



AWAKENINGS

Consciously Linking Humanity Through Presence, Dialogue & Collaboration

Manifesting Essence

By Angela Whitney

*“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” Shakespeare’s Hamlet*

Spirit is omnipresent, omniscient, all-pervading. Humans are the height of living form, spirit discovering spirit-self. Considering the nature of the human being—a ray of the Unfathomable Sun, the source of All, the Alpha and the Omega—how do we maintain our purity, remain true to Life, maximize our potential? How do we maintain fidelity to our source? In our quest for right life, the human returns to Source daily to refreshen, remember, renew in Flow through nature and meditation, and by participating in awe, mystery, creativity, imagination, prayer, and communion. As we live from our spiritual center, essence manifests—our spiritual self incarnates more and more extensively, and we see “spirit-in-action”.

The Spirit of Guidance is a palpable thread uniting human beings with Source, evidence of “spirit-in-action”. It is the product of incessant resonance, communication, and exchange in the Spirit/Human entity. Its intimacy profound, the vapors of the cries of the human heart are Spirit-witnessed. The reflex return to the human from Source is the Spirit of Guidance - deep communication and communion in the Spirit/Human entity. In our daily life we can orient ourselves to the Spirit of Guidance as the core around which we spin our lives. Essence manifests.

The spiritual art of our spinning involves allowing the connection to Spirit, discovering and deciphering, allowing ourselves to be moved and lifted, allowing intimacy and resonance, as we clear ourselves of dust and things not resonant. Yes, big subjects! Our learning and practice are lifelong. Spirit-in-action, Spirit in human guise—the sweetest of fruits—comes from innocence, creativity, diligence, patience, commitment, discernment and grace.

Spirit-in-action is the searchlight that is a torch in our darkness, that helps us find our way, to discover the aspect of Source offered to us in this moment

Spirit-in-action has many faces. *How do I know Thee? Let me count the ways....*

Spirit-in-action is the *searchlight* that is a torch in our darkness, that helps us find our way, to discover the aspect of Source offered to us in this moment. It is *our growing edge*. It is Life in Flow—always twisting, turning, developing, reaching, expressing in the new those parts of ourselves that are renewing, transforming, hurting, exhilarating, uncertain, and challenging us. Our perpetual choice is how to orient ourselves to our growing edge—to stuff it down, make it destructive to Life, or to harmonize with it somehow, turning it into evolutionary flow, manifesting essence.

We have this choice in our millions of moments. It is *imagination*, a stimulation of the human mind/soul by the Source, that is the “leap” from what is already created to that which is birthing-in-this-moment. In a willingness to express one’s resonance with Life, with the Spirit of Guidance, *creativity* is born. Creativity is the child of the clear union of Spirit/Human, itself a manifestation of *essence*, the spiritual core and juice that exudes from the softness of the ripening human.

Some of the many additional faces of Spirit-in-action: *intelligence, light, beauty, gratitude, forgiveness, insight, kindness, love, mercy, relationship, compassion, empathy, art, friendship, consciousness, altruism, humor, joy, communion, health, sharing, glory, tantric sex, consideration, meditation, communication, transformation, justice,*

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tolerance, healing, blessing, music, prayer, nature, cooperation, awareness, breath, culture, morals, teaching, fellowship, social movements, pathos, understanding, inspiration, discovery, growth and development, ethics, harmony. All these beauties are Spirit-in-action, and more. What else would you add??

Revealing Spirit-in-action, our activities as humans constellate around Source not only in our clarifying process and being resonant with spirit, but also in being a “true heart”, in *slaying our dragons* as did St. George, and in *self-expression*. The qualities of our *true heart* are love, compassion, and innocence; they allow us to be our supple, loving, accessible selves. We pursue what is beautiful to us, a guiding light in transformation, our gift to ourselves and others. May we give it often! Our finest gift is our true heart to give as we rise to the challenges on our journey through life.

St. George slaying the dragon is the exemplar of discernment, the warrior spirit, and the good boundaries needed for meeting life’s challenges. Spirit-in-action. This myth is older than its most recent Christian source, and dragons symbolize diverse things, both pro-life and anti-life, “good-and-bad”! In our context, a dragon symbolizes those pieces of ourselves and the world that block our path toward Life, that obfuscate, detract, distract and fool. In orienting to the light of our soul, we discern the Flow of life in us, and allow parts to die back that are not for us, as St. George slew his dragon.

We outflow—just as Spirit desires to know Itself, the human knows itself in outflow. Outflow is *self-expression*. Spirit-in-action. Outflow is being, not just doing. We express ourselves in discovery, in seeing ourselves, in supporting others, creating larger life, in imagination and creativity. We constantly (continually) refine our expression as resonating with that voice that constantly comes from within. In this we find integrity and authenticity.

