lifetime. Was this a hard one? Do you need an easier one next time? That's fine. But eventually you will need to get back to it.

After leaving the body, you look again at the blueprint, comparing the plan with the scheme of that which was actually built. You may notice that some rooms were left off entirely, or unfinished. "Patience; that needs more work next time. See how reactive I was to the catalyst of fear ..." You may notice other rooms, unplanned in the original, have been beautifully constructed. "See how much I learned about fear that leads to greed; I really learned generosity with an open heart this time around. I won't need to concentrate on that so much next time ..."

After whatever time you choose to spend on the spirit plane, you again reincarnate. Why? Some of you wonder, if you are not forced to return to this earth plane, why would you choose to do so? Is someone standing over you with a whip? No. There is always free will, even with karma, and this is sometimes misunderstood. You are evolving from what I've called a Spark of the Eternal into a fully evolved "sun" in your own right. That energy that you are is clarifying and purifying itself so that it may return to the Eternal as pure light, in a far more mature form than it left, its energy multiplied many fold.

To sit even in the soft shadows just beyond the direct reach of that Perfect Light is bliss beyond telling. Each of you, as spirit, yearns to return to that light, to know your perfect union with the divine. Within you is the wisdom to understand that in order to return fully mature to the Light, you must clarify the shadow within you. This move to your own perfection is a driving force, the move to Light. Thus, it is your own free will that leads you to choose the exquisite pain and love of the next incarnation.

This yearning is not a grasping but aspiration. There is no sense of trying to "get somewhere." To "get somewhere" implies that there is a self that is "getting." This aspiration I speak of comes from a level far beyond self and ego. It grows from full knowing of what you are, of the divinity of your nature and your desire to express that divinity as purely as you can, not for yourself but for all life, for all beings on every plane.

In your deepest wisdom you know that every bit of light, of purified energy, that shines from you adds light to the entire universe. To purify yourself is the ultimate path of service. To follow this path of loving service is NOT another's will or plan for you, but your own free will and plan for yourself.

## Karma, Reincarnation, and Schoolroom Earth

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However long it takes, it will take. While knowing that each lifetime is a precious opportunity to learn, also remember that there is no rush. In its own time, every being will find that perfect freedom and peace. Every being will find its way Home.

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# Meditation

**Question:** You often talk about meditation. What does meditation mean to you? Why do you advise us to meditate, and is there any other way to learn those things beside meditation?

**Aaron:** You have several questions here. Let us take them one at a time. Is there any other way to learn? Bluntly, NO! This is not so limited as it may seem, since meditation takes many forms. Your personality and where you are on your journey determine the best type of meditation for you. Rarely is only one form of meditation adhered to throughout life. As you grow and change, a new method may become appropriate. Try it on like a suit of clothes and if it fits you, wear it for a time. Allow it to become comfortable and familiar until it becomes like a second skin. Then you are no longer performing an action when you meditate, but simply experiencing, or being.

What is meditation? It is the means to know yourself at deeper levels, which knowledge allows you to be in harmony with the universe. It is the path out of the illusion of separation into which your human form and feelings bind you. Meditation frees your awareness from such personal identification. It is the way to know your oneness with each other, with all living things, and with God. It is your way home!

I have experienced many forms of meditation in my lifetimes. I have been a Christian priest and practiced devotional meditation, living in solitude in a monastery and teaching there. I have been a Buddhist priest and done the same thing in a forest monastery in Thailand. There, the practice was Vipassana meditation. I have chanted mantras, practiced martial arts, done Sufi dancing, lived in luxury and prayed in great temples, and lived in poverty and meditated in hovels.

Looking back on all this, I know now what I did not know in each of those lives, that no one method is right. They are all right! The rightness is not in the method but in your heart. It has truly been taught that when the student is ready, the teacher appears, and that teacher will help you to open the doors you need to open. If a certain practice is right for you, you will be led to it when you need it. Open your hearts and trust your inner wisdom, and it shall be so.

You ask if there is one method of meditation I'd teach above the rest. I am hesitant to commit myself here because what is right for one of you, at one stage on the path, is not what another needs at another stage. I do not contradict myself when I advise one to do this and another to do that. I merely try to direct each one back to the center of his chosen path.

As you approach that stage in your journey where you understand your true spiritual nature and begin to long to find the way home, to come to an end of all duality and separateness, at that stage I would recommend a combination of Vipassana and devotional meditation. The Vipassana is hard work and requires courage and perseverance. The devotional meditation is to remind you to hold constantly in your hearts the reason for this work, which is both your love of God and the fact that God is Love.

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Devotional meditation takes many forms. Hold God in your heart and speak to Him. Your message may be in the form of words, song, dance, work, or service. You may seek out the great Master of your choice and, revering him, ask his help to lead you to God. Your love for this Master reminds you of the holiness of your own self, for the spark of God is in all of us. Through the Beloved you come to know the perfection of your own true being, and finally, your oneness with God.

What of those who do not believe in God? Can they go no further on their path? If they love enough, and serve others through their love, that is their God. They will know God when they are ready for Him. Until then, their love and service is given no less in service to God, just because they do not acknowledge Him. Indeed their faith may be greater, as they serve with love and dedication He whom they do not know. For those of you who have been graced by direct experience of Him, your path is easier. Your experience enhances your faith.

What of Vipassana meditation? This is the path to your recognition of your wholeness. It is a meditation of reality, of compassion, of forgiveness. It is a meditation that takes you beyond your fears, deeper into the heart of love where you find your oneness with all that is.

You have fragmented yourselves into self and other, and that perceived self into that which is acceptable and that which you must hide. That whole Pandora's Box of hidden matter smolders under the surface. It separates you from yourself. You spend your days fleeing from this fire, so busy merely trying to escape it, to outthink it and stay one step ahead, that you never pause to see what's burning.

Meditation provides a firebreak, a still space where you may stop and look. There is no judgment here, no blame, there is just reality. No, some of that reality is not pretty, but we are not in a beauty contest here. Slowly, you learn to open the box, to let in air and light, to allow what is hidden to surface. You have been looking through the filters of what you wished to see, so that what was really there was unknowable. Always, the unknown is more dreaded than the reality. Slowly you pierce the layers of illusion and begin to see with clear vision. Slowly the subsurface fires, exposed to air and light, burn their way out and die away. There is no more fuel to feed them, as each smoldering twig of kindling is brought into the light.

This process takes courage, perseverance, faith and love. As you permit it to happen, you begin to find an undreamed of wholeness. There is no longer a wall between your conscious mind and your heart, no longer a separation in yourself. There are no longer places that must be hidden. You learn to open to yourself and trust what you find there. What you used to need to bury becomes the fertile ground for exploration. The burned out material from that old subsurface fire becomes the compost heap that provides the rich soil for growth. Always there is growing compassion, forgiveness and love.

Then the wall between self and others may come down. It simply dissolves. You cannot love another until you love yourself. Once you love yourself, then you know God's love and know that it is an impersonal love that loves all of creation. For truly, God is Love.

Choose the method of meditation that best fits you. Listen to your heart or let a trusted teacher guide you. But practice daily, if you are serious about your commitment to your own growth. Whatever your practice, you must approach it with a willingness to be with

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what's there, what's real, not just to practice when you are feeling "spiritual." This is not reality but separation from yourself.

Open to yourself and to God and your love, trust and work will bring you home.

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# Marriage

**Question:** What is the purpose of marriage?

**Aaron:** What is the purpose of anything in your lives? This earth is the schoolroom for your souls as you pass through this human stage of your journey. As with anything else, your marriage is meant to teach you the lessons you have incarnated to learn. They are often lessons of love, of giving selflessly, of sharing with another.

You have also chosen marriage because of the support you offer to one another. You are both on the same path. Your recognition of each other's efforts teaches you both. Ideally, your marriage partner is one with whom you can be honest about both your needs and your dreams. You can help one another see with clearer perspective, lifting each other beyond the earth plane to see the path more clearly.

I say "ideally." Obviously, many of your marriages are not ideal. There is anger, blaming, bitterness and pain. I ask you to stop and see why you have chosen this. Yes, I hear you wailing "It's not my fault." I must remind you that you are always responsible for your choices. You are never in a situation that you have not agreed to, at some level of your being.

Stop your blaming for a moment. Quiet yourself and look within. There must be no self-judgment, just clear seeing. What are you learning from this situation? You have made this choice, consciously or unconsciously. If you do not understand why, if you continue to cry "It's not fair" and place all the blame on another, then you will not learn what you came to learn. So quiet yourself and look, compassionately but honestly, at what's there.

What did you come to learn? I cannot answer this for you, but if you can still the blaming voice a bit, you will hear the answer within yourself. It may not be pretty to see your misunderstandings. It may be painful. Treat yourself with kindness, and forgive yourself for your mistakes. Then honestly try to grow from what you've learned. The same misunderstandings will occur over and over. Learn to greet them with a lighthearted "Oh, you again," a gentle reminder to reexamine and see where you have lost the path.

You are here to gain maturity and assume responsibility for your selves, so you may grow into mature compatibility with your Creator. Your past lives are your soul's infancy and childhood. Many of you now are adolescents. You long for the freedom of adulthood, but fear to give up the dependent child in yourselves. While one part of you longs to grow up, another part of you trembles in fear of the responsibility.

Marriage is one of your tools here. You cannot learn lessons of responsibility and love in a vacuum. The closeness of a living relationship with your spouse, your children, or your parents provides you with ample place for practice. Before you can practice you must know what you need to practice. Most assuredly it is not blaming one another. Look within yourselves for the answers.

Are you ready to leave a painful marriage? Stop a minute and ask yourself two questions. Did I learn what I came to learn? If so perhaps you are ready to put the pain behind you and move on to new learning. If not, perhaps you are running away from



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the pain, but you will not leave it behind with the divorced partner. You'll carry it with you into new relationships until finally you are ready to face your own responsibility for your own learning.

At this point, ask the second question. Is it too painful? Perhaps you know that you have something to learn, but simply cannot face the pain of the situation. It is not wrong, in any moral sense, to move on. Know that you have these lessons still to learn. Perhaps in the next learning situation that you choose you'll be more ready and the road will be less rocky.

Let us return to those marriages where the love outbalances the pain. You say there is no pain? You are not being honest! You are suppressing these feelings. No matter how much love, there is also occasionally pain. But the love in any close human relationship can far outweigh the pain. It is a much more pleasant way to learn.

Your learning does not need to be painful. When you face the same lessons over and over, and do not listen to your inner voice, then the lessons are made stronger to collect your attention and direct you to focus on the needed learning. When you are in harmony with yourself, and in touch with the voice within, you develop the courage and honesty to face your issues and learn what you have come to learn. Then, truly, your learning can be joyful.

A loving marriage between two beings in harmony with themselves provides the foundation for deep learning. The lessons of love are one of the most important for you on this physical plane. Love enables you to transcend ego, to move beyond the needs of self interest and to serve others. It is a path to the understanding of your oneness with all other beings and with God. While there will be occasions of conflict in even the most loving marriage, you will both know that of God in the other. Both beings will stretch themselves to be all that they can be, and will support this effort in the other.

The love from such a marriage shines like a radiant sun on all whom it touches, giving warmth and a brilliant glow that lights the path for all who come near. Those involved in such a marriage are deeply blessed with the giving and receiving of love.

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## Eden

**Question:** You've said our lives don't have to be painful if we learn to pay attention when there's no pain, and I understand that intellectually. How do we learn to pay attention without pain? Can we ever live in perfect peace? If, as you say, things are far less cruel on this planet now than thousands of years ago, and if we continue moving in a positive direction, can this planet eventually be the paradise it has the potential to be. Or MUST there be pain for growth? In short, can this world ever be a "garden of Eden"?

**Aaron:** It would first be useful to ask how you define Eden. By this term do you picture a totally painfree environment where all is provided in abundance, where there is never anger, never illness, never any discomfort of any sort? How can this be? Within the limits of this physical environment, the rain that allows food to grow to abundance also may be disturbing to those who wish for sunshine. Had you in mind a planet where it only rains over growing fields, perhaps only from 11 P.M. to 5 A.M.?

I do understand what you mean by Eden, but I am not certain that you do. The question must be raised, once there is self-awareness, can there ever be total freedom from physical, emotional or mental discomfort?

Defining Eden in a more realistic way, can your earth ever be free of war, of starvation, of disease, of the general suffering of human beings. I answer this with a resounding YES. It is indeed possible. Will you still be able to learn? Again, YES!

You must come back here to the difference we've often talked about between pain and suffering. Pain is just that—pain. It is the physical hurt of the injured or ill body. It is grief at the loss of a loved one. It is the ache in the heart when one sees the effects of pestilence, war and famine over the earth. Yes, pain hurts!

Your suffering is created by your conflicts and struggles with pain and all else that arises in your lives. It grows out of resistance to life. Let us use an obvious example here of something that you cannot avoid as long as you are human. No matter how advanced your medical technology, no matter how far you move beyond war and disease and even accidental death, no matter how long you are able to extend the human life, there must still eventually be an end to that life.

For most of you, the idea of this inevitable death causes suffering. Does your Eden include eternal life? Might you not grow weary of this earth or this body and long for change? Would your Eden include the miracle of being able to move into a fresh new body, to return with your loved ones to a new learning situation. But my dear ones, that is exactly what you have been given.

Does this opportunity to leave the body and continue on your path need to cause pain? Does it need to cause suffering?

When you struggle with what arises in your life, there is suffering. You want to control it and cannot. You feel helpless and angry. Here is a major source of your suffering. Can you imagine growing old peacefully, knowing that the time for an ending of this physical existence approaches, and not needing to struggle with that fact?

Take this to the other areas of your life. Can you imagine being at peace even with the knowledge that there is not perfect agreement between you and another being? Can you accept that there will be differences as long as there is self awareness and free will? Your neighbor wants to plant a row of lilacs between your properties as she has a great love for this shrub. You want to plant evergreens. Need this lead to anger and then to suffering?

We've spoken at length about the process of movement from self-awareness to fear, fear to separation, separation to the need to protect and the arising of emotions such as anger and greed. Can an Eden include such emotions? With the physical body on this earth plane there is an emotional body. As long as you are human there will be emotions, no matter how evolved you become.

I have said this so many times. IT IS NOT THE EMOTION THAT IS THE PROBLEM, NOT THE EMOTION THAT CAUSES SUFFERING, BUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO IT! Can you see that there can be an Eden and still be feelings of anger or greed if you can relate with love and openness to those feelings, not reacting to them, not needing to act upon them, but observing them and responding with compassion to the self and to other selves.

What is Eden on earth? It is not a place where there is never anything unpleasant or discomforting but a place where all is recognized to be just as it needs to be.

Let us say that all beings have learned such trust, have let go of the need to struggle. No one is suffering. How do you learn these lessons of love, compassion and faith? The same way you learn them now, but without the added pain of distortion through the need to move to a deeper place of separation. The faster you can notice separation and respond skillfully, the more your energy flow is harmonious with the flow of universal energy. Then you are learning through love and awareness, not through pain.

So let us redefine Eden. There is nothing given that cannot be gratefully accepted as a source of teaching, as a gift. Thus, there is no suffering, but only a joyful embrace of each moment of learning. This is already given; the difference, again, is in your reaction to what you receive. Your resistance to the experiences of anger, fear, and greed create the distortions that lead to increasingly painful learning for all. Without fear that leads to greed would there be any starvation? Without separation that leads to hatred, could there be murder?

This is your Eden, an earth where each being has developed the skill and love to respond as if there is no sharp delineation between self and other. Eden is not perfection but a state of mind where everything is KNOWN to be as it needs to be, where there is trust and love.

In that state of mind there will not be famine because when drought or some other natural condition allows less food in an area, others throughout the world will respond with their plenty. There will not be war. There will be increasingly less disease as your technology advances to combat diseases, all the while respecting that even the virus or bacteria has a place in the scheme of your world.

The next question is "How will you learn?" You do NOT need pain to teach you, only awareness. When you see separation arising that will lead to fear and perhaps to anger and greed, when you are able to be aware of the first arising of that sense of separation, then instead of fearing your neighbor's lilacs, building up a rage at your

neighbor so you plant a thick wall of evergreens that will shadow and kill his lilacs and shadow and kill any hope of harmony between you, you will notice the separation and you will COMMUNICATE. You will do so with love and respect, each HEARING the other, each feeling the other's needs and preferences as clearly as your own. Then together you will plant your yards in such a way as to bring both physical pleasure and increasing respect and love into both your hearts.

You ask "What if we can't agree? What if he's so rigid that he won't hear of my evergreens even while I listen openly to his lilacs? Do I always have to give?"

We are speaking of group karma here, and group learning. You can only learn for yourself. If you have truly learned, then while you may feel sadness at the lack of your evergreens, you will not hate nor despise him but will forgive him and accept that he is not yet as ready to open his heart. You will wish him well on his journey, help him to open his heart as you help him plant his lilacs, and plant your evergreens elsewhere in your yard. Were they really that important to be planted right there?

How can you help another being learn to listen, to open, to love, when you meet them with resentment or fear? You have a choice about how to respond to this neighbor. What lessons do you offer in your response. Love can never grow from hatred.

Each being that accepts love and compassion as its responsibility, that takes the care to be aware when separation arises, that responds to every provocation as lovingly as it can, is teaching love. More and more of you do this. Slowly, the behavior patterns that are considered acceptable change. Yes there is still torture in this world, but there are groups like your Amnesty International that work against this, work to bring such inhumane treatment to the attention of the world. One thousand years ago, such treatment was taken for granted and no cry was raised about it. This is but one example. You are all evolving. You are learning slowly, but you are learning.

So when does Eden arrive? It is already here. You just have not noticed it because you have been too intent on "self" to pause and look around. When a sufficient percentage of you learn enough, become responsible and loving enough, learn to master your own minds and emotions, then Eden will be apparent. Like all else on the earth plane, it is a process and not an event. Open your hearts to the possibility of that Eden's emergence as you each learn the lessons of love.

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## Climbing With an Open Heart

**Aaron:** The question has been asked, how do you choose between staying in an old path that has many opportunities for learning, but is very painful, and moving into a new path? When is continuation fear rather than harmonious movement? Do you struggle with what is or find a more harmonious path? This is an area where there's a lot of confusion. I can only offer guidelines, and not hard and fast rules. First of all, no matter what choice, at times there's going to be pain and at times there's going to be joy on that path.

It is as if you've walked through a woods and emerged in a clearing where there is a sign that says "Spiritual growth, maturity and peace, that way." Ahead are six or seven different paths. Where do you go from here? You start down one of them, chosen because it had attractive flowers growing. After a while, the ascents and descents become steeper. The rocks are sharp and frequent. Some of the ascents require real climbing. Your fingers start to bleed. Finally, you say "I've had enough of this path. It's too hard," and you return to the clearing.

Now there are six more paths. Here's one with beautiful, leafy branches overhead. You start down, and, oops, here's a river. "How do I get across?" You find a raft and start poling. But the current is fierce, and you're afraid. You pole your way back to the shore. Walk back to the clearing.

Let's try a third path. You may think, "The prettiest paths didn't work out; I'll try the ugliest one this time. Here's one that looks brown and muddy." A mile further on, it still looks brown and muddy. Another mile, still brown and muddy, flat, messy, ugly. You are getting bored with this one. It's passable, but it's not very interesting. You return to the clearing.

You look around. "I avoided this one because it starts off with a steep hill; maybe I'll try it." After you climb the hill, there's a spectacular view on top! And a cliff. A sheer descent straight down. There's a rope ladder. "No!" Back to the clearing. Is there any one path that will take you through without formidable obstacles, with continued interest and beauty? If it's there, I've never found it.

Let us say you've explored all these paths, and you're back in the clearing. What are your options? You could forge a new way through the woods, steering clear of any path at all. Perhaps you can skirt around the mountain and around the mud, or find a shallower place to cross the river. Or you could just pick a path and follow it. What about that steep descent? Can you climb down that ladder? How about the river? Surely, if there's a raft there, there must be some way to get across. Can you do it?

How much is fear dictating your choice to seek a new path? What is the fear? How aware can you be each time fear arises? How clearly can you assess your own skills? You don't need to climb down a sheer drop on a rope ladder when you know you are incapable of that, and that half way down you're going to fall and get hurt. If it's too hard, you don't have to do it that way. That's why there are so many different paths.

Let us come back to real life experience. Perhaps you're in a job or relationship that's painful. What are you learning? Is there a point where you've worn all the skin off your

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fingers trying to climb? Your hands are bleeding, you are truly in pain, and you say "I can't live with this pain any more. There must be a clearer way through." Where are you at that point? Do you hate the pain? Do you hate the catalyst for the pain? Is there much self-anger? Then fear is at the root of seeking that easier way.

Or, does the "that's enough" come from a place of self respect and respect for the other as well? Such respect allows an acknowledgment "If I'm in this much pain, this being who is the catalyst for it is also in great pain. We're heaping hatred and anger on each other, and it's reached a point where we need not live with it any more." This heart doesn't feel the separation of "this being or situation against me." The open heart says "I can be more gentle to all beings, including myself." Can you see that the same choice to move away is then made with love, not with fear?

What if there is fear? Can you acknowledge that and greet it with mercy and not disdain? Can you extend love to this being who is afraid?

Of course there is the other possibility, that it is painful, but along with the pain, you're aware of a sense of joy because there's so much growth happening. Then it seems clear that you might continue.

Again, I come back to rock climbing. I don't know how many of you have done this. When one scales a steep cliff, there is often a point where all of the limbs begin to tremble, where you literally feel "I cannot move another inch. I've got to get myself from this handhold over to there. I can't do it!" Panic may arise, "I'm going to fall!" Or simply discouragement, "There's no further way up. It's beyond my skills."

At that point, you may simply stop and rest a few minutes, allowing that this mind/body has been pushed as far as it can go at that moment, and touching it with mercy.

Suddenly, in that stillness, a whole new direction may appear. "There's a handhold I hadn't seen; I do feel a bit more energy; if I can get my feet set against that rock and push up, then I can get to that handhold, and there's a little ledge on which to rest up there." Five minutes later you are perched on the edge of a narrow resting space, looking out over a vast valley, feeling exhilarated with the grand view and clear air. You have the sense that you've done something that was just a little beyond your prior limits, and feel a deep sense of joy. Maybe I should take all of you on a rock climbing expedition.

