

The Path of Natural Light

by

Aaron

Channeled through Barbara Brodsky

Part Two

Transcripts, January, 1994
through June, 1994



Deep Spring Publications

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Introduction

As we ponder the best way to get Aaron's teachings out to those of you who live far away and have come to value them, it's clear that a book which is carefully edited takes too much time and work for our limited resources. These lightly edited transcripts of the weekly classes from mid-January through June, 1994 offer the weekly sessions just as they were channeled. They have not been fully checked by Aaron for accuracy. There may be occasional errors in the transcribing. The overall sense is correct. Please bring inconsistencies and typographical errors to our attention so they can be clarified. Thank you.

This is a continuation of the transcripts from September 1993 through mid-January, 1994. They are two essential parts of a whole and may be gotten as Parts 1 and 2 separately or as one volume. The page numbering reflects that Part 2 is a continuation. At Aaron's request, the first transcript in Part 2 is a repeat of the final transcript in Part 1, since this is a key teaching. It is our hope that this entire work will eventually be professionally published and nationally distributed. Meanwhile, we are glad to be able to offer it in this form.

The book No Chain at All, the edited transcripts of January to June, 1993, will provide useful foundation for those of you who wish deeper understanding of the conditioned nature of all phenomena. That book is not necessary, however, to understanding of this one.

Many of you have asked us to include all of the transcript, discussion as well as Aaron's talks, so we haven't cut anything except those questions which were clearly unrelated. We've also included several private sessions where Aaron spoke in more detail about these teachings.

There is wide variety offered here. Aaron does have a clear "teaching plan" for the year, which becomes apparent if you read through the book from the start, but you can dip in anywhere. Many people come regularly every week; some come occasionally. New people frequently appear, and some stay and join our weekly sessions. We've found Aaron speaks clearly to us all.

His focus this year has been teaching the balance of relative and ultimate reality. Thus, some of his talks are about working lovingly and skillfully with the catalysts of our daily lives. Some are about choosing the space and perspective which allow us not to get caught in these issues. We don't "get rid of" the issues that cause us discomfort, but see it all more clearly as manifestation of pure awareness. Duality falls away. Our lives become more spacious.

There are talks about working with the heavy emotions on the relative plane, about fear, relationships, grief, forgiveness, and more. There are also talks about the "Light Body" which is always perfect. He asked us to look at a perfect white sheet of paper; crumple it; unfold it. Can we see the perfect piece of paper which still exists in the wrinkled sheet? Where do we fix our gaze, on the wrinkles or the natural perfection of the paper?

Introduction

In just the same way, when we fix our focus on our fear, anger, greed, and other heavy emotions, we practice those. We see in a dual way, distorted/undistorted. We try to hold this, get rid of that. When we first find equanimity with what has arisen in us, and then literally fix our gaze on the innate perfection of all arising, we release old distortion. Just let it go, no aversion, only release of that which no longer serves a purpose, and which was never “real” in the first place. Where do we fix our gaze? There are many practices introduced here for this work. Please take whatever is of value to you.

Acknowledgments

With thanks to all of those whose commitment and hard work have drawn forth these teachings. Their work is reflected in the questions asked and the depth of the teachings offered in response.

With special thanks to David Brown and Karen Weber whose energetic and careful transcribing makes it possible to share these sessions so promptly with all of you.

I find this book to be the heart of Aaron's teaching. It has changed my life profoundly, and touched many others' lives deeply as well. I speak for many when I offer gratitude to Aaron for his continued, loving guidance.

Deep thanks, also, to the long succession of teachers from whom these teachings have flowed.

Barbara

If you are new to our work and wish to know more about it, to read other of Aaron's books, or to receive our newsletters, please send us your name and address. All group work with Aaron, and newsletters, are supported by donation.

Deep Spring Center
3455 Charing Cross Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
www.deepspring.org

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A Message from Aaron

(Channeled privately before the class and printed.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. My greetings and love to you all. Some of you have worked with me and with Barbara for many years, some, for a shorter time. Some of you are new to our work. I would speak to you all about our present path together.

Like a rope, your spiritual paths are composed of many strands. We can name these strands in many ways, following the language of many different religious traditions. Let us be simple and non-technical. One great strand is simply living lovingly and skillfully in the world. Work within this strand pulls together the numerous substrands of morality, which manifest as intention to offer your energy with non-harm, non-judgment, and compassion. This strand is fundamental. It was the basis of our work for several years.

Another strand is mindfulness, deepening attention. Amongst its substrands are concentration, skillful use of energy, greater tranquillity and the opening heart which increasingly allows one to be present in each moment. You can already see how these two strands interweave and depend upon one another for their strength.

Let us call the third strand wisdom. Within this strand are the deepening awareness of your true nature and of the interdependent nature of all that is in the universe, and the ability to rest more stably in ultimate reality. Exploration of this strand is newer in our work together.

Last fall we began to speak less frequently of the skillful living in relative reality and more about the balance. This shift is not because I find skillful living in relative reality to be unimportant, but because it's time to more fully bring in the third strand. You must continue to work with mindfulness. You must continue to strive to live lovingly and with non-harm, to understand the ramifications of your actions, words and thoughts, and also the meaning of being "someone" who is striving.

We could continue forever to talk about nothing but how to live skillfully in this moment and to work on such skills. It is highly important but insufficient. The preliminary work is essential. It shows you where there is aversion to relative reality. It opens your heart to this human who is afraid. It teaches you equanimity with all that arises in mind and body. As long as the aversion is treated as solid and something to be escaped from, then ultimate reality, heaven or nirvana, become something separate, something to be grasped for, a place of escape. Relative and ultimate reality, heaven and hell, samsara and nirvana, are non-dual. If you grasp at ultimate reality as escape from the pain of your humanness, you only dig yourself in further to the patterns of aversion, grasping and fear. Learning about this has been our foundation. Most important is that we have raised awareness of intention to live skillfully, and opened compassion for the being who finds that so difficult. That intention and growing compassion walk with you.

Now we have brought in this third strand. You are learning to see how boundaries arise, and that they are the delusion of old mind. You are learning to let go of identification with that arising, and to come back and rest in what various systems call pure mind, rigpa, the light body or higher self. These terms are not quite synonymous but are close enough to bring them together in this way.

A Message from Aaron

We all meet here together, new and old to this work. Those who are newer to it travel hand in hand with us. To all of you, a word of caution: constantly you must go back. You must earnestly practice this skillful living in the present, living with love and an open heart, compassion and non-judgment. My book, Aaron, and many transcripts are available as guidance. Your meditation practice is your tool.

Tonight we jump into a new phase of this work for which all of this has been preparatory. In past months we have been discussing the light body, the perfect, unwrinkled sheet of paper, the illusory wrinkles and how the physical, emotional and mental bodies reflect those wrinkles. If I were to introduce you directly to practices of identifying with that perfect sheet of paper without the practices of finding compassion for that which experiences itself as wrinkled, I would be teaching you duality and disassociation with the human, not the integration and non-duality which are true fruition of this path.

We move ahead then with this caution: what I teach here is not escape from your humanness, but deeper embracing of that humanness, wrinkles and all. We will begin tonight with the introduction of very specific practices for releasing identification with the wrinkles, be they emotional, mental or physical distortions. It is essential that you see that this work must be done with no aversion to any of those distortions, only the skillful realization, "This is not who I am. I need not carry this any more. I let it go."

It will be each of your responsibility to be aware of where there is aversion and to do further work on the relative plane with the human who is still stuck in unskillful distortions.

This is background. I would like this statement to be made available tonight and in following weeks so that each being who joins us understands that this present work is only the blending of the strands and that each strand still must be attended to. This is important. Given a physical distortion such as a painful back, or an emotional distortion as the frequent arising of jealousy, if there is any aversion, you are not releasing the distortion but solidifying it through the attempt to get rid of it. I am not suggesting this is bad, but it will be painful and lead to further adhering karma. You must attend to the relative being.

I fully trust that people are always where they need to be. If you are new here tonight or in these past few weeks and, if our work speaks to your heart, trust that you are meant to be here even if it seems very new to you. Trust that the pieces will come together as they need to. I do not wish to frighten you with my cautions, only to remind you this work will ask your deep energy and effort, skillfully given. Our work is not about judgment, preference and aversion, nor about avoidance of these, but about equanimity. It is about balance, non-duality, and opening the heart.

My love to you all as we walk this path together. That is all.

Wednesday, January 19, 1994

Aaron's talk

Aaron: Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. The introduction that we channeled earlier today gives you background. Instead of the normal opening talk tonight, I'm first going to explain this process that we'll be practicing: the various steps of it, why we will do those steps and how to use this practice as a tool in your daily life. After this introduction, we will answer your questions and then take a break. Then we'll come back, do a guided meditation with it and use whatever time is left after the meditation for other questions.

Some of you worked with me last year learning about the interdependent co-arising of all phenomena, of all experiences of body and mind. By this I mean that when **this** arises then **that** arises. The arising of **that** is conditional on the arising of **this**. When **this** ceases then **that** ceases. Some of you have read the book, No Chain At All, which is based on the transcripts of that semester's work.

For those of you who are completely unfamiliar with this background, you are still able to join the work we're doing now. But you must know that this past teaching is at least useful for your consideration and will be very helpful in the present work. It is one of the building blocks of the present work. It is not necessary to start with it but, eventually, you may want to come around to learning about it.

Through the past years, we have spent most of our time here looking at the heavy emotions and thoughts that arise and learning how to work with those more skillfully. You have learned how to be not quite so reactive to what arises in your life. This has created more space for you and more joy. As I said in this introduction, we could go on with that work forever. This is what I have called in the past several months "horizontal practice," practice with relative reality.

Last year we began what I have called "vertical practice" in which there is conscious focus on allowing in the wisdom mind that cuts through the delusion of a self involved in these situations. Many of you have done various exercises with me learning how to shift the balance to that pure heart/mind, pure awareness, and away from the small ego self. What I've emphasized is the importance that there be no aversion to the small ego self, but compassion for the human that keeps getting caught. This, too, has been a core of our work in past years.

Now we are come to a place where I want to begin to bring it together. Last year we did many exercises leading you to rest more fully in pure heart/mind. We looked at that pure light body, the perfect white sheet of paper. Almost all of you have seen Barbara crumple that paper—an actual piece of paper. She opened it out again, and then we asked, "Can you see the perfect unwrinkled sheet in the wrinkled sheet?"

In recent months we have begun to emphasize the ways that you can rest awareness in that unwrinkled sheet—in awareness of pure heart/mind—without aversion to the relative self. We've also talked at some length about the ways the relative being reflects, not the pure mind—not the pure white sheet of paper—but the wrinkles. You

get caught in that identity. When that first wrinkle first was created, it served some purpose.

For illustration, we might use the wrinkle of raising boundaries, the distortion that you need to be separate, that you **are** separate. That distortion served a purpose at first. It allowed you to feel safe and in control. Now you begin to see that's not who you are.

Yesterday Barbara was swimming back and forth in the pool. There were a young couple who were a bit wild in their play, diving down in the deep end and coming up, taking over the whole space. Swimming is a daily meditative activity in which Barbara completely relaxes and merges into the water and space. Boundaries fall away for her. She was watching herself, how each time she came to the deep end, aware of these swimmers—that they were not in any way watching out for her, but likely to dive right on top of her—she tensed. The boundaries came up.

Yes, there was real danger. In fact, one of them, coming up, kicked her very hard in the stomach. There was real danger that there could be injury. But the boundaries were still not necessary. It was useful to be alert each time she entered that end of the pool, to watch that they were not about to jump or dive, to watch that they were not under water and about to come up. That's all. Where did the boundaries come from?

As she swam, she asked, "What are these boundaries? What is this wall that comes up each time I enter this part of the pool?" Old mind. The need to be safe. The need to control. It has nothing to do with the present situation. In a similar way, you may look at the arising of greed, of jealousy, of rage, of impatience, of any heavy emotion.

We've come this far in past months: looking at what arises and seeing how it has grown out of old mind conditioning. Repeatedly, I have asked you to note that arising and come back to this moment. The illusion of distortion may remain though, the wrinkle in the paper. There may not be reactivity to it, but are you still identifying with it, still trying to get rid of **this**, to be **that**?

Remember that the light body is perfect. The distortion is in relative reality. It is this relative with which you continue to identify, owning the relative self, wrinkles and all. Each time you re-confirm that distortion, it solidifies the identity. It plants a further karmic seed. Please note that to experience that you are not the wrinkle is very different than to grasp at not being the wrinkle, or to convince yourself of that fact. Thinking you are the wrinkle is just another wrinkle. Judging that new wrinkle is still another wrinkle! I am not suggesting aversion to identification with the relative self, only the accompanying clear seeing that the identification is grown out of illusion.

Now we have come to a place where we are ready to introduce exercises which will aid you not only to see the distortion of old mind conditioning, but to release that distortion instead of practicing it. We will begin in this week, and in coming weeks, working with emotional distortions, gentle ones at first, not the biggest ones. The same principles that I am teaching you can be applied to physical distortions and, finally, also, to adhering karma. Work with these will come later in the spring. You may no longer be planting the seed for new karma in this or that situation, but the old karma is still there, the roots are still there. This is one of the ways in which those roots can be allowed to dissolve. I don't want to get too deeply into that yet. First I want to stabilize this practice with something easier.

Before we start I would like you each to bring to mind some emotion which is discomforting to you and causes a withdrawing of your energy, causes barriers to arise. It does not have to be the heaviest emotion you work with. It may be something like impatience or judgment, desire to control, anger, greed, jealousy. I ask you simply to call to mind a situation in the past few days in which this emotion arose—not to involve yourself in the story of it, just to recall the incident and to make the decision, “This is the emotion and situation I will work with tonight.” In response to those of you who are unsure of what kind of emotion I’m talking about, it can be something as simple as the need to defend when you feel threatened or criticized. It doesn’t have to be a screaming rage. Pick something that’s a recurrent issue for you, and one specific recent situation.

(Pause while we do this.)

What I want to do now is talk about the four basic steps. They are steps that I hope you will be doing over and over and over—not just in meditation practice, but in your everyday life. I remind you, I will go through the steps and explain them. We will come back to each step in the doing of it.

The practice we are going to do has four essential parts. The first is that we note the intention that this practice is not just for ourselves but for all beings, to alleviate the suffering of all beings. To clarify this intention broadens awareness to the fact that the work we are doing is the work that all beings are doing, each in their own way and at their own pace. It helps us to dissolve the boundaries between self and other, to see the suffering not only of ourselves but of all beings. It helps us be aware of where there is selfishness and fear, where there is aversion and wanting to get rid of this or that discomforting feeling, and offer compassion to those fears in self and for all beings. It helps us remember our connection with all that is. So, the first step is simply to clarify one’s intention that one’s practice is for the alleviation of suffering of all beings.

The next step is one of outward expansion and release of barriers, which we have introduced here in one form or another many times before. Do you remember that meditation of expanding outward? You are not trying to expand outward, you are allowing the natural outward expansion from the small self into your true being. It is an allowing of the dissolution of barriers and separation. The prior step of intention is helpful here. It serves as inspiration that the work you are doing goes beyond you and does touch all beings. That helps you with the fear of letting barriers dissolve.

Last week we did an exercise preparatory to releasing barriers. Very briefly for those who were not present, you joined in pairs, facing one another, hands touching, eyes meeting. You allowed barriers to dissolve as much as was possible so that you felt in connection with the other. Then the one designated as A withdrew hands, dropped arms, withdrew energy. I asked you each to see if you could feel any barriers that arose. You rejoined and the one designated as B withdrew.

What we were doing is watching the arising and falling away of these barriers. We looked at the old mind conditioning through which those barriers were re-erected. We saw that there was not a tearing down of barriers so much as a realization that the barriers had never been there, that they were illusion created by the fears of old mind. I asked you to practice this during the week, simply allowing your energy to merge with others, feeling how barriers arose, as I described with Barbara in the swimming pool.

So, the second step is allowing energy and awareness to expand outward, allowing the barriers to dissolve. No grasping, but seeing the natural non-separation of your being. We've done a similar practice to this outward expansion with what is called "guru yoga": visualizing—or, with your eyes open, looking at a photograph of that Divine being or high master with whom you feel strong affinity, such as the Buddha, Jesus, Mary, or one of the various gurus you may have. The process of allowing your energy to merge with that being and its with you, moving out of the self, is similar to this practice of expanding outward.

We've done the same thing with what I've called "sky yoga." At other times, we've rested in the aperture in the breath, between inhale and exhale, breathing in ... space ... breathing out. There's just that brief instant of very pure awareness with no self involved in it. You have found the absolute NOW of that space, empty of any notion of self but filled only with ineffable Light. So, there have been a number of different expansion practices that we've introduced in the past year.

Finally, we have practiced what the Tibetans call "resting in rigpa." I have introduced that term but not used it often. Essentially, it is the practice of resting in pure heart/mind. We've watched thought arising and brought bare attention to that arising as a conditioned display. With that bare attention, we have seen that thought dissolved. At the time of its dissolution there was often a moment of pure awareness, in which you have rested. In this way, you have practiced non-ownership of what arises, practiced resting in the Pure Awareness that only sees the flow of arising without fixating on any content. Slowly, that Pure Awareness stabilizes and you begin to understand that this pure heart/mind is what you are, not the myriad comings and goings of thought from that mind.

There is a Buddhist teaching that one must remember that the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon itself. These are all tools to help you find Pure Awareness. They are not Pure Awareness. The expand outward practice, guru or sky yoga, breath practice, noting thought and the moment of dissolution of thought—they are all tools. I cannot offer the experience of Pure Awareness. I can only point my finger to it. But I promise you that it's there. You don't have to grasp at it because it is innate, only to become aware of it.

Each of you, in your own ways, has been working with one or another of these practices, working to identify and then to stabilize that space of pure heart/mind, to learn how to rest in that space for increasingly long periods. When I say long, it may only be a few seconds, but you're increasing your ability to rest there.

This is step two, then, and it will vary depending on what practices you have been using. Or, if this is new to you, which of these practices I've just described feels most familiar to you. What step two entails is dissolution of boundary and resting in pure heart/mind.

In step three, this expanded awareness looks, with love and compassion I would hope, at the relative human and remembers that discomfiting emotional situation that I asked you to first consider you would work with tonight. This is where we move into something new. Pure Awareness has seen with clarity, "This is old mind. I don't own this." But there has still been the pain of the old identity with it, the old patterns of holding onto it. **What you are examining is not the thought or emotion itself but the**

contraction around that thought or emotion, indicative of your relationship with the thought or emotion. .

As we enter step four, we are going to shift balance from relative reality—the human who is involved in this pain—to ultimate reality, but we do so very carefully, with no aversion for that which the relative human is experiencing. With aversion, step four becomes a “getting rid of,” and solidifies self. Here you must watch very carefully. There must be an open heart. This is why we do not introduce this practice until you have done much work with awareness of what arises and learned to find equanimity with arising. **If there is aversion, can there be no aversion to the aversion? If aversion is present, it's the aversion that needs to become the primary focus and not the emotion that preceded aversion.**

There is some confusion about the last statement. Let us regard the movement through step three, into four. If you are looking at how you move into jealousy and remembering a recent movement into jealousy and the discomfort of that, and you see aversion arise—“I don't want this jealousy!”—then allow the focus of this step three to shift, seeing the pattern of aversion to what we experience, how painful it is, that constant putting yourself out of your heart, that constant self-judgment and denial of experience because it feels so threatening.

Whatever it is that you are looking at, I ask you to do it from this space of expanded awareness which sees the human involvement and makes the very conscious, skillful decision—with equanimity to aversion—“I do not need to own this anymore. I've been carrying this pattern around for how many lifetimes. I see how it arises out of certain conditions. I see how I get caught in the ownership of it. From this space of pure awareness, I see that I really can release that, just make the decision to let it go.”

This is the fourth step: release. Not getting rid of, but seeing through it, seeing it was never solid in the first place. It was your fear of it and the repeated patterns with it that made it appear solid. It is like those raindrops we've talked of that created the Grand Canyon, one drop at a time.

The difference here from our prior work is that instead of this awareness simply leading you to non-reactivity to that which has arisen, here we are going to release it, to cut the roots. We've stopped planting seeds, now we're going to cut the roots of these old patterns.

There are many ways in which you can release it physically. Raise your hands; let it go. Breathe it out. Drop it. Put it in the fire and burn it. If that which we call God is real to you, offer it to God. Ask for help from those masters or gurus with whom you feel connection. Each of you has your own way of working. Each of you is unique. You are free to ask for help to release it, but you don't need help. Just let it go. But, again, I remind you, **you are not getting rid of. There was nothing there to get rid of. Rather, you are freeing yourself of the delusion that there was something that needed to be gotten rid of.** In a real sense, what you are doing is less a “letting go” of the thought or emotion, than a letting go of **fixation** upon that thought or emotion, coming to a place where you can let it be.

These are the four steps. At first, you may wish to practice them in meditation. Soon, I hope, you will begin to apply them when tension arises in your life, when greed,

jealousy, impatience or anger arise. At first it will take you a few minutes. You will get faster at it. When I first taught Barbara this practice, I told her that eventually she should be able to do it in four or five seconds—one second for each part. And, indeed, she has learned to do so. That's in the future. For now, let it take as long as it needs, one step at a time.

We will not simply introduce this practice tonight and then be done with it. We will continue to work with it. We've worked with some of the stages of it. We'll work more with the other stages independently as well as bringing it together. In the future, I will teach you how to apply the same principle to recurrent physical distortions, such as a constant backache or migraine headache.

What you are doing here is practicing your perfection and wholeness instead of practicing the wrinkles, the distortions. I'm going to end here. I want to hear your questions specifically about this practice and then we will have a break first and then do a guided meditation with it. I thank you for your attention. That is all.

Questions

Question: Could you clarify the difference between steps three and four?

Barbara: The end of step two has given you a shift in awareness ... it's that juncture we've talked about of horizontal and vertical practice—relative and ultimate reality—coming into that space where we're balanced on two legs across an illusory threshold. When you find that balance between ultimate and relative reality, you allow yourself to see from the viewpoint of ultimate reality while embracing and not getting rid of relative reality. The relative is part of the ultimate. There can't be any separation between them.

From that space, step three involves seeing the human who's caught in this thought or emotion, perpetuating its energy. Step three involves the intention to release. We open our hearts compassionately to this human who's suffering with this situation. We see this is old mind conditioning; it has nothing to do with this present situation where this human is stuck in it, has been stuck for however long. We know, "I don't need to carry this anymore." The difference here is, in the past we've looked at the thought and found we can sever the identity with that. We don't have to be reactive to that situation. But we haven't allowed ourselves to release distorted energy. Each time that thought has arisen, there's been a contraction that goes with it. It's not the thought, so much as this contraction around the thought, which concerns us. We can choose to no longer perpetuate a relationship with the thought, which means noting and releasing the contraction.

Step four is the new step: releasing it. Instead of just being non-reactive to it, we say, "Take it out of the backpack and leave it. I don't need it anymore." This is part of the process of stabilizing pure heart/mind, stabilizing our resting in the pure light body, cutting identification with the distortions. Okay? (Yes.)

Question: Why are we adding this process to what we've already learned about mindfulness?

Barbara: Instead of just working more skillfully with the relative reality situation, not having to be reactive to what's arising in us, what we're doing is noting the ways that pain has caused us to put up barriers, to close our energy, to become "self." We make

the decision, "Not only do I not need to be reactive to this, but I really can let it go." We see it never was who we are, there was never a self feeling or doing this. We let go. There's no rush. If it stays, just watch it. When it's ready, it will go.

As Aaron said, it's the difference between merely not cultivating the plant so it drops new seeds and looking back at what are the roots of confusion? How can we start to cut the roots? Aaron's not going to get into the karmic side of this tonight. We'll talk about that in the future. But this is how we start to cut this old karma ... to not need to repeat these situations. We can go on forever with anger or fear or greed arising when certain conditions are present for their arising. We don't have to. We really can start to clarify that, while not with any getting rid of. Are there any questions?

Question: It feels as if what we are releasing is that moment's karma, or that little moment of jealousy or whatever emotion. We are not releasing the roots of it in this practice at this time. Is that what you are saying?

Barbara: It works its way down. After you've done it a certain number of times, you start to see that that surface of the root is connected all the way down there and, as you release that, the whole thing comes out.

Question: I feel like I'm doing some of this in my sleep.

Barbara: You meditate regularly and work with these practices mindfully during the day, so you probably are. Another thing that Aaron wants to get into further is lucid dreaming and working more with this practice in our sleep. We did some of this last year, but haven't continued it. At a long meditation retreat, sometimes people are only sleeping three or four hours a night and practice really goes on twenty-four hours a day. That happens less when we're busy doing things in our life and only meditating a short time each day. But probably all of you are doing it to some degree in your sleep.

Working in your sleep is powerful because when you know it's a dream, you know you're safe. You can watch defendedness arise and release it more easily. You lay a new foundation for how you'll respond to threat.

Aaron is saying that we will not be spending this much time with this every week. He wants to introduce this practice. He wants you to all take it home and work on it. He'd like us to have the tape transcribed as soon as possible and give it out to everybody who comes so that he won't have to repeat any of it. He wants this to be a foundation for our future work. He says some of that work is to move right back to mindfulness practice and dealing skillfully with what's arising in this moment, that we're not putting that aside in any way. We allow these two practices to support each other.

(Break.)

Barbara: We're going to do this meditation. Please remember there's no right or wrong way to do this. You're not trying to achieve something, not trying to get rid of anything. Whatever happens is okay. In the beginning when you do this at home, you might want to take longer to do it than we're going to take here. Or certain steps you may want to do longer, certain steps shorter. So, you'll each want to adapt it to your own needs. As Aaron pointed out, it's a process; once you learn the process, it becomes a very workable tool ... that you can bring it into your life and apply it each time there's the bit of contraction of fear, anger, jealousy or whatever there may be.

So, no getting rid of. Nothing to achieve. Nothing to grasp at. Nothing to be done. Nobody doing it. Just relaxing and being with whatever is, as we go through these four steps. Before we start, think of that emotion, that specific situation, that you want to work with tonight. It doesn't mean that that's what you'll work with continually; just think of some time in the past few days where there was some kind of contraction of wanting mind, greed, fear, whatever was arising, and especially something that you see is a recurrent pattern for you.

Meditation from Aaron

(Dots (...) denote short pauses.)

Begin with the breath ... simply noting the inhale and the exhale ... relax into the breath ...

Throughout this earth of yours beings are suffering ... not only humans, but sentient beings in all forms ... Begin by offering the intention that the work you do is to alleviate the suffering of all beings ... Allow this intention to inspire you and lend you courage and energy as you work ... I will be quiet for a few minutes while you do this ... *(long silence)*

As I previously noted, you have worked with many practices of outward expansion and the dissolution of boundaries. I am going to lead you here in one specific practice. If it does not fit you, feel free to silence my words and move in your own direction.