As we dare, as we trust, as we develop ourselves as true heart, “slaying” what is not a fit in diverse ways with grace, compassion, and wisdom, as we express ourselves in our myriad of venues, *integrity* and *authenticity* abound. Integrity is our wholeness in action (as realized wholeness). Authenticity is our capacity to come directly from our unclouded waters. As we follow the voice and the call that arise from within, we swim in the Spirit-in-action water of integrity, being our authentic selves. The resonance of the whole informs the parts. Essence manifests.

Spirit-in-action is all over the place. Look to see. It is not linear. Allow the atmosphere birthing in you as you read these words to guide you to your places and to the fruits awaiting you, as you trust and dare. Follow the path suggested in the murmurings of your heart and soul in this and every moment. We find ourselves to be spirit-in-action; we discover the scent of lovers mingling. Essence manifests.

Angela Whitney is a spiritual guide, family nurse practitioner in community health, and mother of three. A UA Board member, she co-directs Light of the Mountains Retreat Center with her husband, Himayat. She is available for spiritual direction for manifesting essence, for One-to-One Process sessions by phone, and for individualized retreats at Light of the Mountains.

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From the Editors

In the Southern Appalachians, spring is considering her ascent. Having been reared in a Christian community, Easter was a season of joy and relief. The sigh of spring after cold, wet winters coupled with the talk of resurrection created an atmosphere blooming with promise.

A memory that has revived my heart through the years is a sunny, blue spring sky. I am running with a pack of children searching for brightly colored Easter eggs in a row of blooming daffodils. Each of us is dressed in pastel cotton dresses or shirts, squeaking in our patent leather shoes. It is a scene of abundance, love, beauty, community, a journey, mystery, surprise, discovery, celebration and peace. For me, these qualities are the promise of awakening.

Our partnerships through Universal Awakening remind us that we are part of a larger rebirth, a resurrection of the heart and soul. In gathering material for this newsletter, I am renewed by the Divine essence manifesting and flowing in individuals and communities all over the world. I am grateful for the opportunity to hear from so many, so deeply their fears, desires, thoughts, efforts, their faith and love born anew each moment.

This issue is edited and published by three of us: the undersigned, in North Carolina (office@universal-awakening.org), and Mary and David Dohrmann, in Oregon (starlight@peak.org). Your communications, suggestions and feedback are always welcome.

Joyful Spring!

Peggy Baldwin

Becoming a Healing Presence for Children

by Jalil Buechel

A recent study entitled *A Sense of Calling* gave voice to the attitudes, assumptions and experiences of new teachers. Nine hundred new teachers contacted by three national telephone surveys gave as their highest priority, not higher salaries (though they would welcome them), but rather smaller classes, supportive parents and community, and supportive administrators. They said they wanted mentors, more pragmatic teacher education programs, and strategies for motivating reluctant students. Ninety-six percent said that teaching is the work they love to do. A study by Susan Nieto, professor at Barnard College, reveals that despite the high dropout rate, new teachers who stay do so because “teaching involves trust and respect, as well as close relationships between students and teachers. It is in fact, based on love.”

A number of trends, however, run counter to the teacher’s desire for a deeper connection with his or her students. On average, classrooms are becoming more crowded and teachers are expected to cover more material in less time. Art, music and physical education are being replaced by more testing. Both students and teachers increasingly are competing for time and space. For example, the number-one reason that half of all new teachers leave the profession within five years is lack of planning time. I would translate this to mean that there seems to be less time overall. In particular, this rush to get the job done, focusing on “the basics”, interferes with the intimacy of the process of learning.

I am writing this article to share what I have done to make connections with children. I have a deep desire to do more to make schools healthier places to nurture learning. At the end of this article I have included my email address, and invite your comments so that together we can dialogue about what is needed.

My first mentor in teaching, Murshida Vera Corda, a Sufi with a Doctorate in Education and a pioneer in the spiritual education of young children, once stated, “All teaching happens from heart to heart.” This is a kind of koan that I have carried with me throughout my 33 years of public and private teaching with children of all ages—from preschool to high school and in both regular and special education. I find heart-to-heart learning the only effective learning. I feel it is particularly effective when working with my latest challenge—students with significant emotional and behavioral issues.

I work with other teachers in a residential and day treatment setting that incorporates mental health practices with special education. Our clients/students enter after being discharged from the state hospital or from other already restrictive special education settings. Most have been removed from the custody of their parents by court order after having witnessed or having been the victims of trauma, including violence, sexual abuse and neglect. They initially appear as hyper vigilant, compressed bundles of rage, or worse, as

children who have given up on themselves. Because many adults have let them down or taken advantage of them, they are either suspicious of friendly adult behaviors or have few boundaries. They are constantly testing to see how accepted they really are.