Your daily life situations are the same thing exactly. You reach a point where you say "I can't do this any more." If there's only grief, fatigue, and a sense "I've got to do it because I should, to prove something to myself or somebody else. I hate what I'm doing," then nothing is being learned. Then you're totally out of the flow of harmony with the universe. The wise thing is to step back, back to a place of self acceptance and kindness, and at that point, to ask yourself "What was it that made me push myself into so much unkindness to myself?"

On the other hand, if you stop, take a deep breath and look closely at your situation, look closely at the places where you're being unkind to yourself, and ask "Can I keep going?" but do it with kindness rather than contempt, you may find, just as that climber did, that there are new openings that you never had considered. Suddenly you may find yourself with that exhilarating success of having worked through a serious obstacle

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in your relationship with your work, with a loved one, or whatever it was that challenged you.

It is a process. You must constantly be aware of where you are in the process. Where are you approaching it from a closed heart place of "I should, I must," driving yourself like a slave driver with a whip, and simply increasing the hatred, friction and pain? Where is there a sense of "I see that growth is possible. I aspire to that growth. There's still love with this relationship, there's still joy with this work that I'm doing, and so I will gently ask myself to stay with it."

You do this not from a place of force, but from a place of love. You notice when love is no longer there, and stop and take a break. If love doesn't return, then it's time to climb back down. But the constancy with which love returns to the open heart may surprise you.

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## Compassion, Non-separation and Responsibility

**Question:** Some people say we should not intervene with other's lives. What we perceive as their pain should not manipulate events or people across the world. If they live with war, that's their karma. If this is so, what about compassion? What is our role? What should we do about war or famine across the world, if anything? Are we responsible for resolving it?

**Aaron:** There are two different issues here, the nurturing of compassion, and responsibility with non-attachment. Let us take them one at a time. You have said "What we perceive as their pain should not manipulate events or people across the world." My friend, there is NO "my pain" or "your pain." Your lives are totally interwoven with each other. Look at a room in which someone smokes. Others must inhale this second hand smoke. Do you think second hand pain is any less potent?

Across the world are people living with war, famine, pestilence. You sit safe in your own corner of the world and wonder, if it's their karma that's led to this pain, why do you need to get involved. This is their suffering, not mine, you may think. There are a number of related issues to explore as we answer this question. Let us look at one at a time.

First, "their pain." What leads us to this illusory space of separation? I am NOT condemning you for that thought. Thoughts are neither bad nor good; they simply are. But it would seem useful to explore how this thought grows, because the sense of separation does dictate your choices.

Separation grows out of fear, fear that you may be hurt, or that your needs won't be met. You must first understand that there is nothing "bad" about such fear. It arises because of conditions, among those being the perceived threat and a sense of solidified self. The threat may be real. Perhaps someone does wish to harm you or to take something from you. Seeing this, fear arises. The fear is uncomfortable. It leads you to want to retaliate against the catalyst for the fear. You move into anger, into grasping. When there are such mind states present, it feels like "me" against "them." Yes, of course you feel separation.

When you bring awareness to the way that sense of separation arises, you begin to find more space. You notice there is a point of decision when the heart closes and the illusion of separation becomes solid. You begin to notice not just the anger or grasping but the fear behind it.

Here is an important moment. When you see that fear and before the movement to anger, if you are very aware you may notice the heart closing, the armor pulled across to shield you from pain. To notice takes courage and a willingness to move away from the seeming safety of past patterns. At that moment, if you can allow even a small bit of loving acceptance for yourself, for this being who feels fear, into your heart, if you can notice any judgment of "I shouldn't feel afraid," or "I shouldn't feel anger," then you open a wonderful door.

As you allow in a bit of compassion for yourself and acceptance for this being in pain, you allow the possibility of compassion for the catalyst to that pain, be it an individual



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or a situation. You begin the formation of a new pattern where the arising of fear does not need to lead to anger or grasping but can be a reminder for compassion.

When the heart stays open, even if only a crack, there is no need to flee into the illusion of separation. To allow your connection with all that is means to remove the armor so carefully girded on for protection and allow yourself to be vulnerable. From a place of connection the heart is open, the undefended softness of the heart reaching out to the world.

Of course you may not be able to maintain that state. If fear gets stronger, at some point the heart may close, the shield be drawn back into place. Can you accept even that movement with compassion for yourself? When you do so, you leave space for the heart to reopen. You see separation as illusion needed for protection even as you move into it. Then we're back again to fear as a reminder for compassion.

Coming back to your question, when you are clear of this illusion of separation you know there is no such thing as "their pain." You see that label for what it is, the heart's desire to protect itself against pain that seems likely to overwhelm.

Something wonderful may happen here. As you see the whole movement with clarity and come back to non-separation, as the heart opens, you find a new space you never knew was there. Within this heart we all share, the infinite heart of mercy, is space for all pain. When you open your own heart, you open to the flow of that limitless space and energy. You may still have an occasional fear of being overwhelmed, but deep inside you develop the trust that it will not happen.

Your willingness to allow yourself to be vulnerable makes you far more invulnerable than all the shielding in the world. Can you see that? You can pile on one layer of armor after another and pain will still creep through and threaten to overwhelm.

Look at the sores developing under the armor. How can there be healing? When you allow the pain to move through, when you acknowledge that pain is inescapable and you need not hide from it, that acceptance finally allows true compassion to emerge. Not "my pain" or "your pain" but the pain we all share, the pain of the universe and all that dwells therein.

When you open to that, you also open to the light, the joy and beauty of the universe and all within it. They come together, pain and joy. You cannot close your heart to pain and remain open to joy.

Let's go on to karma. There are those who believe that people move into the situations that they've created for themselves, in this or a past life, and of course there is some truth to that concept. Carried to an extreme example, there are those in some cultures and religions who, if a child should fall off a boat into the sea, will not reach out to save that child, but say it is that child's karma to drown. This is a TOTAL misunderstanding.

Perhaps it is that child's karma to fall into the sea, and your karma to be present and able to reach out and save him. You can NEVER allow another being to suffer without doing all that you can to alleviate that suffering. If you see another being suffering, and turn your back on that, that IS your responsibility. Always. And, yet, it must be done without attachment. This is subtle, and it's hard.

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Some of you work with people who are physically or emotionally impaired, who have serious problems of one sort or another. You have learned that no matter how hard you try, sometimes you can't help that person to make a change in their physical or mental condition. Does that mean that your effort is meaningless? Of course not. The meaning is beyond the physical plane.

I see all of you as light. Just that: light. Some of you give out a very brilliant light, and some of you have quieter light. You are all evolving toward perfect purity of light. Each act of helping another being, each act of love, of forgiveness, of compassion enhances your own light, and adds to the light of the universe. Part of that light is felt as energy, a positive or a negative energy that can be felt and experienced by all beings.

Each of you have felt this at some time, when you've been with somebody that was very negative and you really FELT that negativity. It made you draw back. When you've been with somebody that's very loving, you relax into that love. You feel yourself embraced by it. It's a very wonderful feeling. So perhaps you're not physically able to help a person, and yet, the love that comes from you in the sense of caring does add light to that person, to that person's experience, and to the whole universe.

It is not always given to you to see the direct results of your actions. Remember, among other lessons, you are here to learn faith. Can you serve, and trust that as you allow yourself to be a channel for love, this love does touch where it is needed?

You may be working with a person who's suffering terribly, and you cannot alleviate that physical or mental suffering. If you become attached to doing that, saying "I MUST make them better," you create more suffering. Not only more suffering, but do you see the ego in that "I must ..."? Yes, perhaps as a physician or mental health counselor, you have the ability to direct them into healing, or physically with your hands to aid that healing. But ultimately, you cannot learn for another person.

Some of you have seen a person with a disease that is cured develop some other related illness, if there has been no emotional learning, no spiritual learning about that disease. The mind and body are related, and can't be separated. So you learn to work with non-attachment.

This does not mean less caring and compassion, but a full acceptance that you cannot do it FOR another person. You bring your skills to bear but they must allow the healing to enter. You still must do the best that you can do, just because that's what you must do. Otherwise, you can't live with yourself. This is what you must do. The results are less important than the love that is given. And, often, that love that is given is enough to lead them to the healing they seek.

Now, let's take that to a world situation. A war. This is both individual and a group karma. There are beings who have chosen to incarnate into a potentially violent society because they have something to learn there. At some time in your many lives, all of you have lived amidst such violence. Several of you are saying "What about those from this society who are sent to a violent society?" At some level they have agreed to that, they also have something to learn by being part of that situation. Indeed, your whole world is now a potentially violent society, but in some places the flammable material has been ignited, in others the flint has not yet touched off the conflagration. Perhaps it need not.

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Those of you who are not an immediate part of that situation must learn to approach it in the same way as that being working with one who is very ill. War is an illness. Perhaps you can help to heal the illness, and perhaps not. But you cannot turn your back on it. In what ways can you help? In what ways can more love be given? In what ways can you add to understanding in the world?

Perhaps the best way that you can help is to find peace in your own heart. There can be no peace in the world while each of you is individually at war. So that is where we start. That doesn't mean that one must just sit and meditate or pray and ignore the rest of the world. There's a balance to be found. You do have 24 hours in a day; that's enough time to go inward and to move outward. The balance will change for each of you from day to day.

Work simultaneously on many levels. Work on yourself to soften the shielding, open the doors of compassion, create that inner peace. Work politically or through social channels, or whatever ways feel appropriate to you, to touch the world. There is no separation. The world is within you and you within the world.

Working with the homeless in your own city may not seem immediately to relate to the situation in the middle east. But think how war comes about in the first place; what are the real issues in a war? You don't need to go half way around the world to find people who are starving or have a great need. This giving does spread out. Very often, those who receive have need of that in order to learn how to give of themselves. So your giving may multiply, moving in many directions. You have no idea where it will end up.

Let me return to this war situation. I have said very strongly that it is unskillful to turn your backs on any being that is suffering, saying "It's their karma, they created the situation." To turn your back and say "Well, I didn't create war for myself, and I won't be involved in it" is no different.

You are not your brother's keeper, you are your brother. Pain felt in any part of the world is felt in your own heart, and you can't escape that. Yes, you can escape it by hiding your head in sand like an ostrich, but eventually you have to face the reality that there is no "my pain" or "your pain," just pain.

You must practice to learn to respond lovingly to that pain, both here, and on the other side of the world. But with non-attachment, accepting that personally you could not keep this young man who has had his legs blown off from that horror, accepting that it is an opportunity for him to learn something. But at the same time, knowing that if you COULD have prevented that from happening, then it would be necessary for you to do so. Because, like that child that almost drowned, perhaps YOU were the one that was meant to reach out and aid him. Perhaps you still are.

As you do the inner work that enables you to move beyond separation you will begin to notice that skillful action does NOT arise from a space of "What SHOULD I do?" but from an open heart prompted by deep inner wisdom and free of fear. The heart knows how to act. When there is no distortion of self to create confusion, the heart acts without measurement. Choice grows from a place of clarity and love. When fear arises, you may greet it without judgment, invite it into the heart and explore it. In this way, will find increasing capacity for skillful, compassionate and wise action.

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## Leaving the Incarnation

I am Aaron. What happens when you leave the incarnation? First, I want to give you a definition of death, as I see it. The essence of what you are can never cease to exist. The personality self, the ego self and the physical body, of course, will cease; but the light/energy essence of what you are simply expresses itself on a different plane. A certain level of consciousness continues, but the identification as the past ego self dissolves—sometimes partially, sometimes thoroughly.

Humans see death as a dark tunnel. They see an abrupt doorway and experience the fear of the unknown because they do not know what lies beyond. If death were not safe, if you were utterly annihilated by death, if you could not move through it as part of the ongoing process of your being, none of you would be here. If death ensnared, trapped you, destroyed you, none of you would be here. Death precedes and follows life. It's a process, a continuing.

Within each incarnation, you have certain confusion that you seek to resolve, certain experiences that have shaped your path. This shaping has grown karmically from past lives. Some of you have complained about the system, said, "As we get older and start to figure it out, to feel more stable in our lives, then we get old and die." My dear ones, you are not here to figure it out, just to live it. If you got it all figured out so there was no more learning to be had, why should you be here? Yes, because it's enjoyable, because there are flowers and butterflies and children's laughter, but I assure you that those are present on the non-material planes as well. You are here to embrace life, to live it with love and, above all, you are here to learn.

Life is change. Death is part of that change. Do you want to be stagnant in a changing universe? This is not to suggest that you choose to leave before it's time, although some do make that choice and we will speak to it in a short while. Death is not to be feared, but neither is life to be feared. Embrace it and live!

But then, eventually, you come to that inevitable time when you are ready to part from the body. What you understand before death has profound implication for the way you move through the death experience. "What is that experience?" I am asked. "Is there a heaven? Is there a hell?" One questioner who has had a near death experience says she knows there is light and spirit guides who come to meet you. Is that heaven? No, it is just light and loving energy. Why give it a name so laden with concept as "heaven"? Heaven is not a place but a mind state.

Is there a hell? Not as a place in space. Hell is being so blinded by your fear that you cannot see the light, nor feel the presence of your guides. If you cultivate an open heart in your life that greets the unknown, greets change, with a spaciousness—not prohibiting fear that arises, but inviting that fear itself into the spaciousness—then you will be able to move through the process of death in the same way.

Your life is a series of thousands of little deaths, little losses, little places of darkness that you must enter on faith, places of subtle or profound fear. All of your life you are practicing how to enter that which is just beyond the limits of your prior experience. Do you think you could experience in the entry to death any mind states that you could not allow yourself to experience in life? Some of you enter any new place with force, as

if, when jumping from a high diving board, you hold your nose and push yourself: "I must leap!" No joy in that leap into the unknown with a sense of dread. If you are angry and afraid in life, do you think you will not reflect those mind states as you die? Some of you have learned to greet the unknown as a growth experience, something to open you still further, something to challenge you to be more than you thought you could be. If you have nurtured the spacious heart and the mind of unknowingness, that heart/mind will cross into death with you. So, your first experience as you cross that threshold will depend, very precisely, on how you have lived your life.

If you have nurtured awareness, you will die with awareness. The light is there. The angels are there. Could you see them in incarnation? If so, why certainly you will see them as you move across into the discarnate state. Did your fear serve as blinder for knowing spirit while in incarnation? Then it is still going to do so.

The spirit will always be surrounded by loving energy and by light. It may or may not recognize that light, or may even find it intolerable if all its life it has preferred darkness. The plane we speak of has no linear time. Therefore, we can't say it takes thirty days or thirty weeks or thirty years or thirty-thousand years. It will take as long as it takes. If your heart is shut, how long does it take to open it? If you're surrounded by loving energy, how long? It will take as long as it takes.

Those of you who are present tonight, and all those who have dedicated their energy to doing inner work, purifying their energy, living their lives as lovingly and skillfully as they can, those who have made real effort to move skillfully with their fear and be open to the light of the universe, such beings will feel this light immediately on the next plane. Those who have lived unconsciously but with lovingkindness, you will also see the light but awareness of it will take a bit longer.

Others will create their own dimness, darkness or hell, carrying their isolation and fear with them. Here is a difference, though. While those who cling to the past, to the ego self, cling to the old methods of safety they've devised by walling themselves in, while they may not experience the light, the veil of forgetting of the incarnative state is gone. There is nothing to prevent them from knowing that light except their own fear, and they are surrounded by so much love, such deep caring energy that it's very difficult to maintain that fear for, in your linear time terms, a long time.

Upon awakening from that darkness, a very real grace is that, even if it were in actuality many centuries of your time, it would seem but an instant. One is aware of it as an extended darkness as it passes, but the instant one wakes up even just a small bit to the presence of light and of love, the pain is washed away. Separate "self" is so clearly seen as illusion. It's like a nightmare: in the light of the sunny and clear morning, the dream doesn't grip you anymore. You see clearly, "The darkness was a dream and here I am in the light."

The first stage of death is this opening into light and truth—not fully opening perhaps, but shattering the illusion of the ego self and opening one's energy to the brilliance of the universe. However long it has taken, it will take.

After this opening stage, the being will begin to review the life past. It no longer identifies with the ego, with the old self in terms of holding to that, but it still has a clear memory of having been that, of what the incarnative hopes and fears were. With its

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own guides and loving teachers, it looks at what one might call a blueprint that it had created before the incarnation, a blueprint based on intention and karma: "What was I hoping to learn in this lifetime? In what ways did I hope to grow and to serve myself and others?" Then it overlays on that intended path what it actually did.

It sees where, perhaps, it had intention to learn deeply about desire and generosity. It had really learned not to be afraid that its physical needs wouldn't be met, so there was learning about material sharing and letting go but it was impatient or angry often. There was not the spaciousness which would allow for trust and emotional sharing.

Thus, it begins to see what was learned, what was not learned, to understand the karmic directions it created for itself and how the impulse of that continuing energy creates the map for the next incarnation. For some beings, this whole process is very fast, may happen in what would be a matter of your days. For others, it is years before they are even ready to begin the process. Please remember this longer time is not of concern; there is no rush.

After looking at this blueprint and understanding how the life unfolded, one begins the process of letting go of that life. At first one sees oneself still clothed in the body and the usual clothing styles of that lifetime. One sees one's guides in similar bodies and similar styles of clothing. But, of course, these beings are just energy, just light, as you are. Usually, one maintains the image of self longer than one maintains attachment to seeing one's guides and peers as human. In other words, there is a guide that had come clothed in familiar face and body; as you become familiar with its energy field, you cease to need the outer mask and, suddenly, you realize that your beloved friend or teacher is truly this swirling energy of light. And then, ahhhh, you look at yourself and say, "It's time to take off the costume. I am also light." This is a moment of great freedom, letting go of the self!

What happens next depends on the individual. Some beings may race into a new incarnation very quickly. Those who have died sudden, traumatic deaths at a young age are more apt to move into an incarnation quickly. Some may choose to spend a considerable period on the astral plane. There are—I can only use the analogy of universities. Please remember it is a metaphor. Each of you has special areas of focus, special areas of interest. Some of you have been musicians in many lifetimes or dancers, scientists, healers. You're not stuck in that work; you can be many different things. But there is that which you most deeply want to learn and will carry some understanding of into the new incarnation. And so, that energy, that light which you have come to understand yourself to be, energy expressed as light and consciousness, moves into a learning/serving phase—never just one or the other. You may stay there as long as you need to. In ways I will not detail in this talk, your energy and karma eventually lead you back into new incarnation. You always have free will. You are not pushed into incarnation, but move into it as you are ready for it.

Some beings choose to stay on the light plane for what, in your linear time, would seem a very long time. Fear or love may be joined as the impetus for that stay. When I say fear, some beings are aware of what they need to learn on the incarnative plane and that it is going to be very hard to maintain the clarity to learn it. They've karmically boxed themselves into a hole and they must be responsible for that and for the moving out of it. They will always be given all the help they need.

No one ever moves into an incarnation in which the learning they hope to do is impossible, but, clearly, if, for example, one has been a murderer in many lifetimes, has beaten and abused others, one is going to have to move into a lifetime that helps them understand what it means to be compassionate and live in non-harm. It does not mean directly that they must move into a lifetime where they will be abused in turn. This is a false understanding of karma. Rather, the patterns of self-absorption, self-centeredness, which caused them so seriously to misuse others out of fear ... these patterns must be addressed. On the astral plane, those patterns are understood, but then one must come into the incarnation. This is like the difference between learning to swim from a book and jumping in the water. You read how to do the strokes and, eventually, you've got to get wet. It is a very different experience within the water than it was sitting on the shore, dry with book in hand. So, you will understand the confusion on the astral plane, but you have set up such a habitual pattern that, when you move into incarnation, it's very possible you're going to move back into that same pattern. You choose the incarnation which seems most to address itself to awareness of the pattern, thereby allowing you to change the pattern.

There is not a conscious decision, "I'm going to change this pattern," which carries through into the incarnative state. Rather, because the energy has habitually patterned itself in certain ways, it will simply repeat that pattern. In order to change the pattern of harming others, one must first learn deeply on the physical plane the lessons of interconnection and the insubstantiality of separate self. So one does not just say, "This time I will be kind." Although on the astral plane one knows the truth of interbeing, one must still come to that truth as human.

One of the characteristics of karma is that it is habitual. For simple example, if somebody spits at you and you move into a rage and spit back, and do it again and again, your energy has set up a certain pattern that when you are pushed you contract and push back. You move into a new incarnation. You may be treated lovingly, you may be treated cruelly. In either case, that self-centeredness and fear, "I will be hurt," which caused the pushing back will still maintain itself, leading you to begin to look at the question, "What is this self that I've assumed to be so solid?" Sometimes, the individual seems to need to be hurt quite badly before it is finally willing to let go of that solid and separate self and begin to investigate the myth of it.

So, you stay discarnate, no longer identifying with the incarnation, fully letting go of it, learning and serving in various ways. You begin to know the "self" as mere tool, as illusion, and yet there is still a guiding awareness which is maintained. You are surrounded by loving energy. The guidance you need is always at hand.

When I say that you dwell in the light, please understand that there are degrees of light. You dwell in that light which is comfortable and tolerable for you. The frequency vibration of the light body is most comfortable in a certain light or vibration and seeks out that vibration. As the vibrational frequency rises through learning on the astral plane, you seek out higher vibration. It's all light, differing degrees of light. No one feels better than another because they have a higher vibrational frequency. There is profound respect for the work that each being is doing at whatever level.

Can one continue to live in darkness? Not after the first steps out of that darkness and the looking at the blueprint of the life just past. For some beings these first steps may be

very long though. Can you choose to reincarnate without having passed through this stage of shedding the darkness? Yes, you can.

In answer to some specific questions, how long is the being newly moved to the astral plane available to you? There is no one answer. It lets go of its identity with the past incarnation, but it may choose to remain connected to you, may become a guide to you. It has free choice. It knows itself to be energy and light, but may make the decision not to move deeper into the light nor into incarnation, either temporarily or throughout your entire lifetime, to serve as guide to you. In that case, it will be available to you at any time.

