

Aspire!

Breath

A Journal of Transcendence

August 2024

NO FIGHT,

TAO TE CHING

BY LAO-TZU

chapter 8

NO BLAME



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All conditioned things are impermanent-When one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering.
Buddha

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"Manifest plainness, embrace simplicity, reduce selfishness, have few desires."

Lao-tzu

Statement of Purpose

The word ASPIRE means breath of spirit. This is the true essence of a spiritual practice: to offer a breath of spirit to those who are willing to move into the mystery of the silence of the heart, through meditation.

The spiritual insights intended for the reader, within this Breath Journal, offer an alternative to conventional thought and religion. The purpose is not to convert, but to offer ways of living that free one from fear. The articles, practice techniques and classes discussed in this publication are designed to help in the quest for individuality, through spiritual awakening.

Aspire is the DBA of Unity of Escondido, a not-for-profit corporation. Gregory Penn is an ordained Unity Minister and is not limited in his teachings by any institution or religious philosophy. He offers a unique method of teaching that does not bind students, nor himself, to any fear-based concepts. Aspire is nonsectarian and nondenominational.

This Breath Journal is created as a way to become acquainted with the teachings and techniques of the Heart that are the root of all spiritual work. Gregory is open to all teachings and Masters whose underlying truths of the Heart offer peace, compassion and awakening to Love.



A Breath of Spirit for a Life of Awakening

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All Things Are Joined Together

Do you see any connection?
Do you see any logic?

“The nightingale singing” - that’s one thing.

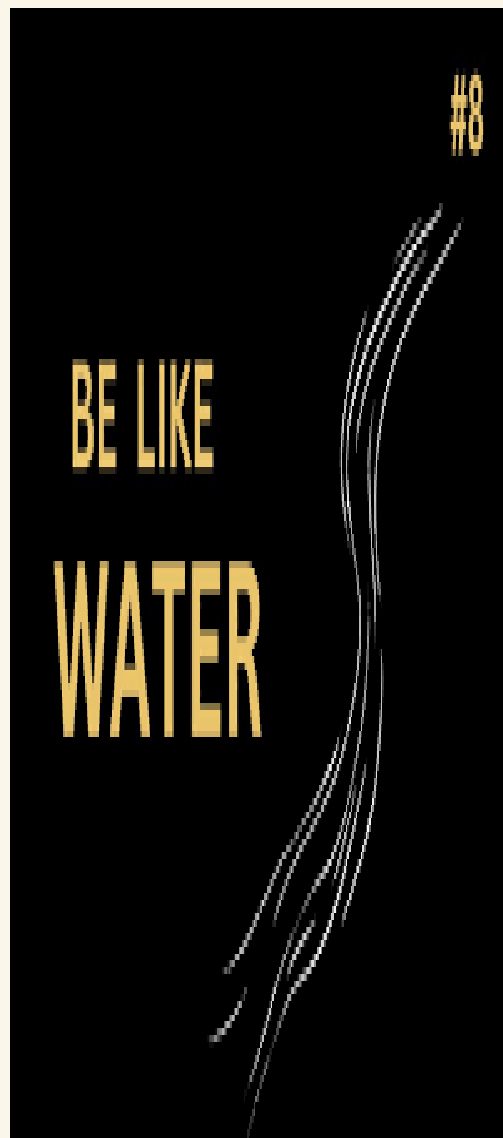
“Thin snowflakes” - that is completely another.

But, in a meditative mind, nothing is separate. All things are joined together. The nightingale singing and the thin snowflakes – both are part of one existence, they cannot be separated. Only mind separates them: this is one thing, that is another.

And, how are you putting them together? But they are together and, not only these two. Then, the bamboos cracking, the wind blowing through the pine trees and the clouds coming with great lightning – everything is connected.

In these two small sentences he has said that everything is so connected with each other that you cannot create separations.

THE NIGHTINGALE SINGING
THIN SNOWFLAKES



HAIKU



ENOUGH SAID

Welcome to this Breath Journal for August.