Despite working conditions that deter most professionals from seeking employment at our school, I actually feel privileged to be working in this area of obvious need. The opportunities for personal growth are many, and I come willing to work with the students starting at whatever level they are willing to allow me. Though my professional training is helpful, it is the work I have done with Himayat Inayati and other spiritual teachers that enables me to draw closer to understanding the students’ unique gifts.

One of the ways I work is in expanding a student’s vocabulary in the five bodies as described by the Sufi Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan: “The education of a child should be considered from five different points of view: physical, mental, moral, social, and spiritual. If one side is developed and not the other sides, naturally the child will show some lack in its education.”

Most people have a pretty clear idea of what defines these viewpoints or domains, perhaps with the exception of the moral and spiritual domains. The moral body is defined by a sense of inclusion or exclusion of others—connection or disconnection within and outside of oneself. Himayat defines the moral body as “that living tissue which connects us to

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the the rest of existence, outer and inner ... The language of the moral body is relationships or the lack of relationships.”

The spiritual domain is defined by its sense of completeness. For example, a little baby asleep in her mother’s arms, with a perfect rhythm to her breath, conveys a sense that there is nothing lacking. “It is a little individual which then begins to have in itself the essence of everything and all things in the world; for in every soul there is a spark of every object and every quality that exists in the whole universe.” (*The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan*, Vol. 3, Ch. 1, “The Education of the Infant”)

It has been my experience that all five domains are equally important; yet I am aware that not all domains are explored or experienced in school. Furthermore, based on what I have seen in being with many professionals over three decades, I doubt that most teachers care for themselves in such a way that these domains are recognized and worked with. I believe that we give scope to the physical and mental domains and neglect the social/emotional, moral and spiritual domains. As a consequence, our experience as professionals and the nature of education in schools is incomplete and will always feel incomplete until such time as this is realized.

Fortunately, I work in a treatment setting where teachers and therapists focus more on the social/emotional aspects. One day, a seven-year-old boy I will call Andy completed a series of readers and received a special trophy for his work. His expression changed from his usual flat affect to a beautiful smile. As he danced down the aisle with the trophy in his hand I asked what he was feeling. He stopped and reflected. “Not mad” was the only way he could describe his emotion. Later, after getting further descriptors such as a feeling of pleasure at his hard work, we came up with “happy and proud”.

I considered Andy’s discovery to be a realization, an awakening to his emotional and moral domains, because he had to stop, dig deep into what he was really feeling, and connect to something inside that was real. He could have answered, “Fine,” without much reflection; but in that pause he became present to something new that seemed to expand an awareness of who he was. It also was possible that a broader discussion had been triggered within himself about those qualities of pride and happiness. Over the next few weeks I could ask him, “Do you remember how you felt when...?” Thus my question could possibly reorient him to the experience and give him a new opportunity to make his feelings real.

Moments of such quiet presence are not common in our school or in life. More often we have lively discussions. Once I was conducting a small group and noticed that one student was quite irritated by one of his friends. Before he could hit, I asked him why it was that we got angry at our friends but were rarely upset by people we did not know. Somewhat stumped, he replied that he didn’t really pay that much attention to or care about people he didn’t know. I asked, “So you only get mad at people you care about?” That

started a dialogue in which he and the other group members were able to reflect on the meaning of friendship, the meaning of anger and the costs and benefits of having friends. It was not a quiet dialogue but it was a beginning of reflection within his moral domain.

As important as it is to expand the discussion with our students about what I consider to be these neglected bodies, I consider it of greater importance to expand this discussion in ourselves first. There is a Sufi ethic that states that since Sufism is based on practice and not on theory, it is important to have a degree of realization about what we intend to teach before we start teaching it. We teach primarily by example. Consciously or unconsciously the students we work with know our mood, know if our attitude toward them is sincere, and feel valued or feel the opposite based on where our consciousness is at the moment. Students with good self-esteem can afford to ignore or defend themselves against the bad mood, temporary or chronic, from adults and peers; but students in the setting where I work have very little self-esteem and few coping skills. They react dramatically to any perceived insult and are drawn to compassionate presence. In a way this reactive state helps, in that I have constant feedback from the them about my own inner state.

The key is knowing myself, knowing what I have added to the equation of our relationship. Once I know myself I will know the other partner in the relationship. What is simple is not easy. Awareness of how I can help hold them in a supportive way appears to require constant presence—a goal that is a process, not a place.

By *presence* I mean that quality of attention that is mindful, heartfelt and continually aware. At the core of awareness is a sense that while I am present, something or someone else is present as well. This other presence may be what Sufi’s call Divine Intelligence. It is the source of all teaching, the source of all awareness. It is highly informative and supportive in and of itself. The greater the awareness of a deeper, boundless presence, the greater the healing. A healing presence includes the children and the person being present, and thus is healing for everyone. Presence appears to bring a dynamism to the atmosphere of learning and, for example, allows me to chuck the lesson out the window if the class starts a greater discussion.