Inhale ... noting that the breath you draw in comes from beyond what you have considered your boundaries ... exhale ... sending the breath from within you out into the universe ... in ... out ... beyond the walls of this room ... beyond the atmosphere of the Earth ... *(long pause)*

Let awareness rest for a moment lightly on the body ... feel the skin that seems to define self ... As you breathe in, feel yourself also drawing in energy from the space around you ... as you breathe out, feel yourself releasing your energy ... not just the breath, but the energy ... you do not stop at your skin ... *(long pause)*

Breathing in ... breathing out ... allow yourself to expand outward ... With each in-breath, draw in the whole universe until it becomes too big to be contained in this skin ... with each exhalation, allow boundaries to dissolve and expand outward ...

You are not trying to expand outward, you are allowing the natural expression of your being ... which is a dissolution of self ... an expansion into the whole universe and beyond ... boundaries dissolving ... gentle allowing ... *(long pause)*

If there is any tension about this dissolving of boundaries, simply note it ... tension, tension ... and make space for it ... no judgment of that tension ...

If judgment arises, note that ... judging, judging, judging ... the arising of tension or judgment, or desire to hold to these boundaries for safety, have nothing to do with the reality of who you are ...

Allow yourself, as much as you are able, to move into that outward expansion ... into the pure mind and awareness of your true being ...

As you find that space, simply rest there ... breathing in and breathing out ... *(long pause)*

If conceptual mind returns, note it and let it go ...

Pure awareness ... turning in on itself ... pure awareness seeing how tension and the illusion of boundary arise and gain solidity ...

Pure awareness touching with compassion the human who keeps getting caught in this delusion of separation ... *(pause)*

Look at this human as if you had not seen him or her before ... a new being ... the way you very occasionally catch yourself in a mirror, and see yourself in an unaccustomed way ...

See this human experiencing desire ... aversion ... impatience ... jealousy ... the need to control ... to protect itself ...

See with clarity how that emotion is a manifestation of old conditioning ... that from this higher awareness there is nothing to be afraid of ... nothing to protect or defend from ...

Can you look with tenderness and loving-kindness on this human ... who has gotten caught in this pattern over and over and over ... and whose bewilderment and aversion to its pain has solidified that particular emotion ... and led it to plant new karmic seeds ... led it to new reactivity ...

Can pure awareness see all this and embrace this human? ... *(long pause)*

What is this fear ... jealousy ... greed ... anger ... need to defend? ... To whom does it belong? ...

Pure awareness sees with clarity that it does not own this emotion ... it sees how it arises and how it may pass away ... it sees how it has been packed up in a backpack and carted from situation to situation ...

Allow this human to rest in the spaciousness of pure awareness ... allow the heart to open ... to be touched with compassion for this human that has so often been judged ... *(long pause)*

The human has been practicing that distortion ... either through the repetition of it or through aversion to it ... the attempt at self-discipline to pull away from it ... just a different practice of it ...

Seeing how it has arisen from old mind conditioning ... and that it need not be carried into this moment ... notice the intention to release it ... look to see, is there any getting-rid-of ... If there is that aversion that creates desire to be rid of, can you open your heart enough to make space also for that aversion ... releasing the emotion and the aversion ... *(pause)*

Pure awareness touching this human with love ... pure awareness releasing the burden of so many lifetimes ... let it go ... whatever this energy was, there is no "mine" to it ... I do not need to continue to own it and carry it around ... I let it go ... no getting-rid-of, but the beginning of understanding that it never existed in the first place except in the mind ...

If it does not wish to go, let it stay ... just watch it ... when it's ready it will go ... you release a bird ... you open your hand so it may fly away ... you don't push it off your hand ... only release ... it will go when it's ready ... *(long pause)*

Now please begin to draw awareness back into the body ... come back to the breath ... to the weight of the body on the buttocks ... the physical sensations of the body ... back to the inhalation and the exhalation ... re-balancing ... drawing back into this relative reality through which you experience the world ... *(pause)*

May all beings everywhere find freedom from the suffering grown out of delusion and ignorance ... (Bell.)

May all beings come to rest in their true nature, to know themselves as non-separate, to open their hearts to themselves and all that is ... (Bell.)

May all beings everywhere find perfect peace ... (Bell.)

Discussion

Q: At the end of the meditation, Aaron was helping us to ground ourselves. I understand that. But, is there anything wrong with maintaining the level of awareness we had at the moment as we move home and into our week? I had the feeling that Aaron was saying to come back into our bodies. Be here. I didn't want to. I wanted to stay in awareness of both parts. And I'm wondering if there's any problem with that.

Barbara: There's no problem with it. No matter how hard we try, we can't stay in that ultimate awareness. But we can know when we're not in it. When we forget that ultimate level of awareness and starting to get caught in our identity as "me" ... when we see that "I'm thinking I'm 'me' again," then we can remind ourselves to re-balance. But is there aversion to re-entering the human awareness with all its delusion? His regrounding us is a way of reminding us not to deny the human with its illusory wrinkles.

Q: This afternoon, you were in a place of ungroundedness. Is there anything to be aware of? I think Aaron understands my question.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Barbara's ungroundedness this afternoon resulted from her having been channeling from a deeper than usual trance state and needing to ease back into balance. In that trance state, she experiences total dissolution of body and ego.

When you are doing this practice, there is a place of shift of perception, an awareness that perception shifts as if weight were shifting from the one foot that's in relative reality to the other foot that's in ultimate reality. In the long run, weight must be balanced on both feet. One learns that relative and ultimate are not separate. As long as you see them as separate, you dwell in your pain and start to think, "There's this other place out there that I can grab hold of. I can move from samsara to nirvana. I can move from hell to heaven." But they are part of each other.

Now you are balancing because you do not yet intimately understand that they're part of each other. Your intellect understands it, but there's not yet firm experiential understanding. As you work with this practice, it will help to draw the two together. Ultimately there is no balancing because there is no duality.

About opening and closing, consider the example I gave of Barbara's swimming and the people who were jumping on top of her and kicking her from underneath, simply being very careless in their play. Each time she experienced some painful contact from them, the boundaries came up, anger arose. She'd turn at the end of the pool and swim back the other way, noting how that anger had arisen, noting that it was simply old mind. She needed to physically defend herself by being aware and not swimming into their jumping and diving, but the anger was really not part of it. It didn't take her long—one length of the pool and back. As she came back, she was open again. Then

they'd jump on her again and the anger would arise again. You keep working with this balance, continually.

The difference here—and I think this is what your question is about—is that working with it continually is what you've all been doing. The new practice is the release. Instead of carrying it with you down to the other end of the pool, you know in that moment, "I do not need to carry this any further. It's old mind." To do that for now, attention must be resting very stably in Pure Awareness, in pure heart/mind—ultimate reality, light body, higher self, whatever you wish to call it.

This is not to differentiate that pure heart/mind as something separate from, only to bring in that aspect of awareness which is usually not fully entered. In a sense, what we're doing is shifting weight back and forth more firmly than one ordinarily would as preparatory to learning to set both feet stably, united, on the ground. First you understand **how** it feels to rest in ultimate versus relative reality. Then you begin to understand that both feet can carry the weight simultaneously. Does that answer your question?

Q: It clarified my question. I experienced this very, very strongly tonight, and I am carrying a very high level of vibration which is very pleasant and a little frightening. Is it okay to go home carrying this level of vibration, or do I need to do something to ground myself first?

Barbara: Simply know that you're carrying that high level of vibration. That's all you need to do: be aware of it. Is there wanting to hold onto it? To recreate it. Is there aversion to the more usual feelings of the illusory self?

Q: A little.

Barbara: What happens to the vibration when you notice attachment to it? Just look.

Wednesday, January 26, 1994

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron.

Last week I introduced a new practice. I spoke about the fact that for many years we have been working with the catalysts of relative reality, looking at the arising of fear, of anger, of greed, and talking about how we open our hearts to ourselves and others and become less reactive to our daily life catalysts. What does it mean to live your life with love?

Last week, I said that one could do that work forever and indeed become more skillful at it but never get out of the delusion that you are somebody learning to live your life with love, still caught in that delusion of a solid self.

The practice that we introduced last week was four-fold. Before we began this practice, I asked each of you to think of one painful situation which involved an issue which is continuing in your life, perhaps impatience, fears that your needs won't be met, or a sense of shame. Each of you was asked to remember one moment during the week when you experienced that.

The first step was to offer the intention that this be done for the good of all beings. I'm not going to go into details about these steps. But by clarifying that intention, you remind yourself of your connection with All That Is. It helps to inspire you and to purify the motivation, to connect you with that purest aspect of mind. The second step was expanding outward. We did this later in the evening as a guided meditation with one specific process of expanding outward, but I reminded you of the many opening processes we have learned here in these past years and that whichever is most comfortable for you is fine.

The third step begins from that space of outward expansion, boundaries dissolved at least to some degree, the illusion at separation at least a bit dissolved. As we entered the third step from this outward expansion, I asked you to look across at the relative human, seeing that particular pain upon which you had focused at the start, seeing how that was that the product of old mind conditioning. How have you come into ownership of it? Can you see that it is not who you truly are but just some garment you wear?

You've almost all seen Barbara scrunch up a perfect white piece of paper, wrinkle it, squeeze it and then open it out again. We've asked you, can you still see this perfect piece of paper in the wrinkled sheet. There are wrinkles but the perfect page still exists. For many weeks this fall we spoke of the light body as the perfect template and how those wrinkles came into the light body, how those distortions were picked up. So our step three last week, was to look at this being who was sitting and feeling a distortion of jealousy, greed, impatience, shame or anger and how, through its delusion of a solid self, it was practicing the wrinkle so to speak, and identifying with the distortion rather than identifying with the perfect light body template.

Step three involves the allowing of non-ownership from that space of higher awareness. We see how the human has practiced this fixation on the wrinkle over and over and over until it tended to identify with it. I asked you to notice that distortion was no longer useful once it had served its purpose. Yes, it originally had a perceived purpose, to allow the human to feel safe or in control. Now it was just habit. When this or that happens, I close up. Who is defending against what? Seeing how the attachment to identification with the distortion comes about, seeing that it is just habit, we move, then to step four.

Four begins with the awareness, "I do not need this anymore. I let it go! It is no longer useful to me. It is habit and creates pain." I pointed out that there must be no getting rid of. To move into step four takes a great deal of foundation work of learning equanimity with emotion. You must have made friends with that emotion, not be at war with it anymore. Having come to that point and also seeing how it arises, I let it go. I come back to the perfect templates of the light and sub-light bodies. No distortion. I allow myself to rest in great perfection, to come to a truer identity of who I am.

I want you all to understand that this perfect sub-light body I'm talking about is unique for each of you. It has no self in terms of the small ego self. It is the perfect clear glass. Let us use a metaphor of the sun, light from the sun and a perfect sheet of glass with no blemish anywhere on it. Sun is the Infinite and Eternal. Light body is a sunbeam, projection of that sun, containing nothing that is not within the sun. As this is its nature, it cannot be distorted, although it carries within itself everything, all seeming opposites, all seeming distortion, just as does the Infinite from which it projects. The perfect sub-light body is as a piece of glass through which the light passes. In its true form it is clear so that the divine light and energy can move through. You might also think of it as the magnifying glass that we've spoken of before which, when the sun's light comes through, focuses that light. The light body can never be distorted as it is entirely free of any idea of self. The sub-light body may seem to distort.

Each of you are that, a continuation, an expansion let us say of that perfect light and love of the divine, whatever label you wish to give that divine energy. So when I say rest in this perfect light body, this is not the sub-light body or higher self which still has an aspect of self to it. This is beyond even that.

Those were the steps we went through last week explaining them and then doing a guided meditation with it.

What I want to do tonight, is to pick up just one small piece of that, expanding outward, letting boundaries fall away. I want to spend just a few minutes now on a guided meditation with it. Each week we will work with it for a short while with one of these four steps. Another week perhaps next week we will do the same four step meditation with a physical distortion seeing how that also was released.

For the rest of tonight, I am not going to give a lengthy talk as I usually do. We're going to use tonight as catch up night. I have three very valuable questions here. I am sure there are more questions in the room. Last week, we had no time for questions. I also would like to touch on dreams again, get back into the dream interpretation process, moving you more and more into the awareness of your dreams and into the process of lucid dreaming.

With that in mind during the break, I would appreciate at least one. I don't know how many we'll get into, how much interest there will be, but one brief dream left here. Try to keep it to the size of one of your index cards.

The three questions are all about working with relative reality, at least to some degree. It's important that we not get too theoretical here. We can understand this perfect light body template. We can understand that there are techniques to help open to it. But primary is this part of step three in which there must be no aversion to that which we're letting go of. This is the primary core of our work. How do we open our hearts to our physical, emotional, and mental pain. How do we learn to love more fully?

What I would like you to do is simply take the hand of your neighbor, eyes closed, allowing that physical contact. What do you experience? Can you feel both the joy, feeling another's energy and presence and also a sense of threat? The illusion of self/other is deeply ingrained as protective conditioning. You are deeply conditioned in your human form to contract into self and defend against anything that feels separate from you.

When you join together with others individually or in groups you seek to establish a commonality. You talk about your interests. You try to find similarities between you, because that is what allows you to feel safe and lower your boundaries. Here we have the commonality that you are all at this session. Some of you do know one another and may be sitting next to a friend. Others may not know the one whose hand you hold. What I ask you to do is look at this multiple input. Part of you wants to relax into this energy field, and let go of boundaries and part of you that wants to stay safe keep the boundaries maintained.

I'm going to be quiet for a minute or two. Remember there's no wrong or right here, no bad or good. Just watch and label what you are experiencing. If there is withdrawal, know it; if there is desire to merge into, note that desire also.

(Some time of silence.)

Now what I would like you to do is this: see that there is that in you which moves to defend, which moves to create boundaries; see that in this moment you are safe, that the need to create boundaries, is old mind's fear.

Breathing in—know that you are safe.

Breathing out—expanding energy outward.

Breathing in—boundaries lowered—draw in more of that energy that surrounds you.

Breathing out—expand outward.

In—drawing in energy and light. Out—expanding outward.

Each time you notice a bit of a boundary, simply note it—BOUNDARY—"feeling defended" might be a good label. Boundaries keep popping up. Each time one arises, simply note it as old mind. What is this boundary? The reminder—I am safe. This is not contempt for that aspect that is afraid, not criticism of it, this is just a gentle hint to it and a reminder—"It's safe."

What happens when you touch that defendedness with love. Watch it carefully. If it dissolves, allow yourself to expand into that space. No force. If boundaries want to maintain themselves, just watch them. When you really feel safe, they will go.

Open outward. Know this defendedness is old mind's distortion of fear. Release it, as one would release a bird. Simply open the hand. Allow it to fly when it is ready. You do not push it off the hand, but open the hand and invite it to fly. This is how we release distortion from the space of greater clarity and defendedness.

Begin now to come back into yourself. Release the hands that you hold. Note that you do not need to re-erect a boundary. Your energy pulls back into an intactness. The boundary is not to hold your energy in. It is to keep other energy out, so that you come back to a sense of self as useful to an intactness of your own energy, but allow yourself to stay undefended and open. As you feel that intactness, when you are ready, open your eyes. There is no rush. That is all.

I am repeating this for the tape which was not turned on.

As you go through the rest of the evening I want you to watch yourselves very carefully. What causes boundaries to come back? If somebody says something that you hear as critical, does that raise the boundaries. If somebody accidentally nudges you does defendedness arise. I am not suggesting that this arising of defendedness is bad; it just is. Instead of getting caught in it can you simply notice defendedness arising and ask what is this defendedness? In this moment is it necessary?

What is this defendedness? Is it arising from real need to defend in this moment? Can I release it and come back to openness again? Remember the bird. If the defendedness does not want to go, sit there with your hand open, sending love to the part that is freed. If you feel the need to be defended, allow yourself to be defended. Simply know you are being defended. Increasingly, you will find your heart opens and that you are able to open your energy field and really express the love which is within you. That is all.

Questions

I would ask Barbara to read all of these questions. That is all.

Q: Simultaneous lives. Are we having them? Do they bleed through one to the other. Are they all on the earth plane but in different periods of history. I understand that time is really an earth-made illusion, that everything happens simultaneously, but often you will say, "Long ago, in a primitive society," as though our lives were not only linear, but followed historical and technological advances. My past lives, as you've discussed them all, seem to be before the present time and none in 2300 AD for instance, yet Barbara drew a diagram, the first time I came, with an up and down curve and a time line on the side, placing dots along the curve to show that one might live in 600 AD, and then 4000 BC, and then 200 AD. That's still sequential.

Q: Related to this, that is a question about Karma. If all is happening at once, how can we benefit by past mistakes? How can the experiences of one lifetime lead to choices to the next? That's a wonderful question. I really want to know Aaron's answer to that one.

Q: I was brought up to believe that we live but one earth life, and during that one earth life, if we do not get "saved," which means to repent of your sins and let Jesus come into your heart, no matter how moral or loving or honest you have lived, you are still doomed for eternal hell. This is not the teaching of some minority group but of the larger portion of this nation. I, too have believed this with all my heart and soul all of my life. I was 50 years old before I finally started thinking for myself instead of accepting the brainwashing I have been subjected to since birth. For the first time in my life I began to realize there was something wrong with these teachings. What kind of God would have such wrath he would condemn us to such a fate? Are we expected to love such a God?

Since I have changed my thinking, and spiritual practices and beliefs, I have been totally disowned by my aging mother who is prejudiced and filled with hate and cannot abide anyone, most particularly her own daughter, who does not practice a religion according to her own beliefs. None of my other family members have reacted quite as drastically as my own mother, but I do have to endure a lot of ridicule from family members. They accuse me of belonging to some Satanic cult and that I have been brainwashed. This is not true. On the contrary I am thinking for myself for the first time in my life. Aaron, what would be your thought as to the best procedure for dealing with these people, whom I so dearly love, but who refuse to accept that I have the right to chose my own path.

Please indulge me while I explain a step further. This path I am now following not only causes my family anguish, that I have gone against my own and my spouse's upbringing, it goes much deeper. They pray earnestly that God will bring me back to the true way, their way, before it is too late, before I, and I quote, "Die in sin and am condemned to spend eternity in a burning hell." These wonderful and loving but ignorant people are sincere in what they are doing. This is deeper than a desire to dominate my life. It grieves their hearts because they truly believe that I have strayed from the true path and I'm destined for hell.

I know these people and how they think and I also love these people dearly and do not wish to cause them anguish. Yet I know I've outgrown their teachings, that there is much wrong with the plan that we have only one lifetime to obtain perfection or suffer the rest of eternity being tortured. I cannot no longer pretend to believe as they do. That would be deceitful. There must be some solution whereby I can at least make them see that we each have a right to seek and choose our own path. I don't want to cause them pain, but at the same time, having found a better path homeward, I don't want to go back to their old teachings. They are so full of fear. Even knowing the things I know, I still have difficulty overcoming the negativity instilled in me as a child.

Aaron how can it be that such a vast portion of humanity can believe these things? How could they ever believe such teachings in the first place? Isn't it hard enough just enduring earth life without having negative and false teachings and concepts instilled in us at birth? It seems such a gross injustice. How did the truth ever get distorted in the first place? What can we do to correct it, especially with one's own family?

Q: Last week, when Aaron spoke of heavy emotions, fear, anger, as emotions not self, not owned by us, and to accept and release them it was understood. What about love? Isn't love an emotion? Is love self? I understand how to let love in and to release

love out. Is the source of love God? Is the source of fear and anger God? Aaron has told us how to empty the warehouse of heavy emotions and give a way to fill the warehouse with love and understanding.

Aaron: I am Aaron. God is love. Love has many aspects. When one acts in selfishness, in service to self, that is still love that is acting but it is the distortion of love which we call fear. Fear is nothing but a distortion of love. When you are afraid, your energy contracts and you move to defend. If there was no distortion of love, there would be no desire to defend.

The one who is my teacher, Ariel, spoke to the group here several years ago, trance channeled by Barbara, about the historical origins of earth, of a different history than is commonly offered. He spoke of the desire of highly evolved energy to create a learning place here on this planet you call Earth, and of how the planet was created out of the loving energy of those high beings, the guardian angels of the Earth plane. They offered to give their energy as the foundation of this place of learning.

I summarize here and leave out many details. At first there was agreement among the guardian angels that those of the earth plane would have free will and that there would be a non-intervention policy around earth. To make that decision took faith in that which they had helped to bring into creation. It took the love that those of you who are parents have experienced when you see your children do something that will hurt them and refrain from saying, "Don't." You know they have to learn it themselves. You can tell them over and over and over and they can't or won't hear! But you have faith that their experience will teach them as yours has taught you.

For reasons which I will not detail here, some subtly negative energy entered the earth plane. The angels were divided in their opinion of what to do. There were those who said "Sit back, offer earth beings love and allow them to learn from their experience. We are the loving foundation." Others said, "No; protect them!" That, "protect them" was the first distortion of love. To protect that which one loves means one feels fear. There is something separate to protect and something else to protect it against. With the idea that the object of love will be harmed, one moves into the distortion of fear.

If possible, we will make this whole transcript available, not next week as Barbara will be away for the next four days, but the following week.

Fear is a distortion of love. It is the first distortion of love. In understanding that, you can also see that fear also comes from God. There is no duality; fear is an aspect of love, shaped by the myth of separation. This is why I so often have said there is no absolute good or evil. There is only light and relatively increasing absence of light. It becomes very dark indeed but even that utmost darkness is still connected to the light.

We can work to see how fear arises in us, how those contractions occur. We can work to stay in the present moment and understand that the contraction for fear does not have to be a catalyst for hatred but be instead a catalyst for compassion. When we note the arising of that fear contraction, we see that our old habit is to be so discomforted by it that we want to escape it. One of the ways we do that is to lash out, to allow anger into our thoughts. But there is something else we can do with fear, which is simply to note it, to note how it solidifies the self with the illusion of somebody who must defend themselves. We see how anger provides a release for the tension, and

how old the drama is. Then we can look at the being who is feeling that fear and touch that being with compassion.

Each time we feel that contraction we can allow the beginning of a new habit so that increasingly fear becomes a catalyst for compassion. This is one of the ways for you to allow more love, more open hearted love, to move through you. Please remember that these are part of the same thing. God is Love. The small ego self is also God. The small ego self is the distortion of fear within the mind, body, spirit complex.

Identification as the small ego self is a distortion within the mind/body/spirit complex. When that identification of the small ego self is present, you are filled with it. There's no room for that God energy to be experienced within you. If you want to experience the non-separation aspect of God, you've got to empty self out, to release the illusion of separation. It's as simple as that. But to empty self out is the learning of a multitude of lifetimes. There is no switch that can throw a lever from full to empty, washing self down the drain. Self is illusion, so "full" is illusion! To attempt to get rid of self just solidifies self, creates more "somebody" doing this getting rid of, pushing that away, grasping at this. So we learn to look at what allows the illusion of solid self to dissolve. What allows us to come back into connection?

Many different religious paths have specific practices that work with the ego, helping you see the ego and accept how it arises and then to let it go. The most powerful practice that I know for working with the ego is mindfulness. You cannot transcend the ego until you accept the ego. You cannot accept ego until you acknowledge its presence. That is what this guided meditation was all about. What is the defendedness? How does self solidify? Can I notice the rising boundaries on any of the bodies? We talked some weeks ago about the fact that each of these bodies has its own light aspect and each moves independently into boundaries so that you may feel connected on some levels and separate on others.

How does self solidify? How do we keep getting sucked into that delusion? What is our habitual response to seeing we're sucked in? Is it contempt or is it compassion? Can we begin to open our hearts to ourselves and see how we keep getting trapped into thinking we're somebody solid here, separate from everyone else.

Many of you have experienced early life situations which have led to a sense of separation. Perhaps you were abused in some way or abandoned. These did not cause your sense of separation, they emphasized it. The sense of separation was already laid at birth. If you have been raised in a very loving close home, and not been subject to any catalyst which would accentuate that sense of separation it still would have been there, but perhaps not manifest painfully enough to need to attend to it. The early life situations which heightened that sense of separation to the point to where it created extreme pain were the reminder to pay attention. You are not separate. You have never been separate. You've been through this lifetime after lifetime. Can you learn it this time. Pay attention.

What is the illusion of separation? It is not caused by historical details of this life. Rather it's shown upon a screen so you can see it more clearly. Seeing how we keep moving into a solidified self, can we touch those fears with compassion? Can we begin to embrace that human which so aspires to connect with God and All That Is and suffers such a sense of alienation and separation? Can we finally transcend the small ego self

and learn to rest in our true being, that aspect which we glimpse when we do let the boundaries down, that aspect which is capable of unconditional love.

There is one more thing I want to say here. In my book Aaron is a chapter called "The Inner Garden." Here we spoke about nurturing of generosity, loving kindness, patience, of all those beautiful qualities. You look at yourself and see a bit of impatience. It may be that you are patient ninety percent of the time but you are such perfectionists with yourselves that all you see is the ten percent. Since you are not perfectly patient, you say "I am impatient!" I call this old soul syndrome. Old souls are perfectionist, perfect perfectionists!

Most of you have heard me talk about this before. You so deeply aspire to that purity which will allow you to feel worthy of God and condemn yourself for every arising of impatience or grief or anger. But that which arises is not bad, it's just an emotion. It is your relationship with it which causes you suffering, your identity with it. In "The Inner Garden" I asked people to begin to pay attention to the other ninety per cent, not to become proud but simply to open to oneself, to see all the beauty of you and to nurture those seeds of kindness and generosity, and morality and truth. They are fragile seeds that are waiting to burst open in the sunlight. Can you give them that sunlight? Can you begin to know who you truly are and identify with the fullness instead of identifying only with that which you have found wanting in yourselves? Rest in the whole space of love, not only the distortion of fear. It is a wonderful process. It really is the major learning of all of your incarnations—how to dissolve the identification with the small ego self and open the identification to the true Self.

I strongly suggest that any who are interested in pursuing this further, read "The Inner Garden" and do the exercises there. That is all.

Question: Aaron has taught us how to empty the warehouse of heavy emotions. Can he give us a way to fill the warehouse with love and understanding?

Aaron: I am Aaron. You are naturally loving. You don't have to fill yourself with anything to become loving. You are Love. The warehouse is always full; how do you gain access to the contents? The contraction of fear prevents that love from being known and shared. If you will deal with the contractions of fear and cease needing to manifest these distortions in your life, then the loving energy, the kindness, the generosity, the patience, the desire to serve others all naturally will flow from you. The warehouse doors will be opened. You can nurture the seeds of these beautiful blossoms, but you don't have to create anything that is not already there, just allow it to expand. That is all.

Barbara: We are talking about the simultaneous lives question that is already on the tape. The only way that I can grasp being out of time is through deep meditation experiences where ego-I dissolves and I cease completely to exist in time. What remains is timeless. Then it makes sense completely. When I, with self-consciousness, come back and I try to conceptualize what has just been experienced, there is no way to talk about it. It is just not part of our vocabulary. I'll let Aaron talk about Future time.

Aaron: I am Aaron. As part the structure of the incarnation you have agreed to accept the myth of time. It's part of the veil of forgetting that you move away from the spiritual plane truth of your being and move into the acceptance of the illusion. The illusion is your teacher so you have agreed to play this part in this theater with as much belief as

possible. That includes accepting the whole construct of time. On one level, linear time exists. On one level it's all happening simultaneously.