Within this issue, as well as the Discourses, I will be offering insight into the great GOODNESS that lives within all of us as Love. If you have been listening to the Discourses on the Tao, you will find what is being presented to you here of great virtue.

We often think of goodness as something that is extraordinary to our experience in living and rightly so. Most people are not interested in “goodness.” They are only interested in what brings them what they can think of as GOOD. Within the offerings for the month of August, I present to you the effort of what it means to move beyond the conventional ideal of “good.” I hope all of this serves you well, dear reader.

I am preparing the new meditations for September, as well as the offerings of meditation for our final Retreat at Mt. Madonna. We will be doing the second set of meditations entitled: PLUMING in September and then the last series in

*Let the beauty of what you love
be what you do.*

Rumi

November at Mt. Madonna.

My work is accelerating at Hospice, and so I keep a very disciplined awareness of what will serve you as well as my Hospice patients. It can be tricky with all I do.

Please know that all I do, I truly do for you.

Thank you for reading this issue of the Breath Journal.

Metta
Siraj

THE TAO CHAPTER 8

Within this beautiful sutra, Lao-tzu talks about how to become aware of the great goodness that lives within us all, as Love.

We are given the manner of goodness as water that dwells in the low places of our being as we move through our human difficulties.

**NO FIGHT,
NO BLAME**

“When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.”

— Lao Tzu



KARMA



Ignorance



Journey



Quest



Seeking



Transformation

MEDITATION WORKSHOP ~ CARMEL, CA

Saturday, September 7, 2024 ~ 9:30am - 3:00pm

Carmel Foundation *(includes lunch)*

Realizing The Simplicity: It is important to understand how deeply important our state of mind and body becomes as we enter into SIMPLICITY. Siraj will offer two new Meditations to prepare for our last Retreat at Mt. Madonna in November.

\$125 per person

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MEDITATION WORKSHOP ~ ENCINITAS, CA

Saturday, September 28, 2024 ~ 8:00am - 3:00pm

Encinitas Community Center *(includes lunch)*

As we come to the inner place where the real journey begins, Siraj will present the blessing of Simplicity. Within this sacred state of mind and body, we move meditatively to awaken and realize the Light that lives within.

\$225 per person

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By Gregory Penn

FROM WHERE I SIT

The Highest Good

No Fight, No Blame

*The highest good is like water.
Water gives life to the ten thousand things
and does not strive.*

*In dwelling, be close to the land.
In meditation, go deep in the Heart.
In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.
In speech, be true.
In ruling, be just.
In business, be competent.
In action, watch the timing.*

No fight, no blame.

Why do you seek?

Why do you read this Journal or listen to my Discourses? What do you “think” or “believe” is going to occur if you try to “seek?” What is it that you are really doing or looking for?

Well, this is all subjective to the effort of something that most people assume that they know. The purpose of reading such offerings as this is inevitably to find some sort of “good” that will relieve us of the burden of the human.

All most of us are looking for is simply some sort of “good” that we have idealized within our minds as the means to make us “happy” and carefree. We want a life that is so “good” that it becomes a “no-brainer”

kind of existence.

We want to be millionaires, we want to be owing to no one. We want luxury and the fulfillment of all of our passions. Hence, we want the outer to bring us inner happiness and contentment.

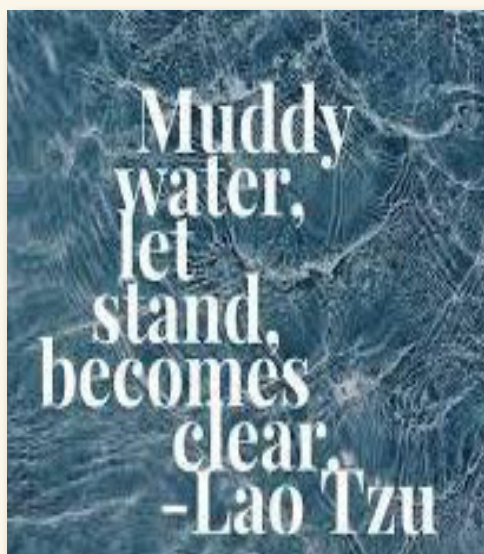
So, this becomes the effort of our entire lifetime, to be able to avoid ourselves and find some sort of place where there is

some sense of “good.” All of this is just futile and ridiculous, for each of us is our own worst enemy, and hence no matter where we go or what we “get” of this world, we will turn it into some sort of problem and conflict.