If it does not make such a choice, it may be available to you for a short time period in your awareness, a few days, or for as long a time as years perhaps. While it is deeply in darkness, should it find itself there, it is not available to you. It first becomes available during that time after it has begun to look at the blueprint of the past life and before it lets go of the solidity of the past incarnation. It may still be subtly available once it has let go of that solidity but, otherwise, it will then move off into its own direction. This does not mean you cannot experience its energy, only that it will be less immediately available, truly of a different vibrational frequency.

I want to make it clear as I talk about this continuation of awareness that, as the being moves into this light phase of its being, there is an increasingly pure awareness which parallels the state of pure awareness, pure heart-mind of which we often speak. The identity with the old self is cut. One sees oneself as an inter-dependent energy, part of everything and not separate. There is its own stream of awareness, but personal consciousness fades except as it is maintained as useful tool. For instance, one who has been a healer, who moves into this light phase and works with certain techniques of healing, will maintain enough of a personal consciousness to retain the intention to carry those techniques back into a future incarnation as much as it is able. But it's not the same person. Person A died. It exists no longer. The incarnation is not a continuation of person A. It is a new being which retains the karmic stream and certain level of awareness of person A. Included in that karmic stream is everything: the loving and spacious and the closed and frightened choices of person A. Nothing is ever lost, including the loving deeds and speech.

**Question:** What of those who leave the incarnation by suicide?

**Aaron:** First of all, when they first begin to open to the light, however long that takes, they will experience some sadness that they let go of the opportunity for learning, not anger at the self, just a sense, "Here was a learning opportunity and I turned my back on it." But, along with that response is a certain respect for the being that was just past, an awareness, "Now I see from a bigger perspective and I see that I could have stayed there and learned. But that being did what it felt it needed to do." There is an acceptance, "I am responsible for that being's choices, that being that I was." But there's not a condemnation anymore, but a growing compassion which helps the being move off further into the light and, eventually, into a new incarnation with a sense of hope rather than fear.

Sometimes, when you hurt too much you just need to come home. Have you ever been sick far away from home? Sick with a high fever or a belly-ache? How much you probably wanted to come home. Sometimes it is the kindest thing to do, if the sickness



feels overwhelming and you feel, "I cannot move through it." Just because a being dies does not mean learning ceases. There can be profound learning on the astral plane, sometimes learning that was not possible during the incarnation because you were so blind and caught in your own misery. But, of course, there is still the loss of that opportunity—a very, very, very precious opportunity—to be human and to learn in incarnation. And that learning that occurred on the astral plane still must be carried into the incarnation. With few exceptions, only in the incarnation is karma resolved.

So, the being who has committed suicide will usually feel sadness, but, also, deep compassion, and is very likely to move into a profound learning experience. Not so sometimes with a being who was killed through the anger of another. If that being carries its anger over, the sense of rage and blame may entrap it, hold it in darkness for a long time. The suicidal being who has intended no harm to another but simply chosen that path out of fear and misunderstanding, seldom stays locked for long in darkness while the being who raged and blamed may find itself in considerable darkness. But, always, at the end there is light, learning, healing, growth and readiness to move back again, back on stage. Give it another try, here are your lines, here is your part. Draw the curtain. You're on! That is all.

**Question:** What about assisted suicide with someone who is terminally ill?

**Aaron:** I am Aaron. It's very much the same situation. Perhaps learning was possible. Perhaps if one could have tolerated that state, made more space for one's pain, a certain opening of the heart would have been possible that was not permitted. On the other hand, there is a kindness and sense of compassion toward the being, the human who found its situation intolerable. So, there may be a sadness, but, also, a letting go, a resolve to look with compassion at the being that it was and simply let go and move ahead. Does that answer your question?

**Question:** Aaron said that a soul doesn't leave a human experience one moment before or after it wants to and that includes suicide. Does it also include murder and all kinds of accidents?

**Aaron:** Yes.

**Question:** Even murder?

**Aaron:** Even murder. Some of you are going to be uncomfortable with this. When there is a murder, at some level, the one we think of as victim has agreed to participate in losing its body. Please remember that there are many planes of being. The conscious level will probably scream, "No!" You really don't know what's happening. In so many experiences you think you're doing something and what you're really doing is something very different. There is a deep soul level intention for a certain kind of learning. On a different plane, there is an intention to be safe, to be happy. Sometimes these intentions conflict. Safety means different things at different levels. On the fully relative human level, safety means not being harmed. On a deeper level, safety may mean participating in something that may seem traumatic because the spirit is always safe. "Safety," in the deepest sense, resides in learning what you need to learn, resolving the karma that in the past has led you into directions of unskillful choices and pain. Safer to learn. So which "safety" are we following, the soul's safety or the relative

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human's safety? The relative human thinks it knows what it's doing, but it's not running the show. I pause.

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# Pain

**Question:** This week I went to the funeral of a six month old baby who died suddenly. The whole family was in terrible pain, especially the grandmother. How do we deal with such pain?

**Aaron:** This is a difficult situation for you. You are asked to do two things simultaneously, to respond compassionately to the suffering of those around you and at the same time to keep your own calmness and not become involved emotionally in the pain. Yet it seems a conflict for you. If you don't become involved, if you keep a distance, then you wonder how to respond compassionately.

When someone is feeling great pain, it does them no good for you to break down and weep. I am not saying it is wrong to cry. If your tears are natural to you, that is fine. But if you go to a place which has been ravaged by war or natural disaster and all you can do is sit and cry over the pain you see around you, you cannot help.

A mixture of two vital elements is needed here. There must be awareness that makes you sensitive to others' pain. Within this awareness is compassion which allows you to deeply feel your oneness with every being and to know that your pain and theirs is the same. The second element is equanimity, a deep inner calmness and balance which comes from a knowledge that all phenomena and feelings are impermanent, that they all are these passing clouds we've talked so much about. Equanimity also grows out of a trust in each soul's wisdom to have chosen the situation it needs for its own learning and an acceptance that sometimes the learning situation will be painful.

Your lives weave a complex tapestry. Every life touches every other life. For whatever its reasons, this child has moved on. Of course this death affects family and friends. You spoke of the intensity of the grandmother's pain. Certainly I cannot say that the grandmother has chosen the grandchild's death for her own learning, and yet certainly she is learning here, something perhaps that her grandchild was willing to teach her.

In each place where your life touches another's and that person chooses, with its own free will, the decisions for its own life, you are touched by that being's choices. Your ability to accept the decisions of another is what allows you to respond with calm awareness and to give love. Here is where the elements of awareness and equanimity must work together. Where there is awareness without equanimity, you will be overwhelmed by all the pain that comes past you. Where there is calmness but little awareness, you dwell in a center of self, calm within yourself but insensitive to the world around. This is not true equanimity, but fear which walls off the pain. There is a semblance of calmness, but it grows from a closed heart, not an open one.

When you cultivate both of these qualities you can learn to respond to others compassionately and truly to serve them, not from a center of self but a center of love. You become able to accept their pain into yourself and to know that you are big enough to hold it and not to be afraid of it. Then it ceases being their pain or your own pain and becomes our pain, the shared pain of mankind, born with love by the heart we all share. To do this you must simply let the pain pass through you and

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acknowledge it without holding on to it. I am not saying this is easy, but keep it in mind as a goal.

It may help you to think of a being who serves others who are in pain, such as Mother Teresa. Such a being gives selflessly to others and does not break down and weep helplessly amidst the suffering but copes with it calmly and accepts it without approving it. You truly can absorb these qualities of acceptance and compassion into yourself by thinking about them in a being you admire and understanding them at a deeper level.

Let's return to the being sitting and weeping at others' pain, perhaps in a war zone or with a friend by their loved one's grave. You wonder, "Isn't it sensitivity that leads to the weeping?" I tell you it is not sensitivity so much as fear. The being who weeps at seeing death and brutality is aware and sensitive, but eventually stops weeping and works to alleviate the suffering. The being who keeps weeping is not responding to others' pain but to his own suffering which grows out of his own fear of finding himself in a similar situation. This is what I mean when I say it comes from a center of self.

You must be honest with yourself here. Are you weeping for another or yourself? When the distinction between self and other is dissolved, there is no longer your pain and my pain but our pain, and together we are strong enough to bear it. When you personalize it and claim it as your own, then your fear grows. It becomes impossible to respond with love when your life is ruled by fear.

Each being who works with others who are suffering must confront this fear in himself. Unless you acknowledge it, you cannot move beyond it. There is nothing to criticize or blame here, just feeling, your own very real feeling of "What if that were me?" Let the fear in and look at it, without judgment. Then you will be able to transcend the pain and in doing so, your own strength and calm will lend peace to others and allow them also to move beyond it. What you are asked to do here is to allow love to replace the fear, so that you are freed of the negativity and your own natural compassion may take hold.

The more you are able to send love to pain, the less hold it will have over your lives and the more your own compassion will serve as a guide and inspiration to others. Love is a very potent tool. I urge you to try it.

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# Violence

**Question:** Will you talk about the violence in the world today?

**Aaron:** There are so many things that seem to cause violence. Let us take each issue and trace it further and further back and see the causes behind the causes. We eventually get back to the misunderstanding that there is a separate self. A being immersed in this misunderstanding becomes involved in service to self rather than service to others, and sees them as mutually incompatible. The self, experienced as needing, demands that which it believes it seeks for its own satisfaction. This may be a craving for personal satisfaction which leads to an act such as stealing from another, or a craving for ideological satisfaction where a being may commit violence against another in the name of a belief. In either case, the action grows from the notion of a separate self which can be satisfied by disrupting the being of another.

Is this being satisfied? In truth, no! There is always a continuation of the wanting, on either the personal or ideological level. Again, let us trace back the source of this sense of wanting. It grows out of a feeling of incompleteness, of lack of wholeness. Indeed, the being that sees itself as separate can never find wholeness, for your wholeness grows out of your understanding of oneness. In separation from others there is also separation from yourself. The acute pain of this separation leads to an attempt to fill in the emptiness, not by reaching out to others with love, but only by taking.

At some point all beings are asked to make a choice between service to self and service to others. For some time, both choices are possible as God is within both self and others. Service to self can be service to God. At a certain point in the human journey, the vehicle of service to self is no longer viable, but the being involved does not understand this. The more a being pursues this service to self, the more deeply enmeshed in this misunderstanding he becomes. I believe that this choice of service to self is what has led beings like Hitler to continue in violence to others with a strong belief in the righteousness of their acts.

Service to self is service to God until it infringes upon another being. It is at this time that the misunderstanding begins and that misunderstanding grows from the further misconception of the separate self. Not knowing the oneness, the being mistakenly believes he can enhance himself through damaging another. The problem for you in the physical plane is that so many beings are enmeshed in this misapprehension of separateness and they have no idea how to get beyond it or even that there is a beyond.

As with all issues, the only work that you can do is on yourself. When you see beyond your own separateness then personal violence is no longer possible, but you cannot dictate this to another without doing violence to him. Many have been killed in the name of such righteousness. Your only option is to use your own life as a demonstration to others that there is no separateness and that violence is not necessary. This is certainly one of those cases where actions speak louder than words. You are all teachers and have a wonderful way to demonstrate through your own lives that violence is not a necessity.

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There are so many secondary sources of violence—prejudice, anger, hatred, pain, hunger. If you examine these, you will find they trace back to this idea of a separate self. The question then becomes not how can we get rid of violence but how can we move beyond this misconception that the self is separate and that any act which violates the essence of another can truly benefit that first self. This is the idea that must be taught.

**Question:** How can I teach this idea in the context of my current life?

You can teach this idea simply by offering that violence is not a necessary and inescapable part of our lives. Contrary to popular belief, violence is not natural to human beings but is learned behavior. Most directly, you can teach it through your own actions. Violence to another does not mean only physical aggression. Forcing your own ideas on someone is a form of violence, as are anger and even impatience. There is no being on the physical plane, no matter how pure or how careful, who does not occasionally commit violence against another.

Please understand that your anger, for example, is not bad in itself. It is simply a feeling, just energy passing through. It is your relationship with your anger that creates the problem. Acknowledge your anger to yourself without judgment. As you do so, realize that there is no need to force that anger on another. It is enough to simply acknowledge it. Be honest but compassionate with yourself as you examine the ego needs that have led you to anger. Understanding your oneness, what compromise is possible?

When your ideas or needs conflict with those of others, acknowledge the discomfort that this conflict causes in you, and compassionately relate to their ideas and needs as you continue to express your own. This open consideration creates a space for listening and communication better than does struggle. When you approach any situation as a battle, you create a battle, even if it is only a combat of ideas. Battle cannot exist unless you allow it to exist. You always are given the choice between responding with love and compassion or with hostility. Remember that a battle of ideas is also a form of violence against another human being and is truly not necessary.

Your own life can be a much better way of teaching than any words that you may choose to use. As you strive in this direction, be compassionate with yourself and your own mistakes. You are not asked to be perfect. If you had reached that level of perfection where you never made mistakes, you would not need to be learning on this physical plane. Allow your mistakes and learn from them. Simply be honest with yourself.

Remember that anything which violates the essence of another being is a form of violence toward that being. This thought is inherent in the concept of *Ahimsa*, a Sanskrit term meaning harmlessness, or more completely, "dynamic compassion." Implied in this concept are not only non-aggression, but healing.

True healing grows out of forgiveness, and even more important, love. We cannot speak of transcending violence without mention of these states of being which provide a balance to violence. Open your hearts to yourselves and all beings, and learn to love. Deep looking and understanding is the vehicle. This is the most important lesson.

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# Abortion

**Question:** Please talk about abortion. When does the soul join with the fetus? What significance does this have for abortion?

**Aaron:** Let us take these questions separately. First, when does the soul join the body? The soul may choose to join the body at any time. The decision to incarnate in that body has been made some time in advance. The actual joining may take place any time from the moments immediately after conception until those moments just before birth. Many factors govern this choice. For example, a soul which is a guide to another being may wish to use those nine months to continue its guidance before it assumes its own incarnation. On the other hand the joining may be made early, which allows the soul to be within the body and have an awareness of both planes, the spiritual and the physical, as the fetus grows. What is sometimes called the "veil of forgetting" does not occur until birth. The soul within the fetus is both aware of its true spiritual being and yet aware of the coming time of its birth and of its passage from the spiritual to the physical plane.

What does this mean in terms of abortion? Let me ask a question based on this? What is murder? Exactly what is occurring when one being kills another?

I am sure you are all aware that no being's essence can be destroyed. One may experience the inconvenience of loss of body, but the soul can not be damaged by physical force. Yet we would all agree that murder is wrong. When you violate the essence of another being you have damaged both yourself and the other being. This is obviously true in the case of murder. How can we connect that to abortion? How can something be nonharmful on one level and wrong on another?

You must first know that the soul will never willfully choose to enter a body which is going to be aborted when that soul has chosen life and a new incarnation. The soul has more wisdom than that, I assure you. The soul knows the plan for that body it has thought to enter. I can not say that a soul will never have entered a body that may be aborted, but it will not have entered such a body when it has made the decision to incarnate. Perhaps it has made such a decision in order to experience the fetal state, knowing that it will be terminated after some weeks. More likely in a body where an abortion is planned, the soul will not have entered. Is this then murder? What are you damaging? What is it that you are violating if no soul is present?

It is possible that you are violating a trust. The relationship of parent and child is never haphazard. The souls have planned this. With the help of their guides, they have chosen each other, while both were on the spiritual plane. If the person choosing the abortion had not made this choice, then a soul would have entered the body, and yet having chosen abortion, the soul has not entered the body. Clearly the action of the being thinking to incarnate into that fetus must be based on the choice of the would-be parent. So we may have here a situation where one being has agreed to be the parent of another being, and this has been planned before either being's birth. The being who had planned to be the parent becomes lost in misunderstandings on the physical plane. Fearful of its physical decision to parent, it decides to abort the fetus.

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If a spirit had intended to inhabit that fetus, what is lost is that opportunity of physical life, with those parents and at that time, as it had planned. It differs in degree, not in substance from that act you call murder, where the spirit is already inhabiting a living body and the body is lost to that spirit. In this situation the soul that has lost the opportunity to incarnate because of another soul's decision to abort that fetus, must then plan again for its incarnation. What is lost here is time. Time and the planning and love that went into the original relationship. The lose of time is not crucial. You have all the time you need for your growth. What is crucial is the violation of love and trust in these souls' relationship to each other.

Any act of violence against another being, and abortion is certainly an act of violence, is damaging both to the recipient of the violence and the one who commits it. It is far more damaging to the being who commits that violence. Let us examine this.

The being who has planned the abortion has begun a life that it can not nurture and continue. This being is dwelling in separation from itself. The mind and soul cannot agree on this choice for pregnancy. The painful lesson of the abortion grows out of the discord between mind and spirit. The body allows the conception, disregarding that whisper from the soul that says "Not now." Then the physical being must face the trauma of the abortion.

I have been asked whether this is a sin? I would prefer to call it a mistake. If you did not make mistakes, if you had grown past any need to make mistakes, you would not need to be here on this physical plane. Mistakes are your tools of learning. But it is necessary that you learn from them.

Often you make the same mistakes repeatedly. This is certainly seen with women who frequently repeat this pattern of pregnancy and abortion. The question then becomes not whether that abortion is a sin or even wrong or harmful to the fetus, but what the being who is locked into that pattern must learn. The painful decision to abort the fetus is repeated over and over until the lesson is learned.

Abortion is not the only issue here. Please look at the question of children who are born to parents who cannot support them. What is the difference between aborting a fetus and allowing a child to be born who will starve within months? You say a parent living in such poverty may not have a choice, and that this is a problem of society. But I tell you that each of you always has a choice. You must learn to be increasingly responsible for your choices. This is maturity.

A similar question is raised by that being who chooses not to terminate the pregnancy although that being knows, deep within, that it is not ready to parent. After the child is born, perhaps it is abused or seriously neglected.

I ask you to regard the being who commits any violence against other beings with compassion. Do not justify it in any way and certainly do not condone it, but try to see how the perpetrator of that violence is locked into a pattern of misunderstanding. Ask how you can help that being find freedom from misunderstanding. Work as hard as you can to eliminate the social causes for violence, and know that each being, each life is sacred. At the same time, trust each soul's wisdom to make the choices it needs for its own growth, or to give in love to aid the growth of another, even if the path to that growth involves violence and pain.



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## Earthquakes and Disasters

*(Transcribed from a channeled tape made in reply to an anguished phone call from a friend in San Francisco, October 19, 1989.)*

**Question:** Why has this happened? What are we meant to learn from it? There is so much suffering. My home is destroyed. Why? I am terrified by the instability.

**Aaron:** Greetings, Ted. I send you my love.

You have been through a terrifying experience and a painful one, and of course the pain has not yet ended.

You have seen great suffering, seen your world turned upside down in a moment. Of course you wonder why such horror is permitted. And you wonder at your own feelings of terror. Let me talk about these separately.

You know that no natural disaster is meant as punishment. We are simply contending with energy here, the forces of the universe. They are neither inherently good nor bad; they simply exist. Yet, as with anything else in our lives, we choose and use these forces to teach us.

Everything in your life is part of your learning. In an experience such as this, people have died, people are in physical pain from their injuries, people are homeless. Any person with a caring heart screams out "This isn't right," "How can this be permitted?"

Who is permitting it, Ted? Some may say, "Why does God permit it?" God has given free will to men. Always, you make the choices for your lifetime; God cannot protect you from your choices. I do not mean to sound harsh when I say that those who choose to live above an earthquake zone have made a choice, but this is quite obvious. Similarly, those who have chosen to live in a war zone have made a choice. In the wisdom of each being's soul they are always where they need to be for the next lesson they need on their journey.

Of course there are those beings who seem to have little choice, whose poverty shapes their lives and prevents their leaving. There are children, there by their parents' choice. Each of them is there for a reason; there is something for them to learn. Trust the wisdom of each soul to be where it needs to be, to experience what it needs to experience. If that experience ends in great injury or death, that is part of the lesson. I do not wish to sound cruel, but try to look at it from my perspective for a moment. You live so many lives. Each one is precious, I'm not denying that. But also each life is like the blink of an eye.

You are asked to keep both perspectives simultaneously, and this is difficult I know, especially when there is suffering. You can best help to relieve the suffering by maintaining an equanimity that accepts the experiences that come, not with rage and blame, but with a deep trust in the wisdom of each soul and its choices. Trusting that knowledge, your love and compassion allow you to work to relieve suffering in any situation while accepting that it is and will be part of human experience.

There are other lessons to be learned here. I have previously spoken about this in terms of those who died in concentration camps, who gave their lives in great love to teach

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others. Consciously they did not choose this, but at the depth of their soul's wisdom they did.

There will be more shifts in the earth and fiercer earthquakes, not just in San Francisco but all over the world. I mentioned free will before. Man lives on a planet which is unstable, where there are tornadoes and earthquakes and volcanoes. He must learn to live with this instability if he is to survive. This is one of your universal lessons.

That highway should have been designed to withstand an earthquake. If the earthquake had been a 9 rather than a 7 thousands of people would have been killed along the whole length of the highway. Can you understand the gift of these people's lives when seen in this light? Had nobody died, do you think it would have been taken as seriously? A tremendous effort will be made as rebuilding is begun to better understand the engineering that is required to prevent loss of life in the future. Do not feel sorry for those who have died, Ted. Rather, thank them with all your heart for the gift of love they have given to teach others. When they return, perhaps the world will be a safer place.

Let us talk about your own fears here. You cannot get past your attachment to wanting comfort, to wanting the continuation of your home, until you understand where your true home is. Then your present home will take a clearer perspective. I understand how painful it is for you to lose the security of this home, to have to find a new place to live. Go deeper, Ted. What do you have to learn here as you examine your attachments? Try to let go gracefully. Open your heart in trust and faith that the learning that will come from this will be good, will be a positive step on your own path. Look at the "now" rather than holding on to what is past.

I have little to add to what your heart's wisdom already tells you, other than to assure you that you do understand what is happening to you. For those such as you who understand it, this is a very deep lesson in impermanence. Highways, bridges and buildings that seemed so strong and permanent are gone in an instant. You can never count on anything to be the way it was a moment ago. All things are impermanent! It is a reminder, and a strong reminder, that we must seek ultimate reality, not apparent reality.

Open your heart to that which continues forever, not that which may be gone at the snap of a finger or the shaking of the earth. This lesson is the gift this earthquake gives to all beings. Bless it for its teachings and go on to the work of caring for those who have suffered, rather than raging against that which you cannot change. Allow its lessons into your heart with forgiveness and love.