Let me begin with this question. You sit at the table. Your host brings out bowls of soup, sets them before you and before your neighbor. They have been drawn from the same pot. Is your experience with the soup the same? Of course not, because you each bring in your own preferences and your own memories. One might take it one step further and ask "Is this the same soup?" Once it is served in two different bowls and served before two different people, is it the same soup? If it's the same soup then once you eat it and it's in your stomach is it the same soup? At what moment does it cease being the same soup? On the ultimate reality level it is always the same soup but in relative reality it becomes different. I want to toss this out to you for your discussion before I continue. When it sat out there on the table was it the same soup?

(Group: Some discussion. Conclusion is no; agreement with what Aaron said, that we each bring our own selves to the soup, we experience it with our own set of memories.)

Barbara: Aaron agrees with you; he wants to throw out another thought.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Please consider this question. Somebody has uprooted a plant and divided it very carefully into two pots. One pot is handed to one being and one pot is handed to another being. Remember that you and the plant both give off energy and receive energy. Each recipient had a different response to the plant. If one is indifferent and immediately begins to offer the plant such energy, how will it respond? How does it actually become different than the other half of itself which is receiving loving energy from the one who holds it. You are flow-throughs. As your energy flows out it touches that around you. If your energy touches the soup and one says "Oh, wonderful; a bowl of hot vegetable soup; just perfect," and the other says "Ugh, I don't like vegetable soup," the energy of the diner influences and actually changes the energy of the soup. Can you see that? Even though the vegetables are no longer alive, they are still giving off and receiving energy. The "wonderful" soup really does interact with the body to provide more nourishment to which that grateful body is more receptive!

(Barbara holding a piece of paper on which two dates have been written; she folds it in half so the dates touch.) I ask you to picture not just two dates on this piece of paper but four dates. We fold it and refold it. *(Barbara folds it in fourths.)* It all comes together. If we wet this paper until it was thoroughly soaked and then pressed it hard enough the bits of paper molecules would move into one another. Four sheets would become one; no separation.

You come to an experience, in some cases an almost identical experience as one you have had before. You have been changed by the process of growth, of maturity and you have also been changed by the accumulation of fear. Each new situation that arises is like a new bowl of soup, it comes from the same pot but it differs according to your relationship to it, your reaction to it. You have all lived so many past lives. You move into a new situation. Your energy relates to that situation and in that way changes, as does the situation. This creates one possible future. If you came into that same situation and related differently, you'd get another future.

There are so many different planes. The dot here *(Barbara holds up folded paper.)* is not identical to the dot there although they touch and there is no separation between

them because the dot here is surrounded by this bit of paper and whatever energy it carries. The dot there is surrounded by the other bit of paper and the energy it carries.

Think of a river. It begins from pure spring deep underground, and it flows out with a passion, moving strongly in one channel for a ways. Then the ground rises and the river divides, one strand going to the right and one strand going to the left. They come from the same source. Are they the same river? Channel A breaks up into five or six streams, channel B breaks up into five or six streams. Into one of these stream is poured much industrial pollution. Another stream flows in a place where it is very protected and the water is warm. A third travels past farms and picks up soil run-off.

They now distinctly differ but it is the same water flowing through. Each has been changed by its environment. The latter observation is simple. What is forgotten is that the base of each is identical. The same pure water from the same source is still present in each, and each has had factors added which influence the water. The pure water can still be found. Your language does not provide adequate words to talk about this. We can only use the words "same," "different," "comparable," or "similar." There are non-earth plane languages which are very specific in defining the relationship between all of these branches flowing from the same source.

The rivers and streams all continue to flow and eventually they empty back into a large river again. Some of them have meandered for miles while others have gone straighter. They all return. Is what they came back into the same as it was at the source? There is water at the source and simultaneously, water a hundred miles downstream. If you scoop out a cup of each you've got different water, and yet by your linear time in several days the water at the source is going to be a hundred miles downstream.

To apply this to your lives, pick up at any point in any one lifetime; there are an infinite number of possible futures. You make certain choices based on your own energy bodies' relationships to the energy around you, which take you into one stream or another. All of these streams are possible. You're in this particular water because of the choices of this moment. The present manifestation of the water is influenced by how turbulent or still the water is, which in turn depends on the terrain it chooses to run through; how warm or cold it is, which depends on the climate. Your consciousness is constantly interrelating with experience. In another, perhaps almost identical, lifetime this energy stream that you are has met much the same catalyst and made different choices because you were so different then.

Here is spot A on the paper, here is spot B. (*Barbara holds up and folds the paper again.*) They come together. Simultaneous time, this one one thousand BC and this one a thousand AD, simultaneous. The choices made in this lifetime are influenced by the choices that were made in the other lifetime. If in lifetime A you made certain choices that led you to not blame others but to be more responsible and compassionate to yourself, those are going to influence the choices in the other lifetime.

Now we get into this question. What if the lifetime where I learned these things was as in this timeline Barbara drew a lifetime in the future? What if the last life that I lived was in the year 2500? it doesn't matter. Most of you have chosen to incarnate more or less in agreement with that myth of linear time. Each of you has an occasional life out of that straight linear time.

If the future has already happened, where is free will? Is the past not then pre-ordained? No! It is all happening at the same time! The future influences the past in the same way the past influences the future because there is no past and future. It is all in process. But you do not have the words in your vocabulary to express this. I can only give you metaphors like the folded up paper or the stream. My dear ones, may I humbly suggest you cease to worry about it; it will be clear when you move beyond the limits of the incarnation.

Let us go back to the stream. The water is flowing from one source steadily down one stream. At its source, the stream was perfectly pure. Follow a bit of water until it is 80 miles from the source. In this moment, 60 miles upstream, someone throws chemicals into the water. In this moment, do these chemicals affect the water 80 miles down? In linear time your answer would be "No."

I ask you to pick up that stream as if you were a giant and hold it in your hands, the right hand holding the event 20 miles down from the source, the left hand holding the "present." Fold it together. Yes the chemical 20 miles down affects what is 80 miles down. Yes your old anger, old fear, old habits affect the present.

Now my dear ones, reverse it. Toss in the chemicals 80 miles down. You might say no it doesn't affect me 20 miles down because the water is flowing downstream. That is the myth of your linear time! You who think you could not have lived in the future, fold it. It didn't happen in the future. It is happening right now; all the anger, fear, greed and delusion are right now. So is all the love!

If one must put it into linear time, please remember (*holding up folded paper, dots touching*) it is happening right now on the other side of the paper. There is constant bleedthrough. You are always learning simultaneously on all of these different planes.

The wonderful gift that you are given on the earth plane now is that you do not need to pay attention to any of these blends and bleedthroughs except to know that everything that you have experienced and will experience affects who you are and how you manifest your energy. It's all catalyst. You really don't need to know more about it than that. Just to keep asking yourself the question "How can I manifest my energy more purely?" How do I clean up the water? It doesn't matter whether this past life where I harbored anger and blame on another happened linearly a thousand years ago or a thousand years ahead. How am I repeating that pattern in this moment and what do I do about it?

Karma seems to follow the myth of linear time. Noting that it doesn't matter where on the river it happened, if I agree to honor the illusion of linear time and hold the event behind me then it has planted the seeds which I am reaping now. Wherever on the river the distortion came, the now carries the fruit of that distortion. The now also holds the possibility for release of distortion. All the "nows" are at once, but we honor the illusion of linear time which accompanies the incarnation. I know this doesn't begin to explain it. For most of you it has simply raised more questions. If you are intrigued by this discussion I am certainly willing to continue with it at another time.

I ask you though not to get too lost in the mental games which are very enjoyable but a very much of a sidetrack to that basic question how do I live my life with more wisdom, compassion, and skill? That is what you are here for. I promise you that once you are

free of the illusion it will all be clear. I do not mean that to have the tone of the parent who says you will understand when you are grown up. This is not to demean you in any way, only to remind you to honor where you are. You have agreed to the illusion because you know that it is the tool for your learning. Know it is illusion and allow it to continue to teach you. That is all. Other questions.

Question: About the illusion of linear time. He gave examples of the relationship between one lifetime and another. Is what he told us also true for the various densities we move in? In other words, are we ultimately experiencing the sixth density and say third density simultaneously?

Aaron: I am Aaron. This river springs up from a pure source. This branch on the right spreads out through a wide, flat river valley. The branch in the middle goes through deep rapids. The branch on the left enters into an underground stream bed. Picture the spot just before it divides. It has been one intactness of water; then it divides. It flows as it must, underground, through the rapids or spread out over the shallows. Then it comes back together. In this way you are in all densities at the same time but the present consciousness is aware only of where it perceives itself to be and not of all the place it touches. Mind does not know of the underground tunnel or the shallow valley but of the rapids if that's where consciousness is. When you move into profound meditation experience and all concepts of self dissolves, consciousness expands and suddenly you are underground and in the rapids and in the shallow plane all at the same time. We may call this expanded consciousness pure awareness.

Then you come out of your meditation and you are back in your own branch of the stream. You are always everywhere but the conscious, waking mind of relative reality can't grasp that so it stays with where it is in its own stream path. When you transcend the illusion through your meditation you know you are everywhere, in all densities and at all times. Do you understand?

You may wish to try this as a meditation. (*Dots (...) indicate pause.*)

Allow your consciousness to be with the stream as it arises from the source. It flows through one single bed. ... You are the water, running in turbulence and stillness. Feel the different qualities of the water as surroundings change. ... You are aware of the riverbanks and their different elements of rock and soil; you are aware of the sun and shadows; you are aware of the slope which creates current. ... Pure awareness knows this. The river does not know itself here as separate from the banks and sunshine. Suddenly the river breaks up into these three stream beds, the wide and shallow valley, the rocky waterfall and the underground stream. Choose one, any one. ... Here we shift into a self-consciousness. Can you feel that shift, as you choose to be this or that and accept the illusion? The only one you can know now is the body you are in, which is this lifetime. Rest here and experience it. ... What of the others? You may come to them through deep meditation experience where you transcend self or through memory of having been there at another time. In this way you remember or deeply understand that which this incarnation has not experienced. You shudder at starvation although this human has not starved. You reach for a connection this human has never fully experienced but dimly remembers. ... You are literally in all the stream beds at all times but the only one that conscious, relative mind can understand is the present relative reality. Pure awareness knows them all.

Wednesday, January 26, 1994

(End of tape.)

Wednesday, February 2, 1994

Barbara: Aaron is asking me to read this question because he wants to incorporate it into his opening talk. It is really two questions.

Question: We frequently talk about the self, using phrases like “the illusion of self.” Once again I want to ask about this. It seems to me that the self is real enough. Granted, the physical, emotional and mental parts are not all there is, and that on a deeper level we are indeed connected with all that is. So, I can see that the entirely separate self is an illusion. Nevertheless, the experiences and memories of this body, these emotions and this mind seem real. For example, if I think about what I am going to do tomorrow, that fantasy is not real in the sense that what I am thinking about is not happening on the physical plane. But the experiences, emotions and thoughts I have had seem very real, even if they are not the whole story.

During the January 19th meeting, when Aaron introduced this four step releasing process, a question was asked to which Barbara replied: “Instead of just working more skillfully with the relative reality situation, not having to be reactive to what’s arising in us, we are noting the ways that pain has caused us to put up barriers, to close our energy, to become “self.” We make the decision ‘not only do I not need to be reactive to this, but I really can let it go.’ We see it never was who we are. There never was a separate self feeling or doing this.” I do not understand the last part. It seems that it was a part of who we are. That there was a self doing and feeling this. My memories and old mind come from this, in fact.

When I hear phrases like “the illusion of self,” and when I read what Barbara has said, I find I am very defensive. In part it feels like I am being told that my emotions and experiences are not important. Can Aaron speak to these two issues. What does he mean by the illusion of self idea and what is this defensiveness about?

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. I want to start this evening with a meditation. I want to continue, weekly, to practice this four step release that I introduced several weeks ago. For those of you who were not here, I am not going to offer extensive introduction; the transcript is available. I believe you'll be able to participate in the meditation without the background information. That information will enrich the meditation, though, and is available if you wish to read it later.

We are working with the concepts we discussed in the fall and moving into the experiential aspect of it. We talked about the light body and that perfect, unwrinkled sheet of paper. When you wrinkle it up and then open out the paper, you can see the perfect, unwrinkled sheet within the wrinkled sheet. We are working to shift identification from the wrinkles to the unwrinkled sheet. This does not mean the wrinkled sheet doesn't exist. This is what the question that Barbara just read is about. That wrinkled sheet is relative reality. Yes, of course a self exists. When we speak of the illusion of self, perhaps more correctly what we mean is the illusion of the totally separate self as independent from all that is. The identification with that identity, to the exclusion of the pure mind aspect of your being, is what I mean by “illusion of solid self.”

I don't want to get into too many words here before the meditation, but I am not asking you to deny self. Only to cut your identification with that as the essence who you are. As long as you identify with that small self which carries the distortions, you're going to suffer. When your identification moves to the true self, which is not separate at all, that doesn't mean there is no personality, it doesn't mean there is no body. It simply means that personality, body, emotions and thoughts become clearly seen as what they are: tools for the incarnation. You understand that easily about your body. That when you leave this body, eventually there will be a new body. You even understand it about emotions. But somehow there is this stream of consciousness that you take to be who you are.

Just as the chair is made of non-chair elements, the wood from the forest, cotton seat from a field, the sweat of the laborers, the sun and rain which allowed tree and cotton plant to grow, so the "self" is made of non-self elements. When you examine it closely in this way, there is nothing to be defined as "me."

We will discuss this further after the meditation. For now I simply want to remind you of what these four steps are. The last time we did this I told you each to choose some emotion that had been predominate in your experience in the past week. Tonight I would like to choose an emotion for you, if I may. One with which everyone in the room is familiar. It may not be your primary issue, but I'd like to use unworthiness and its many ramifications. So I would like you each to think of a time in the past week when you felt in some way humiliated, unworthy or rejected. Simply remember that.

Now, briefly, the four step process. First, we offer the intention that we do this meditation for the alleviation of suffering of all beings, as a gift to all beings and not just for our personal selves. In the second step we will expand our energy outward. There are many tools for doing that, which we have used here at different times. Tonight I am simply going to choose one. Each time we do this I'll choose a different one, so that you each may see what works best for you.

The third step: from that place of outward expansion and of resting in the much purer "self," the self empty of identification with ego, thoughts, emotions and so on, we look with tenderness at the human who experienced a sense of unworthiness. From this higher perspective we see how the human picked up that sense of unworthiness, identified with that wrinkle, that distortion, and that we were never truly unworthy. We see that belief was simply old mind's distortion. In the fourth step, seeing the origin of that contraction and that it was never who we were, we release identification with it. We release the distortion of the energy field. This is not **getting rid of** it, there must be no aversion to it, just noting, "It has never been who I am, I don't have to hold on to it." We allow ourselves to come back and rest in that distortion-free, pure light body. There's no grasping at that distortion-free body. Only clear seeing: "I no longer need this distortion." It's like carrying heavy rain clothes because you walked outside in the morning and it was cloudy, so you've got your galoshes, umbrella and your raincoat. You've gone for a long hike. You're coming back the same way, reversing your steps. Half way through the morning the sun is out and you're still carrying all this rain gear. Old mind. "When there were clouds I thought I might need it to protect this body. There is no longer need to carry it. I put it down here beside the road. I'll pick it up and carry it home when I come back." We release the burden.

I will offer the steps for doing this within the meditation itself.

Begin by offering the intention: "I do this work for the service of all beings. Within my own clearly seen suffering, I see the suffering of all beings. The more I can learn to dwell in the light and not in the distortions of fear, the more I can clearly serve all beings." I will be silent while you do this.

Tonight we're going to do the second step using the breath. Breathing in, just this one breath. Nothing else exists in the whole universe but this one breath. At the end of this breath, this exhalation, this being who you were dies and a new being takes the next inhalation. The whole of the moment is in this one breath. *(pause)* And again. *(pause)* Going no further than one breath. *(pause)*

With the next breath, note the space between the inhale and the exhale. In, pause, out, pause. As you come to that pause, I would ask you to focus as much of your energy as you can on the third eye space in the center of the forehead. *(pause)* Some of you may begin to experience in that space a sense of light; others may experience a peacefulness. If you don't experience those, that's fine, nothing to worry about. Just continue to breathe, pause and focus. *(pause)* If there is light or space there, just rest in it. If there's just a pause there, rest in the pause. If thoughts, emotions or sensations arise, do not move attention to them here, simply note their arising and come back immediately to the breath. *(pause)* That pause is what I call "now." Not past, not future. In that pause there is nothing but God. Nothing but infinite light, space and love. Don't get lost in the concept of it, try to keep your attention as present as you can. Even if it's only a fraction of a second, allow yourself that fraction of a second's experience of this "now." *(pause)* Heart opening. Fully present in this wondrous moment of being. *(pause)*

From this perspective bring thought to that memory of feeling unworthy that I asked you to recall. Look with tenderness on that human who felt unworthy. From this place of greater spaciousness, can you see that that human never was unworthy? For whatever its reasons, it bought into that story. It's an old, old story. A burden that we simply never dared to put down. Look with compassion at this human, who for so long has borne this burden. In the moment of the telling of that story, was there unworthiness? How far back does it go? How many lifetimes? This is the wrinkle, the distortion. I want you to allow yourself to see or feel that space free of this distortion of unworthiness. No getting rid of here, just the skillful and loving decision, "I'm going to let it go. However I have used this illusion in the past, I no longer need to do so."

Remembering the story of this week, feeling humiliated or rejected, "I do not need to identify with this, I release it." You may want to turn your hands up, or raise your hands, to physically release it. Do so if that feels helpful to you. "I am not unworthy, I have never been unworthy." Allow yourself to focus, in whatever way you can, on that perfect light, that perfect unwrinkled page of yourself. In, pause, out. Come back to the breath. With each pause, release. Breathe out the distortion. No war with it, no getting rid of, just a clear seeing, "It's not who I am. I release that old illusion."

We come back from that space, now. Back into this body. Wiggle the fingers. Wiggle the feet. Deep breath. *(pause)*

When I speak of the illusion of self, what I more precisely mean is the illusion that all these old distortions are who you are, or that the identity created with those distortions needs to be maintained for safety. As long as you cling to those distortions you are unable to understand who you truly are. The question was asked, "Why do I feel defensive when Barbara or Aaron speak of letting go of the illusion of self?" The ego does not want to let go, the ego wants to maintain itself at all costs. When I say let go of the illusion of self, the ego says, "No!" What else can it say? It's clinging by its fingertips and I'm smacking the fingers; let go. If you let go you're going to fall; where? Perhaps fall into who you truly are when you're not so busy being who you always thought you were. But that's very scary; how do you know anything's going to be there? We'll talk more about this.

I want to give you two examples of working with this practice. One is something that Barbara experienced some time ago. She was at a meditation retreat; not teaching, but attending the retreat. There were times when she felt rejected in one way or another. I asked her to look carefully, to ask the question: who is feeling rejected? Perhaps somebody had walked past her and averted their eyes. She knows that they may be averting their eyes because they don't want to make contact and it has nothing to do with her. She also knows that, perhaps, she was being rejected. Does that mean she's unworthy? From where did this notion arise that if someone rejects me then it means I'm unworthy?

It's not necessary to look at each historical detail. For Barbara, it was simply enough to look at the pain she felt, occasionally, as a child; feeling rejected, feeling unworthy. When there was that pain of feeling rejected and the ensuing anger, it was too uncomfortable to be there with that anger toward another. So, her response was to say, "I'm unworthy. I'm unworthy for why ever they reject me and I'm unworthy for feeling this anger. That's why I'm being rejected, because I'm an angry person." Is there anybody in this room who's not sometimes an angry person? Is there any human alive who's not sometimes an angry person? You're human, of course there's anger. There was fear that she would be hurt or her needs not met. With fear there was a sense of helplessness and lack of control. By saying, "It's my fault," she was back in control. If she could "fix" her anger, then she would have the love she needed. Thus, "unworthiness" served its purpose, protecting her from deeper fear.

You're all suffering from what I call "old soul syndrome." You've heard me speak of this before. You so aspire to be worthy of that union with God, so seek to purify yourselves, to come home, that each perceived fault in you looks magnified a thousand times. As you now become more highly evolved and more perfectionist, each emotion which you may have overlooked some hundred lifetimes ago is seen as flaw and magnified. That purity to which you aspire seems ever further away. Unworthy becomes a defense. In a sense, unworthy is ego's last stand: "If I'm unworthy at least I'm still somebody." At least there is still some identity, and it's more comfortable than being the angry one. At any rate, seeing that old unworthiness, Barbara was able to see that in that moment all that was happening was that somebody was not looking at her. How absurd to say, "Therefore I'm unworthy." What does unworthy have to do with it? Furthermore, she asked, "Back when this seed was first planted, was I unworthy? No! I wasn't unworthy then and I'm not unworthy now. This has been a myth I've been carrying around. There

was a wrinkle in the paper and I believed it, so I practiced it over and over again, re-crumpling the paper."

Then the final step, needed because you can do it up to here a thousand times and still get stuck in the myth of being someone who is unworthy: "I release it." Have you ever had a sore in the mouth and noted that your tongue keeps going to that spot, worrying it? The more you flick at it, the sorer it gets. You finally have to stop and remind yourself to leave it alone. This is the same thing. Each time unworthiness, or any other heavy emotion, reappears repeatedly, you remind yourself, "Old mind." It must be done with compassion for the being that moved into the sense of unworthiness. If there is judgment of that being, that only practices the distortion again: "Look how unworthy I was to have kept doing this; look how bad I was." Just more of the same thing; can you see that? A hug to that being and a reminder, "I am not unworthy, I never was unworthy."

Then the new part: "I release it." The release must be done from this higher perspective. You are resting in that pure, unwrinkled aspect of self; the pure light body. Resting there as firmly as you can. You are not denying the wrinkles, only knowing that they are just relative reality and you've bought into it. Let it go. There is a shift in weight from one foot to the other. It is not a grasping at the unwrinkled, because there's nothing that needs to be grasped. Rather, there's an allowing of yourself to rest in that pure light body. You're going to have to do it over and over and over. How many times did you practice the distortion for it to become solidified into habit? How many times are you going to need to remind yourself, very lovingly: "Old mind. I don't need to identify with this, nor carry it anymore. I release it. I come back to my true being."

We return to the words, "Illusion of self." Equate it with ownership of the wrinkle. Your true nature, the God-, Christ- or Buddha-self, the unblemished light body, it is still a self. Just as each drop of water may be taken separately out of the sea, yet there is nothing that is not of the nature of the sea, so within that light body there is nothing that is not of God.

(Tape ended and was not restarted on the second side. After Aaron's talk was finished, we discovered that and filled in what he said.)

Barbara: I'm just briefly going to say here what Aaron just said so we don't lose it. He has given us an assignment to be conscious during the break of moving into defendedness, seeing it as old mind, making the skillful decision, "I don't need to carry this defendedness," and releasing it. Can we feel our energy opening again.

Comment from someone: I think he started the second side by saying that on a soul level we still have a self ... Help me, what else did he say about that? I remember that's how it started.

Barbara: He was speaking about the drop of water to the ocean. He said, we're each unique, but we don't have those attributes that we think of as small ego self and with which we get caught in identification. He says that we will talk more about it after the break; he would like to hear your questions. The question that I read is lying here if anyone would like to read it during the break.

Questions

Barbara: Are there any questions related to the question that I read at the beginning of the evening? Can people talk about their understandings of “illusion of self”? Are there questions about it, or thoughts you want to share with each other about how you understand it? Also, speak about the exercise Aaron asked you to do during the break. Did anybody notice this contraction and release? What happened?

C: Yesterday Aaron said something to me about not identifying with the ego self, the emotional, mental, physical bodies. But that’s the only part that I know. So, it’s sort of crazy-making to tell me not to identify with what I know.

Barbara: That’s what this process is about, learning to recognize a deeper part.

L: I have a cousin who is in the hospital dying of bone cancer. Her mother, my aunt, is staying with me, so I’ve spent a lot of time in a supporting role; towards my aunt as well as my cousin. This seems to be a very pure state, and I sense that this may be a purer state of self. I am wondering if this is what might be called the self, because so many of what I would think of as ego contractions or manifestations seem really irrelevant and kind of ridiculous.

D: What do you mean by a “pure state of self”?

L: Well, it’s like a pure state of energy, like love. I would say that I feel a lot of love for this cousin and, in particular, my aunt, who I have been very close to all of my life. Is that what a true sense of self is? Is that why it feels so unfamiliar?

Barbara: I understand what you’re asking. It’s that place that we each occasionally get to, where we stop all the wheels that are usually going about—“What am I gonna get out of it? Am I gonna be okay?”—All the concepts, protection and manipulation quiets down and there is just a real sense of connectedness. It’s you lying there with cancer; it’s everybody.

L: Is that self?

Barbara: It’s not ego-self but what Aaron would call true self. There are degrees of this. In a very, very deep meditation experience, you reach a space where there is no physical body, there is no ego, there’s no notion of self. There’s not even a thought “I am experiencing this”; there is no experiencer. There is some level of awareness because when you come out of that meditation there is still memory of it. But it’s the closest, maybe, that the human can come to complete emptiness of self, to completely entering that space. What you described moves towards that space. There’s still an experiencer, so there is some degree of ego-self.

Aaron once used an image that I found very beautiful. He talked about the pure, brilliant light of God and said if you put us in front of that light, we cast a shadow. There would be a silhouette that would show where we were. If you put him in front of it there would still be some small degree of shadow. If you put a being such as the Christ or the Buddha in front of it, they would be invisible. He said that’s what we are moving to, this perfect invisibility. To me that perfect invisibility is emptiness of self. Do you know how they print a picture out of black dots? As the picture gets more and more faded there are fewer and fewer dots. There are still some dots here, we’re still visible, but we’re moving in that direction.

J: Another way to look at this, that has been helpful for me, is to see the self, the emotional, physical and mental bodies as tools for the soul, tools the soul uses to become more invisible.

Barbara: It's very different when they are tools instead of something we have to own and invest our identity in.

J: I think what happens is that we get into this mindset of the self being illusion, not real, and therefore it's not worth anything so we better get rid of it. But, then again, here I am. I can't get rid of who I am, so ...

Barbara: It's not getting rid of, it's simply making space around, of not getting stuck in it. I'm paraphrasing Aaron, who is saying it's not disassociation with who you are, it's embracing the relative self while also knowing that you don't have to get caught in believing that's who you are. An image the traditional teachings use is the sea; waves—of physical body, of emotions, of thought—arise on the surface but they never depart from the sea. They are an integral part of the sea. We don't have to get rid of the waves, but we also know the waves are not the sea, just a surface part of it.

Any other comments about this? Any questions relating to the original question, if it's still not clear?

L: Question to J. Are you saying the self is illusion or the ego is illusion?

J: I guess what I'm saying is that I don't like to look at it that way because I find that it becomes too complicated and complex. Excuse me, but it's like we start mind-fucking ourselves with all of that stuff. I just feel that I can look at it more like all those things are tools that I can use, tools that I can look at, little index cards. Something that I can use to help my soul evolve or help me to be a better person. That's an easier way for me to look at it. It just makes it easier for me to work with all this stuff. I don't know if that answers your question.