You may not believe me, most people don’t, but the fact is that we live as a

matter of consequence rather than that of awakening to Love. We think in terms that Love is something we “get” (earn) rather than realizing that Love is what we are.

Those who are seekers, true seekers, come to realize that goodness is something that is the result of the discovery of true authenticity. That is, we are the goodness



that exceeds the world. To realize this we must come to that place where we learn how to allow for a lifestyle that is not based in what we believe that we don't have, to that of discovering what WE TRULY ARE.

Lao-tzu talks about goodness as water that nurtures everything in this world. The true issue is to cultivate Wisdom. Wisdom emerges within us when we can truly realize that everything that occurs within our lifetime is merely our own consequence. We make our consequence, our lifetime, as a matter of two things...as the Master points out.

FIGHTING and then
BLAMING.

It is these two obsessions that make for our difficulties. We seem to have the gall to fight over the willingness to simply realize that nothing is as it may seem to be. That true goodness is found in the least likely places within our world and lifetime.

Lao tzu chooses water as the metaphor for the essential element of life. Water is very important to all living things in this world. It is essential to life, and hence represents the state of the Tao.

The essence of the Tao is like water. Water flows downward and can be found in the least likely places within us. Come to realize that water is yielding to everything. It surrounds all obstacles in its path, caressing them with its essentialness.

in our current world, we have turned water into a problem because we simply have betrayed nature with our ignorance of nature, our disregard for nature and its power. We are natural born

The superior man makes the difficulty to be overcome his first interest: success only comes later.

Confucius

FIGHTERS who have no means for any respect for life itself. Hence, we have turned not only nature against ourselves, but the movement of life against us. We simply live as a mobile means of conflict.

We live in the primordial waters of Life. This Life is what Lao tzu calls the Tao. If we follow the Tao as water and allow it to caress our inner being with its essence, we find the Way as the basic principle of life on this earth and like water is to all living creatures here on earth, it is the mother of all...nurturing us into Life.

Listen: *In dwelling, be close to the land.*

In meditation, go deep in the Heart.

In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.

If you can hear this sutra, you will soon realize how to live in this world as the measure of the Tao.

To make our inner dwelling the state of mind whereby we trust in the goodness of the Tao as our basic premise for living, we give up the FIGHT for living. We no longer try to obtain in this world and replace this feeble effort for the sake of ATTAINMENT. The attainment is to recognize GOODNESS and what must be sacrificed for the sake of this



kind of blessing.

To say the least, this is a huge step forward in our spiritual evolution. Not many can or are willing to do so. The reason is because we FIGHT the Life of goodness and relegate ourselves to our own ignorance and willfulness. Hence, we live via our own consequences.

The achievement of authentic GOODNESS is no small task. Goodness, as Lao tzu speaks of it, has far different INTENT than our earthly morals and ideas can understand and accept. Generally speaking, the average person who has limited themselves to the pedestrian mentality, simply chooses to live and believe in the FIGHT for life and BLAMES others for their “lot in life” kind of living.

In all of this, we love the preciousness of living in the manner of the Way where there is no such thing as FIGHTING and BLAMING. In the absence of the FIGHT, we replace it with the willingness to live with compassion and the results of our meditations.

