

December 6, 2022 Tuesday Evening, Living Awake Class

(This talk not yet fully reviewed by Barbara and Aaron)

Maturing from spiritual child to adult; What does enlightenment experience mean? Experiencing higher self; How do we talk to skeptics of the spirit realm?; What is love?; Soul groups

Barbara: This is our last formal class of the semester, and Saturday is our close of the semester. Aaron has been tossing all kinds of ideas toward me. It's going to be a good day.

We started with the Ox Herding Pictures and the finding that there is such a thing as an ox. Seeking the ox—what is it? Finding its footsteps. Seeing little signs of it. Catching up to it. Seeing it's wild and doesn't want to get caught. Connecting with the ox.

John suggested not "taming the ox" but—I can't remember what term he used; it's at the edge of my thought—but being present with the ox. We don't have to change anything in the ox, just getting to know the ox.

And eventually as he calms down, inviting him home with us. We don't want a wild ox bouncing around our living room. Where is this ox that's more centered?

Then, second semester we're going to move on to the second part of the Ox Herding Pictures, much more the non-duality teachings, including some more of path of sacred darkness. No distinction between light and darkness. Putting it all together.

But for first semester, just getting to the point where we're ready to invite this ox into our living room.

A few of you have remarked to me about the story I told just after my birthday, when I woke up at 1am, 2am, 5am on my birthday with strobe lights going off in my bedroom, malfunctioning. Malfunctioning smoke alarm, Hal's alarm malfunctioning. Whooo! It wasn't the strobe lights that were the issue, it was what my mind did with the strobe lights. Resistance, don't want, aversion, pain.

These are going to keep coming up in our lives. I see a few of you out there who have reported to me some challenges in the past couple of weeks. This is how life is. Sometimes there will be challenges; sometimes no challenges.

I had hoped for a long peaceful day today and there was just one thing after another, after another, after another. This is life.

How are we able to be at peace with all of this? I don't know about you, but I guess it's true—and I hope it's true, and I know from what some of you share with me that it IS true for a number of you, at least—we're maturing. We're getting to a point where we're no longer a child. We're much more getting to a point of presence in our lives and really able to hold things in the immensity of our hearts. Not struggle with things so much.

As I'm talking I'm remembering something I want to pull up. Just a minute... This is something that I opened the other day to share with somebody. It's from Aaron probably 20 or more years ago, just private conversations, private journals. And I want you to feel yourself in here.

He said:

What is enlightenment experience? You've asked me that many times, and I've declined to answer, as I did not want to focus on a goal other than opening and learning and becoming more aware. So what is it?

Let's use the Buddha's river. You cross and find yourself on a new shore, but immediately you realize you've just set foot on land, that there's a whole world beyond. You are nowhere but at the beginning.

In a sense, it's a rite of passage into adulthood. When you are finally an adult, what do you do with that? If all you do is to sit and tell people, "I'm finally an adult," to brag and let that state be an excuse from doing your work, then you are still a child wearing adult garb.

The true adult has no time or need to mention this, or even think about it. Rather, he is busy being an adult. Being responsible. Serving others. Doing whatever needs to be done.

I'm skipping a bit, as this was personal to me...

We must be deeply aware of the responsibility, and that we are very young adults. There is very much we do not know.

I'm changing it a little to make it all of us.

There is no fear here, just strong openness to learn, and that is fine. But keep your humility about you. You are truly just on the threshold, and you must work tirelessly and ceaselessly if you're not to simply stagnate with a prideful, "I made it!"

Enjoy the bliss of any deep peace that you're experiencing and let it be a balance to heightened pain. Stay aware and trust. It is really no different than any place else on the path. Simply, clearer vision gives you added responsibility.

So what does enlightenment experience mean? Nothing. It is not the experience but what you do with the experience that matters.

To open into enlightenment is simply to understand that you are nothing, empty of self, just energy and light, and that is all you need *ever* be. That this is the substance of God and the universe. "I am That!" It is truly lightening rather than enlightening. A divestment of the illusion of self so you no longer need to carry that burden.

That knowledge is the threshold, but you walk the same world, only with a new perspective that asks constant mindfulness, responsibility, and love.