I love you!

**Aaron**

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## Working with Depression

**Question:** Why am I depressed, Aaron? What do I do about it? If my learning doesn't have to be painful, why is it painful? I think I'm paying attention, but there's still all this pain.

**Aaron:** My dear ones, you are light. Each thing seeks its own kind: light seeks light, darkness seeks darkness, joy seeks joy, and sorrow seeks sorrow. When you're fully able to enter into the experience of yourselves as light, everything seems light around you. You know yourself to be part of that source of all love, call it God or whatever you prefer.

If you have a beautiful, flowering houseplant with lush, green leaves, and you put it in a dark closet and forget about it for several weeks, what happens to it? Open the door and pour in some water, but give it no light. Will it thrive? Each of you take yourselves off for hours or even for days at a time, and shut yourselves off into dark closets. Your fear and anger are walls that enclose you and shut off the light. Then you ask me: "Why am I depressed?" How can the light get through?

What is this darkness? Your fear is opaque. It assumes a solidity. We have talked about anger and greed as manifestations of fear, and about how hard you find it to have compassion for this dear being who is afraid. When fear arises it is followed by judgment, "I shouldn't be afraid." Then the fear is suppressed and you move into anger or greed with the same "I shouldn't ...". By this time the light is thoroughly walled out.

It is not the emotions that bring the darkness, but your reaction to them. To feel heavy emotions and have compassion for the dear being that you are, in pain, does not block light but invites it. To feel heavy emotions and dwell in those without awareness shuts out all light as effectively as if you were the plant in a closet.

Connection reconfirms light. Separation enhances darkness. When judgment against feelings arises, it separates you from yourself, and of course, from the light.

Can you begin to see the depression not as a cause, but as a symptom, so that you begin to recognize the process, "I'm depressed, I need light." Perhaps that recognition can lead you to see the walls of fear, anger, shame, jealousy, judgment or greed with which you've surrounded yourself, and ask yourself, "How can I open some windows, and allow light in here?" You CAN do that, but in order to do it, you've first got to recognize that the shades have been drawn, that the walls have gone up. For many of you, THAT is the most difficult thing to do. The judgment is so thick! The darkness becomes an illusion of a safe hideaway.

Why is it so difficult? If we are beings of light that yearn for the full experience of light, what is this attraction to darkness? In your pain, you seek that which will confirm your feelings. When anger arises in you and you judge that in yourself, saying "I'm no good, I shouldn't be feeling anger," that "I'm no good" seeks to confirm itself through experience. It actually makes you reach out and find those experiences that prove, "Yes! See? I really am no good."

As you judge your heavy emotions and deepen the anger at yourselves, the walls get thicker. There is not even a glimmer of light allowed to shine within.

We have spoken of this safe tunnel you hide in, putting up strands of protection in the doorway. They wall out all that you fear would harm you, and thus serve to defend, but they also wall out the light. For example, feeling another's judgment, you move into anger. It protects from the pain of feeling judged and from all the self judgment there has been. It also separates you from yourself and the one who judged, and blocks the light.

You can begin to dissolve these protective strands of anger, greed and so forth. You must do it with utmost gentleness, recognizing that each has been raised for a purpose of defense. You need not tear them all down and stand naked and vulnerable in the blazing sun. That action would be a brutality to yourself. Slowly you acclimate yourself to that light so it warms but does not burn.

Work gently, lifting one at a time and examining it. What is this fear? What is this jealousy? Do I still need this judgment? Might I not lift it from the doorway and leave it here beside me? I can replace it if necessary, and can see how it feels to allow that light to enter, the light of truth.

There is desire for the light. Is there also fear of it? Is there still clinging to the darkness for protection? Do I hide my soft and vulnerable heart behind anger, jealousy or greed?

What if you really are as good and beautiful as I keep telling you you are? Many of you felt a bit of fear as I said that. Can you start to see what that fear is about? You have each experienced the pain of rejection and defeat so many times. There is such yearning for that light. The thickness of the armor in which you have imprisoned the heart bespeaks the sensitivity of that heart. How badly it has been wounded to seek such heavy protection. How soft and vulnerable it is.

It becomes less painful to find the light unattainable to begin with than to reach yet again and experience defeat. It is the process of "You can't fire me; I quit." You defend yourself by wrapping yourself yet again in your fear and wearing it as a shield.

Each of your souls yearns to move fully back into that light, to reexperience that which truly is your birthright. And yet, each of you knows, with deep wisdom, that you have work to do, and that's why you're here. So you move into a misunderstanding where you see the light, and the very pain of your yearning causes you to push it away. It is the "Dark Night of the Soul." Then you create situations to prove to yourself, "I'm not good enough to be in that light"—that precious light which you so desire and without which you wither away. It is a very poignant human predicament.

Can you begin to notice depression when it arises, and see it as a symptom of your yearning to move back fully into the knowledge of connection with light, rather than as proof of your separation from light? There's such a world of difference in that, because when you see it as a symptom of your love, it immediately opens the window shade. Maybe just a crack, but enough to let sunlight come in. It reminds you of who you are.

Let us explore other factors in depression. Barbara just received a letter from a friend who said that every morning when she wakes up, she does a number of things to remind herself that she is an angel here in a human spacesuit. Depression is a symptom of the claustrophobia of that angel. One does feel hemmed in by this spacesuit at times. It feels unworkable. Nothing is as easy as it should be.

Somewhere, beyond the conscious mind, are real memories of the ease of moving in the light body, of the joy of being fully present with that light. Of course incarnation feels claustrophobic. Can it become a deeper reminder of who you are, and lead you into an appreciation of the perfectness of the journey? Even the depression, fear and anger are gifts to help you learn love.

There's one more aspect of depression I'd like to talk about. When you are seeking to confirm the heavy judgment you've laid on yourself, and move yourself into increasingly difficult and painful situations, the heaviness of your anger invites in negativity. We've talked about this many times.

There are beings of positive and negative polarization on all planes. And there are what we call mischievous spirits, not beings that are very dark, but beings, on the astral plane who are a bit bored. They're young souls, for the most part; they like to mix in. Your negativity is an invitation to them.

There are beings that are deep in misunderstanding and feed on anger and pain. Your own anger and fear truly invites them in. So that when you move into depression, it's like opening the door and saying: "Come on, all the negativity; welcome, we're having a party."

Now, I'm not suggesting that you say: "I shouldn't be feeling depressed; I'm not going to let in negativity!" because that in itself is already negative. When you're feeling depressed, somewhere you have got to open a windowshade.

Perhaps you could have a set of Groucho Marx glasses and mustache and you could go and look at yourself in the mirror. Just stand there and stare at yourself for five or ten minutes until, finally, you have to laugh. "Am I taking myself too seriously?" Anything to lighten the moment, to begin to penetrate the density of these walls that you're pulling around yourself, that separate you from the light.

You humans have very short memories. As soon as that light is cut off, it's GONE. It's so hard to remind yourself: "I really am an angel in a spacesuit, and I really am more connected to spirit than I am to this body."

Think about the ways that you can bring lightness in when you're emerged in darkness. Each of you will find different ways that will work for you. One finds it wonderful to go outside in the sunshine and take a walk, to reconnect with trees, grass and flowers. Another of you may find that outlet by listening to music, or exercising your body in rhythmic ways; dancing, doing yoga, playing ball. A third may seek loving companionship. There's no one outlet.

When you are feeling depressed please remind yourself of that pot of flowers that's been put in the closet. Ask yourself: "Wouldn't I, in compassion, bring that pot of flowers out into the sunshine? Can I not do at least that much for myself?"

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## Anger and other Heavy Emotions

**Question:** I feel peaceful while I meditate. Then, a short time later, everything seems chaotic and I find myself feeling furious or anxious or some other uncomfortable emotion. What do I do with these feelings?

**Aaron:** First you must be willing to look at what's there. Humans are so hard on themselves. You condemn feelings and fears within yourself that you would meet with compassion in another. You are human. You are not meant to be perfect, in your human form, or you would have no need to be learning on this plane. Be loving to yourself. Forgive yourself for your imperfections. Simply use them as a signpost pointing the way to what you need to learn.

Look at the constant turmoil within yourself. There is so much pain, so many ego needs that grow from your sense of imperfection. You see yourselves as flawed, and constantly try to patch the flaws. You grasp at anything going by as a possible patch, and then put patches over the patches when the first ones don't fill in all the gaps. At one stage you grasp at material things for your patches. Then, when you see that a new car or better job won't do it, you grasp at spiritual things. You think perhaps more prayer, or a new yoga posture will fill the gap. Or perhaps enlightenment is what you need. Even a little bit of enlightenment and you'd really be there; then the pain would go away.

You are driven by fears—fear that you won't get what you need, fear of trusting, fear that others will notice that you're not perfect. You cannot put patches on your fears and pain. You must allow them to heal from within. Only then will you discover that you are whole and have always been whole. In your essence you are perfect, complete and unlimited.

You take all that you find unacceptable about yourselves and hide it beneath the surface. There, suppressed, it smolders—a slowly burning fire that gives you no rest as you race in circles, trying to escape the heat. Meditation provides a firebreak, a clear space to look at what's burning.

As you quiet the turbulence in your mind, you begin to notice the fears, the resentments, the pain that have been smoldering there for so long. This is like a personal compost heap. You take all those heavy feelings that have been lying hidden for so long and turn them with the fork of concentration and mindfulness and allow air in. Slowly the "garbage," all that you have discarded beneath the surface, becomes the nutrient for growth.

So first you must allow for this process of looking at what's been hidden. This must be done with no judgment. Simply notice what's there. Accept all of yourself. Do this mindfully, not just while you sit but throughout the day. This is your first work. Stay with it. Open to yourself with love and compassion.

As your concentration deepens, you will notice what's there with greater ease. There will not be as much need to hide parts of yourself from this scrutiny. This process of looking will lead to some purification, an ability to simplify your life and rid yourself of those extra, unnecessary burdens that cause you pain. From the greater space of

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deeper concentration and a purer lifestyle, you will find some wisdom, some understanding. Your increased understanding and the letting go of some of your excess baggage will allow you to move to even deeper levels of meditation. And on it will go. It is a process. You must simply allow it to happen by having the courage to accept what you see, without condemnation or self-blame.

After awhile, noticing these heavy, uncomfortable emotions nonjudgmentally will have become a habit. Now suppose you have just finished sitting, and are feeling very peaceful. Suddenly your spouse rushes in with an overdrawn check statement from the bank. He/she is furious. "Why didn't you realize the account was low and put money in?" In the past you would have become defensive. That feeling of being flawed would have pushed you to deny your blame and point out that your spouse wrote the check. There would have been an angry encounter.

This time you approach it with a new feeling of space. You feel angry and notice the feeling. You feel guilty; it is your job to balance the checkbook. You take a deep breath and notice, "Feeling angry; feeling guilty; feeling I want to deny my responsibility; feeling I want to lash out and hurt someone."

Suddenly you understand that these emotions do not need to control you. They are not solid, just energy passing through. It is not the emotions that create a problem, but your reaction to the emotions. Instead of lashing out, you're able to handle the situation with greater maturity and responsibility. This does not mean you will not feel anger, but only that you will not react mindlessly to that anger. You have many more choices, a great space of freedom from which you can choose a skillful and compassionate response.

You may be able to point out that anger is not going to resolve the problem of the overdrawn account. Your calmness will help your spouse settle down. You find yourself able to acknowledge your responsibility for neglecting the paperwork. Calmly you are able to discuss what steps need to be taken to handle the issue. There is no more need for blame and anger. At this point you may even notice that you are no longer feeling anger.

Or suppose your spouse continues to be angry and blame you. You still have this space from which you can note the feelings—anger, ego need for approval and to be right, frustration that he/she doesn't seem to hear you. From this space you can notice the continuing anger and realize that there is no need to strike back. You understand the other being's pain and anger and can relate to it compassionately. Not condescendingly, but compassionately!

Everything that happens in your life is meant to teach you. When you have created a situation where you feel anger, you must ask yourself why you chose that situation. What are you trying to learn? Perhaps it is a situation where you truly feel you are not to blame, that you are being victimized. I must remind you that nothing happens to you without your agreement at some level. Always you have chosen the issues and relationships and situations in your life because you have something to learn from them.

Learn to accept yourselves at ever deepening levels, noticing what is there. Do this first in meditation, and extend it to your entire day. Before you can love others, you must learn to love and accept your self, your entire self, which includes those emotions that

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cause discomfort. This is a basic step on the spiritual path, learning to love and not to blame.

I am not saying that it will be easy. It takes faith and courage and honesty. But you can do it, and your lives will be increasingly harmonious. Love is the strongest force in the universe. Allow it to be a part of your life. Do not be afraid of your feelings. Accept your whole self with love, that your love may then reflect outwards and shine light upon all beings.



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## Anger and Forgiveness

**Question:** You talk a lot about forgiveness. I'd like to forgive, but I feel so much rage, I can't get past it. How do I learn to forgive?

**Aaron:** Forgiveness comes from a space within you where you have moved past your rage, so let us first talk about anger. Anger is a feeling and it is never wrong to feel, but you recognize that your anger does create pain for yourself and others. What is anger? Have you ever stopped to look closely at it? Sometimes rage feels like a solid wall that cannot ever be gotten past. Is it really as enduring as it appears?

Anger is a protection. It is your way of striking back when you've been hurt, or seen harm come to another. Within anger is fear—both the fear of being out of control, of not knowing how to change a painful situation, and the fear of acknowledging your own part in the situation because with that acknowledgment you must assume responsibility for your acts. There is also often grasping or aversion, both part of this sense of wanting things to be different than they are. It is all these ingredients that make your anger so painful.

When you only see anger, it does seem a solid wall. So much rage; what do you do with it? Can you break it into its parts, see the aversion or the fear separate from the rage? Next time you feel rage take a deep breath, dive back in and see what's really there. Fear; where is it coming from? What, exactly are you afraid of? Grasping; are you angry because another has what you want and it doesn't seem quite fair? Aversion; this relates to fear as well. What frightens you that you must push it away so strongly?

Do you begin to see that your anger is not solid but is made up of many components and all of them are workable? Don't feel you must take them all on at once. Just open up a bit and begin to be aware of what's there. You do not need to stone these emotions to death, just to allow them into your merciful awareness. Compassionately, nonjudgmentally, gently!

What is missing in anger is acceptance, on so many levels. You cannot accept the situation and you cannot accept yourself. Anger is filled with blame. There's no room in it for accepting one's own responsibility. That's too frightening. If you are responsible, then you have the ability to make changes. Are the changes more frightening than the anger-causing situation? It is like the prisoner who, being set free, heads back into his cell. There's too much space; he's not ready to handle it. Be honest with yourself and look to see if this is part of it.

Let's stop a moment here. We started with forgiveness. Can you see how impossible that is while there's still so much rage, so much fear? So you blame yourself for not being forgiving—just another place to judge yourself inadequate, something else unacceptable that enhances the fragmentation, separating you further from yourself.

So where do we begin? What is the way out of this trap of self blame and rage? The answer is love, and you must bring it first to yourself. Let yourself back in to your heart. Sit down with yourself and your fears. I ask you again, what are you afraid of? Let it in. It is not so terrible as it seems. Just notice where it's coming from. What is it that you want and can't have? What is it that's been done to you and isn't fair? What is it that you are

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afraid of doing to another, in the passion of your rage. Take all of this emotion that you've labeled unacceptable and had to bury and let it out, let the sun and air get to it.

Do you see how you get caught in the story to avoid looking closer at the emotions? "But it's his fault ..." "She started it ..." Yes, that's fine. But now what do YOU do about it? You can blame and rage forever and perhaps the other being will acknowledge his/her responsibility and perhaps not. This is irrelevant. The question is not who is to blame but where is healing to be found.

Healing can only come from within you, and you can only heal yourself and not another. Do you want to continue on in rage? Are you enjoying the suffering? It's your choice. Nothing ever happens to you without your agreement at some level. Why are you in this situation? What did you come to learn here? Are you finally ready to learn, or do you choose to go on with the blaming and the anger for awhile longer? It is always your choice.

When someone has wronged you and you feel hurt because of their unskillful acts, let your pain be a reminder to love. Allow another's anger to be an invitation to return with compassionate understanding for their pain. Look at your fear and anger and hurt and make a decision that you can move beyond it, that you can choose love, first for yourself and then for another.

Here's where forgiveness starts. First you must forgive yourself. Accept that you are not perfect. If you have made mistakes, have acted in an unskillful way, that is part of your learning. Let it teach you, not about hate and blaming but about acceptance, forgiveness and love. We are not talking here about suppressing the anger, the feelings of unfairness or hurt, but of finally acknowledging that, real as those feelings may be, they are simply causing more pain.

You must first accept the pain and love yourself enough to move beyond it. You can not transcend what you do not accept, and you can not accept what you've buried and feared to acknowledge. No! We are talking of honesty here, of opening to yourself, not of closing down.

You are all so afraid of all that you've found unacceptable in yourselves, all that you've had to bury. The fragmentation has torn you apart. You are at war with yourself. Now it is time to skillfully see through this and decide to end the war, to create peace, to allow room for love and forgiveness.

Having reached this point, sit down with yourself and, saying your own name, tell yourself, "I love you; I accept you; I forgive you; I welcome you back into my heart; I am now whole and am a being of love, a being of light. All the emotions and fears that have made me put myself out of my heart I acknowledge and accept and forgive. There is nothing that is unforgivable, if it is reached for with love."

Now reach out and repeat this with the being who has hurt you. Feel the space in that forgiveness. No matter who was to blame; that is beside the point. Feel all the space that surrounds your forgiving. There is no wrong or right here. That is not the issue. The only real issue is whether you choose anger and fear or love. That choice is always yours. But know that where there is love, there is healing, and this is what you came for.

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## Anger as a Catalyst to Compassion

**Question:** Please talk about anger. Is our anger ever useful? If not, how do we get rid of it? It seems that without righteous anger, we'd let many more social problems go unsolved.

**Aaron:** Your anger is not good or bad, it's just anger. Let's start with that. Anger does contain energy which can be transformed into skillful and loving action. But first you must understand your dislike of experiencing anger, or any heavy emotion.

You ask, "Isn't anger bad in itself? When I'm angry, I give off negative energy, and that can hurt people." That is true; when you're angry, you do give off negative energy. Are you going to stop the arising of negative energy in yourself by saying, "I'm bad to be angry"? Can you stop a river from flowing? Can you stop a cloud's movement across the sky? Think about that a moment.

You can control your reaction toward another, but can you shut off the feeling of anger in yourself, really get rid of it? Or do you merely suppress it? In terms of energy flow, if you suppress it, it's just as present, it's simply hidden beneath the surface. Yes, it would be well to transform it into positive energy, but such transformation will never happen through judgment and suppression. As long as you are getting rid of your anger, you are still controlled by that anger.

It is not helpful to attempt to eradicate all anger, greed, jealousy or pride, because, as long as you are in a human body, occasionally there's going to be a catalyst that arouses those emotions. I'm not suggesting that you simply allow anger or greed in and act upon it. Can you develop a different relationship to them? There are more than two choices. You need neither to act upon them nor to suppress them, just bring gentle awareness to them.

When someone speaks or acts in such a way that anger arises in you, can you stop and look? What is this anger? Ask, "Does it relate only to the catalyst or does it also relate to my dislike of this emotional turmoil in myself?" It is so inconvenient and uncomfortable to experience anger! In your slang, it pushes all your buttons. You fear you'll be driven to act on that emotion, and with that fear, you judge yourself as if you had already acted. Do you see that judgment?

The problem is easier to see with greed. Take a situation where you're feeling very hungry; you missed several meals that day. You walk into a room, and there's a child with an ice cream cone. There's a great sense of longing, "I want that, I'm hungry!" You know there's no danger of you reaching out and grabbing that ice cream cone from a small child. None of you is going to do that.

It's not hard for you to say "I'm feeling hunger. I'm so hungry, I feel I could reach out and grab that ice cream cone and eat it. I really want that." You don't hate yourself for that feeling. Just, "Feeling hunger, feeling greed, wanting the ice cream." And you walk on, perhaps deciding that you'll stop and get something to eat. That's the emotion of wanting transformed into skillful action.

Why is anger so different, then? You feel anger arising in you, feel that you want to lash out at somebody. Most of you are not going to lash out and hit them any more than

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you were going to reach out and take the ice cream cone. That doesn't lessen the intensity of wanting to retaliate. But there, you come to judgment, "I SHOULDN'T feel this way, I'm BAD to feel this way."

Were you BAD to want the ice cream cone? You were feeling hunger. Now you're feeling anger. Are you BAD to want to reach out and hit somebody? You don't have to act on that, and you don't have to suppress it or hate yourself for it.

You have not been conditioned to judge yourself for hunger, but anger is another story. Can you see that they are both uncomfortable feelings but your response to them is vastly different? What is this conditioned mind? How are you a slave to it? Which way is freedom?

As you notice the intensity of the angry feeling, you might begin to be able to see what lies behind it. Anger is a mask. Behind it, often, is fear. Fear that your needs won't be met leads to grasping and clinging, to jealousy and selfishness. Fear that you are going to be hurt arouses a need to protect the self. In that need to protect, anger arises with its rush of adrenaline.

Thousands of years ago, your ancestors may have felt fear, perhaps of an attacking wild animal, and a sense, "I could be hurt, or my child or friend could be hurt." With that rush of adrenaline came a rising of a spear and a desire to kill, followed by a throwing of whatever missile was at hand to kill that wild creature before it killed you. You have had much practice with that process.

Now you've evolved to a different level, but the same instincts come to bear. When fear is experienced, the body reverberates with so many situations of past danger. There is the constant question: "Could I be hurt?" When you feel threatened, fear arises and, then, often, anger.

As you come deeper into watching that process, the solidity of the emotions changes. It's no longer a solid mass that you have to fight with. Instead, it becomes just anger. When you notice it early, just noticing the first tightness in your stomach, then you have a sense, "This is anger arising in me," and you can simply be present with it, without reactivity.

Many mind states pass through you every minute. Some of them are painful, and you may react to that pain. To free yourselves from reactivity it's useful to see the arising of such mind states as part of a process.