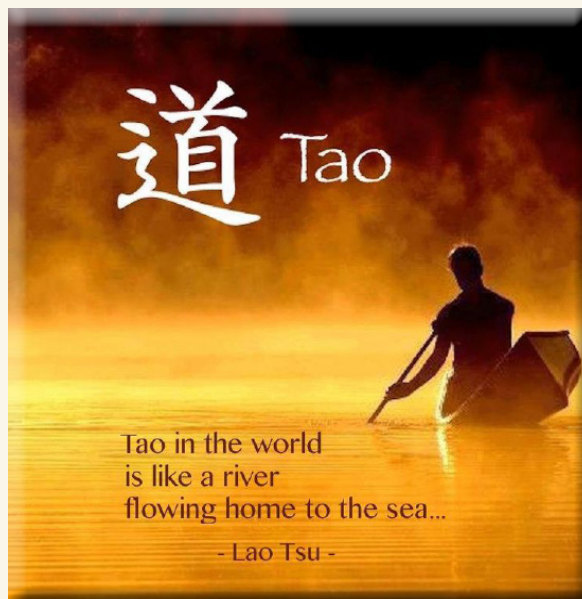
To live in the essence of the Way, we no longer live in the grave decisions of hate and fear. In our daily living we, as the watercourse way of living, find ourselves in the beauty of loving our work because it LOVES us into the Tao whereby everything is significant. What we all seek is a significance to our lives that moves past the fears of inadequacy.

Moving into the Tao as a means for life instead of living for the sake of FIGHTING and BLAMING whatever and whomever, we come into the blessed state of GOODNESS. This GOODNESS has its consequences and will emerge into our

living as the very means for LIFE itself. This is a huge step forward.

The effort is to get beyond our conflict. Conflict is often found in morality, which has nothing to do with GOODNESS.

A person can abide by human morals but still find themselves at the mercilessness of confusion. The confusion of guilt and self-hatred reign supreme in this world. This is why we have so many difficult decisions to make pertaining to our survival. For the most part, we miss what it means to truly live in the manner of Love.



It must be understood that GOODNESS is realized in this manner of living;

In meditation, go deep in the Heart.

In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.

In speech, be true.

In ruling, be just.

In business, be competent.

In action, watch the timing.

No fight, no blame.

If you can feel the blessing of all of this, if you can live in this state of being and discipline, your intents to become kind in all ways, you will soon realize the manner of Love that you are. In this LOVE you will yield GOODNESS that will become the mercy that changes consequence into Life itself.

I hope this helped. The monthly Discourses will offer you more.

Please forgive me

Siraj

THIS IS TAO



The highest
good is like water,
which benefits all things and
contends with none. It flows in
low places that others disdain,
and thus it is close to
the Tao.

In living,
choose your ground well.
In thought, stay deep in the heart.
In relationships, be generous.
In speaking, hold to the truth.
In leadership, be organized.
In work, do your best.
In action, be
timely.

THAT WAS ZEN

The Highest

What is the highest within us and why do we not seek it?

The truth of the matter is that we derive great satisfaction through conflict. We seem to not realize that what we seek after, as goodness, already lives within us as the state of water.

Do not make the lifetime about what we desire, but rather seek the SOURCE of our needs and desires and we will find the goodness that lives within. Not only this goodness, but the state of our own intrinsic goodness that lives as the great pool of Love.

Goodness is like water, as the Tao speaks of it. Without any conflict it blesses all living things. This is how we might consider living. To bring about our goodness, we can nourish goodness with the very essence of the goodness that lives within us.

Most people merely consider the “cost” of goodness and hence place themselves in the position of drowning in selfishness and pride. This is the conflict that Lao-tzu is speaking about. When the generosity of goodness touches our life, we are placed in the posture of a life without inner conflict that can affect not only our mental health, but also our bodies.



MONTHLY DISCOURSES

The Tao - Chapter 8

The following Discourses are offered as a means for consciousness. If you have been diligent in your efforts of listening to the Discourses this year, you will find that these offerings will put a smile upon your face.

The full set of four Discourses for this month is offered to you for a donation of \$60.00. To save money, you can donate a year's subscription for \$625.00 or a half year for \$325.00. Call 1-800-ASPIRE2 to order or e-mail Gregory at greg@aspire.org. All donations are tax deductible and used to purchase more air time for Aspire.



The Highest Good!

This is an important offering for your life. These Discourses are essential to life in general.



Places That People Reject...

Many states that are of goodness, people in general miss and do not accept.

In Dwelling, In Meditation, In Dealing with Others....

There will be much insight offered here!

No Fight, No Blame

The title of this Discourse says it all.