Enlightenment drops the burdens of ignorance and fear and picks up other burdens in their places. Yet, carrying that new burden of love, of service, of oneness, is perfect freedom. It's a space where you can finally hand the reins to God, let go of control, simply be, and do what is required and serve with love and with an open heart.

I'll make sure you get a copy of that.

So, we're not assuming to be enlightened. We are assuming to be lightened a bit, not so caught in the heaviness of the ego, the heaviness of the stories. This is such a big shift, not to stop the stories, not that the stories cease, but that we see them faster and say, "Oh, you again. Just another story."

I hope that many of you have been inching toward that this semester. Coming to a place where, when the stories come up strong, you are able to say, "Ah, story, story." Who is the self that's caught in the story? There's no self there, just all the outflow of conditions. And then to rest in the spaciousness that's beyond those conditions, beyond the stories.

This is where we're hoping to inch our way along to this first semester. So, catching up with the ox. Getting to pat him on the face and the back, feed him some grain. See him jump away from us, not really wanting to be caught, and gradually settling down. Mind gradually settles down and says, "Yes, I'm ready. I'm ready to come more into the stillness that is my deeper truth. I'm ready to know myself as love."

And that's how we tend to the ox. And as we tend to him in that way, he says, "Yeah, I'm ready to come home with you." We don't force him home, we just gently invite him home.

Aaron is not going to give a formal talk tonight. We're going to spend this last class hour with questions and then pass it to John for meditation. So, we're just going to go into questions and answers.

I want to share one more thing. You seem to find some value in my talking about what's coming up for me. I've had the great joy to spend some time talking with Anna, of *Anna, Grandmother of Jesus*. Colette was here for the board meeting and channeled Anna for me, and I've also just done some talking with her on my own.

You know that I've been working for lifetimes with some of the old stories of unworthiness, abandonment, and so forth, and I've gotten very much past those. They still come up but I don't get snared into them. But there may still be a moment of, "Oh!"—feeling it, and then seeing it for what it is and moving past it, letting it go.

As I've worked with these throughout this and, I assume, past lifetimes, there was still that small story. And to me, Anna was very much grandmother, mother Anna. She was never my genetic mother or grandmother. But through several lifetimes—she says many lifetimes—she was very much a mother figure to me.

Well, I had a startling realization that was very beautiful as I talked to her, as Colette

was sitting here next to me channeling her. Anna was holding my hand, looking in my eyes. And I realized, I don't need to be a child to her mother anymore. Of course, we always want our mothers. But I realized—and I said to her—“I feel more like your sister now.” And she smiled a big smile and she said, kind of, “Finally! Finally you've got it! You don't have to be a child anymore.” Those were not her exact words but her meaning.

And I'm sharing this because it's true for all of us. It's part of what I just read to you from Aaron. Coming to the point where we're willing to say, “Yes, I'm an adult, and I can handle things.” Not always. Not always perfectly, certainly. Sometimes not even at all. But yes, I can handle this. I am whole. I am beautiful. I am love.

And I think for me this is the whole meaning of this first semester: getting ourselves part way along, even if only a little part, to that point where we can acknowledge we're adults now.

Aaron used to say to me frequently, “Adults don't get in the way and make trouble for other people.” He put it in a much more eloquent way. But when I was feeling tired and just wanted to nag at Hal or do something not quite skillful, he would gently remind me: Adults don't need to do that. Pay attention. And I would realize, no, I don't need to do that, see the part of me that wanted to do that and hold a lot of compassion for myself, and not need to act it out.

We are adults. You are all adults. We are growing up. And in order to do the service that we hope to do in this world, we have to acknowledge and live as adults. That doesn't mean there's no time to be children. And it's not about play. To go out and play is a very adult thing to do, not just a child thing to do.

But to get caught in the old emotions and the old stories, at what point do we say, “That's enough. My highest intention is love and service. And yes, I'm ready.” And spirit will take your hands and walk with you and love you and cherish you. We can do it.

Thank you for hearing me. It was a beautiful thing to share that with Anna. And when I said I was a little bit embarrassed and feeling disrespectful to say, “I feel like your sister,” she gave such a big smile and say, “Yes.” We're all her sisters and brothers.