D: I think that the illusion of the completely separate self must be important or we would not have taken incarnation. So it is not something to be gotten rid of, but is something to aid us.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Consider a very small child with a toy. The child has put down a toy truck and picked up a doll. It's playing with the doll. It's not paying any attention to the truck until another child comes along and reaches for the truck. "Mine!" it says, and grabs it. If you are the adult with that child, you don't tell the child, "No, don't be selfish." In other words, don't grasp onto "me" and "mine." You give the child a hug and say, "You're afraid that somebody will take away something that's important to you. You can let him use it. When he's done he will give it back. It's safe to do that." Thus you allow the child to slowly let go of that grip of fear that it will not have what it needs.

The ego self is much the same way. The emotions, the mind, grasp and hold onto this and that. If you mock that small ego self and say, "Let go," it just holds on more firmly. If it lets go of the immediate object it moves to something else like guilt or judgment; just another place to fixate. When you make space around it and give it a bit of compassion, it doesn't have to hold on any more. The identity naturally shifts to the

larger self, to the God-self. There is no getting rid of here. There is no denying. There is no saying, "Oh, it's only illusion."

It may be illusion, but if there is pain, it hurts. If it hurts one must pay attention to it. What makes it so solid? How can we allow this shift and not force this shift? That is what this work is about. We're going to be doing more practices in the coming weeks, dealing more directly with light and energy. In all of them, the focus will be helping you to get to know the other, larger aspect of self. C has just said that this is all she knows, but it's not all she or any of you know. Only, you have not previously been asked to pay attention.

When you rest in that greater self, which is egoless, you don't notice that you're there. It's the same kind of situation when you wake up in the morning and you're feeling good, nothing hurting. You don't generally notice, "Gee, it's wonderful, nothing hurts." But if there is pain, you notice it. You don't generally notice when you're not hungry, you notice when you are hungry. **When nothing itches, do you notice that? No, you notice when the itch starts. You spend so much time resting in this God-self, but you don't notice it. What we are trying to do here is to help you first, know it and, second, to stabilize the experience of it,** so that each time you get stuck in the small ego self, you have someplace to shift your weight, some way to move back to that larger perspective. That is all.

C: I liked it better when Aaron talks of the balance of relative and ultimate reality. Sometimes he has said, "This is an illusion," and I have read that many other places, too, like A Course in Miracles. They say that this life is an illusion. When I first read that in A Course in Miracles it made me very frustrated because I was just beginning my spiritual growth and hearing that nothing of this world was real, nothing I knew was real, the only reality was something I didn't even understand, was crazy-making. I would cry in the shower. I was trying so hard to get it. But I like it better when this human experience is not denied, but as Aaron is using the language now, speaking of it as relative reality instead of saying it's illusion. It is painful to deny our human experience, I think.

Barbara: We can't deny our humanness. The ultimate reality has no meaning unless we incorporate relative reality into it. But, they are not separate. Relative reality can not stand on its own without ultimate reality. It's like actors on the stage; there's got to be the stage floor and the curtains and the audience, not just the actors or they have no meaning. But, the stage has no meaning without the actors. It comes together.

Response: It seems like C is bring up this question: If we say that relative reality is an illusion, does this deny the validity of our experience of this place?

Barbara: Does it to you? I think that comes down to asking what we mean by illusion.

Response: For me it's difficult to accept certain experiences. Knowing that they are an illusion sometimes makes it harder for me to accept the painful experiences because while they seem real, maybe I should not be experiencing them if they are illusion. Do you see the trap that sets up of invalidating experience?

Barbara: The thing is, when we get stuck in the identity of "me," of self solidified around emotions, body and thoughts, then we get very attached to some things and have aversion to other things. We keep planting the seeds of karma. Karma grows out of this illusion of a solid, separate self.

Question: Is karma an illusion?

Barbara: On the relative plane, no!

C: M and I were talking about that this week. In fact, I wrote a piece to bring and I'm sorry I didn't, but it had some anger in it. I was saying if this life is an illusion then it follows that karma is also an illusion, because you can't deny the reality of this life without denying its by-products. It's not fair!

Aaron: I am Aaron. When M asked is karma is also an illusion, Barbara gave a vehement "no." I offer the opposite answer. Karma is indeed an illusion. Once you understand the illusion of separate self and are completely free of identification with that self, but simply embrace it as a tool for living this relative reality, then you cease planting those illusory karmic seeds, and truly become free. As long as there is the illusion of self you're caught with the whole illusion, which includes karma. I am sure that all of you have, at some time or another, played with those bubbles which arise when you dip a wand into a jar and then blow bubbles into the air. Are they real or illusion? That is all.

(Tape stopped and re-started.)

Aaron: You must embrace relative reality, it is your place of learning. The statement that it is illusion in no way invalidates it. A play is a grand illusion, and those sitting in the audience may learn a great deal from a fine, well acted drama. It has its own validation.

We're not talking about validity here so much as we're talking about suffering. As long as you buy into the illusion and stay caught in your separateness, you suffer. You plant new karmic seeds. When you move to J's stance of seeing the emotions, body and mind as tools for the incarnation, tools for learning, you can open your heart around the circumstances of your life. You move to true non-attachment, and that letting go allows you to rest an equal amount, not a greater amount, an equal amount, in ultimate reality. Then they come together, there is no separation. This is not ultimate and relative reality being two sides of a fence. It is the example Barbara just gave, the actors on the stage. The play needs the actors, the stage and the audience. The lines are part of the relative reality, the props are part of the relative reality, but they exist in a greater whole. We treat them with respect, with love. We don't invalidate them, but we don't own them or identify with them as all that we are. That is all.

M: If relative reality were invalid then we wouldn't need to practice it.

J: I think that's what D was saying. It must be important—here we are.

Barbara: Here we are because without this where are we going to be?

(Much laughter.)

C: Apparently it's part of the plan that we experience separation because here we are as individuals with separate minds and bodies, at least it appears so. So it confuses me that we are asked to let go of our illusion of separateness, because it must serve some purpose or we wouldn't have it.

Aaron: I am Aaron. I hear your question. Use your illusion of separation, knowing it for illusion, to learn. Do not cling to it nor fixate on it. Suppose you had an abundance of

food, more food that you could possibly use. Somebody said, "May I have some apples and a bit of bread?" and you responded, "Sure, here, take it." Is that generosity? What does it mean to give when there is no fear for the self being short?

The illusion of separation is much the same. How could you have ever left God? Can the water ever leave the sea? It can evaporate into a cloud, it can come down as rain and be sucked into a tree. It can run through the soil and into streams. Eventually it comes back to the sea. Nothing is ever separate. How could you ever be separate from God? What does it mean to know your true divine nature? In just the same way that you can not know the experience of generosity until there is some fear of lack, you can not know the true divine nature until there is some sense of separation from it. Then you come to understand who you truly are and allow yourself to manifest that divinity in a way that you could not do previously. Before you were just a spark of God. Once you move through that illusion of separation and come back to knowing the divinity of your true nature, you become a brilliant sun in your own right. In short, you manifest that divinity throughout the universe. This is the purpose of your spiritual journey, if it could be said to have a purpose. The seventh density being that is finally returning fully to the divine returns absolutely able to manifest its own divinity. Read the Book of Revelation; it talks about this. This is all.

Question: How would Aaron define divinity?

Aaron: I am Aaron. That which I call God is that which we experience as infinite love, infinite intelligence. It manifests itself as light and energy. It is the essence of the universe, without which nothing else could exist. There is no duality, so that which I call God is in everything; not just what you call "good," but in everything. There is light and there is relative absence of light, but there is still light in it, even if it's just a small amount. When I speak of divinity, I mean that which radiates that light and love allows itself to be a channel for that light and love, is that light and love.

You can not know God in the conceptual mind. You can only know the projections of God. At first those projections are of the culture or tribe. Thus, for example, in the old testament God was perceived as being a wrathful God, and he defended those whose side he was on. He was a military hero, of sorts. So, there was a projection of God which reflected the values of that culture. This is like taking one slice of an orange and thinking it's the whole orange. Or taking one piece of fruit from a bowl, an apple, and thinking, "This is fruit"—that all fruit is apple, and completely ignoring the myriad types of fruit. There are thousands of projections of God, each is one small spoke of the whole.

On the next level you move into what I might call a first level God experience; some kind of contact with God. There's not perfect unity with God; there is this being experiencing that as beyond itself. Again, what you are experiencing is a projection. But it's a somewhat broader projection. That's as far as the conceptual mind can take you.

In meditation, as the self dissolves a bit, you make space for God. When you're filled with ego, there's no room for the God experience. As you move into a deeper meditation and the illusion of a solid self dissolves a bit, you start to follow up the sunbeam into the sun. Finally you become aware that the sunbeam is not God, it's only a piece of God. You see the sun for the first time, the whole blazing glory of it. But there

is still a somebody who is seeing it. Two who come together as lovers, embrace and even merge; but even the merging means that this that was separate from that with which it merged.

Eventually your meditation experience may take you to the place that Barbara described earlier where all sense of separate self, all concept, is completely gone. Then you'll finally start to know that you are part of that brilliant sun, that you've always been part of it. You are not just one projection of it, you're right there in the center of the blazing fire. Your ego is a projection of that; relative reality is a projection of that. That's why I say you can not separate relative and ultimate realities; you can not separate mundane and sacred.

You move into the experience of "oneness"—the essential oneness, the identity with God—which is different than unity. Then you start to know the true divinity of yourself and all that is. You are that divinity, and have always been. From that experiential understanding of identity with God, your whole moral system is shaken up. You cease acting from a place of doer, from a place of should, or outward moral imperatives. Your choices of action are based on the simple fact that there is nothing here that is not God, so you may not harm any of it. To hurt another is to hurt myself and to hurt God. It then becomes unthinkable to do harm. That is why moving towards this experience of identity with God is so important. Because until then the earth will need to be run by moral dictates; shoulds and shouldn'ts, commandments. And there are always going to be those who break commandments. Eventually your earth will evolve to a place where all understand their oneness, and the commandments will no longer be necessary. That is all.

Barbara: Aaron asks me to read this question out loud so people can think about it, and we will give it more time next week.

I'd like to ask you to take up the issue of defendedness for women. We women are trained from birth to be defended from men, and indeed, if we relate openly we are viewed as "available" for sexual advances. It's hard to be openly open. How can we appear open but not appear "open"?

Barbara: Good question. Next week ...

Aaron wants to know if you have anything you would like to share from the break with his assignment. Did anybody notice defendedness? Did you try this process of releasing it? What happened?

C: As you know I worked on this a lot, but it still comes up. During the break, there was someone here, who is not here now, with whom I had a deep connection last year. We never had an argument, but as spring approached a discomfort, because I think this person ...

(Tape ended—a part of this person's talking was missed.)

We had exchanged a few words tonight and smiled. When this person was leaving I attempted a hug and felt resistance. I said, "You don't want a hug?" This person said, "Not so tight." Well, it wasn't tight; they didn't want it. I thought of the exercise, but the pain was still there. I thought, "This is old mind, it has nothing to do with me. I've

opened my heart to this person. If they don't want me, why should this rejection cause me to feel unworthy, or less than."

Barbara: Let me stop you here for a second. The pain isn't old pain, the pain is right here in this moment. The myth out of which the pain has grown, "I'm unworthy, I'm being rejected," that's an old story. We can see, "I wasn't unworthy then, I'm not unworthy now." But, right now you are still feeling the pain of feeling rejected. It doesn't matter if it's ultimately real or not, it's present pain. As soon as we say it's old pain, we invalidate it. When we can say the pain is here and give ourselves some love for that pain, then we outgrow attachment to that pain as validation for small self. There are two different steps. One is recognizing the old mind from which these myths grew. And one is opening and making space for the pain. Our sense of unworthiness was a way of keeping the pain at bay. Can you see that?

C: I've heard that before, but it's still difficult.

Barbara: When we get caught up in, "I'm the unworthy one," we're trying to control the pain by explaining the pain. Then, of course you're feeling pain, because you feel unworthy, but there's a way to handle the pain. But, if you're not unworthy and there's all this pain, what do you do with it? You've just got to sit there with that bare pain and make space for it. That really tears your heart open, but in doing so it opens and stretches your heart and allows you to stop identifying with it as "my pain," it's everybody's pain. You cease owning the pain. It's very important not to deny the pain, just to make space for it.

C: How?

Barbara: Just watch it. Go deeper into it.

Wednesday, February 9, 1994

(Barbara reads from No Chain At All, 4/22/93 transcript, pages 63-65.)

Barbara: With this goes Aaron's image of the perfect light and the piece of transparent colored paper that's got a wrinkle in it. You hold that paper to the light. If the paper was also perfect, with no wrinkle, then you wouldn't see a wrinkle on the physical plane surface where the light is shining. Because the paper has a wrinkle in it, the light shines through the paper, wrinkle and all, and the manifestation on the physical plane shows with the wrinkle.

When he talks about scar tissue of the light body, that image of a scar on the surface of the "always perfect" helps me to understand that the pure light is perfect. It's only a wrinkle in the paper. The perfect sheet of paper is there, but the wrinkle shows as a distortion on the final physical manifestation, interpreting that as ... we still get hooked into the identity of "my" anger, "my" jealousy, "my" fear, whatever. We start to own that and identify with it as who we are, rather than identifying with the perfect light.

Aaron's talk

I am Aaron. Good evening and my love to you all. Tonight's opening talk will primarily be a guided meditation.

Several weeks ago we introduced this four-step process for releasing the scar tissue of the emotional and physical bodies. We worked with it last week with unworthiness. Tonight I want to focus more on the physical body's distortions.

First, I would like to point out the connection between the physical and emotional bodies. I am going to do something in a moment and I want you each to notice as carefully as you can if there is any reaction in your body. (*Barbara screams.*) I ask you to forgive me if I alarmed you. Where was the contraction? Where was the tension?

For some of you, your jaw may have set just a bit firmer. Did your shoulders hunch? Did your abdomen pull in? You each have habitual areas where you hold tension. Usually these are related to past life experience.

C, Barbara and I were talking about this earlier today. C described an exercise she had experienced in a different setting. To help you understand the interconnection between mind/body, I asked C if she would be willing to share with all of you what she shared with me and she said yes. Before she begins I want to talk very briefly about old mind conditioning. All but those who are new here tonight have heard me talk about this before.

You see a snowfall. When you open your eyes in the morning, there's snow on the ground. Some of you move into delight and some of you shudder, depending on your prior experiences with snow. Now, of course, they have not all been one kind of experience. You've all had some joy of sledding. You've all gotten stuck in the snow in your cars. But there has been a primary tendency to like it or to dislike it.

You smell bread baking in the oven. Good! Your mouth begins to water because you know what that fresh bread is going to taste like. Old mind conditioning.

In most instances, it's not a problem. But when you see somebody coming toward you, and the last three times you've met that person there's been an argument, you begin to tense before that person opens their mouth. The contraction of your energy already is inviting their anger.

Is it possible to see each person, each situation, fresh, as if it had never happened before? Last year we did an exercise with a class in which we brought in a cup. We asked everybody to look at it for just fifteen seconds, then we covered it up again. We asked people to draw it. Very few people were able to draw that cup. People drew the concept "cup." Then we uncovered it again and said, draw it. Really be with that cup, as if you had never seen a cup before.

You see the world around you in concepts. It's so difficult to come to direct experience because this old mind conditioning gets in the way. Accompanying old mind conditioning is the reactivity of the emotional body. The physical body's distortions follow exactly the same pattern. You have learned, many of you, to identify the arising of old mind, to simply note that it is present and to be less reactive to it, to let it move past and try to come back to the experience of this person's pain or anger, of that pile of garbage, of whatever it may be. But the old physical or emotional reaction still occurs; you have just learned not to follow it.

I'm sensing a little confusion still. An example that Barbara used last year was that she needed to clean up her yard where there were dog-droppings. They had been on the ground for some weeks, covered with snow. The snow had melted. There was absolutely no more odor. It was no different than raking up leaves. She had a big scoop and a rake. But old mind said—pardon my language—this is dog shit! It's disgusting. And she wanted to pull back from it. As she was able to observe that old mind and look at this—what is it? digested and reformed dog food, essentially, that's been lying out on the ground in the snow for some weeks—then her relationship to the job changed. The contraction around "repulsive" dissolved.

The physical pattern may accompany the emotional, or may be formed on its own. For example, if somebody were beaten in a past life, they may have developed a certain protective stance. Perhaps they were hit in the stomach, so they might hold themselves with their arms wrapped around a bit, shoulders hunched forward, when they feel threatened. The stomach might automatically contract when there's feeling of threat.

What happens with these physical distortions is that they become the places of inherent weakness in the physical body. By way of example, somebody with whom I spoke in the past week was experiencing pain in a part of his body that relates to the gall bladder meridian. This person has absolutely no problem at present with his gall bladder. However, if there is continued energy blockage on that meridian, in the future there may develop a problem with the gall bladder. The meridian goes through different parts of the body. The present physical distortion was in a different part of the body and not the gall bladder. But seeing that it's related and beginning to release the scar tissue, as it were, is possible. Then the distortion need not develop.

However, it must be done in a very gentle way with no getting-rid-of. This is release of what we see we don't need, not getting rid of something which is discomforting. We've done this with anger, jealousy and fear. You've seen, time and again, how those heavy emotions arise in you, that the emotion itself is discomforting and the second reaction

is wanting to get rid of that fear, rid of that anger, or impatience or whatever it may be. You cannot get rid of it by wishing it away. Denying it doesn't work. Flinging it at others is unskillful. So you have learned to make space around it.

The next step in the process was to come to see "I don't need this. Every time somebody ignores me, I have a sense of unworthiness." I speak here of a hypothetical case. "Just because they're ignoring me doesn't mean I'm unworthy. It's just old mind conditioning." Many of you have gotten to that point where you understand that. You allow the pain, "feeling unworthiness," and at the same time you know there's not really any worthiness or unworthiness here. It's just old mind conditioning. What we haven't looked at is the accompanying tightening of the shoulders or the gut or whatever it may be that accompanies that sense of unworthiness and its pain.

Now we come to the next step, which we did with the emotional body last week; we do the same thing with the physical body. First, there must be seeing of the physical distortion that accompanies the emotional distortion. What is this headache about? Why do I always get sore throats, an upset stomach or weak ankles? How have I moved into this distortion? Do I need to continue to own this distortion? Can I begin to let it go?

That's the background. I would like C to share with you what she told me today. And then I want to do a meditation with all of you to release the scar tissue created by old conditioned physical distortion. We're not doing this specifically to get rid of the headache or the stomach-ache. They'll go when they're ready. We're doing this to relocate ourselves from identity with the distortion to readiness to release the distortion, to re-identify with the perfect light body. I will pause here and ask C to say whatever she wishes, and then continue. Thank you.

(C discusses her recent experiences at a Polarity conference and how one particular exercise that she learned there has helped her in working with her sore neck. She then leads us in the exercise.)

C: Sit up straight. Get centered and grounded, in touch with the floor or the chair. Just quietly, for a minute, think about a situation that you've been in in the last few days that angered you. Some small thing that caused you to feel some anger.

Then notice, in this remembered situation, what is the movement that comes with that angry feeling. Either do the movement or figure out what it was in your mind. (She demonstrates the tensing that came with her anger and led to her neck pain.) So try to figure out what your movement would be, the first jumping reaction there when you feel that anger arising.

Then label in your mind that movement from one to ten, one being the beginning of the movement and ten being the completion of the movement. Then come back to your center. And now, imagine what it's going to be to move just to position one, one-tenth of the movement. Just think in your mind what it's going to be to move to the level of one in that movement, just a little tiny bit. Now go ahead and do one and then come back to your center. One more time, just move to position one of that tense movement and notice what happens in your body as you begin to move toward that angry gesture. Then come back to center.

(C discusses her experience of this exercise in working with her neck pain. We can learn to just begin the contraction and then come back to center without having to complete the whole movement of tension, resulting in chronic pain.)

C: Now imagine or remember an event in your lives which caused you to feel some shame and, again, go with the first movement that comes into your mind when you think of shame. What is the movement? Go with the movement and then come back to center. If that movement was again on a scale of one to ten, imagine how you're going to move toward one, but don't do it yet. Just feel the movement in yourself toward one, and then come back to center before you ever move. And then move to one and stop, and notice where in your body the contraction is beginning. Then come back to center.

(C comments that this exercise seems to be akin to working with the cycle of dependent origination for kinesthetic people who like to move and who don't visualize. She learned how she could stop the movement, the cycle, somewhere before she completed the whole contraction.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. Before continuing, I simply want to point out a few things. When the energy is blocked in a meridian because there is this scar tissue of the light body there, the points on that meridian are more prone to re-injury. This is why you each develop weak spots. One gets frequent stomach-aches, another gets headaches. It also concerns the whole meridian and not just one spot on the meridian. There are organ and junction meridians. If there is a blockage on a specific meridian, it does not mean that that organ is damaged, only that if you don't learn and reopen the energy there is a likelihood that it will become damaged.

There are three parts to this whole thing. The first is simply to see how that distortion has arisen in the ways that C just shared. This takes constant mindfulness. The second is to limit the ongoing distortion, again in the ways that C just shared. It's just like, "Anger." Many of you who have worked with me for awhile have learned, when you're angry, to just know you're angry—not to need to do anything about that anger, not to need to deny it, not to need to throw it on another, just to let it come and when it's ready, to let it go. To smile to your anger and, thereby, not to increase the distortion, not to "practice the wrinkle," as it were.

We've worked with all of that. That does not mean our work is finished by any means, but you're familiar with it. This step that I want to introduce now with the physical body comes next, after you are aware of how you create tension—you may have some karmic memories even about that tension—after you have minimized the distortion so you are no longer identifying with that distortion. But there's still the shadow part, the scar tissue.

For C, in this example, it might be a matter of noting with more and more precision how each moment of anger or shame causes tightening in those muscles, and a decision to limit it to that very small movement and come back to relaxing the muscle again. This is the point where you're still addicted but you've got the, let's call it "distortion patch." You're coming back to center.

The next step is the one of making the decision to release the scar tissue, to shift the focus from the scar tissue itself to the perfect template, the unscarred light body, to

start to know, "In my perfect light body, there is no distortion in this area. I don't need this distortion any more. I see how it has arisen. It's old habit. I've learned how to not get caught into it. Now it's time to release it." It's the same four-part meditation.

Each week I am introducing the second step of this four-step meditation in a different way. Basically, what this second step involves is dropping away the boundaries of the solidified small ego self and coming to rest in the God-self, pure awareness, call it what you will. Each of you is different and unique so, ultimately, you must use the method that's most skillful for yourself. I invite you to try each new method to find what works best. We've done this step with breathing in ... pause ... breathing out—finding that pure awareness in the "now" of the pause. We've done it by sky yoga—breathing out into the universe, letting your energy move out, expanding outward. Today's again will be a bit different.

Meditation

We start by clarifying the intention that the work you do here is for the benefit of all beings. You allow yourself to remember the suffering of all beings and the deep aspiration to help alleviate that suffering, not only your own but the world's suffering. This helps you connect with that clear space of loving aspiration and service, that selfless place within you.

Visualize, imagine, bring your energy to, or in whatever way you can, experience the direct presence of a being who is the symbol of truth and love to you. It may be an historical being like Jesus, Mary, the Buddha, Krishna, or Moses. It may be a being such as Gandhi or Mother Theresa. It may simply be a beloved teacher, a guru. There must be a sense of trust and love of that being and a reverence for the perfection of that being. You must see that being as divine, see any shadow in that being on the relative plane as non-dual with its perfection

Use your imagination or senses to really feel the living presence of this being and allow yourself to feel your love for this one ... Allow the boundaries between you to dissolve ... Feel your energy field merging with this being ... I don't mean beyond sense of self, only coming to see your own divinity through the divinity of this being ... For example, if it is Christ or Buddha whom you visualize, meet him from the space of your own Christ or Buddha consciousness ...

Just rest in that loving presence ... opening your energy field to let him or her in ...

Allow your mind to focus for a moment on an area of your body where there is frequent distortion or tension or pain ... Feeling this loved one's presence and energy, see if you can feel them putting their hand on that spot ... You may find it useful to use your own hand and gently touch where there is tension ...

Can you feel that tension dissolve under this all-embracing touch? ...

Allow awareness to move to the perfect distortion-free light body template of this body part ... See if you can really move into the experience of that ever-perfect ... You may be experiencing both almost simultaneously, the very open-hearted higher self within its perfect light body gazing with unbounded compassion at the human with its body knotted into distortions ...

Can you open your heart to that human ... and also see that the distortions are just old scar tissue, old mind? ... Rest awareness in the perfect undistorted template for that particular area of your body ... Let identity rest there ... in that perfection ... not shutting out the distortion manifest in the human plane ... but finding the heart opening and opening in loving compassion for the human who for so long has borne that distortion ...

"I do not need to own this distortion anymore ... I release it ... It has served its purpose ... It has given me the illusion of safety and I have borne its pain from lifetime to lifetime ... I release it ..."

Breathe it out with exhalation ... Open your hands upward and let it go ... No getting rid of ... just release ...

Breathe in the perfect light body template ... Breathe out the distortion ... And again ... And again ... Continue as much as you are able to feel the power and energy of this beloved being, to feel that being's touch on the place of distortion ... healing ... helping you to identify with your own highest consciousness, for that is what this being does ...

It does not magically release the distortion for you, you must do that ... It helps you identify with your own God-nature from which place you understand the distortion is not needed ... It deepens your courage ... It offers you its energy and love ...

Breathe in the light ... breathe out the distortion ... Again ... Again ...

Gently now, feel that being begin to recede from the immediate presence of your awareness ... Allow awareness to move from the highest consciousness back into the relative body ... knowing that it does so ... knowing that it moves back into the tool and gift of the incarnation ... but with less fixed ownership of the distortions of this mind and body ...

Relative reality is within ultimate reality. You do not have to choose—you are always in both places at once. You can rest attention in both. Whenever you are ready, open your eyes. There is no rush.

That is all.

Barbara: As I was channeling that meditation, in between my words, Aaron was also speaking directly to me and asking me to notice levels of connection in my body so subtle that I've rarely noticed them before. Like the first thing I noticed is that when I'm defended I clench my jaw, but that didn't seem to jibe with the sinus headache I've been working with all day. As I looked very closely, I could feel how clenching the jaw tightens lines up the back of my neck and that these lines come over the top of my head right into my sinuses. It's the first time I've really noticed that connection.

Aaron said to me, and I'm passing on to you, "Look carefully. It may not be exactly be the first place where tension settles. There's a chain."

(M comments that she noticed pain moving from her lower back to the middle of her back during the meditation.)

Aaron: It could be for a number of reasons, the simplest being that you had released the pain in the lower back and pain which was subtler and not previously noticed in

the middle back was suddenly noticed. Pain also does move. The muscles are connected, of course. There is a chain reaction. Those of you who have been on a meditation retreat remember how hard it is to sit the first day. Everything in your body hurts. Your body isn't used to just sitting. When it's asked to just sit, the pain seems to run all over it. It's your body's way of releasing the tensions from one muscle to the next related muscle to the next. That is all.

C: Does the revered being that you identify with have to be a person?

Barbara: No. It can be anything. Everything is God. A flower is God. The piece of dirt on the carpet is God. Some people find it easier to start with someone like Jesus, Mary or the Buddha, but it doesn't have to be a person. It doesn't have to be anything special. The point of that stage of the meditation is ... It's called "guru yoga." ... You move into a place of real reverence and love for some "divine being" and, through merging with that being, you really start to be able to rest in the divinity of yourself. If you can already do that, you don't need the other being at all. It's just a tool.