DEAR MESSIAH

Greg:

Why are you so deeply involved in the Tao? Frankly, I do not "get it" nor do I think it will help me in this day and age.

Ted

San Diego, CA



Beloved Ted:

Namaste

Thank you for your e-mail.

Yes, I am in deep respect for the manner of the Tao. Like yourself, I live in a Western body and my basic body temperament is culturally of the West. But I have found that the West is smart, but the East is Wise. I am more prone to Wisdom than intellectual acutities.

The depth of the Eastern teachings are very simple and offer a person the ability to deepen into consciousness rather than thoughts themselves. I lived on and off in India in my youth and found that Wisdom is something that one can take with them through death. This is most important to me.

I understand that you, as you state in your e-mail, "don't get it." The reasons for this can be many. I do not know you, so all I can say is that you might want to consider the state of your conflicts in this world and with yourself. If you can observe them and realize beyond genetic pride and human traits that only in Wisdom do we realize our great potential.

This potential is found only as we begin to transcend beyond our need for selfishness and pride.

True goodness is found in the maturing into mercy.

Please forgive me.
Gregory



Write to Gregory

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P. O. Box 223779
Carmel, CA 93922



Meditation

The Highest Good

Meditation is a flow.

Meditation is the flow of energy unencumbered by the human.

To truly understand meditation, is to miss its profound sense of goodness. The highest goodness is found in our Silence.

To attain to the Silence, we must allow our attentions to move past the assumptions of the desires and ambitions of genetic emotionality. For most people in this world, this is just asking way too much.

When we do not choose to discipline our attentions past the human impulse, we place ourselves in the posture of living and thinking from the ego. It is deeply important to learn how to live from the highest goodness, which means we must learn how to live in the “fast and pray” modality.

To do so is noble and brings about virtue.

Let us look at this simple discipline that most of us merely ignore. The word “fast” means to abstain from food, in the traditional sense of the word. But to the person who is seeking the Way, this word simply means to no longer engage in the nourishment of the pedestrian mentality. So, we no longer indulge our thoughts to our emotions. This is of utmost importance.

Our emotions are always trying to push us into indulgences such as pride, vengeance and physical fulfillment with food, money and any obsession that facilitates the body into some sort of comfort.

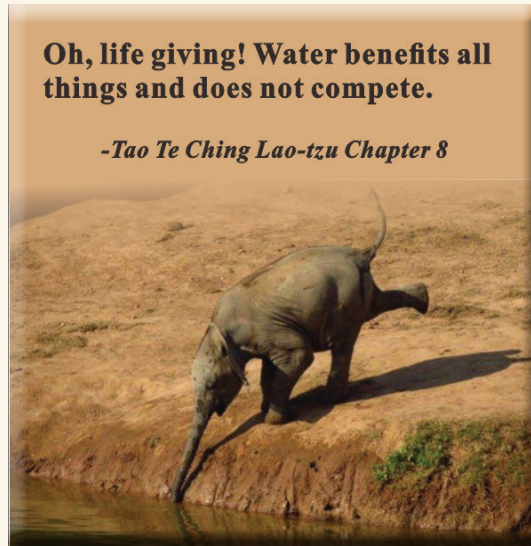
To get past all of this, we must begin to observe how the body and mind work together to manufacture an alibi for the sake of indulgence. This is often referred to as “what one deserves.” This can get ugly. Most of our life is spent seeking indulgences that we have come to believe that we deserve.

To remove our attention away from the screaming emotional body and no longer allow its impulses to move us into action is the property of a great goodness.

This goodness moves not from human impulse, but through intuition. From the state of being sympathetic to that of becoming compassionate.

When we can see how our emotions bleed us of our deeper energies - energies that would make and sustain consciousness, it is then and only then that we find THE HIGHEST GOOD.

The HIGHEST GOOD is that which asserts itself as Love. The fact that we simply do not care for the HIGHEST GOODNESS that is Love makes for a very difficult lifetime. This is why we have a difficult time with discipline. We just do not want to “miss out” on anything that would, in our minds, keep us from



biological and emotional impulse.