Okay, raising hands with questions...

(Question not recorded)

Barbara: It's hard. Part of what we're being offered the opportunity to learn is trust and faith, both broad faith and verified faith. What are we trusting?

We all have a higher self. And a sixth density being like Aaron, he no longer is in a body. He no longer has a third density form, or fourth or fifth. He is basically his own higher self. What we hear from Aaron is the higher self of Aaron.

You as a third density being are made up of all of it. You have a third density physical and mental body, and you're the sixth density part of yourself too.

We can learn to tune into the higher self. We do that in meditation. And this is something other than vipassana, pure awareness, although it's probably some pure awareness. But to listen and hear our higher self. And then, when the voice says, "Can I trust this? Am I making this up?", ah, watch the contraction. We come back to vipassana. Fear, contracting. The one who knows that it can trust is not contracted. The third density aspect of ourselves is right there, contracted, saying, "This can't be me. This can't be true."

So, when we look at that fear from a perspective of watching fear arise, having clarity for a moment, and then, "No, couldn't be. Can I trust it? Ah, feeling fear, feeling fear." And then just working with it in a very skillful way with vipassana. We see how that whole fear, "can't trust," arose out of conditions, is impermanent, not self—let it go.

John, I know you've had a lot of experience learning to trust your higher self. Do you wish to talk about that at all?

(John's initial statements not recorded)

John: ... another being. And yet, the tone, I guess you would call it the <tremble>, the energy of the thoughts, are different than when I would just normally think and conceptualize. It was something other than that.

And so, I just would let it go, just let it flow. And notice that as I did that there was less of a sense of self or separate self. That I was in touch with another aspect of my being, which Barbara has described as the higher self.

I remember Barbara saying one time to me that she could see what my higher self looked like. I have never seen that. I don't have a very visual mind. But I remember Barbara kind of describing what my higher self looked like.

So, just through this process of the meditation, of writing, and especially as it relates to dharma, that the combination of those two things helped me to increasingly get in touch with my higher self. I can feel a difference when I'm kind of listening to and kind of acting from that energy of the higher self versus when I'm more kind of relating to situations or reacting to situations more from the place of the separate self.

That's basically it, in terms of how I experience my higher self.

It also comes out and through what I'm teaching. When I'm giving dharma talks, I can tell the difference between when I'm speaking more from my mind, from my conceptual mind, thinking mind, versus when I'm speaking more when the dharma is coming

through without any of that sense of self, of I, of me. It feels very different to me. It's like I've stepped aside and it's really the higher self is speaking, not John speaking.

And it's wonderful to experience that. It's been a process of trusting it, trusting that difference and just kind of allowing the higher self to come forth more in consciousness. And I hope to be able to do more of that in the future.

Barbara: Thank you, John. It's good to hear you talk about it. I remember reading about and hearing there was such a thing as a higher self. This is way back, just the first year or so after I met Aaron. I had met Aaron. I was struggling with my own emotions and fears and belief in limitations and belief in unworthiness.

I had been sick with the flu. I was sitting in my bed meditating with a cup of tea and a blanket wrapped around me. I began to sing the song to myself, "Amazing Grace", which song I have always loved. I've never heard the song "Amazing Grace" because I'd never come into connection with it. I was interested in spiritual things, but I never came in connection with the song as a child. And then I couldn't hear. So, by the time I would have really listened to "Amazing Grace" I was deaf.

This voice came through, and I just knew exactly the notes to sing. There was this, Wow! Just huge energy pouring through. I felt so connected with love, and the song pouring out of me, and so much joy. I didn't have to ask—I knew this has to be my higher self. And I AM this. And of course I didn't remain knowing I am this; it slipped away. But for half an hour, sitting there meditating and singing with joy, just knowing this is what I am. And now my intention is to live up to being this. Whatever is coming next, knowing I am the higher self.

And you all are your higher selves. You're all expressions of this really radiant and wonderful shining light, which is an expression of the Divine.

Aaron is asking a question. He says he does not have a fixed agenda yet for Saturday. He's in the course of making it. He says the good thing about a full day is that we have bigger blocks of time to look at things that interest people. This may or may not interest you. For how many of you would you enjoy spending an hour with guided meditation getting to know your higher self?... Okay, a lot of interest.