Central to the teachings of the Buddha is a natural law called Dependent Origination. Put in simple terms, for something to arise, the conditions for its arising must be present. When conditions are no longer present, that which has arisen dissolves. Understanding the process of how things arise and dissolve isn't mere intellectualization but is vital to your lives. Even more, it's a keystone upon which you may begin to act more skillfully and to free yourselves and others from suffering.

Let's look at the process by which you move to any emotion, painful or joyful. What really happens when you feel anger, desire or even bliss? How do you move into the experience of emotion?

To experience anything, first there must be contact of sense to the sense object. Let's call this step consciousness. For example, your eyes touch on the object of sight; you're

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not separate from that object but participants with it in the act of seeing. In this way we become aware of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. You may experience a tightening in the belly that's the first physical signal of fear, or a sense of expansion of the heart that may be the physical sign of joy or bliss. You also become aware of mind touching mind object, thinking.

You may label the experience—hearing a cough, seeing an angry face, or if mind was the sense that made contact, perhaps knowing or understanding. We can call this stage perception, perceiving what the senses have contacted.

Notice that there's still no attachment or aversion. You're in neutral. Just hearing, seeing, feeling. Then comes the instant we call the active moment. At this moment of sensation you may stay in neutral or move from neutral to positive or negative, feeling aversion to the angry face perhaps, or tasting that sweet desert and liking it.

If you stay in neutral you experience equanimity. If not, you move to the mental formations such as "fear," "anger," or "craving." This movement from contact to mental formation happens in a flash so you may not see the steps. It doesn't just happen independently, but is the result of all your past conditioning.

What's the significance of coming to see this? When there's strong emotion and you can see how it arose with some clarity you have much more choice. You don't have to react to emotion or suppress it; you can just be compassionately, nonjudgmentally present with it and watch.

It seems important to understand that it's not the emotion that causes the intensity of your discomfort, but your relationship with the emotion. To have inner peace doesn't mean you never feel, only that you are at peace with whatever arises. It is quite possible to simultaneously experience anger and compassion. Your compassion is not only for another but for yourselves. It is the judgment about your anger that separates you from the deepening of compassion and from your true natures. Can you be present with anger without hating that anger? When you hate your own anger, that's just more hatred.

You ask about righteous anger. Perhaps you've been with a being who is prejudiced, who spoke out in a very negative way about those of another race or religion, and it infuriated you. There was a sense of, "I've got to teach this person. How dare they speak that way?" If he says, "That's bad," and you say, "No. It's good," he can't hear you. You crash into each other. There's no room for communication, which can never come from a place of hatred.

What might happen when you hear that person who speaks with prejudice, and, as rage rises in you, you meet that fear, and touch it with a bit of compassion? Then you know you are BOTH feeling fear, and see his prejudice in a new light—not "He SHOULDN'T feel prejudiced!" but "WHY does he feel prejudiced? What are his fears?"

Can you accept that if his prejudice arouses rage in you, you also have fears, different from his in specifics, perhaps, but still, fear? Can you meet fear, not with rage, but with the openhearted question, "What are MY fears? Why does his speech arouse so much anger in me?"

As compassion leads you to hear his fear, then communication becomes possible; change becomes possible. This is the basis of compassion and unconditional love—

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learning to watch fear and anger responses arise in yourself, and ask without judgment, "What is this anger?" Until you can be compassionate to yourself, you can not be compassionate toward another. Such compassion is the only REAL basis for world peace.

So this is a vital lesson that all of you are learning, to relate differently to yourselves and to each other than you have in the past, to begin to notice how anger arises, to begin to let go a bit of the judgment of yourself for being angry.

I said, earlier, there are two different issues—the emotion itself, be it anger, greed, pride, jealousy or whatever, and your relationship to that. Part of what you're learning is to change your relationship to those emotions, to feel a sense of peace with whatever is coming through. You can't control your experiences in large part. Your lives interweave with each other, unless you're going to go off and live in a cave, completely alone. And, even there, loneliness may arise, or other very strong emotions. Wanting. Wanting companionship. So, you can't control any of that, but you can control what happens inside when you're experiencing such emotion.

Something wonderful begins to happen as you move from feeling anger, and self-hatred about that anger, to feeling anger, and feeling a calm acceptance. "Here's anger. It will come, and then it will have passed." We call this equanimity toward emotions.

With that compassion for yourself, you begin to see another's anger or greed in a different light. That being is feeling anger. Suddenly, you no longer need to control your angry response towards them and say, "I'm not going to let myself get angry." There's a shift within you.

When you see another feeling anger, a great sense of compassion arises in you when you see the depth of their pain! You genuinely don't feel angry. You may think about it later and say "How did I do that, I really wasn't angry?!" You are breaking loose from conditioned mind and creating a new pattern for yourself, a new way of being with heavy emotions, a new way of being at peace within yourself. You're learning that your inner peace doesn't depend on external circumstances, but comes from within. And that is a wonderful piece of learning.

This earth is your school room. You have moved into this physical body and into this schoolroom to learn. To learn what? Compassion. Nonjudgment. Unconditional love. Grand terms, to be sure, but what do they mean? What does it really mean to have compassion for another? What does it mean to be non-judgmental?

Think about the last hour; just review it in your minds for a moment. Was there any judgment? "That driver ahead of me is slow. I don't like that house. Why did somebody paint it that color? This road is too bumpy, doesn't anybody in this town take care of the roads?" Little bits. I'm not talking about hatred, just little bits of judgment.

Some of you may say "But, Aaron, if we never judge anything as deficient, then there's no force within us to try to change that which we see lacking." Barbara is training a puppy. He's very deficient in many learning areas. His attention span is rather short. He has learned to sit and stay remarkably well for a three month old puppy, but ten seconds is about it. Does Barbara hate that puppy or rage at him when he gets up from sitting? Or does she simply walk back to him and say "Sit. Stay"?

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One does not need to feel hatred or even mild irritation to see what is wrong in the world and attempt to change it. In fact, one can create change far more readily and more skillfully, when there is no rage. Here is where anger offers the most energy, when it is transformed to compassion and to recognition of your non-separation with this earth and all life upon it.

So, what is the path to truly moving beyond anger? In human form, can you ever reach a point where you don't feel anger? It is what I just described; we've come full circle. You can only begin to move beyond anger by accepting anger. You cannot transcend what you don't accept. When you find compassion for all the heavy emotions in yourself, THAT ACCEPTANCE is what leads you to compassion for another. Then you find that the same catalyst that led to rage or greed or jealousy simply leads you to an open hearted look at the situations that confront you, without judgment.

It is a wonderful process, and one in which you're all involved. It's not something you choose to be a part of. You've already made that choice by moving into incarnation. You are in this schoolroom, and offered the curriculum. It's your choice whether you practice the lessons that are offered. Life 101: How to live your lives more wisely. How to love more fully. And yes, my dear ones, you'll still be perfecting those lessons when you've moved on to college and graduate school!

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## The Journey from Fear to Love

**Aaron:** The most frequent question I am asked is how to work with the terrible pain which may grow from the human desire for love and acceptance, and from the fear that these will be withheld. This fear manifests in many ways—as a sense of unworthiness, as greed and clinging, as the push to achieve, as prejudice, jealousy and hatred. It even manifests as action striving to be pure service or generosity, as you attempt to be “better” than some preconceived notion of what you are, so you will be loved.

I say “preconceived notion” because very few of you know what you are. You measure the imperfections against that which you judge “acceptable” and emerge with a sense of failing utterly.

We have sometimes done an exercise where we’ve asked people to list those qualities they like in themselves and those they dislike. The insight people gain here is that if they are generous ninety percent of the time and greedy ten percent, they consider themselves greedy because they see that small response of greed. They won’t allow themselves the label “generous.” It has to be one hundred percent or I’m not that!

Do you see that in yourself? Try it with patience and impatience. Is any one of you one hundred percent patient? Yet friends might say you are a patient person. It is the discomfort of that arising sensation of impatience that leads to self-judgment, even if you are not reactive to the sensation.

You forget so quickly that within each of you is perfection. Yes! This perfection is your true nature, no matter that you cannot always manifest it in your lives. The seeds are there.

There is a lovely song I’ve heard that contains a verse, “Just remember in the winter, far beneath the bitter snows, lies the seed, that with the sun’s love, in the spring becomes the rose.” That is what YOU are, the seed of that rose, and your fear is the snow that hides the beauty from view.

For the flower, that dormant stage is a time of gathering strength, so the seed can blossom when the conditions are right for that blooming. Your fear is NOT something you need to hate, but a gift for your growth, the period of dormancy where the nurturing may occur.

In this most perfect classroom of yours, you must trust that even fear has a place. Do you know the song, “Amazing Grace”? The second verse begins, “’Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear ...” What does that mean? Fear is the dimension through which you may truly learn love. There is no duality. Fear and love are a part of each other. Until you can be openheartedly present even with the heaviest of fears, you cannot fully love. Can you see that?

You’ve heard me talk of full telepathic communication on my plane. You receive all that another sends, and you send all that you experience and feel. Would you be comfortable with that now? Is there anything you feel a need to hide, anything from another that leads to discomfort?



## The Journey from Fear to Love

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To be ready to move to that plane, to grow beyond this samsaric cycle of birth and death, you must first move beyond judgment. Different religions give this process different labels, but all have in common the moving beyond ego.

Fear is a mirror reminding you of where ego is still present.

Ego is a funny thing. It's like a jack-in-the-box. It's out of sight and all but forgotten and then something pushes your button and WHOOIEE, SPROING! Can you see it up there with its silly grin and waving arms?

Can you then say to it, as a friend suggests, "Hello, ego. I've been expecting you; come in and have tea."

I've said repeatedly that there are only two basic emotions, fear and love. Fear is the closing of the heart that seeks to protect itself from pain. Love is the opening of the heart that knows its ultimate connection with all that is and therefore has no need to armor itself.

For most of your lives' experiences, you fall between the two. The heart opens, the heart shuts—again and again and again.

So what we're speaking of here is not the arising of the sensation of fear. The frequency of those occurrences will diminish as the heart learns trust. No, what I'm speaking of now is hatred of fear and reactivity to it.

What is fear? Many of you have looked with me and seen how fear masquerades as anger or wanting. What masquerades as fear?

There is within the human soul a craving, a deep desire for love. This is not good or bad, it simply is. Yet it is natural to you, for the soul has its source in Love, and all things are drawn toward their source.

No matter where its journey takes it, through whatever fear, hatred, ignorance or pain, the soul's deepest memory is of Love. That is the essence of every life form.

The soul remembers that love beyond love from the spirit plane and longs to return to that original experience of total nonseparation, the place where there is no ego or self, but only the One.

But the human is separate. It cannot be fully one with all things because it lives in a body. The fetus still within the womb dwells in oneness, but the fetal state is a transition. With birth and the physical and symbolic cutting of the umbilical cord, comes separation. You, as human, are born alone. You live alone. You leave this earth plane alone. No one can make those journeys with you.

Your deepest meditation experiences lead you to know non-separation of the spirit body, when all ego and physical awareness has dissolved. Some of you have glimpsed the bliss of moving fully into that Light of the Eternal and knowing that is your true spiritual nature, to be one with that divine Energy. But you are not only spirit while incarnate, but body and mind as well. The meditation ends. Your limbs and organs, your thoughts and emotions are there, encasing and seemingly separating this dear spirit, cutting it off from the experience of that unity it briefly knew. Then there is only memory, and a knowing that has moved closer to the conscious experience.

## The Journey from Fear to Love

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My dear ones, you have heard me say that this earth is your perfect schoolroom. You are incarnate in a body to learn. And yet you hate the lessons. This makes the learning terribly difficult.

How would it be if a child sat in her classroom but refused to pick up the books because they felt too heavy? Could she learn? In this classroom of life, lessons come in many forms but you turn your back on many of them because they feel too heavy.

If the experience of the illusion of separation, manifested through the body and emotions, were not necessary for your learning, you would not have it. There would be no veil of forgetting with each birth. The entire human experience would be one of conscious knowing. How would you learn faith?

Life would be a practice of self-discipline and will, which indeed it is not! This veil, this incarnative experience even with all its pains, is a gift. Can you begin to trust that, and to trust the glimpses of who you truly are?

Let us return to the experience of fear in any of its manifestations. "What do I do," you ask me, "when fear is strong?" Dear ones, no matter whether you like it or not, no matter how much you wish it away, you still continue to experience fear on occasion. Since its arising seems inevitable, can you begin to make friends with it?

IT IS NOT THE FEAR THAT IS THE PROBLEM BUT YOUR REACTION TO THE FEAR, YOUR HATRED OF THE FEAR. This hatred is what leads to the illusion of separation, and not the fear itself.

Without awareness, you lump it together, the fear itself and that which feeds off of fear. As you practice deeper mindfulness, you find you can distinguish between the two.

When fear arises and is followed immediately by the desire to be rid of it or the need to suppress it, you fragment yourselves. There is such suffering in that fragmentation. Can you take this very human person who is afraid into your arms and offer it love? Can you touch with mercy that in yourself that you have always touched with contempt?

I've said you are here to practice love and faith. Of course there are other lessons, but these are basic. Love means without conditions. Not, I'll love if you fix this or that, but love for the being just as it is—for your dear self just as you are. This does not mean you no longer aspire to grow, nor that you use your fear as excuse to harm another.

Some of you have had wonderful nurturing as children; some of you have missed that experience. I'm aware of the pain felt by those who lacked such nurturing, but there does come a time when the past needs to be put aside—not denied, just put aside. Here is this being that wants nurturing, that cries out to be accepted. Can you do it? It is as simple as that.

No more excuses about why you haven't done it, or can't. No more blaming the parents or life situations. Just this; can I open my heart to myself?

I can't tell you how to do that. For each of you, the armor is attached in a different way. You must find that key for yourself, to open the lock and remove the armor, to unsnap it, unzip it, peel it, dissolve it. But the key is always the same—love!

Every moment there is the opportunity to stretch yourselves, to go one step further than you were able to go before. Your life is a series of edges and a progression of learning,

## The Journey from Fear to Love

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learning to let go gently and with trust. To allow yourself that letting go, there must be nurturing by yourself, of yourself. This is the end of fragmentation and the beginning of wholeness.

What keeps you from that nurturing? You say you want it, from another or from yourself, yet when the possibility for it arises, you turn away. Can you begin to see why?

You have enclosed yourselves in armor, not to shut out the light that is so beloved, but to protect the sensitive heart. It is the very vulnerability and softness of this heart that has led you to don armor in the first place. Does a rock need armor? When you pierce the tough skin of the orange, you find the sweet fruit.

I spoke before of the inherent perfection of the spirit body. This is the aspect that is fully open, loving, generous, patient, wise, and so much more. And it is so easily wounded. The thickness of the armor is proof of the beauty of the soul that lies beneath.

To nurture is to begin to open the armor. How frightening that movement is. Can you touch with mercy this dear, frightened being who wants to open and dares not? Do you see what a big step it is to admit the softness and vulnerability of that which you have spent so many lifetimes trying to make invulnerable? Yet that is your next step—to allow yourselves to become vulnerable.

And what of responsibility? As you begin to open and learn, you understand that you are, and have always been, responsible for everything that moves through you. And also, that even here you must let go of self-judgment. It feels impossible. “Am I ready to be that responsible?” you may ask. And then you berate yourselves again, for this new fear! Your lives are filled with so many “shoulds.”

Can you begin to see fear in a new light, as the catalyst that reminds you to have mercy, reminds you of the sacredness and tenderness of the inner heart?

It is a constant process of awareness, watching fear arise, touching it with acceptance, watching the reactions to which fear leads—anger, greed, and such—and touching those feelings, too, with mercy. Watch each moment, in its newness. Constantly look for the pulling in of the armor. Be aware of the judgment of “I should be merciful.” Can you see that’s just more judgment?

As you learn not to hate your fear, a transformation begins. You begin to find healing and acceptance for this dear being that you are. Your actions and words become more skillful, not because you have said “I should” and denied anything in your experience, but because you have opened your heart to the infinite space and compassion therein.

This step is the beginning of maturity. You will not become something with no feelings, but rather, a being of intense feelings, a being of sufficient maturity, wisdom and compassion to allow the full experience of those emotions—the joy and the grief, the beauty and the ugliness, without distinction—no longer being reactive to those emotions but allowing them to serve as a reminder to love. This is the path you all walk, my dear ones, and it is a wondrous journey. Trust!

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## On Love

**Question:** What is the balance between detachment and love?

**Aaron:** I am Aaron. To love is not to possess. To love is to let go. The ego possesses. The soul loves. In meditation you learn how the ego self solidifies, how fear leads the ego or personality self into desire to possess. As you bring compassion and kindness to those fears, you find more spaciousness and less need to grasp. You begin to see the deepest interconnections between yourself and the beloved, and, also, the uniqueness of each of you. As you appreciate both similarities and differences, as you cultivate a spaciousness that works skillfully with its fear, increasingly you approach the beloved with a sense of deep reverence, and from this, this egoless space, you truly begin to love unconditionally and to let go. Does that answer your question? I pause.

**Question:** I experienced a sense of Divine love through heart opening and I'm not sure how that relates to emotional detachment.

**Aaron:** Divine love comes from and to the soul self, not the ego self. This soul level is an aspect of the being in which there is no heavy emotion. There is joy and sorrow, but there is no fear or acting out of fear. This level of love may flow between the being and that which it considers the Ultimate Divinity, or it may flow between the being and what it considers to be expressions of that Divinity, in other words, another human, animal or a flower. It's the same Divine love. When I use the word "love," in a sense I am implying Divine love. This is not to say that love is impossible on the relative plane, impossible for the ego self but fear must be separated out. When you look deeply at what the ego self considers to be love, you find one level of Divine love and another level of fear and grasping. For example there is loving the reflection it sees of itself in the other, loving the way the other cares for it, loving the sense of being somebody who cares for another. These inflate the self. They are ego's mimicry of love. But when you remove ego self's motives, you're left with what I could only call Divine love, egoless love. This level of being is never attached. To what would it attach? There is nothing separate.

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## The Inner Garden

**Aaron:** At times you become so lost in the fear, anger and pain of your lives that you forget that these emotions are not who you are. We've spent much time exploring skillful ways to work with the heavy emotions. Today I want to approach it from a new perspective.

Regard your journey as if it were a river. Your energy is the waterflow. The heavy emotions are logs caught in a logjam. We've been learning how to unjam those logs so the water may flow unimpeded. To open the channel, one may concentrate on the logs or the water itself. When we raise the water level, the logs are freed. When you allow in more love and joy, the heaviness of anger and fear diminish. They become seen for what they are, artifacts of a mind that has solidified itself into fear by losing its connection with the Eternal.

How do we raise this water level? My dear ones, you pay so much attention to your fear, so little to the love, patience, generosity and caring that are a part of you. Each of these are fragile seeds within your being. They cannot grow without your nurturing attention. Those attributes such as generosity are natural to you but are also not you. They move through you when you allow it. They are manifestations of the natural movement of the open heart.

Let us look at joy. We're not talking here about the momentary happiness which comes with getting something you want or doing something well. You receive a pleasing gift and feel happiness. Perhaps it's a new pair of gloves and you leave them on the bus. A day later you're without your gloves and feeling sadness of their loss.

This joy is not the happiness that comes from resolving issues in a relationship because even that is fleeting and dependent on things outside yourselves. You feel happiness and that's fine; I'm not negating that. But perhaps the next day there is another argument.

I am talking of a much deeper kind of happiness which I prefer to call "joy" to differentiate it from impermanent happiness.

You have heard me say that all things are impermanent. Certainly this sense of joy is such, in that it is not fixed and unchanging. But when your joy is not dependent on that which constantly changes, then while it may ebb and flow, a sense of it is always present.

It's a bit like a perennial plant. It emerges when the sun shines on it in the spring and the days lengthen. When the weather cools, it fades, closes and disappears. There's no sign of it above the surface through the long winter. Then it blossoms again.

I have heard a lovely song. One verse's words are: "Just remember in the winter, far beneath the bitter snows, lies the seed that with the sun's love, in the spring, becomes the Rose."

That seed is within each of you, and the potential blossom within the seed. You can choose to be the sun with its light and warmth that enable the seed to grow. Even in winter, when joy and connection are hidden beneath the snow, you can be aware that

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they are there and seek ways to nurture them. So while the blossom is changing and impermanent, the seed is always there. It is eternal because it is part of the eternal light and energy of Love in its everchanging manifestations.

What is that kind of joy? Where does it come from? It doesn't depend on material things. It doesn't depend on relationships. Rather, it emerges from a clear seeing of things the way they are, a dawning of deep understanding about yourself and your interconnection with all else, an understanding of the nature of that which we call the soul, and of God.

It is a joy that does not diminish even in sorrow, loss and pain. It is the movement of the open heart that knows its most fundamental connection with all that is, and is no longer trapped in the delusion of separate self and ego.

I would ask you to discover this seed of joy in yourselves and to nurture it.

Fear grows out of your small ego self and its sense of separation. As long as the self is viewed as separate, there is need to achieve, to attain. There is all that outside of you, which you seem to lack.

When you begin to know your connection with all else, that fear may still arise but is seen clearly for the delusion it is, and the deeper self can offer the reminder to trust.

You may wish to practice working with such fear with the practice of generosity, whether material or of energy. When you follow the promptings of the open heart despite the fearful voices of conditioned mind that arise and say, "I can't," you begin to observe how those voices arise. They are the patterns and conditions of old mind with its core of "self." While they must be acknowledged—"feeling fear"—they need not be obeyed. You begin to establish a new and more skillful pattern of listening to the voice of love.

This is what it comes to, over and over again—fear, or love. Which voice will you heed? Can you have the love for yourselves to acknowledge your fear uncritically and say to it, "No, not this time"?

When you look back at experiences of generosity, and of fear of giving, you find a common thread. You come to feel the connection that allows joyful giving of your energy or resources. "Not separate!" That is the heart of it. You are a part of everything. Nothing belongs only to you and nothing can be taken from you. There is no beginning or end, no depletion or satiation. When you know that, fear dissolves.

As you practice generosity, and offer nonjudgmental awareness of fear as it arises, touching the fear with acceptance, that compassion allows you to move past your prior limits and know your infiniteness. It is this knowledge of your connection, of the interdependence of all that is, that leads to real joy, and to peace.