C: So the purpose is to feel the divinity within yourself?

Barbara: It's the same meditation we've done in many different forms the past two months. We've done one form as "expand outward into the sky, visualize your breath going out into the atmosphere, and out." We did a form of it one week with letting your boundaries go, moving into your higher self. We did it with the breath last week: breathing in ... pause ... breathing out. In ... pause ... out. In that moment of pause, if it's a brief pause, thoughts stop. And, instead of being in conceptual mind, for that moment you're in Pure Mind, divine mind.

We keep moving into that Pure Mind; we try to allow ourselves to stabilize that experience and to really rest in that place of experience of our own highest self, highest awareness. From that space we don't need to be defended, we don't need all the old distortions. We can see very clearly how we've picked them up, that they've served their purpose, and just let them go, with "I don't need it."

There's no getting rid of it; rather there's a clarity, "This never was who I was in the first place. It's an illusion. It seemed very real but it's not who I was."

In meditation class, talking about this, I gave an example of an experience that I had some time ago. I was at a meditation retreat. Aaron was first teaching me to work with this practice and I was working in myself with a sense of unworthiness. I knew I wasn't unworthy, but still, if I felt at all rejected or if something went wrong, I would keep experiencing this, "I'm unworthy." Aaron asked me, each time that sense of unworthiness arose, to just stop and say, "Who is unworthy? Where did it come from?" It was very clear to me that it was just old mind conditioning, that when I was a kid, this or that had happened and the feelings of unworthiness were what I had done with my discomfort of my anger of fear. Aaron has talked at length about the reasons we move into unworthiness in the first place; I don't want to go into it now. That's a whole other talk. But we do move into unworthiness and it becomes a pattern.

At a meditation retreat, people are pretty much into themselves. I'd walk past somebody and I'd smile; they wouldn't smile back and I'd feel rejected. And it was absurd. It was because it was so ludicrous that I was able to look at it because, obviously, I wasn't being rejected, they were just meditating. But here's this rejection.

It's old mind. Who is unworthy? Not Barbara in this moment walking down the hall in a meditation retreat, but Barbara, the little girl who had this illusion of unworthiness. But I was never unworthy then either. What is "worthy?" What is "unworthy?" The whole thing has been an illusion.

When I come back to the pure mind that sees that from this space of higher awareness, there is no worthiness or unworthiness. The whole creation of worthiness and unworthiness has simply been consciousness' way of coping with whatever stresses and strains have been coming to it. It's old habit. Nobody's ever been worthy or unworthy. But in a relative reality I have experienced unworthiness. So I need to do two things: to know I was never unworthy, to really shift the weight from this person who's feeling scared and unworthy and rejected to the open pure awareness of the person who really sees through it all. Also to have compassion for the pain, which is real. It may be an illusion, but it still hurts. So, when I can open my heart from that higher consciousness—when I can open my heart to the sense of unworthiness and the pain of that, not have to get rid of the pain—then the whole idea of unworthiness just goes poof! It just dissolves.

You do it over and over and over. Each time you do it, you rest in the state of Pure Mind and watch the unworthiness just go poof! And, eventually, you start to realize as soon as the thought of unworthiness arises, "I don't need this anymore. It's just this baggage I've been hauling around." Let it go. But you do that from the state of pure awareness. That's why Aaron's asking us as the second part of this meditation to identify with a divine being and, through that, to come to a space of our own divinity from which perspective we can more clearly see, "This is just old baggage, I don't need it."

(C shares that she was able to let go of just a little bit of the old mind pattern in the meditation, not the whole pattern. She is able to let go little by little, not all at once.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. C, what you're going to find is that when you work persistently with this—that is the key word, "persistently"—somewhere along the line you're going to have a tremendous insight, as Barbara had in the experience she described, "Oh! I've never been unworthy!" And you're going to truly be able to say, "Yes, let it go." You just keep working with it. It may take you days or weeks or months or years. It doesn't matter how long it takes. Meanwhile, you're skimming it off the top. But there will come that moment when there is a flash of deep understanding—at a gut level, not a conceptual level. You don't have to worry about what blocks that understanding now, just know there is still some level of fear, some level of defendedness. That's okay. When it is ready it will go. Be persistent. Have faith and courage, as I know you do. That is all.

M: ... about relative reality being within the ultimate reality. I really liked that. I thought that was a lot like what C. S. Lewis' character says in the movie, Shadowlands: "The pain is in the joy."

Barbara: This is very important ... that relative reality is not separate from ultimate reality. If it were, then we'd have to get rid of this and attain some other space. But we're already there. We're all already free. We're all already enlightened. We're just really learning how to let go of the old baggage that's stopped us from remembering the light. But along the way we keep gaining little degrees of freedom.

The way that you've learned with your emotions, you've found increasing freedom to allow emotions in. None of us are perfect at it yet, but we're each getting better at not being reactive, at having our hearts open, at seeing what gets thrown at us. Sometimes we collect it, grab it and go scurrying for cover. But, increasingly, we're able to just let it go through and not have to take it out on other people or ourselves. So, we keep gaining little bits of freedom.

I see what Aaron is teaching right now about release of the "scar tissue" as some of the same thing. He just said to you, at some point it's just going to go whoosh! But meanwhile, you keep finding a little more freedom and a little more freedom. The old karma becomes just a shadow of its prior self and less and less and less and less.

C: On the issue of unworthiness, I still am somewhat confused because on a relative plane most of us do things of an unskilled nature.

Barbara: Aaron says not unskilled, but less skilled than that to which you aspire.

C: But some people murder.

Barbara: Most of us don't.

C: But most of us have in past lives. So were we worthy then? We always were worthy, he says. But in the past we murdered. Some people still do. We hurt each other in many ways.

Barbara: I ask again, what does "worthy" mean? Worthy of what? Of whom? You can't just be worthy; it's got to be "worthy of ..."

Aaron: I am Aaron. There is nobody in this room who has not murdered somebody in a past life. There's nobody in this room who would murder somebody in this life. A clear sign that you're growing up. Please continue.

C: Would Aaron tell the murderer that he was worthy?

Aaron: I am Aaron. As Barbara just asked, what do worthy and unworthy mean? The murderer is neither worthy or unworthy, he simply is. And he's committed an act that has harmed another out of his own fear. It is a tangled distortion to pull in ideas of worthy and unworthy. We can call it harmful or unhelpful, skillful or unskillful behavior, self-serving versus other-serving behavior. What does worthiness mean? To be alive, to have taken incarnation is, in the relative sense, to be worthy. Everything that exists is worthy of its existence. It took tremendous courage for that being, with all its anger and distortion and fear, to move into a new incarnation, knowing there was a likelihood that it was going to be caught in the same distortions and do harm to others. But it was willing to put itself in that situation again and again and again in order to learn. What wonderful courage! How can you call such a being unworthy? Unskillful, absolutely. Unworthy?

But, on another level, there's no worthiness or unworthiness because there is no duality. If the being is not unworthy, how can it be worthy? They are both concepts. Just as relative reality resides in ultimate reality, unworthiness resides in worthiness. There's no separation between them.

When I say there's no worthiness or unworthiness, I mean as distinct and separate things. Everything which is unworthy contains worthiness and vice versa. That is all.

C2: Are we just making things too complicated? Hasn't Aaron given us plenty of specific answers about specific questions? When we come back to guided meditations with regard to emotions or body pains, we come back to complicated questions. Are we struggling too hard to satisfy our analytical minds by asking these questions? Isn't it really the simple questions that matter which are answered with less struggle and which lead us into mindful exercises such as meditation, and lightening up on these types of questions, and having more confidence in simple exercises? The answers are basically simple, aren't they?

In other words, we're getting involved with all of these types of questions which are all complicated for everybody in their own way, but really doesn't it just come down to exercises that apply to everyone, starting perhaps with meditation? Maybe isn't it simpler to say just start clearing?

Aaron: I am Aaron. C, you're right. It's all very simple. One of the ways to learn it is to simply go off on a several year silent meditation retreat. But that's not where most of you are. I thank you for the opportunity to mention the value of retreats. I like teaching this at a retreat because we gather together and we talk like this for a limited time, 45 minutes perhaps, and then everybody is silent. You sit and meditate with it. Then there's another optional time to ask questions for those who are caught back in the mental body again. Those who want to stay quiet can stay quiet.

The thing is, C, each of you are different. These four bodies of yours vibrate at different frequencies. The spirit body may be very clear. The emotional and mental bodies may be reverberating with old fears, old experiences. You have hooked into those and become identified with them because they offered you an illusion of safety. The time the experience was first created, it may have given real safety: there was a tiger and you ran. Now, when you see danger, there's this "fight or flight" reflex. But now you've come to a time in your evolution when fight or flight is no longer skillful.

What do you do with the reverberations of old mind? Yes, you can sit and meditate. That's a wonderful way to understand those reverberations and begin to release them. But for some people there's too much tension in it. Talking about it and finding what is truly only intellectual clarity does open a doorway for a much deeper experiential clarity when the being is ready to allow that clarity. Your intellect is a kind of defense. As you become willing to put your intellect down and be simple, you allow in more clarity. But that is each individual's choice: When am I ready to allow in that clarity?

I do not feel then that what we're doing here is maintaining the defendedness of intellect so much as allowing intellect to become a tool that serves the spirit. It is the spirit that will have to decide, it's time to let intellect move aside, to just rest in the light, to rest in who I am. It is very, very simple. You are God. Or, more clearly put, there is nothing in any of you that is not God. Each drop of water, there is nothing in that drop of water that is not of the sea, but no drop of water is the entire sea. There is nothing within you that is not God. Seeing that there is nothing in any of you which is not God, there is nothing in any of you which is separate from anything else. All the rest of you is old fearful mind, the old dialogue with fear. As you release the dialogue with fear, you become able to manifest your divinity. That's all we're doing here: each, in our own way, coming to the readiness to more clearly manifest that divinity. For some, the words are useful tools.

There is a Zen teaching: Do not mistake the finger pointing at the moon for the moon itself. What we do here is to offer myriad fingers pointing at the moon. Each of you, yourselves, must come to experience the moon. I cannot do that for you. I can only point, through words, through guided meditations, and so on. And I can encourage your own use of silent meditation as perhaps the most potent tool that I know for experiencing the moon. That is all. Does that answer your question, C? (Yes.)

Q: I am committed that this be my last physical lifetime and I'm wondering about more fully comprehending the processes of completing the work that I've promised to do ...

(Tape ran out. New tape begins with Barbara in the process of answering.)

Barbara: The most important thing for me ... I said in the beginning, are we just trying to get more comfortable through our meditation practice, to ease our pain? Or do we want to be free? Years ago, I was just somebody trying to do all of these different things to get rid of my pain. I saw that the more I tried, the more solid pain became. Then I fought harder.

We all have pain to some degree. There's nobody who comes through that door who's not feeling some kind of pain or you wouldn't be here. That doesn't mean we're heavily neurotic, messed-up people. It means that we're human. If we're human, we have pain. The more we try to get rid of pain, to control it, the more we solidify ego. The more we just make space for the pain and focus on looking at how we create this ego structure, looking at the whole process that we've gotten caught in for how many lifetimes and allow ourselves to refocus our attention to who we truly are, to our true nature as interconnected with everything, the less we experience suffering. There's nobody there getting caught. We start to see that being caught and not being caught are the same thing; in both cases there's somebody we think we are who is free or not free. Who is this "somebody?"

Aaron wants to speak.

Aaron: I am Aaron. I will speak to this very briefly. It's something that we could spend hours on. It's also something that we've talked about at great length here. I don't mean by that to refuse to answer your question, only much of it is available in transcript and I do not wish to talk at length about that which is already transcribed.

You are what I call third density beings. You are approaching readiness to graduate to fourth density. In your fourth density form, you will be completely telepathic with one another. You will dwell in what I call a group energy, completely open to the others in your group, able to learn from the group experience, from the experience of others, rather than only from your own experience because nobody in the group will be ashamed to share and nobody will be afraid of others' judgments of them or of their own emotions. When I ask people, are you ready for fourth density now, I ask them a simple question: If everybody in this room were suddenly completely telepathic, would that be okay with you? Is there anything that you've thought of tonight that you'd be embarrassed to share? Would there be anything another in the room has thought of about you that would make you feel uncomfortable?

You have four bodies, one of which is the emotional body. Emotions arise. As long as you are in human form, there are going to be emotions. When you are ready to graduate from this plane into fourth density, to move beyond this samsaric cycle of

birth and death, there will still be an emotional body but you will no longer be reactive to it. You will have developed such deep compassion that there is no longer any judgment of that which arises in yourself. Coincident with that, there will be absolutely no need to fling what arises at others. No need to act it out or own it in any way. And also coincident with that, there will not be judgment of others, but deep compassion at their pain when you see them frightened or angry or sad, grasping or jealous, or whatever.

This is what you must do to be ready to graduate from this plane: to find that complete equanimity with what arises. Just that. Of course, there's all the work with karma. It ties in. We're running out of time and to speak about this in detail would take me over an hour. But, as you come to equanimity with emotions and find forgiveness for yourself and others, you cease to create new adhering karma, and the roots of old karma shrivel up and die away. You don't have to get rid of karma, you release it. You let it go. It dissolves.

Finally, I would emphasize that you are not attaining anything, you are not getting rid of anything. You're not getting rid of the emotions, of the thoughts, of the physical body. When you no longer need a physical body, you'll cease to incarnate. You're not getting rid of anything in your experience. You are coming to see how you have erroneously identified who you were with your emotions and thoughts, and that those emotions and thoughts were never who you were. You are coming to find out who you really are when you're not your emotions and your thoughts, and to rest in that space of your divinity. It is here that you find that you have real equanimity with those emotions and thoughts, no need to judge them, no need to enact them or harm others because of them, or harm yourself. And then you are free.

In closing, may I remind you: Enjoy the journey. Those of you who are goal oriented are missing the beauty of this gift of incarnation in your eagerness to be done with the incarnation. And it is just that that will trap you. So, trite though it may be, stop and smell the flowers. I thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with you this evening. My love to you all. That is all.

Wednesday, February 16, 1994

Question (saved from last week)

Aaron frequently talks about emptiness of self. It is, in some ways, at the heart of many of his teachings. I struggle with defendedness in many ways. Some are recurring patterns that do not seem to be changing, others are changing very slowly. I understand much of what Aaron has been teaching about defendedness and how the experiences of emptiness of self and of interbeing can help us to see beyond the need for defendedness. However, now this understanding is more of an intellectual than an experiential one. It has been helpful to have an understanding at the intellectual level. In many ways I am able to be less defended in my life as a result of my meditation practice and Aaron's teachings. Nevertheless, I'm wondering if there's not a more powerful way to experience what Aaron has been teaching. Is this just a wish to be rid of my pain?

My question is this: How do I bring this intellectual understanding more into my experiential life? Do I need to meditate for hours each day? Am I missing something here?

Aaron's talk

I am Aaron. Good evening and my love to you all. I have many thoughts about this question; we have saved it for tonight to give it more space. Intellectual understanding is a precursor to deeper experience, but there is no magic switch. What there is, is continual practice. No, you do not need to meditate for hours each day. What you do need to do is to be very aware, not to assign meditation to a fixed period of the day, but to bring awareness into each moment of reactivity, each moment of defendedness. I know you can't do it perfectly. That's fine. You begin with this moment.

We have spent much time here these past months talking about relative and ultimate reality. We've looked at the human with its physical body that feels pain, its emotional body that moves into a myriad assortment of heavy emotions—joyful ones, too—the mental body with its thoughts. What I hope you have come to see, at least intellectually, is that you are not those sensations, emotions or thoughts. It's not the sensation, emotion or thought that creates the discomfort; it's your relationship to experience.

What I want you to begin to see is that the physical sensation or arising emotion is not the thoughts about that sensation or emotion, not the consciousness moving to awareness of the contact, not the pleasant or unpleasant quality of it, not the liking or disliking of it, not the wanting-to-hold-on or to get-rid-of. What happens is that there is a proliferation of consciousnesses from the beginning sensation, thought or emotion, the contact with it, to the reaction to it. If, for example, you hear somebody walking through the hallway. There's just hearing: the contact of the sound with the ear and recognition that hearing is taking place. That is the first contact. If you don't get caught up in identification with "me hearing" and all the old memories that come with it, if you don't solidify into a self that becomes reactive—liking or disliking what you're hearing—then there's just hearing.

If the hearing causes it to be difficult for you to concentrate, for example, if you associate it as unpleasant noise and you move into dislike about it, what has often happened is that an old memory has arisen. There's been thinking. It's no longer just the hearing; there is thinking about the hearing. In this moment it would be difficult for you to hear Barbara's voice if a horn were honking outside, for example, or the phone ringing. If a memory arises about some past pain because there was something you needed to hear and couldn't hear—perhaps remembered embarrassment because somebody asked you about something said and you couldn't answer, perhaps anger because you were trying to concentrate, noise jarred your concentration and a judgmental voice said, "I should be able to concentrate ..." Many, many possibilities—then there is pain in the memory. The point is memory has entered and is influencing your relationship with the present, and you are unaware of that influence. The hearing is no longer the object of contact; the memory is. Each one adds on a new theme. You become further and further entrenched in the story.

Those of you who have been in meditation classes with Barbara are very familiar with this process. It's not something I wish to speak about in depth tonight, only to offer it as background. The work we've been doing this past few months is to come to see that arising—hearing, seeing, touching, arising of emotion, whatever it may be—and the secondary arisings proliferating from that first one, the ways we've gotten ensnared. Then we offer a new tool—the various exercises we've done to come back to the true self.

I've frequently used this example, our familiar old plain white sheet of paper which Barbara has wrinkled, crunched up, and then smoothed out. I keep asking you, can you see the perfect sheet of paper within the wrinkled sheet? The perfect sheet has not gone anywhere. It simply has accumulated some wrinkles. The pure mind, the God-self, the Christ or Buddha consciousness, the higher self, call it whatever name you like, it hasn't gone anywhere. When mind gets ensnared by the wrinkles, you forget who you are.

I call you "angels in earthsuits." The earthsuits are real. This is the fact of your incarnation. You need the earthsuit or you wouldn't be here. But you forget you are angels. You forget who you are. The practices we've been working on this winter then are practices to shift awareness back into the angelness, to help sever the identity with the wrinkles, to let go of fixation with that which has arisen. As fixation goes, we come back to pure awareness.

In order to return to pure awareness it is useful to learn to recognize that space. What is pure awareness? How does it feel to rest in that space? This is where there's no short cut. It takes much mindfulness to learn to recognize that space, to rest in it, and to stabilize the identification with the angel. I have said one must be very, very careful here. You cannot prefer the angel because it's pain-free and use it as a device to escape the pain of the earthsuit. Rather, as you embrace the pain of the earthsuit and stop needing to flee from it, you find yourself increasingly able to rest in the angelness.

Part of the question that was read was the line, "Am I trying to escape from my pain?" I think many of you are. This is the next place we must look. This practice won't work as long as it's a device to escape from pain. There's not less pain in ultimate reality, my dear ones. Rather, there's more space for the pain. You no longer experience yourself

as limited. In your infiniteness, there's infinite space for pain. If anything, you experience more pain because you find a willingness to let in what's there, and not to need to hide from it. But you experience it differently. With a sense of loving connection, it ceases to be "my" pain and becomes "our" pain, the pain of humanity. That shift from "my" to "our" is no longer a defensive maneuver to escape "my" pain. Rather, it's a natural following of the open heart. If there's any grasping at making it "our" pain, then there's aversion to "my" pain.

Perhaps this is the crux of it. Seeing the aversion to the pain that has come up, one must know first, here is pain in whatever form it takes and then, here is aversion to pain. And then one must watch ever so carefully to see what techniques the mind chooses in order to escape that pain. One must know "escaping." Seeing that "escaping," if judgment follows, know there is judgment. If there is fear, know there is fear.

What happens to pain and the desire to escape from it when real attention is focused on it? Somewhere along this whole chain, one becomes aware of one's identification with the pain, the way that has solidified self. I can't tell you where it will happen—it happens differently for each of you—but somewhere there's a shift as if the weight has been almost all on one foot, looking at relative reality, and suddenly perspective shifts as if you moved through a doorway. You look back through the doorway. Relative reality is still there, but it is seen differently, as if you walked out of an enclosed house and suddenly you're in a vast space. You can see through the doorway, but you understand that this room with its pain is not all there is. You start to experience your true being.

It takes time. I can only suggest to each of you that you work patiently with these practices, and as mindfully as you can, and trust that shift will occur. When it occurs you must be aware to catch it. The first time, you may only stay in it for a second before you're back in the room again. But forever something will have shifted because you'll know there's something out of that room of fear and pain. When you step out of it again, it may be for a few seconds. Each time it gets bigger. Each time you rest for a longer period in this angelness or Pure Mind.

Let's move away from theory. I'd like you all to sit up straight and simply to breathe. Each week we've done different exercises to try to introduce you to this space of Pure Mind. This is one we've done before. It's one of the most simple.

Meditation

Breathe in and out, noticing the inhale and the exhale ... I want you to watch the space between the inhale and the exhale ... Elongate it subtly ... enough to create a real pause ... but not enough to jar the breath ... In ... pause ... out ... pause ... in ... pause ... out ...

I'm going to be quiet now for three or four minutes. I just want you to do that. Notice each pause ... that space between breath ... If there is a thought present with the inhale ... and you're very present with the pause between breath ... what happens to that thought? ... Does it tag along or does it go? ... If it stays, is there secondary thought about it in that pause? ... Secondary thought may follow with the exhale ...

but, in that moment of pause, are you just there ... with that pain in your leg ... or wanting ... or planning ... or whatever it may be? ... I'll be quiet now while you do this ...

Can you feel the power of that pause? ... If you are attentive and fully present in that pause, it is empty of self. Mind cannot be two places simultaneously ... In other words, the mind cannot be wandering and fully present ... It may be fully present with some pain or thought or emotion ... but it cannot drift off into thinking about that thought or sensation ... It cannot move off into this proliferation of thoughts that we spoke of earlier ... Mind is just here in this moment ... Thus, if there's pain here in this moment ... or fear ... that's all there is ... In this moment there's no liking or disliking of the sensation or the emotion ... there's just what is present ... Or if like or dislike has arisen ... that's what is present ... There's no judging it or trying to get rid of it ... We don't take it any further ...

What I want you to do now is to see how this may be used as a tool in living experience. I want to do a very simple exercise. I would like you each to turn to the person sitting next to you, to find a partner. With your eyes closed, you will turn toward that person; simply reach out your hands toward each other. There's no danger, you're not going to punch each other. But there's just a small amount of tension: When will our hands touch? Will we miss each other? How far apart are we?

I simply want you to allow the presence of that small amount of tension so you can experience how working with the breath with that tension becomes a powerful tool, helping you to stay in the now and in angelness. Will you each find a partner and then I will give further instructions?

Now, very slowly, with your eyes closed, begin to move your hands forward ... If contact is made, note the contact, pull your hands back a few inches and start again ... Can you notice the very small tension: When will we touch? ... Where are the other's hands? ... Allow the mind to know: feeling tension ... Can you see how old mind consciousness creeps in here? ... All that's going to happen are hands are going to touch ... but all the old stories of bumping into something ... fear of the dark ... discomfort about the unexpected ... all of those old stories creep in ...

Now, doing the same exercise—when there's touch draw your hands back six inches and start again—as your hands go forward, I want you to simply breathe: in ... pause ... out ... pause ... In that space of the pause, can you feel yourself moving away from all of those fears? ... In that pause, there's just this moment ... hands reaching ... There's no room in that pause for all the old thinking about the unexpected or the bumping or any of it ... I'll be quiet while you play with this ...

Can you feel the difference? ... Let the breath go and come back to the old way of doing it ... See the bits of tension and expectation arise again ...

Now move back to the focus on the breath one more time ... In ... pause ... out ... Just this moment ... If, in this moment, there's touching, then there's touching ... If, in this moment, there's not yet touching, then there's not yet touching ...

It is a subtle shift ... All of you who are doing this exercise are feeling it to some degree. Some are uncertain about it. It will take practice. We'll put the exercise aside now and let me finish talking with you.

Through the past months, we have offered many tools for coming to this space of Pure Mind. This work with the breath is only one. We've used meditations of breathing out

into the universe, expanding yourself, moving into the experience of a beloved teacher whom you see as the manifestation of the divine and allowing your energy to merge with that teacher. These are all tools which may help you more fully experience your own angelness.

What may you do then, when you are aware of the arising of fear, of defendedness, of heavy emotions? There are several steps here. First, notice the compounding of thoughts and feelings from the original contact: there is first some sense contact—hearing an unpleasant sound, seeing an angry face or feeling an unpleasant sensation—and then you get hooked into that. Note the beginning of the secondary chain: a pleasant or unpleasant quality to the contact, liking or disliking it, judgments about it, wanting to hold onto or get rid of it. The more it continues without mindfulness, the deeper you get snared.

What uncatches you? If this tool of the breath is helpful for you, use it. You can do it almost anywhere. It doesn't take the lengthy concentration of guru or sky yoga. Just stop and breathe. Breathe in ... pause ... out. It's just a reminder: "Come back to my angelness." Not to escape this pain, but to put my foot on the other side of the threshold, to come back to who I am, and allow myself to rest in that pure and perfect aspect of myself which is fearless. I do not imply this Pure Mind aspect doesn't feel pain, but it is not afraid of the pain. It feels anger; it's not afraid of the anger. It's an aspect of you that is infinitely spacious around whatever is arising so you don't get caught in this proliferation of emotions out of which deeper defendedness, deeper aversion or clinging will arise. Just that.

You know that we will not be meeting next week because Barbara will be away. What I'd ask you to do is to attend very carefully to this practice for these two weeks. Each time you notice yourself moving into identification with a sensation, an emotion, a thought, getting hooked into the stories of it—anger arising or clinging arising—simply know, "I'm getting snared into this chain. I can stop it. Not to get rid of the experience of pain, but simply to come back and rest in my true self ... to let my heart reopen ... to allow connection to be reestablished ... and, especially, to not need to be reactive to these painful catalysts." There's no "I shouldn't be reactive" in this, no judgment against reactivity if it arises. Rather, there's a clear space where reactivity simply becomes unnecessary. Defendedness and its tensions become unnecessary. Not because you're getting rid of, but because you're more fully allowing yourself to rest in the God nature of yourself ... to come back to who you are.

You will need to practice it again and again and again. It will stabilize. In two weeks I would very much like to hear your experiences with it. That is all.

Questions

Q: Is there such a thing as cars having their own will? My car, which was given to me after my grandma died, has been in three accidents, including today when it was hit in the driveway after my neighbor's car rolled down the hill and hit mine.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Perhaps you are going to have to teach your car to meditate. Speaking with seriousness, no, a car cannot have its own will, but an inanimate object does absorb the energy of those third density beings that have been close to it, and even of second density beings.

For example, a room will pick up vibrations. Many people come into this room and say, "It feels joyful here." The room may be empty, just that one person in it, but there is much loving energy that this room has soaked up.