Aaron is making the plan for the day, not me. He says we're making it together, and with John. We're actually meeting with John on Thursday so we'll bring this into it.

Other questions?

John: Barbara, I am wondering if you and/or Aaron can speak about the interface of dharma and channeling. I know this is a broad question. Because what we do here at Deep Spring is very different than most dharma centers, especially because not only is there an emphasis on Buddhist teachings and other spiritual teachings, but also a much greater container that includes so much of this interaction with spirit. Sometimes we go

more into kind of the Buddhist or the meditative vein of things and sometimes kind of more into the vein of spirit guidance and a much broader perspective on things.

So I'm wondering, for yourself, being both a dharma teacher and a channel, your interaction with Anna recently and how that affected you—how does this fit together for us? How does that all fit together? Because not all of us necessarily have that direct connection with spirit as you do in terms of being able to hear spirit plane guidance.

So I'm trying in my own mind to more deeply understand, reconcile, how the two aspects fit together. Thank you.

Barbara: Thank you, John. I think I understand your question, and I'd like to speak for just a few minutes and then give it to Aaron.

When we founded Deep Spring Center, and the question was what to call it, what was our focus to be, at that time we were holding meditation classes and we were holding these Wednesday Nights with Aaron, what he called "spiritual inquiry". We held them two different nights. People could join one or the other, or people could come twice in the week and do both. Most people started to come twice because they found it held together.

I remember Aaron telling us with pretty strong feeling, "You are divine. You are of this awakened essence. Nothing is separate. There is no duality." So right now you think of yourself as you, the small self, and you might be a teacher, and somewhere out there there might be a higher self. There might be spirit guides. And each is a unique expression—one finger expressing out of the hand. No expression is better than the other; they all grow out of the same hand.

Moving past duality, we start to experience our connection with everything, including the spirit plane guides. So, I said I want to let Aaron talk about it. Just for me what became so important early on was seeing that there was no putting one above the other. "Oh, I'm a spirit—I'm better than you." Nothing like that. Just each being truly beloved, heard, learning, and teaching. Supporting each other.

It was helpful for me to see that much as Aaron taught us, he also learned from us. And he kept telling us that he was constantly learning from us.

So the flow of it together into Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry just seemed like a natural flow.

I'm going to ask Aaron to come in and speak further. I just wanted to share how that was for me in the beginning, and how important it was that it was inclusive. There were many people who said, "We just want to hear Aaron" or who said, "We just want to learn meditation, not have this woo-woo channeling stuff. Just dharma." And Aaron just persistently said, "Take what you can use and leave the rest." Gradually, as we mature in this, we see how it comes together.

Aaron, will you speak?

Aaron: My blessings and love to you. I am Aaron. At this moment, I do not have a physical form. I am sixth density mind, spirit, mental—I have a mental body. Let me go into this a bit deeper.

Physical, mental, emotional, these different bodies. I no longer need a physical body, especially since I have such a dear being as Barbara willing to let me borrow her body! So I don't need a physical body. It's very handy; I appreciate it.

I don't have emotional body. That said, I feel joy and sadness, but not emotions as you think of them. Not anger; not all the vast range of emotions. I just don't experience them anymore because I've come to see that they are simply arisen out of conditions, impermanent, and are not self. The physical body is not self. The emotional body is not self. Why should I hold onto them as self?

The mental body is also not self. And yet, in order to speak to you in this way I do have need of a mental body. But it is not MY mental body. I don't own it. It simply is there and available as a container for ideas, for thoughts.

Traditional Buddha dharma does not get involved in teaching from spirit because the dharma does not need to come from spirit. There are many clear dharma teachers in the world. The spirit perspective that I bring in is something different from the bare dharma.

Now, I love the dharma, and I love the meditation practices. And I know these to be a route to awakening because they served as my route to awakening.

So why is this not sufficient? Because in order to help you know truly who and what you are, to help you transcend self-identification with the heavier bodies, it's good to have a model.

Here I am, coming to you from somewhere beyond, knowing exactly how it was to be human and with enormous compassion for the human, and able to say to you: This heavy human experience will pass. You are waking up to the truth of who you are.