There are two different directions that mindfulness needs to take. One is the clear seeing of the arising and fading of everything, of all thoughts, feelings, sensations, of all situations, people, relationships, and material objects. "This is because that is. This is not, because that is not." Thus, one comes to understand impermanence and the absence of a self in all things.

But impermanence is not nihilism. The second direction for mindfulness is continuity and interdependence. "This is because that is ..." Everything ends, and yet it finds its

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continuance in something else. The garbage becomes the compost that nourishes the plant. The plant creates the food that nourishes the person. There is a constant flow-through of energy. There is such joy in the experience of knowing oneself to be part of that energy, my dear ones. So much peace. This is the understanding through which one transcends birth and death.

You may nurture all of the seeds within you with the same process used to nurture generosity. Each time fear arises, it is like a wall around the garden. In endeavoring to protect the fragile seed, it blocks the light. The wall is the armor around your heart, called to defend that soft center that so fears being wounded.

The wall and the plant are not two, but parts of the garden. There is no need to get rid of the one with hatred in order to nourish the other, only to touch it with awareness and gently move it aside.

It is not a wall of steel but a living wall, grown from the organic substance of the fearful heart. As you investigate its nature, you will find that it is NOT solid, but very workable. Trim it a bit if necessary, and gently turn the cut ends into the soil to nurture the new plants.

Allow your fear to be a reminder to deeper compassion for the human feeling such fear, such pain, rather than a gateway to anger, greed or shame.

In this way, nurture your generosity, patience, lovingkindness, truthfulness, joy, wisdom, compassion, energy, and so many more, by constant awareness of their arising and of the walls which would block light. Remember, there is no "getting rid of." As the plant grows strong, the walls will no longer need you to maintain them. They will fall away, dying back into the soil.

Are there weeds in your garden? Remember that your impatience or greed grew out of the need to protect the self. You allowed them into your garden for a reason and they have offered that protection to the frightened heart. As you know your limitlessness, you will have no more need to defend. When energy is given to the new growth of love and connection, the weeds will fall away as disuse weakens their fiber.

This is the garden of your opening heart. Treat it with love and cherish it as it grows into the light.

### **A note from Barbara**

When Aaron spoke of this garden to our weekly class, he asked us to do an exercise which many found of value. He suggested we each draw a garden. In it, he asked us to put those plants we most wanted to nurture in the coming months, those which we felt to be weakest in us and most in need of loving attention.

He suggested we draw the walls, the weeds, the entire landscape. Just how big or small was patience in us, or energy? What blocked it from the light?

He emphasized that our drawing skills weren't being measured. Rather, the exercise served two purposes. It allowed us to see more clearly, when one said "I want to be more generous," just exactly what fears blocked that generosity and made giving so painful. The fears lost their solidity as we got to know them intimately.

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The second purpose was that he asked us to put these drawings where we could see them as a gentle reminder of our work, and even to update them as flowers grew, weeds withered and walls tumbled.

You might like to try it for yourselves.



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## A Perspective on Jesus

*(Aaron has told us that at the time of Jesus' birth he was a very young child living in the hills in that country with his father who was a shepherd. As an adult he came to know this master and became a follower. Aaron emphasizes that in that lifetime, even as an adult, he was "just a simple shepherd, unlearned ..." and not one of a core group who were the great disciples of Jesus. Nevertheless, he had great love for his teacher and gratitude for his teaching.*

*Each year Aaron has shared stories with us about what he learned from this beloved teacher. He offers them as "teaching stories." The stories in this chapter have been drawn from the book Aaron's Christmas Stories, given during the years 1989 to 1993.)*

### December 5, 1989

**Aaron:** I would like to talk to you about that Teacher you call Jesus. You are in the midst of your annual celebration of his birth. Do you understand what that birth really means, who he was and what was truly given? I see much confusion between the true gift and church doctrine that has grown up around it. I do not mean to offend anyone here. Your private and group myths are important to you and must be deeply respected. Yet the beauty of this gift is such that it needs no other myths to support it.

I have told you that you are all sparks of God, evolving slowly through your many lifetimes to perfect light and to mature compatibility with your Creator. Since the dawn of time a few beings have so evolved as to become pure and radiant light, filling the universe with their luminescence. Such beings truly sit at the side of God, and the power of their light and love are inextinguishable.

Such a being is the spirit of the man you call Jesus. For God, this spirit was the proof of His divine plan, the perfect example of what all mankind could become. As such he was deeply beloved, the Son of God as you are all sons and daughters of God, and yet especially cherished because he was the first to reach this divine perfection.

Your earth in those days was full of war, of misunderstanding, of hatred, of chaos. There were those who believed that God taught that one being should avenge himself on another, and one nation avenge itself on another. Such bloodshed was enacted in the name of God. There were those who taught that God's laws were a matter of convenience, that murder was permitted in His name. These were not people meaning to do evil, but beings filled with misunderstandings. Many of you were there. Ask your higher self's memories if this is not how it was.

Seeing the misunderstandings that filled the world, God grieved for His children. So he asked His Son, who stood by his side, to give a great gift to mankind, to take it unto himself to return to that human plane to teach lessons of love, compassion and forgiveness. The gift was no less God's, for He was giving this beloved Son unto the pain and chaos of the physical plane.

The spirit of the man you know as Jesus agreed to God's request, with gladness that he might serve Him. He fully understood what he agreed to, that in returning to this

physical plane, in agreeing to incarnate in human form, he was taking on all the pains of human birth. He agreed to the forgetting of his true self. Although this forgetting did not reach the level it reaches with most humans, there were to be times of deep doubt and despair. He agreed to the physical pains of the human body, of the frailty of the human form. Do you think those nails that penetrated his flesh at his crucifixion were painless? Out of love, and to give love, he gladly accepted whatever agony he might face.

He came to teach God's true messages of love and peace to a weary, chaotic, pain filled world. This is the true gift of his birth and his life. He had free will, as have all beings. He could have said no, and God would not have loved him any less. Do you understand what it means to freely and willingly leave that perfect Light and Love? Can you understand how much this Holy Spirit loved mankind and God, to accept this mission of teaching? Only perfect love could have made this choice, and only perfect love would have been able to teach such love to others. Had he said no, the world would have continued on in darkness until another being was so evolved as to be able to perform this task.

The other gift of this season's is God's. Which of you could send a beloved child to a place torn by war and hatred, to certain agony, to teach others?

As you think about his incarnation this season, to become the teacher known as Jesus, as you think about the teachings of love and peace and forgiveness, think also about the gift that was given—the gift of love. Let all your gifts that commemorate this birth be gifts of love and forgiveness, each to another, so that he may see that his lessons are truly being learned. This is the greatest gift you can give him, the way you can best honor his gift—to love one another.

I love you all and wish you a happy Christmas filled with peace and the beauty of God's and Christ's love.

### **December 19, 1990**

It would seem fitting that we talk tonight about he whose birth you will celebrate next week ... he who in his final incarnation was known as Jesus. You know that all of us have lived many past lives—myself as well as you—and there were a number of you who were incarnate on the earth at that time, two thousand years ago, as I was. I have shared few of my memories for they all fall into that category of "You do not need to know." Yet, for each of us there are certain memories that stand out through an infinite number of lifetimes. I'd like to simply share with you this beautiful one.

I'm not going to try to separate for you tonight what has been built up as myth about the story of his birth, and what was real. Was such a being born near the area of Bethlehem about two thousand years ago? Yes, he was. We will not quibble over the exact date, nor the details of that birth. The facts of his birth are far less important than what he taught.

At the time of his birth I was a young boy of six or seven, a shepherd boy in the hills outside that town of Bethlehem with my father and older brother. The emotional climate of the world in that time was very different than it is today. Yes, there is war and hatred in many parts of the world today, but there is a new word, the concept of which

barely existed two thousand years ago in much of the world. That word is “forgiveness.” Instead, the prevailing philosophy was that of, “An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.” “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” was distorted to, “Do unto others as they do unto you.” If he hits, hit him back. Protect yourself.

There was an effort to follow the Ten Commandments: not to steal, not to kill. But it was acceptable to kill in self defense. That wasn’t considered killing. If one harmed you or those you loved, it was quite acceptable to seek revenge against that one and those he loved. You may think this sounds little different than today’s world. Certainly, for some individuals, it is little different. But today for most individuals and even as a nation, there is an effort at forgiveness. Look at your relationships today with Japan or Germany. The past is past, and hate is not extended to the citizens of those nations.

So this is the world in which I lived—a young boy sitting wrapped in a blanket by a fire on that cool evening—a very peaceful scene. My father and the other men told stories. On that night of memory, the air grew very still. Suddenly there was a brilliant star. That much is fact, as I saw it. Below me, in the valley some distance away was the town that has come to be known as Bethlehem.

Never had I seen a star like that before. Neither had the elders, I supposed, because everyone grew very quiet. Some felt afraid, but most felt a deep sense of peace and wonder. You have all seen a full moon shining on a snowy scene, the way the world seems to radiate light. That star did the same thing. The world seemed lit from within.

I can’t say the light was focused over a special building, a stable or any other dwelling. I can’t say it was not, either. I didn’t observe that; I was a young child on a hillside. But there was such a sense of deep peace, such a brilliance to the light. Music seemed to fill the air, not music which is heard with one’s ears but music which is heard with one’s heart.

We were drawn as if by a magnet to descend the hills. There were many, and my father was hesitant to leave our sheep and go too far. So we did not go all the way down into the town, but stayed on the hillside.

It was a night like none I have ever known before or since. The strongest memory is that of deep peace, and of a profound joy that something had happened—something far beyond the understanding of that young boy I was, but something that would profoundly change the world.

Many went all the way into town. Others of us stayed closer to our flocks on the hillsides. But no matter where you were, Light permeated everything. It seemed almost as if the earth itself glowed. We were awed, not just myself as a child but the adults as well. Many began to pray.

We sat there for many hours. Some of those who had gone all the way into town began to return. I was dozing by this time, asleep in my father’s arms, hearing just the faint words of elders whispered past me in the still, morning hours: “A child is born. They call him the Prince of Peace. They say that his teachings will change the world.”

Then I remember my father’s strong arms lifting me and carrying me back up the hill to our fire. I slept with a sense of joy and peace that I had never known before—a sense that somehow much that was wrong with the world might be righted—that new hope was born.

I give you this memory to share what his birth meant to me. Think, if you will as you celebrate his birth, of this gift of forgiveness and how his teachings changed the world.

### December 18, 1991

As in past years, this week before the annual commemoration of his birth I'd like to speak about that being you know as Jesus or the Christ. Those of you who know me understand that I do not share from the viewpoint of a Christian. I am a spirit who resides beyond the bounds of any one religious doctrine but who has great love for this beautiful and loving being. What I wish to share is my own sense of who he was and why he was here.

This is a being whose light was already purified. He had no need to incarnate for himself, and yet he willingly did so as a way of serving others. Last year I spoke about being present in that part of the world at the time of his birth. No, I did not see the infant Jesus, but I was the son of a shepherd—a very young boy tending sheep on a hillside—and there was that star ... Not only a star, but the air was filled with angelic presences. Now, that in itself isn't unusual. The air is often filled with loving spirits. What was unusual was the strength of this being, that even those who might have been skeptical could sense the strength of energy that was present, and the love.

So many felt awe, having the sense that this was someone special. Had he encouraged that awe, he could have grown into a very powerful being and wielded his power for his own gratification. It would have been easy to do, because there was much awe about his birth. And yet, he went to great ends to do the opposite.

I knew him as a young man. My father brought me to see him when I was grown and my father an old man. At that first meeting I became totally devoted to him. I was not a teacher nor a wise man of any sort but a simple shepherd, but I knew this was a being I would follow anywhere. He simply radiated peace and love, and yet, he did not make use of that for his own power. To me, this was his most important quality. I know that stories are told of the miracles he did, but far more important are the much quieter acts he performed.

I came to him once after traveling for many days. I had been stopped by outlaws ... robbers. They took my clothing and my shoes. They left me with only a garment resembling a loincloth, and a small bit of water. Like that I traveled two more days over wilderness terrain.

He had been traveling at that time, traveling to a part of the country near my home, and that was why I was able to come and see him. When I reached his encampment, he knew me, he remembered me. My feet were bleeding and I was very, very thirsty. Yes, he could perform miracles, I suppose. He could have touched me and healed my feet, but he didn't do that. Instead, he sat me down and provided an appropriate amount of simple food and water. Then, with his own hands, he washed my feet and bandaged them. He could have asked another to do that, but he did it himself. They were so badly cut that it should have taken ten days or more for them to heal, yet in three or four days they were whole. I didn't wonder about it then. I thought my healing power within myself had done this. Now, as I look back, I recognize that it was his work.

Had he miraculously healed them, I would have been in awe of him, and he didn't want that. He didn't want blind devotion. It is this quality of him that I cherished most as I knew him in that lifetime, that he understood that he was human. He did not want to be worshipped as a God.

For a God to teach forgiveness, to teach that one should turn the other cheek and love those who torment one, people could say, "Well, that's fine for you to say, but you're not human." But the point is that he was human, fully human. He felt the same pain as any other human. He had the same desire for acceptance and for love as any human. But he, more than any other being in history I would suppose, clearly understood the nature of his divine spirit.

Now, I tell you that every being is of the same nature. The same divine spirit resides in each of you. No, you are not fully evolved as he was. You still have karma that needs to be resolved. You are not yet beyond the astral plane as he was. And you have not come back just for love, but because karma has drawn you back. Nevertheless, your spirit is no less holy, no less perfect and beautiful.

It is this that seems to me most wonderful, that he knew that to be an effective teacher it had to be realized that he was human. Far more often than not, he emphasized that humanness. He let people see that he bled when he was cut, that he felt pain when there was pain, and that he still could forgive and could love.

The epitome of this plan is his death. Certainly, one as powerful as he could have avoided such a painful death if he had chosen to do so. What would have happened to all he had taught if he had escaped that death? What if he had allowed himself to become a powerful king whom many idolized and to whom they paid homage? Could the message of love been as clearly taught? Is there any way it could have been taught as directly as through those beautiful words as he died in agony, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

How can we follow that message with our hearts today, learning the lessons of forgiveness as one very beautiful human being taught them? That truly is the challenge of all our lives: to learn that level of unconditional love, compassion and forgiveness, to truly have peace in our own hearts so the energy of the Eternal may flow through us, and through our own hearts, on to all that is.

### **December 19, 1991**

In speaking last night of he who was known as Jesus, I emphasized that they who came to be his followers related to him, not because they thought of him as God, but because of the very beautiful human qualities in him, because he did not set himself above the suffering we all encounter. He did not set himself apart, nor wish to be worshipped in any way. He did not call himself God.

*(Long pause.)* I am sorting out memories. There was a time when I was traveling with him. We came to a village where his reputation had preceded him, where there were those who shunned him and those who sought him out. Those who came after him wanted to hold him on a pedestal. They brought out food and wanted to serve him and to set an elaborate table. He sat down, as the others did ... No, not at a table but

on the ground. This was a rural village. When I say "set an elaborate table," I mean to bring out the best they had.

They brought him a plate of sorts ... more of a bowl ... with many foods in it, and they served him first. I know he was hungry. We all were. We had been traveling for several days with little food. At the outskirts of the circle, a young child was watching. He was thin and had sores on his body. There was obviously both disease and scarcity of food in this village. They were serving him their best, and the child watched wide-eyed.

One of those who was serving noticed Jesus looking at the child and moved to shoo him away, "Get out of here. Go on." He said to Jesus, "That is the son of one who disdains you."

Jesus simply stood up, took his bowl of food and carried it to the child. The boy was frightened, having been told to go and seeing this man walking toward him. In a gentle voice, Jesus reassured him, "I will not hurt you. Would you like food?" He sat down on the ground, held the bowl out, handed it to the child. He asked for clean cloths and water. While the child ate, he washed his sores.

Just that. There was no lecture. Certainly he could have used it as an example: Love your enemy. Words were totally unnecessary. The simplicity and grace of his living example was all that was needed.

There were other children there. This one had been the boldest. The others approached; seeing this one eating made them braver. The food was shared with all. At first there was fear on the hosts' faces, for they had served their best and there was little of it. But as the food was passed around, there was plenty. I didn't know if he did it or how it happened; I was a simple man. But there was enough for all who were hungry to eat.

There was another day I remember when we were in a very poor place. Please do not mistake my stories to think that I was very close to him or followed him all the time. He traveled a bit and when he came close to where I lived and word was passed of his coming, I would travel to that place to be with him for awhile. This happened at most one time a year, that I had the blessing of these few days with him before I needed to return to my family, my sheep, my responsibilities. There were many with him. I was not one of a select few in any way.

We were gathered in a barn of some sort, a flimsy shelter against a great storm. The roof was leaking everywhere, and yet it was still better than no shelter. There was thatching material available to mend the roof. The being whose barn it was had been injured and was unable to do that work. So when the rain let up a bit, some of the younger and stronger of us went out into the cold and wet to make repairs as best we could, to weave in some of this new thatch. It is a job far easier to do in clear weather.

He came with us. He didn't have to. He could have stayed inside, in the driest spot. He did not talk about it; he just came. Such work in cold weather may lead one's hands to become raw and bleeding, especially the fingertips. His hands bled along with ours. I'm sure he could have stopped that if he wanted to. Instead, he bore it with all of us. When we were done and the roof leaking considerably less, we came inside. He simply took each of our hands in his, not to perform miracles but as a way of saying thank you,

of sharing the comradeship. Somehow, in his touch, much as I told last night, there was some degree of healing.

I'm sure he could have instantly healed those torn hands of ours—he was able to perform such miracles although I never saw him do them—but he chose not to awe us with his miracles, but to do his work quietly. At his touch the pain simply receded, almost to the point that we were not aware that it had happened. It wasn't until thinking about it much later that I realized it had been his touch that had taken away the pain and soreness and led to prompt healing of the split skin.

I was not an educated man, nor political. I didn't understand the political forces of that time, only the forces of hunger, of disease and suffering, and of love. I was a very simple person. What I responded to most was his love, his humility, honesty and kindness. But I also responded to his humanness, to the fact that he felt sadness as well as joy, that he felt pain when his body was injured, that he was clearly human.

People have asked me about the stories of his divine birth through a virgin and I've declined to answer. Each religion builds the myths that are useful to it. In stating it that way, I'm not implying that immaculate conception is a myth. I don't know. On the etheric plane, such is clearly possible. It doesn't matter. Upon taking birth, he was human. However he came to this incarnation, by whatever route he moved into human form, once in human form he was human. His willingness to take birth in this world of suffering so as to teach most effectively is one of the greatest gifts ever given on this earth.

May I answer your questions?

**Question:** Are there others like Christ and the Buddha who have walked this earth, who do so today?

**Aaron:** There are beings who have reached that level of evolution, but very few who, having moved to that level, have returned to human form—very few. You must understand the difference between these two. The Christ was a sixth density being who came only to serve, only for the immensity of his love. He had been human in many past incarnations but had long since moved past this cycle of birth and death. He stood at the threshold of dissolving the mental body, approaching readiness to move back fully into the light. Yet he willingly moved back to the earth plane and the torment of having to again enclose himself in the illusion of self.

In incarnating as a human he entered into those laws that bind humans. Any anger, hatred or fear within him could lead to adhering karma and the need to take rebirth. He knew that. While he did not have the veil of forgetting that most humans experience at birth, so he had clear memory of who he was and why he came, yet he knew he would be human and he was still willing to come.

On the spirit plane there are many highly evolved beings who serve humans—who serve all beings, human and non-human—but very few who have willingly chosen to return from that Light to the human plane to serve. And yet, it's the only way it could have been done. It is one thing to receive divine guidance and another to see a fellow human practice what he teaches, even to his own death. The power of that is profound. This, to me, is his greatest gift, his willingness to serve, even to that degree,

and the fact that he did not take advantage of his clear seeing of who he was and why he had come to avoid the pain of being human.

Can you see that even the smallest avoidance of that common humanity would have set him apart, so that his teaching could not have been nearly as effective?

The Buddha who was born as Siddhartha Gautama incarnated into what would be his final lifetime as human. He needed to come to that birth for his own liberation. The depth of his understanding and the purity of his being were such that, after leaving his body, he was not only ready to move beyond the cycle of birth and death, but he had no need to move through the fourth and fifth densities. He moved from third to sixth density in one leap. He totally dissolved the emotional body while on this plane. The lessons of wisdom and compassion had long since been mastered. Few have done that. Even he whom you knew as Jesus moved from his final human lifetime before that last incarnation, through fourth and fifth densities, and into sixth.

Thus, the Buddha is a beautiful example and inspiration of what one can learn in human form, of the preciousness of human birth. The Buddha became, in that final lifetime, what Jesus already was when he came to that lifetime.

**Q:** Are Christians more evolved in some way?

**A:** Every religion on earth which is rooted in love is a viable path to enlightenment, to graduation from this human plane. What is a Christian? Through fear, the Church has distorted the meaning of this word. Perhaps more murder and ill will has been performed in Christ's name than have loving deeds, sad though that may be.

There are a great many that I would consider as Christians who are not a member of that Church, but are like those of us of his time, who did not call ourselves Christian, but simply followed this being and pledged ourselves to live his message of love and forgiveness as fully as we could. The label is unimportant. All beings who commit themselves to live with awareness, with love and forgiveness, with non-harm to others, are on the path to liberation from this cycle of birth and death and add their light to touch the dark corners of the universe.

**Q:** Was Jesus called Jesus back in that lifetime or did you know him by another name? You keep saying, "He who was called Jesus."

**A:** Some called him Jesus, or the correct translation of that name, some called him "the carpenter" or "the carpenter from Nazareth." Among some he was simply known as "the teacher." Yes, there were many teachers, and yet he came to be called that by many. When I say, "He whom you know as Jesus," I do that more to distinguish this lifetime, because this spirit also lived other lives. Yes, he had reached the point where he no longer needed to incarnate in human form, but to reach that point he had lived a great many lives. In naming him in that way, I am referring to this specific incarnation.

**Q:** Did Jesus practice meditation?

**A:** He was familiar with the practice of meditation. I would suppose that he learned that practice in the East, but that is conjecture. He was able to move freely into a jhanic state—a state of profound concentration—understood the practice of that, and also understood that it could be an escape and so did not frequently indulge himself in that practice.