In the same way, you can walk into a place and feel depressed. The furnishings may be lovely, but for some reason it's giving off angry energy. We heard about a home that was painted by somebody who was very depressed. There had been a tragic loss of life within that family and, as a way of moving away from the pain, the being who lived in the home painted the walls. And each brush stroke picked up the pain. The family couldn't stand to be in the room. They asked me, "What's wrong?" When they were feeling better, they repainted. The same color, but they repainted. And the room picked up a different energy.

The car may have picked up the energy of the present or past owners. There are tools that you can use to purify the energy of an inanimate object. There's the Native American tradition of using a kind of incense, offering certain ritual prayers, asking for the release of that old energy. The present owner of the car needs to be certain that the car is not picking up its own negativity. On the other hand, perhaps it's better that the car is occasionally damaged than that the owner is occasionally damaged. If the car is serving that function, one might simply wish to thank the car. That is all.

Q: Why are we born under the same sign over and over? What is the significance of this? Of what significance is being born on the cusp? What does Aaron have to say about numerology?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Let us take this one question at a time. You are born under the same sign repeatedly because karmically you are working with issues that revolve around that sign—desire to be controlling because of fear perhaps, stubbornness, or a very flowing and vibrant active personality which wants attention. You tend to move into very similar personalities lifetime after lifetime until you resolve the karmic issues involved. As issues come to the forefront to be resolved, you make a move to different signs.

One might well ask, if the personality is already established, would not that personality manifest itself equally no matter what sign it was born under? This seems to be negating signs by saying that the personality comes first and the choice of sign second. The positions of the stars do affect the energy so that one that is born with the stars in certain positions, the energy of that one is affected.

If you want or need to have a dominating personality and be the center of attention, if that is the personality that you wish to manifest in this lifetime in order for it to serve as the catalyst for your learning, then you would not choose to be born under an astrological sign that effects a submissive and quiet personality. So you move into the birth that offers you the optimum possibilities for learning, including the arrangement of planets at the time of birth and how that energy will affect the being who takes birth.

As to numerology, reading cards or tea leaves, or any kind of symbolic material form that speaks to you, there is some truth in these, of course. There is not magic in them. Your energy subtly interacts with everything that surrounds you, just as I said that the energy of the depressed person filled the paint that they put on the walls. The cards

may seem to be turned up at random, but there is never such a thing as random. In some way, your energy affects it.

Numerology is something different. It comes closer to astrology, that you align yourself with certain numbers because this is the personality, the catalyst that you wish to effect in this lifetime in order to create the optimum situation for learning. The question about numerology is simply that it doesn't tell you anything that you don't already know. Actually, I raise the same question about astrology.

There are those who look to these devices to teach them about themselves and others. **Looking at the position of the planets or the placement of the numbers as cause for the way a being is, rather than as reflection of, is misunderstanding. Because you choose what sign you will be born under, it is not cause for that which is within you—karma is cause for it—it is simply reflection of it. That doesn't mean that observing the reflection cannot offer valuable learning, but don't forget that it came second.**

When you see it as cause for, there can be a sense of "I'm stuck in it, this is simply the way I am." Nothing is simply the way you are. The planets have affected your energy, but you always have free will. You are here to learn. You cannot lay the responsibility for your learning on anything else and say, "It blocks my learning." It is your choice.

Use these as useful tools, but keep perspective. That is all.

Q: What about the transits, the movement of the planets since our birth and the relationship of that movement to the planets' positions in our birth charts?

Aaron: I am Aaron. I precede this by saying that I am very much a novice in astrology. I can only present you my perspective. I cannot speak in depth about it. With free will you make the decision to move into incarnation. Eventually you will need to take that incarnation for karmic reasons, but you are never forced into any specific incarnation. Your free will intersects the free will of other beings. There may be compromise involved. You may say, "This would be the ideal location of the planets, but here's the fetus of parents whom I would like to parent me and it will not be born at the perfect time. Adequate."

Of course, everybody born under a certain sign is not a twin. You're each unique. It may be a sign under which most people are submissive and here's one who is aggressive and outspoken. This is one who chose this birth because here was the fetus and here the parents, and if the sign and the astrological energy was not perfect, so be it. Such a one will feel an abrasion with its astrological sign rather than a harmony with it.

If one were only to consider astrology, one would simply look at the movements of the planets, the specific moment of birth, how that energy would affect one later in life, but that's only one consideration. There are many energy forces applied to each of you: the astrological signs under which you take birth and live, the energy of those who have parented or befriended, the culture and physical situations of your life, plenty or starvation, peace or war. These are all forms of energy that influence the being. When

you lay it just on astrology, you're denying the reality of your multifaceted existence, and also denying the force of your free will choice.

No matter what energy is placed upon you, you still have the choice to move in the directions that wisdom and heart ascertain to be most skillful. If you were born under a sign which has certain negative personality traits which you have sought to overcome, if you were born in poverty in a country at war to parents were drug addicts, that doesn't mean you're stuck in all of that. It's throwing a giant catalyst at you, but it's still your choice what you do with it. One must ask, "Why did I choose all this heavy catalyst? What am I here to learn? Can I pay attention this time and learn it?"

Does that answer your question? (Yes.)

Q: The part about numerology ... I saw someone last summer who was very knowledgeable about numerology and did a reading for me based not only on numbers of birth and so forth, but also my name. He claimed we choose our name ourselves and that idea is implanted in our parents' minds sometime before birth. So, he does a chart based on your birth, your name and maybe some other things, and each letter and number mean something. Based on that, he said I had had a lot of power and misused it as a male, but had done fine in my female lives. I wonder if Aaron thinks there's any credibility to this idea.

Aaron: I am Aaron. There is credibility, yes, because everything does give off its own energy, even a thought. Those who agreed to parent, on a very real level, are connected with the energy of the fetus even before it is conceived. By which I mean, they are connected to the intention to create the fetus. They know whom they have agreed to parent, at some level. They are aware of which of those beings they have agreed to parent plans to move into that fetus—certainly not on a conscious level, but there is awareness.

Part of the choice of names may be a drawing in of the numbers and the energy in those numbers, but nothing is ever fixed. The most numbers or astrology or any of these can offer is probability: the way the energy lies at this moment. If there's a river with a swift current and I see somebody arrive in a bathing suit, about to wade in, it's easy to predict they're going to drift downstream. However, that particular individual may set its sights straight across the stream, strike out straight across and not be pulled by the current. Each being has free will. Does that answer your question? (Yes.)

Q: Do agnostic people want spiritual answers? What about materialistic people? Am I in the relationship to teach anything to ____?

Aaron: I am Aaron. There is no such thing as agnosticism or atheism in absolute terms. There are only different views of what we consider God. For some, God may be materialism and collecting. Please remember that that which we call God is infinite. Therefore, everything is within that, even materialism.

Think of the sun and a million sun rays. If I stand in one sun ray and say, "This is the sun," and you stand in another, we're each experiencing one aspect of the sun. Neither of us is experiencing the whole sun, nor can any human experience the whole of God while in human form. For those who choose not to call it God, but materialism, power, justice or kindness, that becomes their small slice of God.

People want answers that they can understand. If you're speaking to someone whose God is materialism and you speak kindness, they may not be able to hear you. If you speak to someone whose God is justice and you speak only of light and loving kindness, they may not be able to hear you. How can you phrase it in terms that the other can hear? Can you help another to broaden their sunbeam, to begin to experience God in a less limited way?

I want to pause here to see if there's any feedback or further question before we get into the second part of this question. That is all. *(No further questions.)*

Am I in the relationship to teach something to another? Of course you are. You are all here to teach and to learn. You are all here to give and to receive. Furthermore, unless you know how to receive, you cannot give. And unless you know how to give, you cannot receive. Therefore, in offering yourself as teacher to another, you also allow yourself to be student and open your heart to learn.

I do not choose at this time to go into the specifics of what this one is offered to teach to its friend. If any of you have that question, what am I offered to teach to another, a good starting place is to ask yourself, what do I most need to learn? Because you find in your relationships that you teach what you most need to learn. That is all.

I am agreeable to this process of simply reading cards and giving answers, but I find it more dynamic here when we get into a dialogue, when you offer your own input as well. Are these gripping questions for you? If not, can we have some gripping questions? Is there something that you passionately want to know about and discuss here, rather than complacently sitting back and hearing answers. If not, that's okay and we'll simply proceed as we are. That is all.

(Some time of silence, then a spoken question.)

Q: I have been dealing with self-hatred—one big lesson for me in this lifetime. I want to know what Aaron did when he was confronted with self-hatred in his Earth lifetimes. I believe we all have to experience this: hatred of the human.

Aaron: I am Aaron. I have no aversion to answering metaphysical questions, but I do notice that when a question such as this is asked, there is an energy surge in the room. It's something that touches your hearts more deeply.

Let me start by saying that those of you who are here in this room are what I call "old souls." You've come to a certain level of awakening, knowing that you are spirit, seeking to live your lives with loving kindness and non-harm, seeking to evolve and manifest your energy more purely, seeking to know yourselves as spirit.

Not all beings experience a sense of unworthiness or self-hatred. It is part of what I call "old soul syndrome." You reach a certain level of aspiring to move into oneness with God, to purify your energy enough to be worthy of that, and you get caught in worthy-unworthy. It's a very painful experience. It's a necessary experience because only through it can you begin to understand that there is and never was worthy or unworthy.

Those words are meaningless. There has been skillful or not skillful, living with motivation of love or of fear, awareness or less awareness, but what could it possibly be to be unworthy? How can a soul which is divine in its origin ever be unworthy, no matter how

unskillful its choices may have been in certain lifetimes? Yes, it may have been unskillful. It may have created very heavy karma for itself. But how could it be unworthy?

(Something is missing from the transcript. Aaron has filled in the next paragraph as best he could from memory of what was said.)

Often the idea "unworthy" and ensuing self-hatred grows out of unskillful choices one has made, seeing the shadow in oneself and judging that shadow, wanting to get rid of it because one so highly aspires to manifest energy purely. So, let's say it as it is. That allows you to focus on the aspiration, not on the shadow. It allows you to focus on the judgment, how that judgment has arisen. So much of it is just old habit. Much of it has arisen because, within that judgment, there was a kind of safety. It's that old story of the prisoner who, when you open the doors of the cell and say, "You're free," feels, "There's all that space out there. It's terrifying," and goes back to the cell. You go back to your perceptions of yourself as limited because it is terrifying to come to know yourselves as unlimited.

We talked about this once using the image of a drop of water, and a perfect clear area of ground. A drop of rain falls, needs to go somewhere. It cuts a tiny scratch through the soil. Because there is a slight indentation there, the next drop of rain runs through the same place. And the third and the tenth and the thousandth. It starts to cut a stream. Eventually, you end up with the Grand Canyon, this Grand Canyon of "unworthy" that you carry around. No giant explosion in the Earth created that canyon, just one drop of water after another, each one saying "unworthy, unworthy, unworthy" until you start to identify with it.

We cannot look at first cause. It is not possible or useful in personal terms, but we can see conceptually because we can see how we do it now in a present moment. That first sense of unworthy was grasped at because it felt safe in some way. It gave you a sense of control: If I am unworthy, then I can become worthy; there's something I can do to change it. I can get rid of this and grasp at that. If I am unworthy, it places a limit on me. There are many reasons why "unworthy" felt safe. You can explore them in your meditation.

The important thing is to come to some experience of, not of any planting of the seed of unworthiness, and to see "I never was unworthy. It's just something I got hooked into believing and I've carried it forward ever since. I also never was worthy. It's meaningless. It's just a way of avoiding the pain that I feel myself separate from the divine."

Why is there that pain? From the very first moment of self-awareness when the spark of God that you were looked at itself, looked at God as seeming to be separate because of self-awareness, and said "I'm here and God's there," pain existed in the illusion of separation. "I'm out of the Garden now; how do I come back home?" That was the beginning of your evolution. It is a necessary path. It is a path to learning true non-judgment, compassion and love.

What does love mean? We'll use a very easy example here. If I have a basket of apples in front of me and somebody comes along and asks for an apple, I may say, "Sure. Here, take one." Am I being generous? What does generosity mean if I have a big basket of apples? When I am pushed, when I have only this apple, am about to bite

into it and am hungry, and somebody comes along and says "I'm hungry," so I cut it in half and give half, then I am confronting my fears, confronting my limitations and asking myself to move beyond those fears, to move into trust, into love, to expand my prior sense of limits. Then I am manifesting my generosity. If you have never experienced separation, aloneness, unworthiness, what does it mean to be non-judgmental? What does it mean to love?

You are all on the path to expanding your energy so that you may bring this small spark of God back into the experience of the divine in seventh and eighth density as a full grown sun—blazing, infinite—and thereby expanding the nature of the already Infinite. So you've agreed to the experience of illusory separation and, once there is that illusion of separation and one becomes mature enough to see spirit, one sees the perfection of the divine and the relative imperfection of the self.

One then begins this whole process of letting go of the illusion of unworthiness, moving back into full resting in one's own divinity. From that place, and only from that place, can one really know the divinity of all that is, can one really forgive everything for manifesting its imperfection, can one cease judgment at that which, out of fear, manifests its own imperfection. Self or other—all manifesting imperfection out of fear. How do we cease to judge that and find compassion for it?

I've been asked, how did I deal with this? Of course I experienced it. I speak here of my final lifetime, and of two beings who were beloved to me—a brother and a deeply loved nephew and student. I was entrusted as dharma teacher of the nephew, and spent many years in that relationship. The brother came in need to the one that I was, wanting to take his son back. The one that I was had come to love this one as a son to myself. I did not want to give him back. I judged my brother's need. The whole affair ended very tragically and I saw clearly that my own dialogue with fear, my own clinging, was responsible, at least in part, for that tragedy.

My first reaction was to move deeper into self-hatred. Here was I who was acclaimed far and wide as a wise meditation master and I helped to create a tragedy for those I loved through my own clinging, through my own delusion and ignorance.

What did I do? That being who I was felt that it had leave where it was teaching, to move itself into a place where it could meditate deeply and in silence. It did the practices that I teach you. It looked in depth at the arising of fear in its own heart and how it had fixated on that fear and not allowed the identity with the unsullied self. It worked and it worked and it worked until it was able to release the identity with fear, until it began to recognize the emptiness of the small egocentric self, and came into connection with its God-self. And then it worked to maintain that identity each time delusion arose.

We could use the image of window here. The window is absolutely clear, but it gets smudges on it. The smudge is the arising of ego. Each time such a smudge arose, there was attending to it. There was no saying, "Smudges shouldn't arise," there was awareness, "As long as this window is in the relative world, it's going to pick up smudges. All I need to do is notice the smudge and polish it off so the window is clear again."

Because the one I was attended to that throughout the rest of his life, no smudges were able to accumulate. The old karma was cleaned up and no new karma came in. There was great joy and peace wiping away the smudges, watching them arise again and wiping them away yet again. There was reconciliation with that brother, forgiveness and letting go.

This is all any of you can do: to recognize the arising of the smudges, to see the ways that you tend to identify with them, and to know "I don't need to fixate on them. I don't need to do anything except to come back to the clear glass. I release the smudges. They're not who I am." Over and over and over again.

Who is this one who thought it was unworthy? Is it me in this moment? No. Let it go. If it arises again, let it go again. Keep coming back to that pause between the breaths where there is no worthiness or unworthiness, only now, only God. We're out of time. I'm sorry we do not have time for more dialogue about this question. I would very much welcome it when we meet in two weeks, if there are those of you who would like to speak further about it. That is all.

Wednesday, March 2, 1994

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. While Barbara has been flying around the world, I have more or less been sitting still and allowing my energy to follow her here and there. One of the conveniences of not having a body: no jet lag.

During this time with Mother Meera, there was much talk about and focus on devotional meditation. The question came up a number of times of what the relationship is between a path of mindfulness and a path of devotion.

There was a group of young French men at the pensione. They had driven many hours from their home to come to darshan with the Mother. Darshan is the word for spiritual meeting. Barbara spoke to two of them about the teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, of whom most of you have heard and whose meditation center is very close to their home in Bordeaux. They had not heard of him. They did not formally meditate and they said, "Why should we? We come here once a year and Mother shapes our path."

It is indeed possible to find freedom from this cycle of birth and death through a purely devotional path. At first glance it seems that it would be easier. You don't have to do anything, just hand it on to God. In fact, it is much harder and I will tell you why.

What we're working with here is the continuing illusion of a separate self which has opinions, which discerns good and bad and other dualities, which likes and dislikes, which has emotions and labels them good or bad, comfortable or uncomfortable, to be held onto or gotten rid of. Those who move into a purely devotional path are often taught, offer it up to God. If there's anger, offer it, release it. If there's fear, if there's judgment ...

Now, that sounds fine on the surface, but if you notice the arising of anger, judgment or greed, and have sufficient discomfort from that arising that you ask God to lift it from you, to free you of that, this is a very subtle form of getting rid of. What actually happens is that such asking may reinforce the duality of good or bad. You don't ask God's help in releasing your generosity. So, there comes into being a form of "I keep this which is acceptable and good, and I get rid of that."

At some stage along the path, that's very helpful because it helps guide the individual into awareness of when it is doing harm, when it is contracting into distortions of fear. But it's only helpful to a certain point because, as long as there is a getting-rid-of, there's still duality. There's still somebody judging "This is no good," not an embracing of everything.

When I speak of embracing of everything, I don't mean that you hold onto your anger, I simply mean that you find compassion for that heavy emotion, and make space around it. This is where you understand you do not have to act upon it. You also do not have to get rid of it. "Offering it to God" is often misunderstood to mean when heavy emotions arise, we say "no, this shouldn't be here, God please lift it from me." But its presence is a useful, although uncomfortable, teacher.

The direction that must be established is to find awareness of the arising of these emotions, and then awareness of the aversion to them. Such aversion is not the same as the arising of the emotion itself but a secondary step; there is discomfort, dislike of that discomfort, distrust of one's ability to handle that discomfort, all of those secondary reactions to the emotion. You look at those secondary reactions and must find compassion for them because, unless you have compassion for your own arising anger or greed, you cannot have compassion for another's. You cannot move beyond judgment of another's.

Only from that space of absolute compassion where there is no longer need to get rid of the emotion, but simply awareness "This is unskillful and painful to me; it comes from old mind; I don't need to carry it," can you ask God's help to release it. This process of release may happen in one of two ways: through prayer or through some of the work we've done this winter. You find the divine in your own self and from that place within you where there is absolutely no fear, no anger, no greed, see with clarity "I do not need this, I just let it go." These are not really different but aspects of the same process, since the prayer connects you to the divine within yourself.

For some time, then, the devotional path in itself can be very helpful. For a very few beings it can be sufficient in itself as a path to freedom, to full realization. But for most beings there is that stumbling block of duality.

Other beings may start with a mindfulness path. Again, it can be a path to full realization on its own. But it also has a built-in stumbling block which will catch up most people, that is, the heart is never encouraged to fully open. It can become very dry, just watching how things arise, how they pass away. It can become a very safe hiding place from the open heart. One watches assiduously. One feels safe and in control because of the consistency of one's watching and so the watching becomes a place to hide and feel safe, rather than a place to be naked and vulnerable and open.

When these two paths are brought together, they balance one another very beautifully. When one is very, very mindful, one cannot help but be aware of contraction, pain, fear and judgment. When one brings in the light to that judgment and fear, allows oneself to connect with that place of God within, one's heart cannot help but open in compassion for this being that is feeling fear and pain. Then the mindfulness ceases to be a place of escape and becomes a pathway leading into the discovery of one's own divinity. If one starts with devotional meditation and becomes aware of how one is using that path as an escape, constantly re-lodging in duality and judgment, one can only be drawn deeper and deeper into mindfulness.

The real question then is, do you want full realization and the level of responsibility that entails, or do you want to simply be able to say "I am a meditator" or "I am this or that religion?" This is to cling to a path and to cling to the ego of a being on that path. It can be very comforting. It can lead to a sense of self-righteousness, feeling good about oneself. But it will not lead to realization.

To become a realized being—by which I mean to know the true self, not the small ego self but the God self—to know the self stripped of all ego and standing naked in the universe, to see the divinity in that self and in everything else—in every grass blade and every rock, bird and insect—that's a very frightening path because the being who has seen that must be responsible for what it has seen. It's easy to see it, it's hard to live it.

Once you know that God is in everything, how do you live up to that understanding? Are you ready to be compassionate enough to yourself to forgive yourself when you err and forget that God is in everything and do something that harms? Are you ready to be compassionate enough to forgive others and not to judge?

To follow a path takes love, commitment, deep aspiration and courage. To truly seek realization and live your life responsible to that realization also takes maturity. It is not for the faint-hearted. It is a place where all of you will come eventually.

I want to make it clear that I have no quarrel with those who would choose a devotional path solely, or a vipassana path solely, or any other path. Only keep in mind where you are aspiring that this path lead you and constantly ask yourself, "Is it leading me there? Is ego growing or diminishing? Am I able to lead my life more skillfully or less? Has this path led me into deeper judgment instead of less judgment? If I am not living my life more skillfully, what do I need to bring in in order to balance? If there is judgment, righteous anger, prejudice, fear, am I trying to get rid of those or am I learning to make space around them, to be less reactive to them? Can I cease judgment of myself, to grow beyond judgment of others? In short, am I truly learning how to love on this path?"

Barbara will talk to those of you who are interested in Mother Meera at least briefly tonight. I believe she plans to write about it for her next newsletter as well when she's had more chance to digest the whole week. In answer to your questions, I want to say only this: It is not my place to affirm or deny the truth of another's existence. This woman presents herself as an avatar, the Divine Mother, incarnation of God. For me to tell you how I see her would not be meaningful. It is far more important to hear how people respond to her energy.

In truth, all of you have that divine in you. Some of you have considerably more distortion than this one who calls herself Mother Meera and whose energy is so very, very clear. The clearer one's energy is, the more able one is to be a channel for the divine. And it works both ways. Yes, she, in offering herself as a personification of divine energy, becomes a human whom you can look at and say, "She doesn't judge." Remember, I am not saying she is God, only she is a channel for God. If God looks within you and sees your anger and your fear and your greed and doesn't judge you, why do you need to judge yourself?

Here is where that release becomes possible, not because there is a getting-rid-of, but because there is finally clear seeing: "There never was anything to be gotten rid of. It's just emotions and thoughts that are moving through. They have no reality on their own. They're just the busy-ness of mind. They only become solid when I make them solid. Therefore, I never was bad to feel anger or greed or jealousy or impatience or any of it because it never had any reality to begin with, but was given solidity through my reaction to it. God, who doesn't judge, most certainly doesn't judge for something that was never real to begin with. I've never had to do anything about this jealousy or fear or impatience other than to see that it's simply the process of old mind, old conditioning, old fear."

The release of it is another part of the self-liberation of it that we've talked about, how, when you look at these thoughts and emotions and see how they arose, they just go "Poof!" and they're gone. Having this personification of the divine before you, this

human who accepts you just as you are and doesn't judge you, can be a powerful tool to teaching you not to judge yourself. Then you hand it to God and say, "Take this from me."

For some, that is easier than the process we've worked with of watching it disappear. If it's easier, that's fine. For some, a human personification of God is a much more powerful tool to work with than the meditation, the guru yoga for example, where you visualize some great teacher or saint and allow your energy to merge with that being.

So, yes, this woman's energy is very powerful. But she cannot do your work for you. There is no shortcut to spiritual growth. She can be a powerful ally in your growth if you are drawn to her energy. So can the Buddha, Jesus or Mary, Krishna, or any of a number of beings, if you are drawn to their energy. So can some of the more human gurus that some of you have found. They are all tools in a giant toolbox, all ways of reaching maturity.

This is much more that could be said about all of these paths; we have only touched upon these two of devotional and mindfulness meditation. I would be glad to answer questions if there are any. That is all.

C: I was talking to Aaron about this subject on this trip and he gave me a very interesting image which helped me. He said that if we are walking on a road, the complete devotional path is on one side of the road and the complete vipassana or other traditional path is on the other side, but most of us find it easier to walk down the middle using parts of both.

Barbara: I'm paraphrasing Aaron. He says thank you. He says, using this same metaphor, one of the difficulties if you are trying to walk the edge, on one edge or the other, is that it's a very fine edge and it's easy to fall off. When you're in the middle you can bring in some of each. Sometimes you may find yourself over-balanced one way or the other and you swerve back and forth, but there's much more leeway.

Aaron: I am Aaron. For the person who so deeply aspires to cut through distortion now that they are willing to walk the edge of that road with constant attention, the edge of the road is a more direct path than meandering through the middle. But you notice, as soon as you bring in the direct attention to the devotional, you've got mindfulness. And, similarly with mindfulness, if there is attention given to the mindfulness, devotion automatically develops. It may be called faith rather than devotion. The name doesn't matter.

So what we end up with perhaps is a path that cuts, maybe not straight down the center, maybe 60 percent this way or 60 percent that way, but it doesn't meander back and forth because, as devotion strengthens and as mindfulness strengthens, the path straightens. And it is that balance which I would advocate as the most viable path. That is all.

M: Mother Meera says the relationship between the jhana/concentration path and Bhakti/devotion path is ... "To be a jnani is to know and the more you know the divine, the more you love. To be a Bhakti is to choose the path of love and the more you love the path of the divine, the more you know." There's another part where she's talking about prayer to the divine and about duality, that I couldn't find, in which ... My take on it was that it was useful for some people to pray to the divine as something external

because it's like something we can turn to when we don't feel strong or feel the presence within ourselves. So, for me, this has become useful in moments of self-doubt or self-judgment when I can't feel connection inside. It helps to reconnect me. So, I wanted to say that has been a useful discovery to me about duality practice.

Aaron: I am Aaron. When you are more relaxed, you're more open to the divine self. When you see ... Let me put it this way, one cannot see the divinity in the Mother unless one acknowledges, even to some small degree, the divinity in oneself. When one looks to God in any of Its forms and finds refuge in God, one is necessarily connected with one's own heart and one's own divinity, and finds it easier to live that divinity, to manifest one's own perfection. That strengthens one, helps ease one away from the sense of unworthiness, for example. It's hard to persist in feeling unworthy when you know that part of you is divine. This is the beauty of this practice. That is all.

Q: I would like to ask Aaron if he could give me insight on the severe problems I am having at work. What is the spiritual growth in this?

Aaron: I am Aaron. If it would be acceptable to you, I'd prefer to keep that problem until after the break and hear if there are any questions now related to the talk. I hear your question and we certainly will address it. That is all.

Q: I am assuming, but not sure, is Mother Meera's method devotional rather than what we're doing? Does she recommend a path of devotion rather than vipassana meditation?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Not quite. Mother Meera advocates that each being stay with its own path and remember God as part of that path. If its path is Christian or Moslem or Jewish, if it is strict Buddhist, as zen or vipassana, that's fine. If it's none of those, that's also fine. However, as Barbara read in her book, Answers, which is her only statement of what she believes and teaches—remember this is a woman who does not give any verbal teaching—it is clear that Mother Meera is not saying this is a shortcut. She's only asking people: "Remember God."