So, I've felt it's perhaps easier for you to hear it from somebody who has walked this path than just to hear it as conjecture.

The other part of it is, I do not have a body. If I'm going to teach you, it has to be channeled.

I've repeatedly said to people you do not have to believe that I am real in any way. If it's just Barbara with this quirky idea that she's bringing through some other intelligence,

that's fine. Is what is said useful to you? Let go of the source and be present with the material and where it leads you.

But since I did not choose to come back with a body, if I'm going to teach you, it has to be through channeling. I'm not upholding channeling as <solid>. Nothing is solid. Channeling is not solid. Nothing has any solid essence except essence, the Divine itself, the Unconditioned. But if I'm going to speak to you, it's going to have to be channeled.

You who have enough spaciousness in your hearts to open to the possibility of a channeled teacher, well, thank you for being willing to listen to me.

But I have avoided through the years bringing any essence of Deep Spring as a channeling center—and also as a dharma center, because we are not just about dharma. We are about waking up, and that in essence is the focus of dharma. And yet there are many different supports for waking up.

If I were to try to define what Deep Spring Center is, it's the awakening into the heart of love that is the essence of each being. To come to know your divinity. To come to know your ability to speak and act and move on this earth with love. To walk that middle of the bridge, attending to the everyday world and resting in the highest space of light. And when your rest there, you know there is such a thing as spirit.

Anybody who has had an experience of dissolution of the body, dissolution of the ego, ask yourself, what remains? It doesn't matter what you call it—this essence. You are that. I am that.

So, perhaps it's easier to hear this from a being who can talk about his awakening experiences and can talk about his struggles and pain on the route, too. Perhaps it's easier to trust him; I don't know.

But John, I'm not trying to create any connection between channeling and dharma, only channeling is one path we have of sharing the dharma.

Our role is not to become channels, except—and we did this a year ago—except knowing that you are constantly a medium through which everything is passing.

We talked about it in the making of the soup. You have the ingredients, and you are the medium putting it together and coming out with a delicious, beautiful soup based on the purity and wholesomeness of the ingredients, and on your skilled ability to hold it all together and invite the soup.

This is for me the only real part of channeling. Hearing spirit is different than channeling. With channeling there is this spirit plane entity, and you have a willingness to hear the thoughts and express them into words.

Mediumship and channeling are not identical. With mediumship you are creating the soup. It's not necessarily about specific kinds of thoughts but everything in your realm.

What I see of importance here is coming to know and trust there is something beyond this human form. When you die, you do not cease to exist, because you are spirit.

What is this spirit? How does it express itself? And here we have the intention to express itself as love from the highest place in the heart, for the highest good of beings and harm to none, that commitment.

The ego cannot make that commitment. The higher self or spirit aspect of yourself can make that commitment.

John, I don't know if that answers your question, and I would be happy to speak further. But for now I will pause.

John: Thank you, Aaron.

Aaron: Have you further question about it, John?

John: I don't really have question about it. Coming from the perspective of more traditional Buddha dharma, and then over the years having met Barbara and you and other spirits, I still come in contact with people who don't believe in the spirit plane guidance or see it as necessary, or just an illusion, etc..

So, I think for myself, even though obviously I embrace it to the degree that I'm teaching with a spirit, it still sometimes creates waves in my mind, because I have to deal with these people! (*laughing*) I have to deal with them.

And so, this is really where the question is coming from, because it kind of creates a certain amount of, I would say tension or contraction. Because even after all these years, there are some people who just do not accept us at all. For me that is somewhat challenging. So this is one of the reasons why I'm bringing it up this evening.

Aaron: Thank you, John. I know you visited a close friend recently who does not really believe that I'm real. (*John laughs*) It doesn't matter. Am I real? Am I not real? Is there something in you that survives the death of the body or not? You can't know that for certain as human; you'll only know it after you transition.

What matters for the human experience is the ability to open the heart with love. To drop away the armoring. To be present with pain, with confusion, with the suffering of the world, with love.

For those who choose to do that limiting themselves to only what they can know through their physical senses, I bow to those. It's hard work. It's certainly much easier when you

can trust that there is a spirit companion walking with you. But for those who are not ready to believe in that, that doesn't limit their awakening, it simply makes it harder.