Presence by its nature is inclusive. It allows the possibility of including all the domains. As a guide more than as teacher, it is my responsibility to hold the class in the larger heart—the boundless heart. With patience and a great consideration for what each individual brings to the discussion it is possible to include all five domains and thus make the experience a more natural, more complete one.

Jalil Buechel is a Certified Practitioner and Teacher of the Raphaelite Work, which he has studied since 1993. As a Special Education Teacher and Counselor, he employs his healing work with young children who have been victims of trauma and abuse. He welcomes comments and extended discussion on this article. Email: jalilb@cascadeaccess.com



Building the Aesthetic Voice

By Alia Whitney Johnson

SEVEN DAYS OF SILENCE. CAN you imagine? She was small for her age, a mere 16 years old but pregnant. For years, her brother and “caring” uncle had repeatedly sexually abused her. One day, she became pregnant. That is when I met her.

Medani was sent by court order to Ma-Sevana, a home for mothers aged 10-18 who were victims of rape or incest in Sri Lanka. While this place would protect her, she had been taken from her home, friends, education... her childhood. The result was seven days of silence and absent, longing stares that could not be overcome by any amount of counseling.

However, there was a glimmer of hope, and it came in the form of small glass beads. Medani took an interest in sorting and stringing the colorful beads I brought to Ma-Sevana to start an income-generating project for her and other girls like her. After one day of beadwork, she spoke. Three weeks later, she became a leader in the home, helping other girls create beautiful beadwork. Medani taught me to see people for their strengths rather than for their troubles. She proved that even the most abused can be active, especially when pursuing something that they find meaningful.

Medani is one of 32 girls I have worked with through Emerge. Emerge supports these teenage mothers in creating and selling jewelry as a means of financial empowerment and personal transformation. It fosters creativity, self-expression and self-worth. Girls create unique jewelry for export and I sell the jewelry in the US with the profits returning to their bank accounts in Sri Lanka. Emerge has supported these vulnerable girls in generating the money and skills needed to build strong futures. With confidence, seed money, and knowledge of how to leverage that money, I plan to make sure Medani and many others will never have to be silent again.

In January 2007, I packed my suitcase full of beads and tools and em-



barked on my third adventure to give these persevering girls a voice. I arrived in Sri Lanka, my second home, 50 hours later. It has been an emotional roller coaster ever since. In the past month, one girl was told that she could never return home to her community, one girl had a beautiful baby girl, and another girl had her 5 month old baby boy die in his sleep. Several girls have been sent away from Ma-Sevana and two new girls have arrived.

I have found myself crying at least once a week but laughing, smiling, and loving even more. I have been living fully, experiencing all of my emotions to their fullest, and learning about the many facets of communication. Sri Lanka has shown me that beyond verbal communication there is also physical communication, emotional communication, and aesthetic communication. I have gotten to know each girl's aesthetic voice. Suneetha always works in

sets of twos when she is beading. Sindu uses long stretches of solid, bold colors. Damni always moves from small beads to big to small again. Tiara has no sense of matching or what anyone might call aesthetic at all but she takes a certain pride in her carefree approach to her work. As I watch them build the confidence to share their work with each other, I know that they are becoming comfortable with themselves and their own voices. Nothing could be a more rewarding transformation to witness.

I have worked to give these girls tremendous ownership in Emerge. I see this project not only for its potential to provide income and an enjoyable activity but to empower the girls to

learn about working together, to give them responsibility and leadership roles, and to encourage them to have the confidence to disseminate the techniques on their own. I see the skills developed in organizing and maintaining Emerge as equally important as the tangible outcomes of the project.

Each girl maintains her own box of beads and produces products on her own time when she is inspired, without supervision. These boxes have provided a sense of ownership in the process and the girls have taken great care in producing products, helping one another, and ensuring that all beads are accounted for. Currently, the responsibility of looking after their communal tools is rotating from girl to girl each week. I cannot describe the pride on each girl's face when she returns the tools back to me at the end of the week.

A wonderful woman named Pat has agreed to help sustain the project after I

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leave. She will drop off beads to the girls at Ma-Sevana monthly and pick up completed products for export. I have also been able to develop a partnership with MAST Cares in Sri Lanka, a company that supplies Victoria's Secret, among other brand names. They have agreed to become a long-term sponsor of the project and will provide tool boxes, bead jars, and beading tools to all girls who come through Ma-Sevana. MAST Cares will also import beads from India to insure a consistent, long-term, cheap bead supply for the program.