You can't talk about spiritual growth without bringing the divine into it. It doesn't matter what you call that. If you're a Buddhist and don't want to use the word God, use "the Absolute," "Nirvana," whatever you wish to call it. God doesn't care what It's called. But if you are sincere and not just using spiritual path as a place for ego to solidify—saying, "I'm on this path, look how great I am; I put them down because they're not"—if you don't want to misuse your spiritual path in that way, then you must keep yourself aware of why you're doing this work, which is to learn to manifest your own divinity, and that can best be done, for some people, by having an example, a personification of that divinity. Others don't find that necessary and that's fine. For those who do find it useful, as M just said, it is a very powerful tool.

All I offer here is the reminder, there is no one path. All paths will take you home. All paths lead to God, by whatever name you call the Unconditioned. Mother Meera says this in her book—she says religions are all rivers leading to the sea, why not go directly to the sea? I would phrase it a bit differently. Each path is a river or stream leading into bigger rivers and bigger and eventually to the sea. And the water that makes up those rivers has evaporated from the sea and come down as rain and is washing down again. Even if you think you're back there on the river, you are surrounded by nothing

that is not of the sea. No matter what path you follow, remember that the center of it is God by whatever name you wish to call that energy. Does that answer your question?

(Break.)

Barbara: We've been talking about Mother Meera and are going to go on now to answer the question that was asked earlier and any other questions that come up.

Q: In the workplace, people giving other people a hard time. How can this become positive catalyst rather than a pain in the neck?

Aaron: I am Aaron. We've said this countless times before: everything in your life is a gift to teach you. Sometimes it's a very painful gift. Sometimes it's a gentle gift. Your relationships, especially, point out to you precisely where you are still confused.

An example that came through here today, speaking to several people. One spoke of commenting on another's actions, said "I wouldn't do it that way." The one who was criticized became defended. When each stopped to look, they could see that they were seeing in the mirror of the other a reflection of themselves. The one who was criticized, that one felt that in the other's taking it upon itself to do this or that, that that was a criticism of it's own efforts. In fact, the other's taking it upon itself was not criticizing the first one's efforts, but was simply doing something. It was the first one's sense of inadequacy which made it afraid so that it saw a very harmless movement on the part of the second as a slap in its face.

What is the difference between what really happens and what you perceive has happened? People all act from their own small selves, at least in part. They act from their own perceptions and their own needs. If there is a bowl of fruit and many hands reach in and grab and you're left without, do you interpret that as "Everybody else is selfish and doesn't care about me" or as "I'm no good or I would have gotten some" or as "They sure were hungry?" If you see it simply as "They are hungry," then you are free to say, "I am also hungry. May I have part of somebody's fruit?" If you perceive it with anger, as "They sure are greedy," then what comes out is the demand, "I want some, too!" made in anger, which alienates the other.

The point to my saying this is that when you watch carefully your own reactions to the catalysts that others hand you, it takes you deeply into seeing yourself and your primary issues with clarity. If somebody says this or that, does this or that, why do I become defended around it? In a specific example, perhaps the boss needs to be in control. The boss cannot compliment and assist others but needs to take the credit for him or herself, needs to put other people down so as to feel adequate. Nobody says you have to like such a person, and you're even free to leave the job if you need to but, as long as you decide to stay in that job, can you look at that boss and see how afraid that human being is? Can he win your compassion?

Can you look at your own reaction of anger because you're not given credit, anger because you're treated as if you were stupid, anger because someone is always trying to control and tell you what to do and make your decisions for you ... does that anger arise out of what the other has said or does it arise out of your own sense of uncertainty of yourself, of inferiority, unworthiness or incompleteness? What is that about? Can the other's words, and the pain of the other's words, help point you directly into the place where you most need to heal?

You cannot heal the other, you can only heal yourself. Or more correctly spoken, allow healing to arise in yourself. You do that through paying attention. Each time the boss comes in and says something controlling or derogatory, what is the righteous anger that arises? "He shouldn't do that." "She's unfair and stupid and I know more than she does." Notice all the rage that comes up. Is that rage a necessary reaction to the other's push or does it grow out of your own imbalance?

You're perched on a rock here by the sea. If you are perfectly balanced and the other pushes, you simply lean back a bit and then come back to center. If you are imbalanced and the other pushes, you topple off into the ocean. The issue is not to stop the other's pushing, but to learn how you can become balanced. The other is a catalyst to help you learn. If nothing ever challenges balance, how are you going to learn it?

When you begin to greet this catalyst that pushes and shoves at you with a more open-hearted sense of "What have I got to learn here? Here's a new chance to practice," you find your relationship to that catalyst changes. You stop hating that it and wanting to get even with it and, instead, it simply becomes a reminder, "Learning opportunity: Pay attention."

What really is happening through this process is that you become more accepting of yourself. As you do that, you become more accepting of the other. It's a spiral: compassion for self enhances compassion for other, compassion for other enhances compassion for self.

This Earth is your schoolroom and you are here to learn. Sometimes the catalysts are gentle, sometimes they're painful. Balancing human relationships can be among the most joyful and most painful work. When you can keep foremost in your mind the simple words, "What can I learn here? How can I open to this pain instead of defending against it, so that I can let in the experience and see what it points to in me that needs attention?" then you can pay attention. Then you can look at the righteous anger, the sense of unworthiness, the sense of "not fair" and begin to understand how you have solidified those.

I'm not saying that in this moment what may be happening is fair. This other one may be controlling, may be using its own personality in very offensive ways. So what? Can you permit another to be fearful and offensive? I am not suggesting you have to like this person and choose her for your best friend, but can you allow the space to work with him, simply looking at that being and seeing the depth of her fear and pain, looking at your reaction and seeing the depth of your fear and pain? Can you embrace it all? This is the process of continually reopening the heart, noting defendedness and contraction and simply, as you note it, being willing to let go. Again and again and again. It is not the offensive one who prevents letting go but the fear in yourself.

This only begins to touch on this subject. We have a few minutes for questions. I also think that it is a central subject for many of you, simply, how to get along with people and why there is such pain in your relationships. So, I would be glad to address further questions about it in future weeks.

Another question that came up during the trip, and which I would be happy to speak about if there is interest, is that of sexuality and the myriad expressions of your sexuality.

That is an aspect of human relationships. Are there specific questions? And may I also ask if some of you think of questions through the week, will you write them out and bring them to us next week, that we may dive into them? Your questions thought about at home and written out with care often lead us deeper than the spur of the moment questions, although both are certainly of value. That is all.

Q: I have a comment. I am aware that many times people show love to me and I perceive it not as love until I look at it. My fear says it is something bad. I would like to receive it because I know it comes to me often. And maybe others may not receive my love but take it differently.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Briefly, as we have little time here, we have two different things happening. One, there is a certain opening that is demanded in order to receive love. It can be very frightening to open in that way even if you want to. Your defendedness and contraction—I'm not speaking of you specifically, but of the whole group—your ways of defending and contracting have been ways that you've stayed safe, kept a fence around yourself. To receive another's love you must take down the fence. It's safer to ask, "What are they trying to get out of me?" than to trust, "They really simply want to love me."

A deeper part of this, of course, is the part of ourselves that so desperately wants to be loved and cannot admit how much it wants that. When another offers it, it's so painful to feel that we haven't had it that we must push it away. It's like somebody who hungers deeply. If you offer that being food, they're going to have to acknowledge how great is their hunger. In some ways it's easier to just push it away and deny, "No, I'm not hungry," than to touch on the deep pain of the hunger.

It also touches the issues of unworthiness. There is no such thing as unworthiness. How could anything ever be worthy or unworthy? It's just a concept that we pin on things. Many of you, for one reason or another, have put that label "unworthy" on yourselves. Often there has been safety in that label. I've challenged many of you with the question to ask yourselves: "If I were not feeling unworthy now, what might I be feeling?" Many of you have looked at that carefully and come up with the answers: anger, rage, fear, shame.

How did these become "unworthiness"? Many of you were treated in some abusive way as children, or simply had needs which were not met. Even the loving parent may not always meet the child's needs, may be tired and leave the child to cry. The child will naturally feel anger. If the parent is "wrong" then the child is "right" and the anger seems justified. To feel thus justified may terrify, because if the parent is wrong, he/she may be without love or attention. What is the child to do? It feels it must play the role the parent has cast it in if it is to get the attention it seeks. It is unable to challenge the parent and say, "I'm okay and you're not. You can't treat me that way." So you went along with the parent's game and accepted the abuse because that at least bought you the parent's attention and what felt closest to love to you. You learned that you had to play the game, and included in that game was feeling unworthy.

Now another being genuinely offers you love, but the old habit is there, "I'm unworthy, therefore this must be just a trick. They can't really be offering me love." So you hide in that myth of unworthiness because it feels safer.

Of course, the heart wants to feel loved. What is the threat? I would like to suggest very specifically for any of you who have experienced this blocking of love, when someone treats you lovingly and you ask, "What are they trying to get out of me?" ask yourself the simple question, "What if I allowed myself to trust and feel this love?" You're going to have to do this very mindfully, very carefully, and with as little judgment as is possible. Can that question lead you to the deep places of fear and pain in yourself? What if I really was worthy of this love? What if they really mean it? What deep grief for all the times I've wanted it and it wasn't met or given? What deep rage about that? What you'll find there will differ for each of you, but do begin to ask the question and you'll start to find the answers you need within yourself.

We're out of time. I thank you for joining me and allowing me to join you this evening. My love to all of you. That is all.

Homework: Two weeks ago we spoke about this meditation—breathe in ... pause ... breathe out ... in ... pause ... out—finding the now in that pause, the way resting briefly in that pause brings you into this moment. I asked you to try that at times when there was tension. For example, when the boss is criticizing you or when somebody is offering you love that you're not able to accept. I'd like you to try that this week. In any place where there's tension, come into this breathing pattern and focus on the pause. I want you to see how resting in that pause cuts through old mind conditioning and brings you into the present where you can see more clearly what is really happening as distinguished from your fears, opinions and concepts about what's happening. Resting in pure awareness, in "now," allows you to be in this moment with the question, "Am I really unworthy? Am I really bad?" or whatever question may have arisen. How did you get caught in those concepts in the first place? In this moment is there any good or bad, worthy or unworthy? How does judgment arise? Does it arise in the present or from the past?

Use this very simple breath tool to bring yourself back to the present and to see how that resting in now effects the painful emotion being experienced. This is not to escape the pain but to know it more clearly as it really is, free of old concepts. I'd very much like to hear your responses to this next week and to share some discussion about it. That is all.

Wednesday, March 9, 1994

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. Let us start with a meditation. We've been talking much about the light bodies and about light and have been asked, what is light? I intend to speak about this tonight, but I want to start with a meditation in which I hope you can experience the vibration which I call light.

Light is energy which may manifest as illumination, but it is not quite illumination. Rather, it deals with the frequency vibration of the subtle energy body which we label the light body. Let us do the meditation as simply as we can and then I'll offer explanation and answer questions.

Visualize yourself, as much as you can, as a stringed instrument. Sit with hands open, palms up, spine erect. Feel, see, or in whatever way you are able to sense a line moving from the soles of your feet up the back of your legs. It joins at the base of the spine and runs up to the crown chakra. Visualize another line from the crown chakra to just below the rib cage at the solar plexus. Lines run up the insides of the legs through the base chakra and to the solar plexus.

See, feel, imagine these energy tracks in your body. Think of them as an instrument's strings ... I would like you as much as is possible to visualize a brilliant light coming in to the top of the head, to the crown chakra ... What I want you to do is very simple: remaining deeply aware of these lines of energy, feel the energy entering the crown chakra and moving through to the other chakras. Relax and allow awareness to rest on those energy meridians which seem predominant. Don't force it. If attention rests only in one, that's okay. If in all, that's also fine ...

Inhale ... and draw in light through the crown chakra ... See, visualize or imagine intense light ... Inhale and draw it in ... Exhale and allow it to rest upon these strings ... Inhale light ... You are not actually inhaling the light. It comes through the crown chakra regardless of what you do. You are inhaling awareness of that light entering ...

Relax as if you were taking a sun bath and just let this light play over the strings, the energy cords of your body ... Let each inhalation be a reminder to be aware ... to allow as much light in as you can ... What you are drawing in through the crown chakra is actually pure energy which manifests itself as light ...

The energy, light, tightens these strings thereby raising their vibrational frequency ... It is subtle. You may feel a tingling or burning on the line of any of these strings ... You may become aware of a very subtle internal hum, a kind of internal "Ommmm." ...

Breathe in light ... Keep awareness focused on any or all of these lines ... Be aware as you can of the subtle changes in body energy ... You may feel precisely as a stringed instrument whose strings are being tightened ... a sense of subtle inner tension ...

Barbara is not capable of leading this. If there are some of you who are familiar with the "Ommmm, ahhhh, uummmmm" chant that John leads and wish to lead others in it, it will help to heighten this experience. *(Group continues the meditation, adding the chant as Aaron suggested.)*

I thank you.

If you are not experiencing anything different, you are not a failure. There's nothing wrong with you. It will come with practice. As with all the subtle senses, often you experience and are not quite aware of what you are experiencing. Like seeing an optical illusion, the face in the vase or whatever. It's there and you see it, but there's not quite yet awareness of it.

You have just met your subtle energy body and experienced the bringing in of light to that body. If your energy feels very high as we conclude, you may wish to offer some of that energy to wherever in the universe it is most needed, simply to literally breathe it out and offer it.

As you are ready, open your eyes.

I wish to talk now about what we just did. My talk tonight is not the inspirational talk I sometimes give, but simply of a factual nature. I want to talk a bit about light, vibrational frequency, the light bodies. With J the other day, we got into a discussion of taking in food/nutrient and how it affects the light body. With P, we recently were in a discussion of dance and movement of the body, hearing music, the way that affects the physical energy body and how the dancer's body, moving to that music, truly becomes tuned to the music. So, I would like to explain some of this to you and how it goes together.

We begin simply with the four light bodies we've already met: physical, emotional, mental, spirit. For any of these light bodies, there is both the light body itself and the physical reflection of the light body. I will explain what I mean by light body in just a few moments.

Let us speak first of the spirit light body. An analogy that maybe helpful: Think of God as an ocean. Within that ocean there is a bucket of water which is the pure spirit light body of the individual. I can use temperature for analogy better than vibrational frequency as you are more accustomed to the measurement of temperature. The temperature of the ocean is of a certain degree. When that bucket of water with a lid on it is immersed in the ocean, it slowly comes to the temperature of the ocean. In just the same way, the spirit light body is aspiring to move into perfect harmony with the vibrational frequency of that which we call God, the vibrational frequency of that energy.

Within the incarnation, there is only a small slice of that spirit light body. The whole of the soul's energy cannot move into the incarnation; it's too big. Let us visualize that incarnative spirit energy as in a cup, again with a lid, put into the bucket before the bucket is sealed. The water in the cup is colder, heavier. The water in the bucket is warmer than the cup but cooler than the ocean. You can see that they will all eventually come to the ocean's temperature.

The vibrational frequency of the incarnation strives to mirror the vibrational frequency of the soul, of, let us call it for consistency's sake, the spirit light body. The spirit light body vibrational frequency strives to mirror that of God.

For another analogy think of it as a stringed instrument. That energy that we call God vibrates to a certain pitch. The string of the soul must constantly be tightened until it vibrates to the same pitch. Then the incarnation attempts to sing that tune.

Before I go on, let me try to explain why we use the term "light body" rather than "subtle energy body." They really are synonymous. That which we call God is energy. It manifests as light. Light is simply the visual aspect of that energy. It also manifests as sound. But more of you are aware of the illumination of God than the sound of God, although for some of you in deep meditation there may be certain ongoing sounds.

It is difficult to speak of frequency vibration. Perhaps some of you have felt this subtly in your meditation just now. Your vocabulary doesn't give you adequate way to express the heightening of that frequency vibration. There may be burning or tension. There may be a sense of the body's or soul's singing. But, for the most, there's no vocabulary to talk about it.

Each of the other three bodies is an octave lower. The strings are heavier, they're denser. There is effort for them to vibrate in harmony, thus we speak of the harmony of the body, mind and spirit. Usually the spirit light body leads the way and the other bodies follow in turn. When the spirit light body is tuned a bit higher, then there is effort to bring the others back into harmony with it. And then the spirit is tuned a bit higher again and, again, you bring them back into harmony with it.

Sometimes you stray from that pattern. In my conversation with J2 this week, he was asking me about diet. Fasting or certain purification diets can raise the physical body's energy and vibrational frequency so that it's no longer in harmony with the upper bodies. If you lighten the physical body beyond that which the other bodies, especially the mental and spirit bodies, are ready to go, the being may move into the conditions that are sometimes called "spiritual emergency." Here are distortions with kundalini energy, not a smooth flowing into kundalini energy but trauma from the opening into that energy. The being may simply feel ungrounded, may have a difficult time staying in its body.

Some people have erroneously thought they could find a shortcut to spiritual growth through such fasting and diet, but unless attention is paid to the emotional, mental and spirit bodies at the same time as diet is changed, you simply throw yourself into distortion.

The usual pattern is that the spirit aspires to oneness with God. Through devotional meditation it proclaims for that which we call God. Be aware here that the label "God" need not be used. We can call it the Buddha, the Eternal. We can call it Pure Awareness. We can call it Love. It is simply devotion to that highest energy of which the human form is capable. Pure joy. Pure love. And an aspiration to merge with that energy.

The mind begins to understand the process of that merging. First there is intellectual cognizance of the path. Then awareness of the blockages that the emotional and physical bodies seem to place in that path. Finally, an opening to the emotional and physical bodies, a falling away of judgment of those, an embracing of the emotional and physical which allows their vibrational frequencies also to come up so that the whole being is again in harmony, singing a higher and higher note, always moving toward that vibrational frequency that we might call God.

One has asked about the term "enlightenment." Essentially, what I think of as enlightenment is a lightening of the heavier densities, a bringing up of the vibration

frequency of the bodies harmonically. The bodies become clearer and clearer and clearer. I once said to you that if you put a being such as myself in front of that energy that we call God, visually you would see a bit of a silhouette. I'm not yet perfectly clear. If you put yourselves in front, there would be a darker shadow. If you put a perfectly realized being, such as Jesus or the Buddha, in front of that energy, they would be invisible. In the analogy we have given, the water temperature of the cup and the bucket has stabilized into the same temperature as the ocean. The vibrational frequency of all four bodies is in perfect harmony with the spirit body, vibrating to the identical frequency of that which we call God.

You know that it is not my way to offer information merely for curiosity's sake. So of what use is this information? As you deepen your meditation practices, you may become increasingly aware of which is out of harmony with the rest. And then you can ask yourself, "How can I more skillfully bring this into harmony?" Is one part moving too fast? How do we keep balance? Thus, you shift your deepest attention to that which is most out of harmony, gradually working with each of these four bodies and allowing them increasingly to vibrate higher and higher, clearer and clearer.

This which we call light is something some of you may see at some steps in this process. It is not necessary to see it, any more than it's necessary to hear that eternal om. If you do, that's fine. If not, no problem. If you do experience this light, remember that it is simply a manifestation of the divine energy and not the divine energy itself. Don't become attached to the light, but simply allow it to play through you. Enjoy it.

Finally, in speaking of what use this all is, I want to emphasize the importance that one not force any of these four bodies beyond the vibrational frequencies of the others. It must be done patiently and with it all in harmony with itself. I emphasize this because some of you have become fixed on work with the emotional body, feeling "Aha, this is where it's at," and neglected the other bodies a bit.

The most skillful way I know to raise the frequency vibration of the spirit body is simply to allow oneself to rest in God, to rest in pure awareness, to pray to whatever it is you wish to offer that prayer, to allow yourself to experience your own and the universe's divinity and rest in that divinity. This provides the push and aspiration.

You might think of it a bit as climbing a ladder. When you reach one hand up a rung and grab as high as you can reach, that hand can help pull the other hand and legs up. You're more likely to push with your legs when one hand is holding as high as it will go. But if you over-extend yourself, you're in danger of falling. You reach as high as you can stably reach, not standing on tiptoes on this ladder and grasping with fingertips for one more rung, but grasping at a stable level. Then the mental body with its awareness comes in. Awareness rests on the actuality of the divine and also on the actuality that the emotional and physical bodies are denser and slower and that they must also be lifted.

We come to the emotional body. Just as it would be very difficult to climb that ladder if you took your hands off the upper rungs, so it's very difficult to raise the vibrational frequency of the emotional and physical bodies unless you are in contact with the divine in yourself and in all things. It is that awareness of the divine, by whatever name you give it, that helps you keep your heart open in compassion, that helps you release judgment. And it is the open heart that allows the heightening of the vibrational

frequency of the emotional body. That is the only way to do it, by keeping the heart open, by allowing the heart to open, by watching what closes the heart, and over and over by touching that fear with compassion.

While you are doing all of that work, you can be aware of the physical body. If awareness and perception are deep, your diet will intuitively be correct. What you eat does influence the vibrational frequency of the physical body. You wish neither to hold it back nor to push it too far, but always, as in climbing the ladder, to simply use the leg muscles to lift up, to use the diet to keep the physical body aligned with the others.

After our break, I will be glad to answer specific questions about diet, about body movement such as the dance that we spoke about to P, about the vibrational frequencies of any of these bodies and how one may most skillfully work with them. There are many more questions to be raised about this, both the technicalities of it and how it may be applied to your lives. I will stop here and welcome any of your questions after your break. That is all.

(Break. Then some share their experience of the earlier meditation; not on tape.)

Barbara: You experienced it much stronger with the chanting? Could other people experience it more with the chanting? (Yes.) Aaron asks, even if you did not experience it strongly, did it give you a sense of what this is that he calls vibrational frequency? Are there people who are confused about what vibrational frequency in terms of your own physical experience? Are there people who would like Aaron to talk more about that later? (Yes.)

He's saying that some people are visual and the word "light" has more meaning. Some people are more physical and they feel it in terms of identifying with what a stringed instrument going "hmmmm" feels like. We each need to use our own way of experiencing and honor our own way of experiencing. Some people are auditory and using the chanting is very powerful in terms of experiencing it.

C is asking about the line up the inner leg from the base chakra. Aaron is saying (*paraphrased*) that if that is blocked, the best way to bring it into balance is twofold. One is the work in consciousness with the emotions, looking with meditation with seeing the arising and dissolution of emotions and finding non-identification with those emotions ... (*Tape ran out. Tape begins*) ... see it as, "I just don't need this," and release it.

That continual release of offering the heavy emotional energy up to the divine with no getting-rid-of to it helps to open that energy. It's a mixture of mindfulness and devotion. Aaron is saying (*paraphrased*) that this physical body is always the last to open in the human because, if that opened first, then we would be having all kinds of kundalini upheavals because the other bodies weren't ready to carry the high frequency.

Q: Are light bodies energy centers in the body?

Aaron: I am Aaron. The light body is not an energy center in the body, rather the energy center resides within the subtle energy or light body. The energy center is a part of the whole. The light body may be defined as the whole light body—spirit, mental, emotional, physical combined—or as any one of those four aspects. When we use the term light body, we are talking about the harmonic whole of all four levels. The light

body, then, is the subtle energy body which is divided into the spirit light body, mental and so on. Within each of those are the specific energy centers. This means there are the spirit body heart center, mental body heart center and so forth. Does that answer your question?

C: Is the light we were channeling in during the meditation Paramatman light? How is it the same or different?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Mother Meera uses the term "Paramatman light" and says she is bringing this light to the Earth. My own understanding of that statement, "atman" is soul, "Paramatman" is the God soul. This is what she brings in, and yet, of course, that divine energy is not new to the Earth.

I wish you to visualize a giant braid. There are three strands to a braid. Let us say that each strand is made up of hundreds of smaller strands. That which we call God is infinite, so its energy is of an infinite number of strands. Each one adds to the whole. When Mother says she is bringing down Paramatman light then, it is not that that light has not been there before, but that she brings down a new strand of that light which is a particularly profound, powerful strand in terms of the way that human energy vibrates in harmony to it. There are some notes that are more pleasing to your ear than others. This is a particular vibrational frequency which she brings down.

What you were drawing in was not just that frequency but, on an individual basis, as much of the whole as you were able to bring in. If I sent you all outdoors and said, "Bring me a sample," some of you would bring me earth, some would bring me water, some would bring me rocks or tree branches or flowers. Some would bring a collection of many of these. But nobody could bring it all in. What you each bring in is individual and is related to where your own specific vibrational frequency is in this moment. You draw in that to which you resonate.

Because what Mother is bringing down is so powerful, it has within it that to which most of you resonate, so it's a part of what you are drawing in. I find her term "Paramatman light" to be very general. It is all that most people need to know; it is not necessary for you to understand specifically what that frequency is which she draws in.

If I may use this analogy, what she does is like the rosinning of the bow. It is not only the bringing of the light itself but that which makes the light more accessible. It has the same quality as the light, but it also heightens that frequency vibration in such a way that the human may better relate to it. Does that answer your question?

C: Yes, and just as Aaron was about to answer, I saw the image of Niagara Falls and a pleasant little waterfall. I think it is also a matter of quantity.

Aaron: I am Aaron. If you shine brilliant light through multi-colored filters, those filters seem to remove some of that spectrum, some of what comes through. Actually all the light comes through, but it's tinted in such a way that it becomes more comfortable for you. What she allows through is not quantitatively different, but is transmuted by her in such a way that you are able to receive it.

Ultimately, the quantity is not different. What is different is the speed with which it is poured in. Please understand, for those of you who did not visit Mother Meera or who feel no particular affinity with her, that it is not necessary to feel that affinity. For those of

you to whom it feels useful to have this intermediary between yourself and that divine light, that's fine. For those of you who prefer to go directly to the divine light, that's fine. The divine has many different filters. You need not be consciously aware of them. You will each be offered what you need when you ask for it and ready yourself responsibly to carry that which you receive. That is all.

C2: Light and vibrational sound are energy. But in earthly terms, energy is the ability to work. Does this definition have any connection to the divine definition of energy? In the Helen Greaves book (*Testimony of Light*) she says over and over, "Let light descend to the Earth." And Aaron talks about light being energy. What is energy? Is it work?

D2: I have a similar question about what Aaron means by light. We say that light is coming from that candle. In that sense, light is energy with particular properties that are noticed when the light interacts with other things. For example, the particular energy carried by the light determines what color it appears to our eyes. What relation does all this have to Aaron's use of the word "light."

Aaron: I am Aaron. We get very technical here and perhaps move beyond what is useful for you to know. The different qualities of energy shine out as different colors of a spectrum and give off different hues. However, since you rarely only get one slice of that spectrum, often it comes together and what you end up with is white light. This is when all of the strands of the braid I was talking about are coming down together.

C2: What is energy and what has it to do with that energy definition as "ability to work"? Essentially it's the same thing in divine terms. Love is a peculiar kind of energy, a very specific kind of energy. It is the core of this braid. By love we mean total non-judgment, total compassion, empathy-with offered in a completely non-distorted way: no distortion from the emotional, physical or mental bodies.

This love, in a sense, is unbridled energy. It is what propels the universe and all within it. Within this concept of love is the desire to perpetuate and expand, not for small self's sake but out of service to all that is. Within love is infinite intelligence as well, and infinite wisdom.