My interest for all of you is to make it as easy as possible. It's still going to be hard work.

There is no answer you can give to somebody who says, "What is this spirit woo-woo? I don't believe it. You can't prove it." And you can't prove it, except that when people meditate and do move into that experience of body and ego dissolution, into opening into awareness, presence, there's some cognizance, something that is cognizant. What is it? Who are you when you are not in any way the aggregates? What remains?

Could we possibly call that remnant 'spirit', just a catch-all term? The one who knows. The one who knows is spirit.

Spirit has many meanings in different traditions. It's not necessarily a personified spirit as I am. But what is spirit? What is essence? What is the Unconditioned itself? And what if that Unconditioned is still capable of thought and can help?

Can you open your hands and your heart to that help without believing in something? Just a, "Who knows? But on the chance that it may be helpful, I'll let myself consider the possibility." Just that much. And that's what you might say to a friend who is skeptical. Not a statement, "I believe in this"; rather, "I am willing to consider the possibility. And because I do that and find it helpful, I continue to consider the possibility."

But ultimately it is each individual that has to wake up. And no matter how many spirit plane guides there are, no matter how well you hear or don't hear them, YOU are still the one that has to wake up for yourself.

But a little bit of help is nice. We are not fostering dependence; we are fostering spiritual friendship.

One more thing. Amongst those who would say, "No, there are no such thing as spirit guides," I remember many years ago Barbara went to a retreat led by a famous Burmese teacher. The first day in the meditation hall he sat there with some kind of screen in front of him to give his dharma talk. He walked in—a human walked in—sat down, and as he sat down and opened his talk there was a radiance, a very clear entity there. He sat there with his eyes closed giving a very clear and beautiful talk, which Barbara could not understand because, well, it was offered Burmese and translated to English, but she could not hear it. So she just sat there. But she could feel the immensity of that which was within him.

Now, I'm not saying he was channeling. It may have been his higher self. It may have been simply his awakened self. But it was certainly not the smaller human giving the dharma talk. And you could feel his energy and the shift in energy every time he offered a talk.

What difference does it make? It's coming from somewhere. If it's helpful, embrace it. If it's not helpful, no matter where it's from, we let it go.

I am Aaron.

Q: Thank you. I am aware that we are at the hour, so I will be brief, but I just want to join this conversation. I so appreciate it, John and Barbara, and John, what you have opened for discussion today. And that is, from my own experience and perspective, how do I relate to my perspective when sharing with others who may be of a different perspective?

And I'll offer that all my life I've been on the fringes, unable to share a lot about who I am with others, especially at different times in my life. I've known since I was a little boy that I was gay, and so for many years, until I was in my young adulthood, that was very hush-hush. So I was living in the shadows with that.

And then I lived in sort of the New Age, New Earth world professionally and socially during my 20's. And then in my 30's, I had this very dramatic head injury that I recovered from after having died for a while, and reviewed a lot about things that are going on with the planet and the history of the planet and the nature of the human condition on the planet.

And when I came back from that a few months later—this was in 1980, and Carla and Don and Jim were just starting with their channeling with the Ra material. And somehow or other I found a little tiny ad about LL Research and Ra, and I went, "Oh!" And I got ahold of them and I started reading their beginning channelings. And I went, "Oh my gosh! They know too! They've seen what I've seen." But yet I had no one to talk to other than them, and they were long distance and this was before internet and all of that. So, very limited in terms of actual discussion.

And so I lived in a strange world of having a very different view of life and humans and earth and other people. But I couldn't talk to other people because they'd think I'm weird, and, "Oh, you think you're strange because you've died. Oh well." It's like, eh.

I'd already been meditating when I was much younger, and that was okay in the time I lived in because it was a college town. But then later on, when I didn't live in a college town anymore and lived amongst a lot of real regular people out in the countryside—"You tell me you're meditating..."

So then I became a counselor. And a lot of my counseling is intuitive. But I wouldn't tell people that it's coming through. I don't want anybody to think I'm a psychic. I don't like that stuff. So, in my history there's a lot of, don't let other people know what's going on with me, and don't let other people know what I see. And that's a very lonely spot.