From my own experience with him in that lifetime, I saw him recommend the practice of meditation, not only prayer but meditation, to others. I knew little on an intellectual level about what he taught, and he did not speak of such things often.

Meditation was more a part of his own training than what he taught to others. He taught by example. He prayed and meditated, so those around him did the same. What he taught was very simple: Forgive, open your heart, offer love in return to hatred and fear, know God's presence in each being and relate to everything through its divinity.

**Q:** Were there other teachers on the level of Jesus and the Buddha? Is there one incarnate today?

**A:** Yes, there have been other such beings. None have become as well known, yet they have always inspired those around them, even if it was only a small group. What strikes me as important here is that an essential part of the Christ's and the Buddha's lifetimes was their intent to serve and to teach. Jesus incarnated with that intention. Upon Siddhartha Gautama's enlightenment, when he became The Buddha or awakened one, he made the decision, "I must share this path of liberation from suffering with others."

There have been others who have not made that decision—not by reason of service to self; of course they have moved beyond that—but through a clear understanding, "my work lies elsewhere. I share who and what I am with those around me, but after the death of this body, my work lies elsewhere." There are many such teachers on my plane.

Let us return to "density" again. In fourth and fifth densities there are still the vestiges of an emotional body. In sixth density the emotional body is dissolved, yet there is still a bit of "self" as there is still personal awareness and memory. Seventh density is the beginning of moving beyond self, when the mental body falls away. There must be a notion of self in order to teach others. Pure awareness cannot channel concept which is necessary for teaching in the lower densities. What both Christ and the Buddha did was to agree to remain in sixth density so they could function as a teacher.

At the time of its last incarnation, that spirit that was Jesus was a sixth density being, fully ready to move quickly through seventh density and into eighth density. It held itself at sixth density because of its desire and willingness to serve. Following the incarnation as the Buddha, that spirit also held itself at sixth density to teach.

There is nothing remarkable about moving from third density through fourth and fifth, to sixth density. Many beings are so evolved. When a sixth density being is willing to remain in sixth density to serve others, when the seventh density doorway to total non-separation from that perfect Light is so close and a being is willing to hold back in love and service, that is remarkable. In your terminology, such beings are thought of as angels. That is the closest definition of "angel" I can offer, a sixth density being that does not move on, of its own free will, but remains for some time to teach.

Buddhism has a term for such a being. A Bodhisattva is one who recognizes the suffering in the universe, and is willing to come back to this incarnation repeatedly, rather than finding its own final liberation through movement to eighth density. It returns to serve, with awareness that as long as one being still suffers, it cannot be

totally free. Willingness to return to third density incarnation is one manifestation of the Bodhisattva. Another form is willingness to remain in sixth density, with mental body intact. Such teachers are here but you on earth do not know of them. I feel the deepest gratitude for the gift they offer us all.

**Q:** When did you first learn of the death of Jesus? At the time, what significance did you attach to his death? When did you learn that his followers continued to meet? Did you ever join them?

**A:** I was a shepherd but also felt myself to be his disciple. What he taught spoke more directly to my heart than anything I'd ever heard. I tried to follow his teachings and to share them with others. In this way, I became very much a follower of his and, when my life's circumstances allowed it, I left my sheep to be with him. I was not among his center core of disciples. I was a simple being in that lifetime. I had love for this being who was Jesus, and yet I also had an ego and a sense of self and fear.

I was not present at his death, but I knew he was to be crucified. People who knew he had been my teacher directed officials to question me, and I must admit that I denied him. I said I did not revere him, out of fear for myself. The tremendous guilt I felt about that lie led me away, as far as I could get. It was not until several weeks later—having spent most of those weeks alone in prayer and meditation—that I understood what I had done and saw what I needed to do next.

At that point, yes, I joined those who had been his followers and who continued to share his teachings. I found that there were many others who had done as I had done and who also felt guilt. I saw that as with myself, others had learned the true meaning of his message of forgiveness through that guilt and the necessity to forgive oneself.

This was his final gift to me in that lifetime. The pain of his death, my own fear that led me to deny him, and the overwhelming sense of guilt all opened my heart to the true meaning of his message of forgiveness. It is not a measured forgiveness. That is easy. Rather it is unconditional, to forgive the seeming unforgivable, in myself and in all beings. This is the final work of the open heart. With that step of unconditional acceptance, the heart opens in compassion so there is truly nothing left to forgive.

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## God and Buddhism

**Question:** My impression is that Buddhists believe that everything is emptiness. Nothing substantive or permanent exists, such as a soul or God, and therefore all things are empty by nature, that is empty of self, or "zero." Yet at times I sense the existence of a soul and of God. Can you comment on this?

**Aaron:** I can promise you that God exists but this will be meaningless to you until you discover it for yourself. I believe you have begun to do this, and must learn to honor what you feel with your heart. As to the belief that everything is empty, how can I explain to you that the Buddha was correct, and that God and soul do still exist. Empty! What is emptiness? Do you understand that everything and nothing are the same. I see that you know this in an intellectual way, but your heart will not accept it.

Learn about this idea of everything and nothing being the same from silence. You understand when you meditate that the silence is full. The deeper you go into the stillness, the more you find there. This is the same in all things. The deeper you go into the emptiness, the more you find, until you suddenly understand that God is there. This is not self, nor anything of form or consciousness, nor any of the aggregates of self. It is far deeper and is an impersonal level, in a sense.

It is the level where there is no concept of self, as the Buddha taught. And it is empty of self, as he taught. But that part of you that is no self, that is part of the One, resides there. It is through your life in this heart we all share, this soul we all share, that you find deathlessness.

This is not a soul with consciousness and continuity, but when you reach this level, is simply oneness. Truly we are all one.

I have been in this space. I have chosen to leave it, to teach. Always we learn, on any plane. This is my own learning now, to teach others and grow in compassion and wisdom as I do so. It is my choice, even as your learning in this lifetime is your choice. And yet, although temporarily I have chosen to assume the cloak of personality and consciousness, I dwell in this oneness too and it is my constant experience, as you try to make mindfulness your constant experience.

It is simply a matter of degrees. Bound as you are by physical form, it is hard to go as deep. This is fine. You are always in the right form and the right plane to learn what you have chosen to learn. Trust this, and honor your heart's wisdom. Please meditate on this. My words can take you only so far. The true understanding must come from within your own heart.

**Q:** You have talked about God and prayer, yet much of what you teach is Buddhism and there is no mention of God in the Buddha's teachings, nor of prayer. Why does the Buddha deny the existence of God and soul?

**A:** I feel the confusion behind your questions. Let us take them one at a time. We are not concerned with an "ism" here, but with truth. You are not fundamentally a Christian, a Moslem, a Jew or a Buddhist but a spiritual being, in human form. Through your many lifetimes you have been in all the major religions, and many lesser ones.

What is the truth that runs through all these religious beliefs and practices? The truth is Love, and God is Love!

There is now a form of engaged Buddhism called the Tiep Hien Order of Interbeing. It began in Vietnam during the war. *Tiep* means to be in touch; *hien* means the present time, the "now," which is all that is real. The essence of Tiep Hien is our relationship with each other and our world. When we are in touch with our deepest being in every moment we cannot help but be aware of our constant interrelationships with all else that is.

The first precept of this Order is "Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology, even Buddhist ones. All systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth." I ask you to look at the meaning here. How often do we look at an issue through our identity as a Buddhist or Christian and lose the truth behind what we see to be real because we're so locked in to the "ism" that has become part of our identity, part of the filtered lens that shades our reality.

You can only find what is real for yourself. If I tell you that God is real, I must also tell you not to believe me, for nothing is real until you know it for yourself, from your own experience.

You ask why the Buddha did not teach of God or soul, why he said all is emptiness. While I explain this, please keep in mind those lines in the Heart Sutra, "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form."

The Buddha taught a path grounded in reality and experience. You cannot know the soul; it must be felt with the heart and accepted on faith. From the space of egolessness there is perfect freedom. That much is clearly experienced by any being reaching this space. The samsaric cycle is broken, and suffering is ended. That is as far as he saw it necessary to go. What difference does it make whether Nirvana includes God and soul or is only empty, in so far as the Buddha's teachings of freedom? We are back here to my often repeated statement that everything and nothing are the same, which is no different from "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form."

You seem uncomfortable with this. Can you formulate the question?

**Q:** It's just that leaving God out of it seems a denial. And the Buddha says there is no soul.

**A:** The Buddha was a man. He lived on the human, earth plane. He had great wisdom and compassion, but he was not God and never claimed to be. This is what makes his teaching so beautiful. He learned nothing that is beyond the reach of any human.

**Q:** If I can see past lives and learn from them, and KNOW myself as a spiritual being, then why is he denying this knowledge. Obviously he had access to it too.

**A:** Because of his compassion for other suffering beings. You can move yourself into this awareness because of your faith. You know it as reality, but cannot prove it, nor can any on your plane. It is not meant to be proved, or the whole experience of faith would be denied you. If you ask beings to accept on faith, and make that faith a necessity for their liberation, then you exclude many. The Buddha limited his teachings to what could be known by human experience, not out of short-sightedness, but out of compassion. While his teachings are interpreted today as no-soul, no-God, from my

perspective I believe that he simply knew the matter of God and soul to be irrelevant to freedom from the samsaric cycle.

**Q:** It seems that I could prove "God" or "soul" in the same way I can prove egolessness, by my personal experience.

**A:** You are not being totally honest here. Look more closely. When you experience egolessness, you see the wheel of karma stop. You understand that you always have choice. The real-life effects are evident and obvious. When you experience soul, it is very vague, just a feeling of oneness and continuing awareness. Your direct knowledge of God is even less. Light, love. What reality have these? I am NOT denying their ABSOLUTE reality, in spiritual terms, but am talking about them in relation to human experience. Do you see that it is the veiled glimpse, and your faith, that allow you to know God. Few beings have been so graced as to know His reality while in human form. Even for Jesus a veil was laid across when he accepted human birth.

The Buddha is NOT making faith a condition of freedom. This has nothing to do with the reality of God! It is simply a statement of the Buddha's love and compassion.

**Q:** You've told us often that one of our most important lessons on this plane is faith. So why take away the need to learn faith?"

**A:** I cannot really explain this if you don't yet see it, child. You find God at the end of your path because you have faith that He is there. Think how much greater faith it takes, though in a different direction, to accept egolessness, no-self, Anatta, without the knowledge of God. This is truly facing annihilation and accepting that such annihilation is okay. It is having the faith to step out into total unknown. The lesson of faith is different, but no less profound.

Please return now to the precept I mentioned. As I speak, try to move past that lens that clouds your clear vision of reality. "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form." When you finally reach the place on your path where there is no self nor any notion of self, where there are no longer defined edges to your being nor any notion of separation between self and other, you may find total emptiness there. Or you may find fullness there, that it is a space that includes all that is, including God. Do you see that it is the same thing. God, Himself is "zero," is emptiness, and the emptiness is God. It is simply the totality of all that is.

The more you open your heart, the more you find fullness and love. If you choose to acknowledge, with faith, that this love is God, that is fine. If you choose to simply call it love, that is fine too. The truth here is love and it is at the end of your path, whichever route you choose. God is Love, by whatever name you call Him. Do not judge another because he uses a different word to define the same experience.

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## Short Answers and a Bit of Cosmic Humor

### Spiritual Concerns

**Question:** What does it feel like to die?

**Aaron:** It is the way you feel when you have stayed underwater just a bit too long. You emerge into the fresh, sweet air which fills your lungs with gladness, and into the sun's warmth which fills your soul with light.



**Q:** Should I become a vegetarian? It feels wrong to eat meat.

**A:** There are no "shoulds" here. You must do what feels right to you. But I tell you that it truly does not matter. Can you avoid destroying life as you walk through the grass? Should you never again have the sweet joy of walking through a sunlit meadow? Can you avoid destroying life even as you breath?

Simply give thanks to that life, which gives itself in love to sustain you. Do not take anything for granted. Thank all beings, large or microscopic, for the part they play in this great dance of life.



**Q:** You talk about the sanctity of all life. I was driving and accidentally killed a squirrel. How serious is this? I feel very guilty.

**A:** What does this experience teach you? Was your mind completely on your driving? Could you have been paying closer attention? Guilt is a negative emotion; it will not help you learn. Open your heart to life's lessons compassionately and without judgment. Learn what you need to learn. And thank this small being for its great gift. It has given its life to teach you something important. Perhaps this gift of love was its life's purpose. Thank it with all your heart, and send it your love.



**Q:** What are your favorite things on earth?

**A:** To list my favorite would be quite impossible. I am very fond of butterflies, rainbows and a sip of good cognac.



**Q:** Is my anger bad or wrong?

**A:** No, my dear one, it is never wrong to feel. It is immature and unskillful to use your emotions as an excuse to injure another.



**Q:** Where were the favorite places you lived while incarnate?

**A:** When I was young and lived in fertile valleys, I yearned for mountains. When I lived on mountains with stunning vistas and crisp air, I yearned for valleys.

Then I matured enough to stay in the moment and to love each for what it was, and found that each place had its own incomparable treasure.



**Q:** Is the sky the same color blue where you are?

**A:** Truly, yes, but what I perceive is different. I am not bound by a body and human perception. The blues look bluer and the flowers smell sweeter. I perceive the reality of things and do not see them through the lenses of fear, or self, or expectation. Even in your human form you can learn to see and hear more clearly. Let go of your expectations of the way things should be and you will learn to see them more truly as they are.



**Q:** Are you real?

**A:** I am as real as you are. And NO, I am not "dead," thank you! I simply exist on a different plane. You are made of light and substance; I am only made of light. When you move beyond the substance of your human form, then you also will be only light, until your next human incarnation. You call this death. I call it just a step in the process of our evolution to maturity.



**Q:** Can you talk directly to God?

**A:** We can all talk directly to God. Do you think He hears you less because your human form fogs your clear perception of Him?



**Q:** Do you feel pain where you are?

**A:** I feel no physical pain; I have no body to ache. I do feel pain at times, but do not personalize it as you do. Instead, I allow it to flow through me, as part of the energy of the universe. I feel the pain of all beings who suffer, and send them love.



**Q:** All religious systems claim to be truth. How do we tell which is really truth?

**A:** There is a Buddhist teaching that one must not mistake the finger pointing to the moon for the moon itself. All religious systems of thought are fingers pointing to the moon. The Dharma is not the Truth; the Bible is not the Truth; the Koran is not the Truth. To bow, chant, bind one's head and arm or face east in prayer are not Truth. They are all fingers pointing to the moon.

As you regard these "fingers," these paths, one will speak to your heart. It will call you to focus your attention in such a way that you finally begin to look beyond the finger and clearly see That to which it points. Then you will have found Truth. You will continue to have deep love and respect for the religious path that allowed you to see Truth, but you will know the difference between the path and the destination.



**Q:** Sometimes I feel a push to work on spiritual things; other times I feel lazy. Does it matter?

**A:** You are always working on "spiritual things." Each moment of your life, each thought, feeling, or event, is part of your path and planned to teach you. You have free will, and you decide whether or not you will utilize these opportunities to learn what you came to learn.

There is no time schedule here; you have all the time you need. But you must recognize that each moment is precious. There is only one "now." Learn what you can in this moment and you will be a wiser and more compassionate person in the next "now."



**Q:** You say we should learn from our mistakes. What are my worst mistakes?

**A:** If another must point out your mistakes, you are not yet ready to learn from them. I urge you to look deeply, but compassionately, into yourself and your mistakes and areas of learning will become obvious. If there are special questions you have relating to this, I'd be glad to answer them, but another being cannot do your learning for you.



**Q:** What is the meaning in the song of a bird?

**A:** You do not want the scientific, technical meaning here. The deeper meaning is Love!



**Q:** Will you incarnate again in a physical body?

**A:** I think not, dear ones. I have finished my work on your plane and have learning elsewhere. I must go where my own path leads me.

### **Social Issues**

**Q:** Talk about the plight of the homeless people in the world.

**A:** To which home do you refer, your spiritual home or that house you build to maintain your illusion that the body is all that needs a home? In truth, you are all home. You have never left. The illusion that you are separate from God is in itself what drives you to pierce that illusion, and understand your oneness.

Perhaps the physically homeless are one step further in penetrating the illusion.



**Q:** What can be done about starvation in the world?

**A:** Starvation is caused by the fear in some of you that there will not be enough, that your needs will go unmet. Fear drives some to take more than their share, and others starve.

When you outgrow this sense of self and other, when you learn the lessons of love, then there will no longer be need for starvation.



## Short Answers and a Bit of Cosmic Humor

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Please recognize that each starving person offers a gift of teaching to those who view themselves as separate, who out of fear must hoard against a shortage. How many children must you see starve before you transcend your fear and learn the lessons of love and oneness?



**Q:** I understand what you've said about starvation, but what about the reality of it? Are you saying it's all right to let people starve?

**A:** OH NO! It is NEVER all right to allow suffering and not try to alleviate it. On the physical plane, work as hard as you can so that not a single person need starve. But you must also recognize that on the spiritual plane, each soul has chosen its course with its own wisdom. Your lives weave an intricate tapestry. None of you stands separate from all others. Perhaps that starving child is here to teach you wisdom and compassion, and you are here to see that she need not suffer. You are all learning from each other.



**Q:** Aaron, can you talk about child abuse?

**A:** Violence against any being, for any reason, is never to be condoned. But what is being learned here? Trust the wisdom of that soul which gives itself into suffering to teach another. Is this not what Jesus did when he died on the cross?

Your lives interweave with infinite complexity. You teach each other and learn from each other. Always work to overcome violence in your world, but when it occurs, and any being dies or suffers, honor that being for the gift of its suffering, which is meant to teach you all.



**Q:** Is AIDS a punishment?

**A:** NO! NO! NO! AIDS is simply a disease. Let it teach you about love, not about fear! Open your hearts to its teaching.

### Political Concerns

**Q:** Nationalism seems to lead to hate, yet some countries do have so much more personal freedom. Is it wrong to defend that freedom?

**A:** National boundaries accentuate your separateness. This is all illusion. You build your fences out of fear, and they keep you separate, safe within the illusion yet desperately alone and afraid.

When enough of you learn to trust and love, the fences will come down and you will all know that the differences between you are very minute compared to the oneness that binds you.

**Q:** Are you saying that the arms race is unnecessary?

**A:** The arms race perpetuates the illusion that fear can serve as a bridge to oneness. NO. NO. NO! This illusion is not truth. Only by letting go of your fear can you learn to

## Short Answers and a Bit of Cosmic Humor

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love, and only through love can you move beyond your fear. You must begin somewhere. Each of you, individually, must learn to listen to that inner voice that bids you to love and trust.

**Q:** Are you saying we can trust other nations that have weapons pointed at us? History shows that our protection lies in our strength.

**A:** What history? How old are your souls? I do not mean to minimize the issues of your present world, but look at it for a moment from my perspective and not your human one.

How many individual beings have lived and died? How many nations have lived and died? Always there will be places of greater personal freedom and places with less, until you all learn the real lesson here, that of love. When you can begin to live your lives from that truth there will be no more need of nations, nor of governments as you know them. Then all your lives can be lived from the truth of love, and not from fear.

**Q:** Aren't you being awfully utopian in this idea?

**A:** Not at all. You are all evolving toward a higher consciousness. More and more, you are all getting ready to live your lives in love.

**Q:** When will we have world leaders who are ready to lead us toward world peace?

**A:** When enough of you have learned to love, and choose such leaders.

**Q:** You talk about trust. How can we learn to trust?

**A:** Learn to listen with your hearts. Learn to love and you will walk through life with truth, and that truth will be a radiance which touches and illuminates all lives.

### Cosmic Humor

**Q:** Hey, Aaron, heard any new jokes this week?

**A:** If I told you a good one and that it was at least nine hundred years old, would you be offended? The beauty of reincarnation is that not only the spirit but the jokes get another chance!



**Q:** Aaron, what happens to all the socks that disappear from my laundry?

**A:** They spin into the higher densities and we thoroughly enjoy them here, as we don't have the idea you humans do that they must match. They are very colorful!

**Q:** Would you mind sending some favorites back? In return, I'll send you the ones that were pairs to socks that got holes.

**A:** We'd be glad to ask them if they will return, but you must understand that if they come back it must be through reincarnation. They will be very small, infant socks, you might say.

## Short Answers and a Bit of Cosmic Humor

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**Q:** If time is non-linear, can't you send them back before they get lost and need to reincarnate?

**A:** That would be before you've made this request and they'll simply spin away again! To ask them not to spin away would be a violation of their free will.

**Q:** Can you just keep sending them back?

**A:** Please note that they do not belong to you but merely agree to live with you. If they have decided to pursue their journey elsewhere, what right have I to interfere? I think you had best take it up with the socks.

Have you heard the saying, "Trust God and tie your camel"? Before you wash them, ask them if they will please remain in the machine and express your love and appreciation. Then pin them together. You may lose whole pairs but at least you won't have odd socks. Or start a new custom of wearing mismatched socks. They really are very lovely that way! Are there further questions?



**Q:** Do you report back to anyone on the spirit plane about your work with us?

**A:** It's not quite "reporting" yet I do convey important information to others here, such as some of the funnier jokes I learned last night.



**Q:** You tell us nothing is ever lost, but just goes somewhere else or changes form. If my ego keeps getting smaller, doesn't it have to go somewhere? Where is all the ego of all the enlightened beings?

**A:** Certainly. We have a big "ego bin" here and recycle it. It's far more efficient that way. Often we offer it to aspiring politicians and world savers. If we had to transmute ego energy each time it surfaced, we'd never have time to ponder the wonder of butterflies!

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# Oneness

## A guided meditation

*(To be read to yourself or shared aloud with a friend. Please pause at each space between lines.)*

**Aaron:** I have said that I plan to lead a meditation, but that has different meaning for each of you. What is meditation?

There are so many different ways to meditate and each has validity; there is no one right way. The method which suits your needs and your path is the best way for you at this time. Do not hold to this method in a narrow way, saying "This is meditation." Be willing to grow and to learn. The right method of meditation is any method which will bring you home. This changes as you change. So as I lead you in a meditation now, I ask you to give up your old ideas of what meditation is. Simply bring yourself to the present moment, and open your heart to the possibilities for the future. The present is now. You can not live in the past, nor in the future.