One of the most exciting new developments for Emerge is that I have found a way to incorporate more at-risk girls into our activities. Sarvodaya, the organization that runs Ma-Sevana, also runs a vocational training center for handicapped girls. These girls learn to sew but don't have sufficient skills to get a job in a garment factory. We have designed a drawstring bag to hold the jewelry being produced through Emerge. The girls at the vocational training center will make these bags to generate some income, reinforce and develop their sewing skills, and to also give them a sense of accomplishment. With the help of MAST Cares, we have selected and purchased the materials to construct the bags. We are opening bank accounts for each of these girls so that she can receive the profits from her work.



Overall, my work in Sri Lanka has progressed beautifully. I am so alive and full of energy. In the US and at MIT I feel like so much of my life is contained in my mental domain. Somehow, verbal communication becomes the reality of my interactions and traps me from moving beyond the surface. While I cannot deny the importance of learning the language of the culture I am in, I have realized that verbal communication is just one facet of a large exchange between individuals. My time in Sri Lanka has enabled me and the girls I am working with to develop our voice in new ways. Because of this, I feel that I live more fully than I have ever lived before. We communicate in new ways that are completely foreign to us but at the same time are completely real. There is no room for politeness or forced exchange. It's all real and it's all refreshing. I am stretching, growing, loving, learning, listening ...communicating with myself and all around me in new ways.

The names in this article have been changed to protect the privacy of Emerge participants. Alia Whitney-Johnson is a student at MIT and can be reached at aliawj@gmail.com



Hitchhiker's Guide to Awakening

Hitchhiker's Guide To Awakening (HGA) is on-line! Take this opportunity to get on the global map.

We are excited to offer you this new navigational tool that allows the global public to access your Awakening site or events via a global map portal on the UA web site. Click here to check it out:

www.universal-awakening.org/index.php?page=profiles

You may contact the Universal Awakening office for information on listing your organization or event on Hitchhiker's Guide. Your listing can be a simple link to HGA placing you on the map! Or you may accept our invitation to have up to three pages of information about your group linked to your location on the map.

We also ask that you send us any suggestions for events and organizations that are resonant with the mission of Universal Awakening. Just click the email address above and send the organization's web site to our office.

If you are interested in volunteering with this exciting project, we need individuals who can help us place links in the HGA system. Just click this link and send us an e-mail:

office@universal-awakening.org

An Integral Learning Community

Himayat Inayati

Universal Awakening is supporting the formation of a new lifelong learning/transformational program called Odyssey, through the UA Incubator project program for a minimum of six and a maximum of eighteen months. Odyssey will be based in Asheville, North Carolina. The program will be a school for preschool to high school students and will include an integral learning community for their parents and the larger adult community.

The integral model of education holds within it the holistic paradigm, the spiritual evolution/maturation of the individual, human society, and the greater field of life on the planet. The integral model embraces and nurtures developmental sequencing of the various strands of the human experience. The integral model is an open system supportive of all no matter their faith, spiritual path, or lack there of. It holds that life is precious, sacred, ever seeking fulfillment - on both the individual and the collective level. It appreciates that each child, each aspect of life, is a unique creation - supporting the fruition of all with unique and deeply meaningful gifts.

This new educational community will attend to the cognitive, cultural, recreational, service, and spiritual needs of its members, while always being supportive of each member's chosen religion or personal path of spirituality. It will be a community that supports our children and supports us, their parents, as well as other interested adults. It will offer the possibility of enriched community and friendship for the adult members—even after our kids graduate on to lives of their own.

Curricular Components

The academic needs of our students (preschool - 12th grade) will be addressed as much as possible by applying the following components of a holistic interpretation of education. This model assumes six Developmental Strands: aesthetic, emotional, mental, moral, physical and spiritual.

Essential Learning Skills

- thinking and working creatively and critically
- collaborating with others
- communicating effectively
- learning independently
- using appropriate resources to access and apply knowledge
- taking risks to succeed
- creating options and making choices
- exhibiting authentic self-confidence

Mysteries Council

In Mysteries Council, children are supported in addressing topics deemed relevant to them using the eye and the ear of the heart.

Multiple Intelligence Theory

Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Visual-spatial, Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Naturalistic.

Multi-age Continuous Progress Classes

Student-led Portfolio-based Assessments; Reflective Moments; Personal Mentoring; Goals Notebooks; Individual Projects & Mega-thematic Instruction

Attending to the Biology of Learning

We propose that the human actually operates and learns with three brains: the head, the heart and the gut. We will always be seeking to apply practical applications of research in education and neuroscience to our student's ability to learn better and to orient them to learning possibilities offered by each of these brains.

Diversity of Life Studies

Diversity of life studies affirm that the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes

Mythology in the Classroom:

“Myth never was, but always is.” Storytelling will be a thread of illumination spun throughout our classes.