So what I've learned or observed, or what I've come to over the years is, this third density planet is a fascinating experience. We get to be amongst ourselves as humans

ALL these different perspectives. Everyone has unique fingerprints, unique eyes, unique thinking, unique everything. It's the famous story of... everybody has the same experience but they describe it differently.

So, I have learned to, instead of being afraid of expressing who I am, simply respecting that other people are not interested in my perspective. So I have to be with their perspective if I'm going to serve them, if I'm going to be in appreciation with them, if I'm going to join them in the human experience.

So I just share that with you as, it has really become more of an interesting thing for me rather than a troublesome thing, that we all see everything very differently. And even other meditators or other people who are familiar with the LL Research material or the Aaron material and Barbara and John's manner of teaching, which is different than other meditation teachers... It's all okay. It's okay that other people don't see it the way I see it. Thank you.

Barbara: Thank you, Q. This is why we co-created Deep Spring Center, because there are a lot of good dharma centers out there, and there are also a lot of so-called light centers, but they don't teach any real practice. They teach beliefs and ideas but don't give people a way to really get at a direct experience. And bringing it together seemed essential. And I know that's what I planned to do with Aaron in this lifetime.

I just want to toss out here, from Q's experience of saying sometimes—or always—it was hard to fit in: Is there anybody here who did not experience that in at least at some parts of your life? (*laughing*)

I think that's why we're all here together, because we're trying to make sense of the combination of the human and the spirit experience, and to go deep in our meditation experience, our practice, and start to know what we are beyond the skandhas. What remains when the skandhas dissolve? Who am I? What am I?

I spoke earlier of the conversation with Anna in which I said, "I'll always respect and love you as mother, but I see us *finally* as sisters." Coming to know we are mature, responsible spiritual beings here to help move the world, the whole universe, into a place of deeper love, each through our own skillful means.

This is all we can really do. And the beauty is that we all have that commitment to live with as much love as we can. Not to get so caught up and lost in the struggles of the human. To remember who and what we are. And that remembering becomes more and more important as we go along, and as we progress into a higher vibration and as we transition into a higher vibration. Knowing who and what we are, and that we are love.

And all the different tools, like vipassana, and pure awareness, the Brahma Vihara practices, chanting, dancing and whatever else we may do, whatever helps us center and remember who we are, that's what we need.

The beauty with Deep Spring is that we have a collection of people, that we're all learning from each other. And I think that's why these small groups are so important.

Human, higher self, spirit, I bow to you: Namaste!

Q: Is the sixth density entity, or what Aaron is currently, the non-returner equivalent in Buddhism?

Barbara: Aaron says, essentially yes. Others?

Q: I just want to offer a very brief comment for John. When I was in the Air Force officer training school, the only thing I remembered from that time in my life is that they taught us to evaluate the message, not the messenger. So my counsel to your skeptical friend would be to consider the message—don't worry about the messenger.

Barbara: This is what Aaron always says to people: Don't worry about where it's coming from—is it useful to you? But many humans get too caught up in the messenger—where is it coming from?—before they can hear the message.

And this is part of what we're teaching in the world, how to just... Aaron talks about if you're walking down the street and you see a book, and you pick it up, but you open it and it's junk, you throw it away even if it has a cover with a famous author. If you open it and there's no author or title page but it's profound, you don't ask, "Where did it come from? I can't read it unless I know the author," you just read it and take it in.

There are so many teachers—I mean that in a positive way—so many very beautiful teachers. Often when we do some kind of work with one of you privately and I feel your higher selves there, it's very beautiful to me to experience the higher self. This is not your guide. I sometimes feel your guidance there, too, but your higher selves, all of you have these magnificent, radiant, just so loving higher selves. It's wonderful.

An interesting story. About ten years into working with Aaron, I had been told that if I was going to be doing counseling of some sort it would be important for me to have some kind of accreditation.

So, after some time of investigating, I spoke to a vice-president of something at a school with a very good reputation, with a big department of counseling, including spiritual counseling. They had a mail kind of program, and I would have to go there for a few weeks a year. I was intrigued with their courses; it sounded interesting. They had Buddhism, they had interfaith classes, they had spirit classes and psychology in depth to get a Master's degree. I had a wonderful conversation by phone with this vice-president, who said, "The thing you're going to have to decide, you and Aaron, is which of you is getting the accreditation!" (*laughing*) How we're going to work with you is going to differ depending on which of you is getting the accreditation!