In the “fast and pray” lifestyle we live through consciousness and not biology. The “pray” part of this sacred equation refers to “lifestyle.” To live within the lifestyle of being disciplined does not sound very appealing to the average person who lives for trying to resist human impulse.

This kind of lifestyle has as its means and purpose the energetics of living for creativity. This creativity is purposeful to the effort of our willingness to live beyond human impulse. This is no easy task because we live so automatically seeking nothing more than overcoming our humanity with more humanity.

Our humanity is nothing more than futility.

Until we recognize this futility, we will never be fully alive nor will we become deeply creative. This creativity that I speak of here takes form in many different ways. Creativity is a lifestyle and when preceded by our disciplines that allow for this kind of goodness we find a whole new manner of LIFE living within us, as Love.

All of this is about meditation.

Meditation is the essence and source of all GOODNESS. To achieve any or all of this, we must learn how to live in mercy. Mercy becomes discipline. Discipline becomes the lifestyle of GOODNESS. If this makes no sense to you, it is because you are living on the “gross” level as Lao-tzu speaks of in his precious Tao.

Coming to the place where we choose to live beyond the confines of our circumstances is the real art of living.

May you recognize the HIGHEST GOOD.

Forgive me.

Siraj

HOW TO LIVE IN THE HIGHEST GOOD

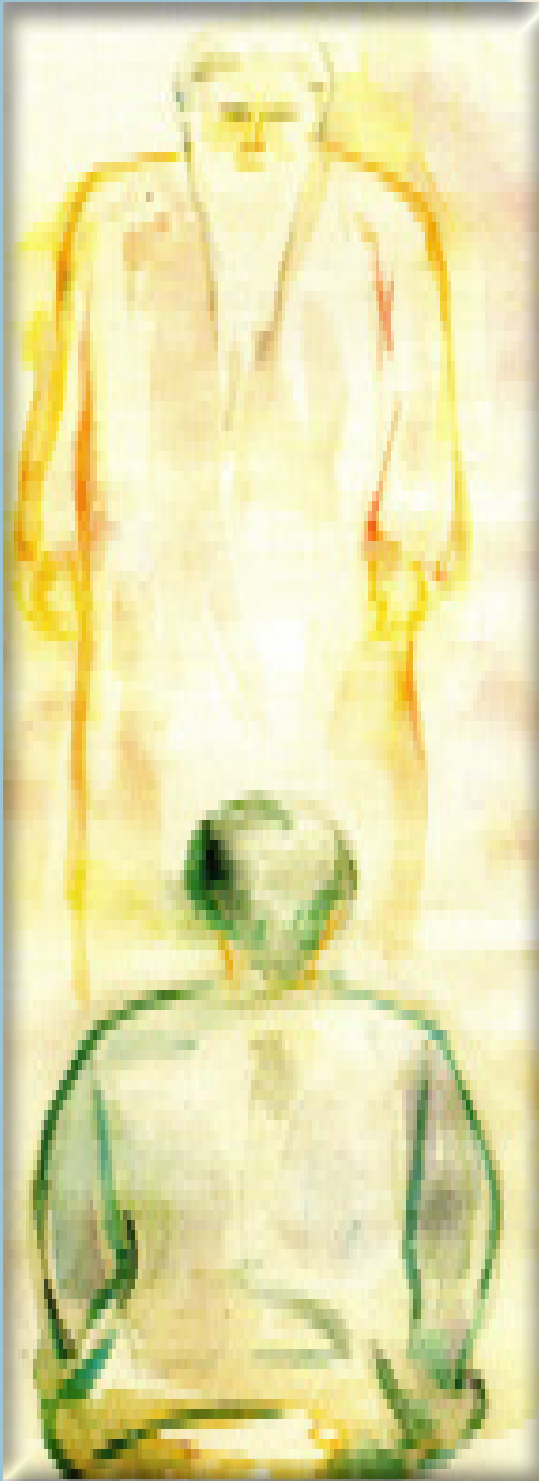
ONE: Realize the human futility through self-observation. Come to become aware of how you got where you are, through futility. If this is not clear to you, then nothing more can occur for you until you “get it.”