Adult Centered Learning/Community:

An essential component of this new learning community is the development of a strong, heart centered, adult community that attends to celebration, recreation, service, alternative health resources and spiritual nurturance/awakening for both the parents of the children, community staff, and any other interested adult.

Himayat Inayati, spokesperson for Universal Awakening, will direct this project along with Kalyan Volpa and a group of interested parents and Asheville area residents. For further information about this integral learning community, contact Himayat at: office@odyssey-ilc.org

Donate to UA thru United Way

As a nonprofit organization Universal Awakening is eligible to receive designated gifts through your local United Way campaign. When you fill out your pledge card for United Way at your place of business, simply indicate that you would like your pledge designated to Universal Awakening, P.O. Box 17578, Asheville, North Carolina 28816; 828.683.1219 (contact information must be included

In many cases, your employer will match any funds you donate to UA and other nonprofit organizations through the United Way campaign. Your local United Way will notify UA of your donation and make arrangements to send your donation to the UA office. Please inform the UA office of your donation...and **thanks for your support of Universal Awakening!**

Email: office@universal-awakening.org

Many Doorways to Awakening

A Six-week Class at All Saints Episcopal Church

Don Weiner, Ph.D.

For thousands of years religions and spiritual paths have provided many tools for awakening, including forms of concentration and meditation, sound practices, energy practices, and prayer. For people of a particular religion or for those who do not belong to any religion or spiritual path, most of these techniques are generally not used because they have particular belief systems associated with them. This class explored essential elements of awakening that need not be tied to any particular religious or spiritual tradition. Discoveries from science, including quantum physics, chaos theory, artificial life simulations on computers, and cosmology were presented as stimuli for awakening. The class included many experiential exercises drawing upon non-belief system-based methods of awakening, including inquiry, presence, visualization, and learning to customize metaphors as tools for exploring higher states of consciousness.

The class considered questions such as:

What is the basis for what we believe (or don't believe) about reality? How do these beliefs affect our spirituality? What would it be like to start with direct experiences brought about through methods common to many spiritual traditions, with those methods cleared of the "trappings" of particular religions and belief systems? How do recent discoveries in science challenge our notions of reality?

What does awakening mean to you? Why do you want to awaken? What methods have been favorable to your awakening? What have been obstacles to your awakening?

Have you ever thought about the real meaning of terms that you (and religion and spirituality) commonly use? E.g., sacredness, higher consciousness, purity, wisdom, spirit, soul, planes or realms, "the

other side". What experiences have you had that have been the basis for your understanding of these and how much of your understanding is based solely on what others have told you or what you have read in sacred writings?

The class used various techniques to explore awakening:

- Practices with concentration
- Practices with presence
- Practices with light
- Practices with sound
- Practices with energy
- Practices with consciousness
- Learning about systems theory and chaos theory
- Discovering a non-dualistic way of relationship in which our sense of individuality is very much preserved
- Discovering how to begin with metaphors and then discovering how to create our own metaphors to serve as a "scaffolding" for experiencing higher dimensions of reality.

The class participants experienced many practices in each of these areas, with the aim of helping each directly experience deeper aspects of reality and as a result, reformulate their sense of self and relationship to all of existence. The class had about fourteen people participating regularly including a computer programmer, an engineer, a mathematics professor, and a variety of others, many of whom had not previously attended a class like this.

Don Weiner is a psychologist in private practice in Corpus Christi, Texas, and has been exploring the integration of spirituality and science since 1969. He is a member of the UA Board of Directors and the author of Upgrading the Operating System of the Soul: A Manual of Quantum Sufism (XLibris, 2004). Email: Azar.Baksh@aol.com

Book Review

Nurturing Child and Adolescent Spirituality: Perspectives from the World's Religious Traditions

Rev. Karen-Marie Yust, Th.D., Aostre N. Johnson, Ed.D., Rabbi Sandy Sasso, D.D., D.Min., Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Eds. Publ. 2006, Rowman & Littlefield.

Nurturing Child and Adolescent Spirituality provides a forum for leading theologians, philosophers, and other scholars to discuss core questions about the spiritual lives of children and adolescents around the world. The book features essays from over 40 thinkers and leaders from the world's major religious traditions, who address six core questions:

- How do the world's religious traditions understand and view children and adolescents? What is the nature of childhood and adolescence?
- How do religious traditions understand the process of spirituality or self-transcendence in childhood and adolescence?
- What rituals and practices within the various religious tra-

ditions nurture the inner spiritual lives of children and adolescents?

- What rituals, practices, and obligations of the spiritual life guide young people to meaning, purpose, and ethical action?
- To whom do the religious traditions assign responsibility for nurturing spirituality in children and adolescents?
- How do religious traditions view and address the social, policy, and cultural forces that influence child and adolescent spirituality?