Q: This is such a basic question, but I would just like you to review. Because you're saying over and over and over again we are love. So, what is love? How would you define this? This I think will be a review. But I just would like to have a little discussion about that, please.

Barbara: Aaron will speak...

Aaron: Thank you, Q. I am Aaron. What is love?

I would like to consider the definition of love as equated with non-contraction. Love is not non-contraction. Non-contraction or spaciousness is one primary expression of love, but it's one that we can really see and feel.

Fear as contrasted to love is often contracted. It's caught up in the small ego. It has to get things right. It has to have control. There's a lot of fear and a lot of contraction.

We can't say what love is; we can only know love by its characteristics. And an essential characteristic of love for me is spaciousness, non-contraction.

So when you are meditating and an object arises that's very unpleasant, there's aversion to it, and the heart mind is able to stay open and hold it, just to see it for what it is. How it arose, that it's passing away, that it's not self—that's an expression of love.

The small ego that comes in and says, "Oh, we have to get rid of this, fix it or control it or make it somehow different," this is fear.

The other attribute of love that I see as very important is light. It's much harder to talk about light or absence of light than it is about spaciousness and contraction.

I hope that is helpful.

One more question?

Q: I took your recommendation at the last retreat, and I think Yeshua also recommended it, reading the book *Testimony of Light*. I loved it. It has so much information. I feel like I need to read it two or three more times to keep getting more.

In the book she talks about there being groups of souls that have the same interest, kind of like a large family group. I am just wondering if, I don't know, if Aaron can speak to it, or yourself. It's, all of us who are in this group perhaps all belong to a large group like that. Maybe our common interest is helping the earth awaken or helping humanity awaken or ascending the earth. Just if you can talk about that a little bit. Thank you.

Aaron: I find that a beautiful book. There are soul groups, but do not get into the idea that each will only be in one group.

In an organization you might belong to an athletic club, and you might belong to a church, and you might belong to a group of friends who like to go on walks together and just share. And you can be part of different groups.

I would say that everyone connected with Deep Spring has a deep soul interest in service and in helping the transition of Earth into a higher vibration. That all of you have an interest in helping the Earth shift into a positive polarity, into overcoming negative polarity. 'Overcoming' is not the best word—helping Earth drop off the negative and blossom into the positive, into non-harm.

There will be sub-groups. Some of you are part of a more Buddhist orientation, or a more Christian or Jewish or Moslem or native tradition. So, remembering this, don't confine yourself too tightly or in too narrow a way.

The one that you know as Yeshua, he of course was not a Christian, he was Jew. He was born into a Jewish home on <>. But he did not define himself in a specific tradition, except that he came to help plant this seed of light deeper into the earth. The earth was in a stagnant place. He came to bring forth this energy of light and love in such a way that it could take root deep into the earth and literally change the earth with that energy of light and love.

Many of you were alive at that time, and the teachings of what we are calling love really resonated for you. Many of you were alive in the Buddha's time, and the dharma teachings, the teachings that the Buddha, awakened into the earth also with his intention to plant this seed of deep wisdom and compassion into the earth. He did not call it this but you have called it Buddha Dharma. Many of you were part of that group.

These groups are not separate but hold together—some off on that side, some off on that side, some merged.

I think the question for each of you is, what is my deepest intention? Why am I here on earth?

And being here and understanding my multitude of intentions and how they come together, do I find support in this spiritual group that helps me on my path?

Is there other support that I seek? And if so, it's fine to seek other kinds of support. Don't limit yourself. But also, don't spread yourself too thin.

I hope that answers your question.

There is the book, *Testimony of Light*, and the accompanying book, *Wheel of Eternity*. *Wheel of Eternity* is by the same author and it discusses some of the same qualities and questions about karma and how we move through the human and post-human and pre-human experiences. So, also very helpful.

I see it's 7:30pm, so I think it's perhaps a good time to stop...

My blessings and love to you. I am Aaron.