Relax your body. The position in which you sit during meditation has different degrees of importance depending on the kind of meditation you do. Sitting here now, simply find a comfortable position.

Breathe deeply several times: deep cleansing breaths.

Bring your attention to the third eye. Now see the inside of your forehead as a movie screen. Simply watch it.

Return your attention to your breath. Notice the inhalation and the exhalation. As you breathe out, release all of the holdings of the past, all the pain, all the attachments. Feel the freshness in each new breath, and how it brings your attention to the present. Simply be here, and now.

Begin to notice that moment between the inhalation and the exhalation. This is the NOW!

Slightly extend this pause between breaths and concentrate your attention here. As you do, see if you can feel your heartbeat. Simultaneously bring your attention to this "now" and into your heart. Feel the pulse of life within yourself. The essence of your being lies not in your brain but in your heart.

Reach into your heart. Look for your soul there.

Find your highest self there, that beautiful and perfect essence of yourself that has lived with you through all your lifetimes.

Feel yourself expand to hold the grandness and perfection that you are, the beauty and wonder of you.

Each of you is a being of perfect light. In your essence you are all perfect.

Note that this being who you truly are, this essence of yourself, goes far beyond the human sitting here tonight.

## Oneness

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This highest self has lived so many lives and been so many people.

You have loved and you have hated. You have known great joy and you have known fear and pain. You have been of every race and lived on every continent.

While the human that you are sits here bound in its fears and limitations, your essence knows no limitations.

It is boundless;

it is limitless;

it is perfect.

Feel that being within your heart. Feel the limitlessness of that being.

It is your own Soul, but it is not separate.

There are no edges to it, no defined boundaries, because you are part of God. His heart is your heart, the Heart we all share.

Through the Heart of God you are part of each other.

Reach out with your hearts to all other beings. Feel your oneness with each other. Reach out in love.

Let go of the fear. In the One Heart there is no need for fear.

When you love and trust there is no need for fear.

Fear is an armor to protect that self that feels vulnerable.

Fear is small ego self's shout to preserve itself solidly in a universe that ego cannot comprehend.

Fear would wall out the universe and wall in the self.

Fear is the cry of the self that judges itself and sees itself flawed in body and emotion.

Fear is demanding, intolerant and closed.

None of you are perfect and all of you are perfect. Do you understand that?

In your human form, you are not meant to be perfect, and in your essence you are always perfect. It can be no other way.

Let go of this fear. Trust, and allow yourself to love and be loved. Let your heart expand with love for your self, your beautiful and perfect self, and for all the others in the world who are also beautiful and perfect.

Feel the edges dissolve; feel the oneness; allow your love to carry you past the cage of fear.

Breathe out fear and armoring.

Breathe in the vast energy and love of the universe.

Rest in that space between inhale and exhale, the infinite NOW.

Breathe out fear and armoring. Let "self" go.

Breathe in spaciousness ... love ...

Rest, opening to this wonderful Now.

Breathe out boundaries.

Breathe in the infinite.

You are the infinite! Rest there.

Please continue silently for as long as feels appropriate ...

*(Long pause.)*

Take a deep breath now and return your attention to yourself. Do not build up that armor again, just return to your center. As we end and you open your eyes, note within you that perfection of each being.

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# Meeting Your Higher Self

## A guided meditation

*(To be read to yourself or shared aloud with a friend. Please pause at each space between lines.)*

**Aaron:** Relax and find a comfortable position. Take several deep breaths. It would be best to close your eyes so you can concentrate without distraction.

As you sit here in your human form, know that this body is just one aspect of yourself. You each have a highest self, that beautiful and perfect part of you which has experienced all your lifetimes and is intimately familiar with the home for which you yearn. You have begun as a spark of God, and have chosen the human path to maturity, that you may grow increasingly compatible with your Creator and find your way home. Your incarnations are the schoolroom for this highest self, which is already perfect in its essence, yet grows in wisdom through the learnings of each lifetime.

Accompany me on a brief journey to meet this highest self, and visit your home.

Direct your attention to your breath. Notice the in-breath and the out. Move deeper within. Look through the third eye. Allow the inside of your forehead to be a movie screen, and watch the pictures that unfold.

You have just emerged from a woods, and are on a lovely open hillside. All around you are flowers, in brilliant hues. Birds are singing, and the soft wings of butterflies touch you gently. The scent of freshness fills the air.

Far below you see a grove of trees, a grassy park-like spot where beings move about. Beyond the grove is a river, glistening in the sunshine. Across the river are lovely hills, turning into blue mountains in the distance.

You start down the hill. The sun is warm on your back and the cool, fresh breeze touches your face.

The figures are larger now. Some present a solid form; others appear as light. Some sit; others stand. They are in small groups. There is an air of peace, and the quiet hum of voices.

You do not know these beings, yet you feel you've known them forever. You feel no fear or hesitation as you approach. You are certain of your welcome.

One being catches your gaze. It is the figure of your dreams, deeply beautiful in the manner that most speaks love and beauty to your heart.

Focusing your attention on this being, you forget the others. There are only you two in all the universe.

This being, male or female, solid or light being, walks toward you with arms outstretched in welcome. Do not force its appearance. Let it be however it is.

You each walk very slowly. There is all the time you need for this meeting.

## Meeting Your Higher Self

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As you grow near, you gaze deeply into each other's eyes. You trust this being completely, and feel only intense joy in its presence.

Stop. Breath deeply. Look into each other's eyes. There is no rush.

Feel a deeper love than you have ever known touch your heart. It is a love that is familiar, remembered and yearned for, through all your human lifetimes.

Slowly you approach each other and touch outstretched hands together. There is such total love and trust in that touch.

Know that this being is yourself, your highest self. It is more you than this human body you inhabit. It is your essence, your soul.

Touch hands, gaze into the depths of each other's eyes, and know the joy of this reunion. Feel the deep peace that comes with your knowing of yourself.

You are whole, you are perfect, you are unlimited.

Separating hands, your highest self begins a Sufi song and dance.

The first line, with hands raised in blessing—"May the blessings of God rest upon you" ...

The second line, as hands again touch lightly—"May His peace abide with you" ...

With the final lines, your highest self places one hand over your heart. You do the same. With your free hand you cover that dear hand which touches you. "May His presence illuminate your heart, now and forever more."

You repeat this song, as often as you like, gazing deeply into each other's eyes.

May the blessings of God rest upon you.

May His peace abide with you.

May His presence illuminate your heart, now and forever more.

Slowly you merge. You become the one being that you truly are.

You are on the spiritual plane now. You will not need your body for awhile. Leave it sitting safely here, resting in the sunshine. Go with your highest self, as one being.

Just gently rest your body on the grass, where it will safely await your return.

You have begun to notice the other beings. They are all spirits like yourself.

Two circles are forming, one inside the other. Join the one of your choice. Face the being beside you in the other circle.

You repeat this Sufi dance, gazing deeply into each being's eyes as you sing and dance together. Move from one to the next, and on to the next.

Go slowly, moving with the group. Hear the beauty of the music. Let it fill you and surround you.

Feel the edges of your being dissolve.

There is no "self" or "other" here. There is only oneness.

You are whole, as are all the beings that you meet. You have no needs to call attention to, no pain or emptiness.



## Meeting Your Higher Self

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There is only love and oneness.

You move beyond yourself. You are aware of yourself dancing and singing, and yet there is no self. You are as fully each partner as yourself.

You are all beings. You are one.

And, as the song suggests, the presence of God fills your hearts, and radiates through the valley.

Continue to dance as long as you like.

When you have had enough, step back and watch.

It is the same whether you dance or watch. You share the perceptions of the dancers and the watchers. The total harmony of your being fills your hearts.

There is total joy and peace. There is no separation from any living thing.

There is only oneness, with yourself, with all beings, and with God.

Dance, watch, and feel the Joy of your oneness.

The shadows grow longer. The dance is ending.

You draw apart, but without regret. The love fills your heart. The memory of this oneness will stay with you.

Return to that human form you left resting on the grass. It is time to join with it again.

You are back in human form, but for awhile you have been your highest self.

You know that this is who you truly are. You are perfect. You are limitless. You are complete.

You must leave this grove now, but the parting is not sad. You may come back at any time. You are always welcome here.

This is your home.

Your highest self accompanies you to the path. You feel the sun on your face as you walk up the hill. Behind you, the beautiful music from the valley accompanies you on your way.

Walk slowly. There is no hurry. Feel the deep peace and love that goes with you.

Whenever you are ready, you may open your eyes.

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# Lovingkindness

## A guided meditation

*(To be read to yourself or shared aloud with a friend. Please pause at each space between lines. The word "Pause" requests a longer pause.)*

*I am Aaron. Traditionally this meditation begins with the self. I find that in your culture it is very difficult for many people to offer loving wishes to themselves so we begin with one to whom it is easier to offer such thoughts and then come around to the self.*

*This is not forgiveness, which is a further step, but only opening your heart to the pain, the pain of all beings, and wishing them well.*

*There is no wrong or right way to do this practice. If resistance arises, simply note it and re-enter the meditation in whatever way you are able. You are not requested to dive all the way in but only to enter as deeply as is comfortable.*

*As you work with this practice, please modify it and make it your own.*

Find a comfortable position, body relaxed, back erect, eyes closed softly.

Bring to the heart and mind the image of one who for whom there is loving respect. This may be a dear friend, parent, teacher or any being with whom the primary relationship is one in which you have been nurtured.

Look deeply at that being, deeper than you ever have before, and see that he or she has suffered. He has felt pain of the body or the heart. She has known grief, loss and fear. He has felt loneliness and disconnection. She has been lost and confused. See the ways this dear one has suffered.

Speaking silently from the heart, note this one's pain, offering first the name:

You have suffered. I see how you have felt alone, afraid, in pain. You have felt grief. You have felt alienated, felt your heart closed. Your life has not always brought you what you might have wished for.

What loving thoughts can you offer this dear one? Let the thoughts come with the breath, arising and moving out.

May you be free of suffering.

May you be happy.

May you love and be loved.

May you find the healing that you seek.

May you find peace.

Please continue silently, repeating these phrases for several minutes. Go slowly. Allow your heart to connect with this dear one, to open to his/her pain and offer these wishes, prompted by the loving heart. I will be quiet.

## Lovingkindness

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(Pause.)

Now, let this loved one move aside and in his/her place invite in your own self. It is sometimes so hard to open our hearts to ourselves. What blocks that love? Just for experiment sake, please follow the practice and see how it feels, even if it is difficult.

Look deeply at the self and observe that, just as with the loved one, you have suffered. You have felt pain of the body or the heart. You have known grief, loss and fear. You have felt loneliness and disconnection, felt lost and confused. See the ways you have suffered. Without engaging in maudlin self-pity, simply observe the wounds you have borne.

Speaking silently from the heart, this time to your own self: Offer your name:

You have suffered. I see how you have felt alone, afraid, in pain. You have felt grief. You have felt alienated, felt your heart closed. Your life has not always brought you what you might have wished for.

What do you wish for yourself?

May you be free of suffering.

May you be happy.

May you love and be loved.

May you find the healing that you seek.

May you find peace.

Please continue silently, repeating these phrases for several minutes. Go slowly. Allow your heart to connect with your deepest self, to open to your pain and longing and offer these wishes, prompted by the loving heart. I will be quiet.

(Pause.)

Now let the self move aside and in its place invite in one with whom there has been hard feeling. Best not to choose the heaviest relationship at first but allow practice with less difficult pain and move slowly to the heavier emotions.

It is so painful to maintain that separation. A wise teacher has said, "Never put anyone out of your heart." What blocks opening?

Letting go....

Just for experiment sake, please follow the practice and see how it feels, even if it is difficult. Please express your own pain too, as you speak to this one. Can you feel the space where your pain is one?

Give this one's name. Speak from your heart.

You have hurt me, through your words, your acts, even your thoughts.

Through what came from you I have experienced pain.

When I look deeply, I see that you have also known pain. You have suffered. I see how you have felt alone, afraid, in pain. You have felt grief. You have felt alienated, felt your heart closed. Your life has not always brought you what you might have wished for.

## Lovingkindness

---

May you be free of suffering.

May you be happy.

May you love and be loved.

May you find the healing that you seek.

May you find peace.

Please continue silently, repeating these phrases for several minutes. Go slowly. Allow your heart to connect with this one, to open to his/her pain and offer these wishes, prompted by the loving heart. I will be quiet.

(Pause.)

Throughout the world, beings suffer. Not only humans but plants, insects, animals, even the earth herself.

May all beings everywhere be free of suffering.

May all beings be happy.

(Bell.)

May all love and be loved.

May all find the healing that they seek.

(Bell.)

May all beings everywhere find perfect peace.

(Bell.)

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# At Home in the Universe

## A guided meditation

*(To be read to yourself or shared aloud with a friend. Please pause at each space between lines. The word "Pause" requests a longer pause.)*

I am Aaron. This is a meditation to guide you into an experience of the essence of your being, beyond the conceptual images of self as form, personality or consciousness.

We will work today with the assistance of a plant, a photograph of a beloved teacher or revered high being, an object such as a shell or flower, a sleeping pet or child or even the open sky out of your window. Choose one object with which you will remain throughout this one meditation. At another time you may use a different object. Please seat yourself so the selected object rests before you. If it is small, such as a shell, let it rest elevated to eye level on a table.

Please begin by moving into a comfortable position which you can maintain for some time. Allow the back to be as erect as is possible.

Body soft, relaxed;  
shoulders soft, loose;  
abdomen soft, open;  
eyes soft, unfocused.  
Seeing through and beyond.  
Not fixed on anything.

Let the jaw hang slightly open, tongue resting loosely in space, not touching the teeth nor the roof of the mouth but floating.

The breath releases with a soft, whispered "ahhhh." Let it flow out from the core of you.

Eyes resting unfocused, seeing through and beyond.

Let the breath flow out, into and around the object.

Edges dissolving as the breath moves.

Draw in the in-breath, noting how it enters the body.

Out; offering this object your very life-breath,  
and in, drawing in its most vital energy.

Out. Let awareness follow the breath, pausing at whatever resists its full release;  
touching resistance with gentle awareness.

In. Noting any defenses against receiving completely;  
touching resistance with gentle awareness.

Out. with a whispered "ahhhh." Mouth open, tongue floating; all resistance dissolving.

In. Subject/object differentiation dissolving in the spacious breath.

Out. Boundaries falling away. No edge to your breath, nor to your being.

## At Home in the Universe

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In. Receiving completely, that which has been there since the very beginning.

Out. Releasing completely that which was labeled "I."

In. No one receiving; nothing received.

Resting in the natural state of spacious awareness.

Please continue for a few minutes in silence.

(Pause.)

Does the out-breath stop at the object? Let it move out still further now. How far does it go when offered freely?

Nothing to stop it.

Touching the ends of the universe.

Drawing in from the same infinite space.

Infinite breath;

Infinite being.

Out. Make yourself at home in the universe.

Breath and pure awareness touching everything and everywhere.

No self: No object.

Floating there in luminous pure awareness.

In. The same infinite space within, where it all floats.

Luminous.

Open.

Radiant.

Never-ending.

Rest there.

Expanded outward and within, we find the same essence.

Rest there.

Let the breath breathe itself.

Rest! Nowhere to go. You are home. Rest!

(Pause.)

And now we return to the relative consciousness.

Blink your eyes. Again.

Take a deep in-breath and note the relative experience,  
seeing it still from outside, from great space.

Out. Allow the return of "self," noting it is just a convenient concept.

In. That self returning to the notion of receiver.

Let edges re-appear but note that they are concept only, a handy tool for dwelling in the relative condition.

Out. Let the edges dissolve again.

## At Home in the Universe

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In. With the notion of boundary.

Out. No boundary.

Play with this for a few moments.

(Pause.)

You are the relative human with concept of boundary, of self.

You are the absolute, pure awareness resting free of time, of space, of illusion.

Be both! It takes courage, love and awareness, but you can do it.

Train yourself to rest in this vast spaciousness of all being, and to still hear the human laugh and cry with a heart of compassion.

This is the beginning and the end of all your practice.

You practice until there is nowhere to go, nothing to do, and then rest there ...

resting in the infinite heart

at home in the universe.

May all beings come to rest in this pure heart/mind.

(Bell.)

May all beings know the perfect joy of their true being.

(Bell.)

May all beings find perfect peace.

(Bell.)

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# Namaste

I wish to say just a few words in parting. First, I thank you for permitting me to share with you, and for the time and effort you have given to reading my words.

Remember that you are also spirit. There is nothing I have said that you don't already know, in the deepest wisdom of your being. I only have more conscious access to that wisdom.

Please do not take my word for any of what is written here. Practice, learn, and understand for yourselves. Your own guides are readily available to you, but they cannot shout at you through closed doors. As you open your hearts, you open the doors between our planes and facilitate communication.

Remember that whatever guidance we can give you, whatever help, we cannot walk the path for you. You must take the steps to maturity for yourselves, knowing that there is always a hand offered in loving support. You are never alone, yet you must do your own learning.

Above all, enjoy the incarnation and each other. Your joy brings so much light, my dear ones. Your joy is a manifestation of your love. It brings light to where there has only been darkness, love to where there has only been hatred. And that is why you are here.

When you learn to live in this eternal NOW with an open heart, fear will become seen for the delusion that it is and love will be the only reality.

At that time, there will be no more separation in the universe. It is a day we will all experience. Meanwhile, each step taken with loving awareness leads us closer to experiencing the fullness of Light which is the birthright of each being, however great or small.

May each of you feel my love and that constant love which surrounds you as you find your way home.

There is a beautiful word of greeting and parting in eastern countries, Namaste. The Light and inner wisdom within me bows in respect to the Light and inner wisdom within you. So to each of you,

Namaste,

**Aaron**



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# Deep Spring Publications

## NEWSLETTER

**Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry Newsletter:** 8 ½ x 11, stapled, 20 pages

The newsletter, published three times a year, is offered on a donation basis. Our cost to print and mail this to you is \$7/year (\$10 Canadian).

## BOOKS

*We offer books at our cost, including mailing. All our books are 8 ½ x 11 and Cerlox bound.*

**Aaron:** 1995 expanded edition, 123 pages. Includes many new chapters and a new format. \$10 (\$14 Canadian)

This is a basic book of Aaron's teachings, with selections taken from the most frequently asked questions: Who are we? Why are we incarnate? How can we best do the work we came to do? How can we live our lives with more wisdom and love?

**Christmas Stories, A Collection of Memories from Aaron:** Newly updated, 97 pages. \$6 (\$8 Canadian)

Aaron's inspiring memories from the past life in which he was a "simple shepherd" who knew and loved that teacher we call Jesus. Each year at Christmas Aaron has shared memories with us as "teaching stories."

**No Chain at All:** 150 pages. \$12 (\$15 Canadian)

This is very much the heart of what Aaron's been teaching. While you can just read through it, the book is really a workbook which invites your participation. To quote Aaron, *"I find the expression of this law of dependent origination to be one of Buddhism's most valuable contributions to the planet. It is called 'The Chain of Becoming.' Teachings speak of the way we have each become caught in this chain, moving blindly from one incarnation to another, never able to find freedom from suffering. This is real, on one plane. Yet on another level, there is no **chain at all**, nor has there ever been. You are free. You have always been free. In the coming months we will explore these truths and come to see that they are not contradictory ..."*

**The Path of Natural Light, Parts 1 and 2:** Part 1, 224 pages. Part 2, 230 pages. \$14 each part (\$20 Canadian)

These are **complete** transcripts of the 1993-1994 Wednesday night classes on relative versus ultimate reality, and light/energy work. From the book: *"I see our work then as finding that balance between relative and ultimate—the horizontal plane of healing and the vertical plane of knowing there was never anybody that needed to heal. With wisdom and pure awareness, that sense of self dissolves ... the whole notion of fragmentation was an illusion, but it is the illusion of the relative reality, and the suffering*

*within that illusion must be attended. The human manifestation needs healing ... In past months we have been discussing the light body, the perfect, unwrinkled sheet of paper, the illusory wrinkles and how the physical, emotional and mental bodies reflect those wrinkles ... We move ahead with this caution: what I teach is not escape from your humanness, but deeper embracing of that humanness, wrinkles and all ... again, I remind you, you are not getting rid of. There was nothing there to get rid of. Rather, you are freeing yourself of the delusion that there was something that needed to be gotten rid of."*

**Seven Days: A Journey Into Awareness, Days One to Three, Part One:** 105 pages. \$9 (\$12 Canadian)

There have been many requests for a book from Aaron about meditation. This book offers in-depth material on meditation practice with specific "how to" instruction. In November 1996, Barbara and Aaron offered a three day workshop/retreat in Mexico City. In April 1997 they returned to lead a four day silent residential meditation retreat. This book contains the transcripts of all of the talks and instruction, offered by both Aaron and Barbara, during the first three of those seven days. The first days deal more with spiritual inquiry and basic instruction in vipassana or insight meditation. There is a progressive deepening of instruction. There is also considerable discussion of working with heavy emotions and the various painful catalysts of our lives, with specific instruction offered for meditation with heavy mind states, resistance, restlessness, physical pain and other difficult states of mind and body. "Days One to Three" is the November workshop. "Days Three to Seven," the April retreat, will be available later.

**The Awakened Heart:** 147 pages. \$12 (\$15 Canadian)

Approximately 1300 years ago, the Buddhist Indian monk/poet Shantideva wrote "The Way of the Bodhisattva," elucidating an important part of the Buddhist path. "The Awakened Heart" is not commentary on the poem, but uses it as background. In Aaron's words: *"For many years you have heard me talk about making space for the heavy emotions. A primary emphasis of my teaching has been that it is not bad to feel emotions, that when certain conditions are present, certain emotions will arise ... I teach people to make more space around the emotion ... If you don't want those emotions to arise you must begin to look deeply at the conditions out of which they arise, primarily the conditions of fear, of the illusion of separation—separation from other beings, separation from the divine ... Through a series of practices and exercises, one could more deeply open to that highest aspect of the self which does not choose to invite in the conditions which give rise to such painful emotion. This is not a 'getting rid of' anything, rather we note that side by side there is the tense and frightened human and there is the innately loving, open-hearted human. You have a choice: you can enact your fear or you can choose to note your fear, to observe that the loving Awakened Heart is always present, to nurture it, and to enact that loving heart. You always have a choice."*