This book is highly recommended for all those who have a professional or personal interest in child and adolescent spirituality. Portions of this review have been adapted from www.search-institute.org

Sacred Dialogue - Sacred Relationship

An Experiential Six-Day Retreat with Himayat Inayati

Wahaba Bergemann

I was asked to write an article about this retreat, held in November, 2006 (attendees shown below), and I said very quickly, “Yes!” Very naïve of me, and now ... so many aspects, so many issues, so many impressions, questions and discussions. All things are important for understanding the process, but it has to be short and how can it be with all these thoughts?

Nearly all of us are Raphaelite Work practitioners and Sufis, coming from Sweden, Holland and Germany. Many had questions which were important to us, such as: *What is new? Why a new organization? How is this different from the Sufi Order? Isn't healing “universal awakening”? What does Universal Awakening mean?*

Himayat has answered all of the questions with a lot of patience; and at one moment, I have no more questions about the old stuff, but more curiosity for that which will come. A new step, a new perspective—actually, a lot of new perspectives from a practice which shows that on different levels, there are always different aspects to the same issue. Life can be easier if one is not so impressed by one aspect, for it is really relative. On another level, there can be oppositional aspects and they also belong to the inner truth. We all were enthusiastic about this possibility for managing our own problems in this way.

Some comments of group members were:

I have the image of a big cooking pot. UA movement is preparing something that feels very rich. Members of the group have added their unique personal “spices” with their energies and their active

attunement to a new perspective.

Himayat creates a room where we can make our own experiences, to be awakened in our own thinking, in our modes of expressing and exploring ourselves.

The space that has been created for us to go through our processes is tremendous, amazing. We become aware of the structures of our own thinking.

I have noticed where I am present and where I manipulate my own experiences.

I feel that there is freedom for our development, to trust our own creativity, our unfoldment, becoming ourselves.

The first impulse of life is love. I am only this in each cell, in each body, in each form. God, God, God! Bless all life.

Before and after this retreat, Himayat gave lectures to the public in two different cities. Forty people came to every event. All were very interested to listen to his perspectives. In meeting with friends afterwards, we experienced good conversation and deep discussions and dialogues.

I am very glad that in early June, 2007, Himayat will come again to Germany with all his ideas and experiences and support of our development.

Wahaba Bergemann is a healing practitioner, Raphaelite Work Facilitator, and founder of the Ibis Institute in Hagen, German. Email: info@ibis-institut.de



Thoughts On Starting A Universal Awakening Chapter

Patty Chama Miller

I am taking the first steps in starting a gathering around awakening the human spirit. I think it could be a chapter of Universal Awakening. "I'm not even sure I'm ready for this," my small self says. However, I want to become a more forgiving and compassionate person, so what better way to contribute to this change than by listening to others in a gathering? You see, I want to start this gathering partly for my own growth as a human being. In this endeavor I am seeking others' guidance. I am sending a query letter to my friends and to those who might be interested because I don't want this to be just my group. As I hinted at above, I have never done anything like this before.

Though the focus of the group will be becoming aware of the divine in us all, the process could be multifaceted. The gathering could use poetry, art, meditation, dance and more to aid in experiencing our greater selves in contrast to our small historic selves. Participants would join in as their spirits move them. I desire my life to become a divine vision with God's peace, as Inayat Khan declares in his prayer. Our God given light could be released and joined with others to rid the earth of the darkness it is experiencing. However, first we need to find this light in ourselves and embrace it. Of course, I don't expect any grandiose revelations; at least, not right away. I hope only for small miracles to happen that will grow together into something marvelous.

An Invitation To Create Sacred Space

*A gathering of friends to share reflections
on our growth as
human beings, in the spirit of guidance.*

*God playing a game of tag has kissed us and said,
"You're it! **I mean, you are Really It!**"*

~ Hafiz, beloved poet of Persia

Awakening the Human Spirit

Discussion, meditation
masks, painting, art,
our own self portraits,
feelings
poetry of Rumi and Hafiz
tea & cakes, dancing, Biodanza
Dances of Universal Peace, movement
Chanting, prayer, Zikr
storytelling,
Universal Worship Service,
community service, one-time projects
Your Dreams, Your Visions
My Dreams, My Visions
Our Life

!!!

An update from our first meeting

We had our first gathering last Sunday and it was most pleasing and satisfying to me. There were nine of us this time; nine women on our individual spiritual paths. We were telling our own stories and listening to each other. Right now we are unknown to each other, so we are feeling each other out for acceptance and safety. Next month we'll meet again. Some new faces will join us and some faces will not return. I look forward to some of us staying a part of this gathering long enough for our relationships to deepen. The sharing of tea and cookies always breaks the ice. The gathering was ended with a witch's closing prayer.

Merry meet, merry part and merry meet, again.

So we shall,

Chama.

pattyandfriends@aol.com

A CyberSpace Universel!