TWO: If realized, then begin the process of intent. Do not allow your intent to be anything other than that of the discipline that would bring forth compassion for the sake of your own life. This means that we change our lifestyle to that of seeking how to live without making our living a chore.

THREE: In whatever you do in the course of your lifetime make sure it has at its roots, the mercy of goodness.

I HAVE HEARD...

A Future Buddha



An enlightened man doesn't care about our ego, because he can see that tomorrow we will be awake.

Gautam Buddha, in his past life, heard about a man who had become enlightened. He was not much interested, but curious, to see what kind of phenomenon enlightenment was and what it did to the man. He set off and, as he came close to the man, something started melting in his heart...something that was hard and arrogant was disappearing.

And, as he came very close, he witnessed himself touching the feet of the man. He was not touching, he had not even the idea of touching the feet of the man, but he saw that he was touching the feet. The man had such a beauty and such a grace that it was such a joy even to touch his feet.

But the most miraculous thing happened as he stood up, the man also touched Gautam Buddha's feet. Gautam Buddha said, "What are you doing? You are enlightened. I can feel the peace that surrounds you. I can feel the light and the fragrance that you have become. It is absolutely right for me to touch your feet and surrender myself, but what are you doing? I am an ignorant man, very stubborn, very egoistic and you are touching my feet."

The enlightened man said to Gautam Buddha, "Today you are asleep; tomorrow you will be awake. Today you are not enlightened, but enlightenment is your very nature. I don't care about your arrogance and your ego and stubbornness, they are not your self-nature. I am touching your feet to remind you that you are not what you are thinking and, also, to remind you that, when in your next life you become enlightened, be respectful of those who are still groping in the dark."

Now, to touch the feet of such a man, is a beauty...is a grace... is blissfulness.



KARMA



Ignorance



Journey



Quest



Seeking



Transformation

COST & REGISTRATION

The cost for this Retreat depends upon the kind of room you wish to reserve. Room rates are available on the [Aspire website](#).

To register for this Retreat and/or arrange payments for your Retreat, please call Carolyn Mollohan at 760-730-2341.

You may also order your Retreat information by calling Gregory at 831-622-8410.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RETREAT IS AVAILABLE AT

<https://www.aspire.org/events/aspire-meditation-retreats/>

November 2024

Entering Into The Light

November 11-15 - Mt. Madonna, CA

Entering Into The Light will be our last RETREAT at Mt. Madonna. We will move to our new Retreat site for the March 2025 Retreat. More on this in upcoming Breath Journals.

Siraj will be offering his students the deepest beauty a person can discover about themselves, the Light of Love. This Love exceeds our need for conflict and self-aggrandizements. Every day we will have Meditations to help us enter into this Light, and then emerge into consciousness.

And as always, there will be gestalts for explanation and the effort of listening to short, but powerful discourses by Siraj.

Mt. Madonna is changing its course, and we find ourselves being ushered out due to the financial complexities of their organization. It will be a beautiful new beginning for Mt. Madonna and for us. Our deepest gratitude for all that we have been allowed to share with them.

Ye are the Light of the World. ~ Jesus

Let us dance our way to the Light in Love and grace.



RUMI'S CORNER



Be like water making its way through cracks.
Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object,
and you shall find a way around or through it.

If nothing within you stays rigid,
outward things will disclose themselves.

Empty your mind, be formless.

Shapeless, like water.

If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup.
You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle.

You put it in a teapot it becomes the teapot.

Now, water can flow or it can crash.

Be water my friend.

~ Bruce Lee



The wave is free when it realizes it is part of the sea.

~ Zen Saying

FINGERS POINTING TO THE MOON

THE TAO - CHAPTER 8 AUGUST DISCOURSES

The August Discourses are offered as a means toward consciousness.

If you have been diligent in your efforts to listen to the Discourses this year, you will find that these offerings will put a smile upon your face.