Please consider joining with Universal Awakening to help create a sacred space in cyberspace! Your offerings of original sacred art will become the altar and the architecture for this Cathedral / Temple in cyber space.

This call is an opportunity for you to have a sacred offering of your creativity in this Universel. You may offer original visual art (digital images), writings, music, spoken word, or short video. Please include a brief bio, a digital image of the artist (you), and a one paragraph artist statement about your offering and your intention.

You may send your offerings to peggy@loydartists.com We look forward to hearing from you.

Meet Members of the Universal Awakening Board of Advisors . . .

The Universal Awakening Board of Advisors is comprised of individuals who have made distinctive contributions in their respective fields, which relate in a meaningful way to the goals of Universal Awakening. In this issue we are pleased to present Alex and Allyson Grey. For complete information on all of the Board of Advisors members, click on the "Boards" link at the UA web site.



ALEX GREY

Alex Grey is best known for his paintings which "X-ray" the multiple dimensions of reality, interweaving the physical and biological anatomy with psychic and spiritual subtle energies. Grey's visual meditation on the nature of life and consciousness, the subject of his art, is contained in the monograph entitled *Sacred Mirrors: The Visionary Art of Alex Grey* (Inner Traditions), published in five languages. His second book, *The Mission of Art* (Shambhala), reflects on art as a spiritual practice. *Transfigurations*, his second monograph and most recent book, takes the reader through the history of his artistic life through his most recent works. Grey's art has been exhibited worldwide, including a mid-career retrospective at The Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, the Sao Paulo Biennale, The Grande Palaise, Paris, and solo exhibition in Tokyo to accompany the Japanese translation of *Sacred Mirrors*. Grey's art work has been used as album art for such multi-platinum bands as Nirvana, Beastie Boys, Tool (Grammy award winner), and String Cheese Incident, where their recent album art won Grey a Jammy Award.

ALLYSON GREY

Allyson Grey's textural oil paintings and watercolors are mind bogglingly labor intensive fields of spectral squares. She has exhibited at Stux Gallery, Oklahoma, Harris Gallery, White Columns and The Clocktower in New York City, in Boston, San Francisco and throughout the U.S. Many corporations and individuals collect her paintings. Commissions of Allyson Grey's permanent public works include a thirty-foot mural at the First Bank of Lowell, Massachusetts, and a large-scale oil painting installation in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She paints and collaborates with her husband and with actress daughter, Zena Lotus, in Brooklyn, New York.

In May, 2007, the Greys will lead a pilgrimage to Damanhur in the Valchiusella Valley in the Alpine foothills of northern Italy. Damanhur exists to build and service its Temples of Humankind, which the community has been building deep within a mountain for nearly two decades. More information about Damanhur is presented in the Greys' recently published book, *Damanhur: Temples of Humankind*. To learn more about Alex and Allyson and their work, visit their web site at www.alexgrey.com or contact them at info@cosm.org

Say not, "I have found the truth", but rather, "I have found a truth."

Say not, "I have found the path of the soul." Say rather, "I have met the soul walking upon my path."

For the soul walks upon all paths.

The soul walks not upon a line, neither does it grow like a reed.

The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals.

~ KAHLIL GIBRAN

Universal Awakening Calendar

If you do not see information for your area, please check the contact names and email addresses below for local UA chapters. You can also check the UA web site for calendar updates at www.universal-awakening.org/index.php?page=calendar

Contact the UA office for more information on events or to schedule an event in your area.

Phone: 828.683.1219 ✕ Email: office@universal-awakening.org

Events

Contacts

April 28 - 29, 2007

The Sacred as a Matrix for Personal and Social Transformation

Himayat Inayati, Th.D

San Diego, California

office@universal-awakening.org

May 4-6, 2007

Being at Home Everywhere: Discovering Meaning and Delight Any Time, Any Place, and in Any Weather

Doe Bay Resort, Orcas Island, Washington

For more information:

David: 508-757-3303; david@rynickcoaching.com

Tamara: 206-783-4669; redcatfam@earthlink.net

June 4, 2007, 7- 9 pm

Developing Spirituality and Social Responsibility

IBIS Institute, Hagen, Germany

info@institut-ibis.de

June 5 - 10, 2007

Developing Spirituality and Social Responsibility

Himayat Inayati, Th.D

IBIS Institute, Hagen, Germany

info@institut-ibis.de

June 10, 2007, 3 - 6 pm

Introduction into Raphaelite Work

Himayat Inayati, Th.D

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info@institut-ibis.de

GERMANY

Wahaba Bergemann: info@institut-ibis.de

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Margot Richardson: pearlwillson9@yahoo.com

*There's a door of great mystery,
single and unchanging,
but many doorkeepers.
One by one they come and serve.
- Jelaluddin Rumi*