TO ORDER:

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THE SHADOW OF THE WHIP

The Buddha used to tell the story of the three different kinds of race horses in order to help his sannyasins understand the level of pain, relative to the person, necessary to receive the Divine message. The poorest horse ran because he felt the pain of the whip to the marrow of the bone. A better horse ran because he felt the pain of the whip on his skin. But the best race horse needed only THE SHADOW OF THE WHIP. These stories hold both WISDOM and PAIN. They can offer pain to the marrow of the bone, or if you are so willing, they can be merely THE SHADOW OF THE WHIP.

WHAT IS LIFE?

It happened that a man was in search and he came upon a man on the path who said: "THERE IS A WELL HIDDEN IN THE CAVES. GO THERE AND ASK A QUESTION. IF YOU SINCERELY ASK, THE WELL REPLIES. IT IS A MIRACLE ONLY KNOWN TO GREAT ADEPTS."

The man searched. It was difficult to reach to the well, but somehow he reached. Leaning down in the well, he asked: "WHAT IS LIFE?"

No reply came. The well only echoed. He repeated his question, and the well repeated: "WHAT IS LIFE?" But the man was really sincere, so he continued. It is said for three days, both day and night, he asked again and again: "WHAT IS LIFE?" and the well only resounded his own voice.

But he was not tired...so he continued.



SPONSORSHIP

unconscionable generosity

Without financial support, Aspire will disappear. Ever since the “pandemic” there has been nothing but increases in costs of goods and services and a sharp decline in support to augment the increases.

If you are not a sponsor of Aspire, we urge you to become one. Your gifts support many community services both at Hospice and our Batmo project that offers free clothing to children who are facing another cold and wet winter.

Please consider becoming a Sponsor today. It is only through your kind mercy that Aspire can offer its insight and help to those who are struggling.

To become a Sponsor, please use the QR code below or just go to the Aspire web site at aspire.org and make your blessed donation that will serve humankind.

Dear Gregory:

I found you!

I have seen your powerful Aspire programs. I only wish I had reconnected with you 40 years ago. Wow!

Greg Shavien
Santa Barbara, CA



Coming next month, Gregory will be offering the programs that were the genesis for Aspire on XETV in San Diego. These programs began in the spring of 1984, and were created from loving donations by Sponsors many years ago.

To make them available now also took donations from current Sponsors who support the transfer of media that allows for the new format of YouTube.

These programs are fun and interesting to watch as they were filmed before an audience, which was

challenging for the audience due to all of the starts and stops that happen while taping. The audience was very patient with the process.

The first program will premiere on September 6, 2024 on the Aspire website and on YouTube.

Gratefully,
Siraj



August 2024 Message of the Month

**YOUR LOVING
GIFTS HELP ASPIRE
CONTINUE TO SERVE**



IT'S SIMPLE!

Scan this code with your mobile phone or tablet camera and you can give a gift in any amount.



EVENTS



with Gregory

SATURDAY DISCOURSE WITH GREGORY

Every Saturday - 9:00 am
Online via Zoom*

[Aspire.org/events/saturday-discourse-with-gregory/](https://aspire.org/events/saturday-discourse-with-gregory/)

*Free Will Love Offering

MEDITATION WORKSHOP

Carmel, CA

Saturday, September 7, 2024

Donation: \$125.00

Includes Lunch

MEDITATION WORKSHOP

Encinitas, CA

Saturday, September 28, 2024

Donation: \$225.00

Includes Lunch

MEDITATION RETREAT

Mt Madonna, CA

November 11-15, 2024

Register online at:

<https://www.aspire.org/events/aspire-meditation-retreats/>

EVENT REGISTRATION

Phone:

831-622-8410

E-mail:

greg@aspire.org



Do not seek after what you yearn for; seek the source of the yearning itself.

Adyashanti



Join us with
zoom
Video Conferencing

SATURDAY DISCOURSE WITH GREGORY

SATURDAYS – 9:00-9:30 AM (PACIFIC TIME)

Aspire offers a weekly interactive Open Dialogue With Gregory (*Saturday morning Discourse*) live online using Zoom video conferencing software.

Topics vary and are always meaningful to the process of Awakening.



A Breath of Spirit for a Life of Awakening

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