It's hard for me to explain this as Barbara lacks the physics background to give me precise terminology. But each of these qualities—compassion, wisdom, patience—is a part of this central energy that I would call love. Each one burns with its own color. That which I would call wisdom is a distortion of love. I use the term "distortion" not in a negative way, but simply to say if one were to equate wisdom with God and say, "God is wisdom," one would be distorting. One would be only taking a slice of the whole. Like a sunbeam with all the rays coming out, you can't take any one ray and say, "This is the sun." But there's nothing within that ray that is not the sun. There is nothing within infinite wisdom, or intelligence, or compassion, or patience or generosity that is not God, but none of those by themselves are God but are a distortion of God in that they direct themselves out from the central unified core and proclaim their uniqueness.

Coming back to C's question, that which Mother brings down which she calls Paramatman light, my own prior understanding of Paramatman light would have been "the sun itself." Yet, the Mother does not bring the sun itself down, but one strand of the sun, a strand that has particular affinity to the current level of most human vibrational frequency and which is particularly helpful in raising that vibrational frequency.

We have not fully explained energy and its relationship to "ability to work." I would say that that which I previously termed Paramatman light, the whole sun, is nothing else than that

ability to work. That could be a synonym for it because without that energy there is only void. With that energy all things become possible, specifically all things: both love and the distortions of love manifest as fear, grasping, aversion. You have previously heard me talk about fear as a distortion of love. There is no duality. I will not go deeper into that now unless there are questions. But this is the core energy which feeds all of those strands.

Have I left you all confused? These are too many words for some of you. That is all.

C3: Talk about dance and music and how we resonate to different vibrational frequencies. P talked about being able to sing on key and being off-key when he was tired or high when he was energized, and being on-key when he had equilibrium. Aaron said that in a highly attuned dance group, it becomes obvious when someone in the group is not attuned, not just to the music and motion, but to the energy moving throughout the group.

Aaron: I am Aaron. To take that just a bit further, there is already a vibrational frequency of the physical body. The music heard through the ears affects the vibrational frequency of the physical body. If the music is also heard by the soul, if it's felt by the heart, if one allows oneself to vibrate to that music not only on the physical level of hearing but on the emotional, mental and spirit level, the bodies' movements flow necessarily in harmony to the higher dance of the spirit. If the spirit is not brought into it, the movements may be lovely but they clearly do not reflect spirit.

If your dance, walking, any movement is to reflect spirit, then the bodies must be in harmony. It can be as simple as that kind of a gesture. Sometimes in the smallest gesture from another, you see the soul. That happens when the bodies are in harmony. When they are not in harmony, all you see is a hand moving. C3, do you have specific questions about motion? (No.)

M: Aaron has talked about there being a template for each of the four bodies. Which responds to the energy vibrations, the bodies themselves or the light body templates?

Aaron: I am Aaron. We come back to the analogy of the ocean, the bucket and the cup. The vibrational frequency of that which we call God exists on the spirit, mental, emotional and physical levels. The light body is part of the ocean. The sub-light body template is like the bucket. Because it is closest to God, it moves faster into harmony with that energy.

Have you ever tuned a musical instrument? When one string is in tune and you turn the tuning peg to bring another string into tune, if you play the first string and touch the keyboard to create a note and the second string is in tune it will start to vibrate, not because you've played the second string but because you've played the first with which it's in harmony. This spirit light body template reverberates to the God-string. It is in perfect tune. All four of the bodies have a light body template, sub-light body template and the "cup," the small slice of the physical manifestation of those. They are slower to reverberate in harmony.

The light body template need not be tuned, but one must remember that it is part of the ocean, it's not the whole ocean. It always draws itself toward the frequency vibration of the ocean. When I say it need not be tuned, there is not a conscious process of tuning. It is always in process of being tuned. It's never perfectly tuned, it's always coming into tune, but there's no conscious doing of that. It simply draws out of the aspiration of the soul to merge with God. You want to join with that energy so, at a totally unconscious level, you move yourself in all physical, emotional, mental and spirit phases into harmony with that energy.

The cup, the physical manifestation of that light body template, needs consciously to be tuned. This is what your spiritual work is about. This is why we say the soul is already enlightened, is always and has always been divine and never been separate from God. If you could totally let go of your illusion of separation, the physical manifestation would instantly come back into total harmony. In a sense, this is what enlightenment is: the total falling away of illusion so that that strand of energy that is the individual self moves instantly into total harmony with the divine.

However, because the enlightenment experience is what it is—is experienced by the relative human who has momentarily transcended that relativity—the enlightenment experience, moments later, becomes a remembered experience as opposed to a living experience. As soon as it becomes remembered experience, it's like tuning from the memory of a sound. What was that sound? A little higher? How much higher? It's the difference between tuning your instrument while the note is being played or tuning it from memory. Because you are human, you are constantly tuning from memory. However, with the enlightenment experience, the memory is fresher, more current.

All of you can tune from memory because all of you have been out of body between lifetimes and, at that phase of your being, the string is experienced. But when you move into incarnation, the physical and illusion of separate self cuts off the direct experience of the string being played, except in those moments of profound meditation when all self falls away and the string of God is experienced.

Does that answer your question? Are there further questions about this? That is all.

C2: Aaron made some reference to the sun. It made me wonder if the sun were energy satellite of God's energy.

Barbara: Aaron is saying he simply uses that for metaphor. The sun in itself has nothing specific to do with God's energy.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Every form of energy offered to the Earth relates to God's energy, is a manifestation of God's energy. But the sun is no more God's energy than Niagara Falls is God's energy, than is an opening flower God's energy, nor is it any less God's energy. And none of these are any more or less God's energy than the kundalini energy and other energy that moves through your own energy meridians.

I did not mean to cut you off, C2. If you have further question, please continue.

C2: The other question was, when we have low physical energy or are ill, is that an indication that our four bodies are not in harmony?

Aaron: I am Aaron. This is correct. When you have low physical energy or are ill, usually your four bodies are not in harmony. At those times, the emotional and physical bodies will be especially out of harmony. That is all.

M2: How do the light bodies relate to chakras?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Just as there is a light body template for each of the four physical, emotional, mental and spirit bodies—for each of the Earth plane manifestations of those light bodies—so there is a chakra template within the light body template. If you look at the light body template for the spirit, you will find all of the chakras fully open and spinning within that light body template. If you look at the physical manifestation—in other words, that small cup—which is the soul's energy brought to the body, those same chakras will be there but will not necessarily be open. They strive to reflect and resonate in time to the light body template. They do not always successfully do so.

This is made much more complex by the fact that those chakras exist on all four levels. The heart chakra, for example, exists in the spirit, in the mental, in the emotional and in the physical body. It will be increasingly open usually, through those four bodies. But not always. Sometimes the physical heart center may be very open and the mental heart center more closed. This is less usual.

Each of these relates to the template. The best example I can give is of transparent overlays. Think of a transparency, the vague outline of a figure, but blurred, the edges aren't hard. Bright areas of color where each of the chakras lay. That is the spirit sub-light body template. And one for the mental, emotional and physical. The colors become duller as you move down to the physical. These are the sub-light body templates.

Now shine a brilliant light—let's call this one Paramatman light—through those. See it reflected on a sheet of paper. Because the heart center on each overlay lies directly under the one above, the light that shows up on the piece of paper reflects the amount of clarity or density of the heart chakra in each of the four templates. It draws increasing density because of the distortion of the piece of paper on which it lies. It strives as much as is possible to mirror that which has created it. Does that analogy help to clarify it? Do you have questions?

M2: Aaron speaks of the physical body with heart center? Does he mean the organ?

Barbara: No, he means the heart chakra as opposed to the physical heart.

M2: I am still a little confused but I think that is okay.

M: What were the lines that Aaron described in the meditation?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Think of yourself as totally connected with all that is. Your sense of boundary is illusory. In essence, your feet are connected to the earth and the crown chakra is connected to heaven, and all of heaven and earth flows through you. The lines flowing up the back and inside of your legs are the fundamental earth aspect of this God energy. The lines coming down, entering the crown chakra and flowing down to the solar plexus chakra, and also the continuation of energy from the base chakra up to the crown chakra, we might call the heaven aspect of that energy. You become the rod that ties it together. You are harmonizing not only these four bodies within

yourself, but harmonizing heaven and earth. The ultimate and relative would be another way to put it.

When the energy is flowing freely through all of these channels, that harmonization of heaven and earth has been allowed. When there is blockage—such as when I spoke of awareness of blockage of the inner lines—there is in that one some clinging to the heaven energy and, not quite aversion, but resistance to the earth energy, or deeming it as less. The earth energy relates to the lower chakras, the heaven energy to the upper chakras.

Are there further questions about this? There is much that could be said about it, such as deeper definition of earth and heaven energy. Because there is so much that could be said about it, I don't wish to get into a lengthy discussion of the whole thing but to answer your specific questions. That is all.

I have given you a lot to think about. May I ask that you not over-intellectualize. Practice this meditation that we did. See if you can become aware of where there are blockages. See if you can become aware of grasping to change the vibrational frequency in one or another of the bodies. See if you can become aware of subtle disharmonies and consciously allow more harmony by focusing attention on the places that are somewhat out of alignment.

I would welcome moving further with this same topic next week if there is interest. I know that there are still questions about it. Don't let it get too intellectual. Remember this harmonization of heaven and earth is the basis of these teachings. My love to each of you. That is all.

Wednesday, March 16, 1994

(Barbara starts the evening by reading a question and two selections from books.)

Question: What is forgiveness? What does it mean? When we forgive on the relative plane, are we saying that what happened that angered or upset us is okay? Doesn't matter anymore? Why now? Why not when it happened? How did this shift happen? How did the event transform from an unacceptable event into an acceptable event? Was it unacceptable before the forgiveness and now it's acceptable? What's changed? The event remains the same. Our perception/interpretation of the event has changed? How did it change? Why did it change?

How reliable is this change in perception? Will it change again? Then what? Is the perception of the event/situation as acceptable more real than the perception of it as unacceptable? Or are they equally unreal?

What is forgiveness on the relative plane? Is there such a thing on the relative plane? What is guilt? When one is forgiven is one no longer guilty of committing the act? Then did it really happen?

An example: Someone slaps me. It hurts. I feel angry and rejected. I allow the feelings to arise, watching them, watching any aversion that arises, allowing myself to move into the experience of compassion for myself as I feel ready to do so and, eventually, am able to experience compassion also for the one who slapped me. This is the forgiveness process as I now understand it. Now, having forgiven the one who slapped me, do I still see myself as having been slapped? Is the memory of the slapping still between us as some sort of boundary? What if he slaps me again? Do I start over again and repeat the whole forgiveness process I just finished? Then did I really forgive the first time?

My understanding of the ultimate reality perspective on forgiveness is that it is a realization that what seemed to happen—one being hurting another—did not, could not happen in reality. Only one's perception/thinking makes it appear real. The perception that something happened—you hurt me—is like a wall between us, keeping us separate in our experience. Even with forgiveness at the relative level, this event remains a fact in my/our perception as having happened and its memory, with or without pain attached, is a thin veil that hangs between us preventing our total union. We must move to forgiveness on the ultimate level for this final veil to be removed.

(The questioner also asks for Aaron to speak about forgiveness from the relative reality and ultimate reality perspectives.)

From [A Course In Miracles](#) (Lesson 134, Page 248):

Let us review the meaning of "forgive," for it is apt to be distorted and to be perceived as something that entails an unfair sacrifice or righteous wrath, a gift unjustified and undeserved, and a complete denial of the truth. In such a view, forgiveness must be seen as mere eccentric folly, and this course appear to rest salvation on a whim.

This twisted view of what forgiveness means is easily corrected, when you can accept the fact that pardon is not asked for what is true. It must be limited to what is false. It is irrelevant to everything except illusions. Truth is God's creation, and to pardon that is meaningless. All truth belongs to Him, reflects His laws and radiates His Love. Does this need pardon? How can you forgive the sinless and eternally benign?"

Barbara reads a selection called "Cow Karma" from The Snow Lion's Turquoise Mane: Wisdom Tales from Tibet, a series of stories collected and edited by Surya Das:

In Kashmir long ago lived a monk named Mirathi, an exemplary upholder of the Buddhist precepts. Through the power of meditative concentration he had developed miraculous powers. His numerous disciples made firsthand reports of their teacher flying in the air, reading their minds, describing past lives and foretelling future events.

The great monk, Mirathi, was a vegetarian. Moreover, in strict adherence to Buddhist tradition, he did not eat after mid-day. One day he happened to be in his forest abode, dyeing his old ochre monk's robe in a large pot set over an outdoor fire pit, when a band of angry men came upon him looking for a baby cow that recently had been lost. Opening the pot and finding it full of motley bits and pieces of blood colored hue, they shouted accusations at the silent monk, accusing him of stealing and slaughtering the cow. Then they led him away.

A kangaroo court that was convened in the nearby village immediately sentenced the silent monk to be placed in chains in a dungeon-like hole in the ground where he remained for several days. He said nothing to disprove the claims made against him and made no attempt to secure his release. His disciples beseeched him to defy the matter, but Mirathi himself said nothing. After several days the villagers found their missing cow. Realizing their mistake they petitioned the local chief to free the monk, but the chief was distracted by other affairs and neglected the case for months and months. Meanwhile, Mirathi lingered in his earthen pit.

Finally, several of the foremost disciples of the imprisoned monk set a personal audience with a local king. He was astonished at their tale. Fearing that a grave injustice had been done, and that immense bad karma would ensue for the entire kingdom as well as the responsible villagers, he quickly ordered the monk freed and had him brought forth in order to make amends. It was not every day that a distinguished cleric was condemned under false charges to spend six months in a filthy hole. When the dignified old monk appeared before the king, the king begged his forgiveness and asked what could be done to right the terrible wrong that had befallen Mirathi through his oversight, promising to punish the parties directly responsible for Mirathi's unjust incarceration. Mirathi replied, "Esteemed King, please punish no one. It was my turn to suffer and I endured it willingly. No one suffers anything except at the hands of the karma that his or her own actions have ineluctably produced."

The king was astonished, "Why, Venerable Sir? What have you done?" Mirathi explained that in a remote past life he had been a thief who had stolen a baby cow from some villagers. While escaping from hot pursuit, he had abandoned the

stolen cow near a sage who was meditating in the forest and it came about that the enlightened monk was punished for the crime by being chained in a hole.

Mirathi continued with downcast eyes, "Oh gracious and just King, as a result of that negative karmic action, I have endured lifetime after lifetime of misery. Now, at last, my karma has been fully exhausted and my sin expiated. Therefore, I have only gratitude and respect for you and your subjects."

Bowing low, Mirathi went quietly back to the forest to pursue his spiritual practices in peace."

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. We are not going to cover this question in one night, and yet, in another way, the story that Barbara read covers it completely. All we really can do is elaborate on what that means.

Let us begin with forgiveness on the relative plane. There seems to be a self and another who has in some way hurt that self. Anger, pain or some degree of discomfort has arisen about what has been done. It may have been a physical or emotional hurt. It may have been intentional in the sense that another reached out and slapped your face, or it may have been that the other was simply walking down a path engaged in conversation with a friend, did not notice you and intended no hurt. There is a difference, then, on the relative plane between whether the hurt from the other was intended or not intended. In either case, you may have perceived it with pain.

Righteous anger arises: "She should not have slapped me, or neglected to see me!" Perhaps a desire for revenge arises. Perhaps just sadness. In either case, as the questioner noted, a wall descends between self and other. On the relative plane—and I emphasize **relative**—the process of forgiveness dissolves the wall.

I want to explain to you how I see this happen. I have described to you the way I see your energy flowing out from you. When you are open, it flows in concentric soft circles; those circles move past and into one another, absorbing, connecting. When the energy is angry, instead of these soft circles, the energy projects in spikes. In this way it forces its way into the other's energy field in a violent manner. The one who has affronted the other may feel guilt, or self-anger, so its energy field develops the same sharpness. When one has been hurt in whatever way—intentional or unintentional—the energy that was merged between those two people pulls back in contraction on both sides.

Then the process of forgiveness becomes important because it breaks down the notion of separation. In a sense, as you move into this process of forgiveness, you are opening your heart. You see the perceived hurt from the other and begin to ask yourself, what was meant by that hurt? Where did it come from? In the case of the other's simply being involved in conversation and the unintended hurt, it's clear to see that the feelings of hurt grew from your own old conditioning, that no hurt was intended. What has created this feeling of hurt then is not the other's looking the other way but your own confusion. Understanding that, the angry energy begins to diminish, those sharp spikes soften themselves, and that barrier between you and the other begins to fall away as energy again merges.

What if the other has actually slapped you? The first reaction is defendedness, feeling the physical pain and also the emotional hurt. Righteous anger arises: "He shouldn't have done that!" Judgment arises. My dear ones, you are in incarnation to learn about this mechanism of judgment—among other things, but very important in your learning. You are not here to expel all judgment, but to understand how judgment arises and to begin to forgive yourselves for the arising of judgment. This is what deepens your ability to feel compassion.

Are any of you familiar with that wonderful television picture of the Grinch on Christmas eve? His holding the sleigh over the top of the hill? He was about to let it run down into the valley, dumping all the people's Christmas, when suddenly he heard them singing. He realized in that moment, "Maybe Christmas means something more than just presents and food."

In that wonderful scene he hauls the sleigh back with all his might and you see his heart get bigger and bigger and bigger, this Grinch whose heart was "two sizes too small." It grows. Figuratively, that is what is happening each time you experience the arising of judgment and work consciously with that arising. It's a gift—a gift to teach you compassion. It is that yeast for the bread. Without it, you cannot learn.

So, you regard the seeming hurt and your anger at the hurt and then you begin to ask yourself, "What led this other to hit me?" That question is not raised to ask, is there justification for the hitting. One is not saying, "If I can justify it, then I deserved it; if it's my fault, then I can forgive it." Rather, the question is raised to understand, to find real empathy with another's fear and pain. From your perspective it may not be justifiable. Can you really move into the other's shoes?

This goes beyond right and wrong which are mere concepts. Is anything ever completely right or wrong? By whose standards? Was it wrong to put this monk in a hole in the ground or was it a gift to him? What you are doing is understanding another's motives, allowing yourself to truly feel another's pain. You are not getting rid of judgment, you are allowing judgment to fall away because of the strength of understanding. As judgment ceases, the heart opens in compassion and there is nothing left to forgive. Ultimately, forgiveness is never necessary. When compassion is full there's nothing left to forgive.

Most humans haven't reached that point though. The process of forgiveness is far more important to the giver than the actual extension of forgiveness. It's not that you are **doing** something but that you are **learning** something. There may not be the perfect compassion which makes forgiveness unnecessary. The best you may be able to do is to understand and let go of blame and judgment. Is there still some judgment left? The very word "forgiveness" would seem to imply, yes. If I say, "I forgive you," I'm saying you have done something that has hurt me. Remember, we're speaking of the relative plane here. In relative reality that slap hurt. In relative reality your ignoring me may have hurt.

If this is only relative reality and the whole issue is illusion in ultimate reality, why do we bother to forgive at all? You are learning compassion and non-judgment. You are here on the relative plane to learn. If you already had mastered these lessons, you wouldn't be in incarnation. You accept the illusion of the relative plane. It's your tool for learning.

You don't need to ask, "Did the slap really happen? Did I really feel pain? Was hurt intended? Or is it a gift, this slap? Is it repaying old karma?" You don't have to ask any of that on the relative plane. All you need to do is ask yourself, "What judgment and desire to blame is arising and how can I most skillfully work with that? Can I begin to see the defendedness out of which judgment arises? As I understand that need to defend, might I need to defend less? Might I have keener insight into the pains of others that lead them to unskillful acts and let go a bit of judging them? Might I develop into a more compassionate person?"

From the viewpoint of the one who has slapped another on the relative plane, if there was intention to hurt, forgiveness serves a real purpose for that person. Perhaps that slap grew out of the slapper's own sense of righteous anger: "That one was hurting me. She has hurt me too many times and I'm not going to put up with it anymore. I will slap her or turn my back on her or in some other way cause her pain." When the other retaliates with anger to that slap or turning of the back, it solidifies the slapper's sense of self and judgment. It intensifies that which says, "See, I was right." It is very hard to be honest with yourself and still maintain anger at another when they greet your slap with compassion.

Does that mean the anger turns back on oneself and one feels guilt? When you forgive another, are you inducing guilt in them? Not necessarily. What is guilt?

Guilt is not always a negative emotion. If you're stuck there, it's negative; but usually guilt is part of a process. Guilt usually follows some way of hurting another or doing something which is perceived by one's values as wrong. One acts out of anger. One begins to feel guilt about one's act. That feeling of guilt is part of the pathway to finding forgiveness for yourself. The guilt makes you squirm. If you have self-honesty there, you must begin to ask, what is the guilt about?

As long as the other is angry, you feel angry back and don't move into this next step of the process of guilt? But if the other looks at you with compassion and you can feel that the other really empathizes with your pain, guilt may arise. Along with that guilt may be anger at the self and even at the other: How dare they feel compassion for me!? Again, if you are honest, you begin to see into the anger that prompted the act, to see how it grew out of old conditioning and fears, to see how it was your own defended thinking, and in this seeing there is the beginning of growth. When you forgive another then, on the relative plane, you invite the other to grow.

There is much more that could be said about forgiveness on the relative plane. In attempt to give a basic talk about the whole subject tonight, I will not go as deep as we might, but would welcome your questions and welcome continued talk about this in future weeks.

I said earlier that you agreed to accept the illusion when you took birth. You agreed to live in relative reality. That doesn't mean you need to be stuck in relative reality. What we've been doing here for years is poking holes in the veil so that you can peer through and get a glimpse that there is another reality that is deeper than the relative plane. We've spent much time talking about balance, understanding that nothing really happened and there was no one for it to happen to. And yet, it did seem to happen to a relative human and, in that relative illusion, there was pain.

One foot in ultimate reality, one foot in relative. From the perspective of ultimate reality one can laugh at the whole illusion, but laughing at the illusion must not mean escaping from the need to learn compassion. How easy it is for the human to regard the pains of being slapped or slighted and laughingly say, "It's all illusion." Not to the human who felt hurt. No matter how enlightened the being, if somebody punches him in the nose, he's going to feel pain. If the punch was sudden and unexpected, it's likely anger will arise. It may only last a moment until there's a sense of wonder, "What happened? What prompted this? How am I getting caught in it?" But still that anger will arise. You are learning compassion, beginning with the self.

But what of the ultimate? Some of you are going to feel discomfort at this statement: There is nothing that happens to you on this physical plane that you have not allowed in some way. We've talked about this notion: You create your own reality. I've told you I feel hesitant to say it in those words because it can so easily be distorted to mean, "I hurt myself, I'm guilty." If I have a disease, "I caused it." So many of you distort it to say, "Why did I cause it?" I can't begin to tell you how many times Barbara has been asked, "Why did you cause your deafness? Why don't you heal it? What's wrong with you that you can't heal it?" Several times a month that question comes through.

That you may have an illness or suffer in some other way does not mean anything is wrong with you. It means you've opened your heart to a certain kind of learning and made a statement to the universe, "I want to learn this. If the lesson is painful, so be it. I've been stuck here and I am allowing whatever learning will teach me."

There's also the aspect of old karma as in this story of the monk. Is Barbara's deafness a punishment or a gift? Was the monk's being put in that hole a punishment or a gift? People have asked Barbara, have you forgiven your deafness? On the ultimate plane what is there to forgive? This has been the most profound teacher, this twenty years of silence, that any being could be offered. On the relative plane, it has been accompanied by very real pain and a sense of isolation. Even now that she understands fully that she is not and never has been separate, there's still pain when she sees her children talking, for example, and just wishes she could hear their voices. What is there to forgive then? This pain is just in this moment, feeling the loss and grieving for it. The pain does not negate the understanding of the gift.

We forgive on the relative plane while we embrace the gift on the ultimate plane. The monk doesn't talk about this, he just says thank you. But, surely, while down in that hole he experienced cold and hunger. Perhaps the one that needs forgiveness then is oneself, whose occasional slowness in learning has led one to allow painful circumstances. Can you forgive yourselves for being human? Can you forgive yourselves for the imperfections you manifest in the human plane? Can you really embrace that?

When this monk was put in his prison, he allowed himself to move into the experience that he needed and it was a gift. Going one level deeper, there's no separation. If your right hand hits your left, which hand is hitting, the active hand or the receiving? They're part of one body. When two hands move apart, does one hand initiate that move to abandon the other?

Your energy broadcasts your intentions. You are never separate from anything. If your energy has broadcast your anger and another moves itself into the field of that anger

and becomes recipient to it, it is a participant in the movement of anger. There is no **doer** or **receiver**. I know that that statement is going to create discomfort for some of you. I will be glad to discuss it in more depth.

Let us use one vivid example. A child is badly abused. On the relative plane there is never excuse for an adult to abuse a child or any being. By all your sense of right and wrong on the relative plane, this is wrong. Anyone who sees it happening bears responsibility to do everything they can to prevent the suffering—not to judge the offender, but to prevent the abuse. On the relative plane the child is indeed an innocent victim. But the energy of that child did not move unknowingly into the presence of that adult. We can not say its lesson is to be learned by being abused. Perhaps its lesson is to grow by being protected from abuse. You can't know what the child's lesson is. If the child's necessary lesson is not learned, it will seek stronger catalyst. Perhaps, eventually, it's going to move into that abuse. You cannot know that. You do everything you can to alleviate suffering. But without judgment. There is no victim or persecutor.

Barbara was in Germany last month. She found herself very troubled as she walked by a war memorial listing the names of young men of the town who had died in World War II. She was angry because nowhere were listed the victims who had died at the hands of these young men. Her first response was, "They were bad and killed innocent people, and they're the ones whose names are on the wall." We spent much time with this. Are these young men who grew up in a society in which they were indoctrinated into a doctrine of hate, or in which they were forced at gun point to choose between giving their own life, being shot for refusal, or going ahead and fighting, any less victims?

Where does judgment come from? This is what you are learning on this relative plane which is your teacher: How does judgment arise? How does righteous anger arise? How do we deal skillfully with that? On the ultimate plane nobody is doing anything to anybody. Various energies have agreed to be in this particular improvisational drama and to act out certain parts: This one will hold the gun, that one will receive the bullet. Next time it may be reversed. How many times have any of you been murdered in past lives? How many of you have been murderers? Would you believe me if I told you that it is about equal? Nobody is hurting anybody. That's illusion.

This statement from A Course In Miracles said, "How can you have the nerve to pardon what God has allowed?" This is another area where Barbara became enraged in Germany. How can God allow this? God doesn't allow it. You have free will. How many times are you going to have to kill each other before you finally learn about non-harm, before you finally understand enough about your anger and fear and reactivity not to need to do that anymore?

But on the ultimate plane nobody has done anything. Good and bad are illusion. Think about that. That's a frightening statement because you want something to hold onto, a truth such as "Harm is bad and non-harm is good." What is harm? What is non-harm? Was this monk harmed or saved by being thrown into his hole? I leave you with that question.

If there is no ultimate harm or non-harm, what is to guide your acts and words as you seek to manifest your energy in more loving, skillful ways. When the movement is guided by anger, greed and desire to hurt, the small ego self, which sees itself as

separate and in opposition to, is in charge. When you note those arisings of fear in yourself and return to the open heart which allows itself to trust, then the deep wisdom of this mind/body will make loving choices. On occasion those choices may seem to harm, as in not lying for the drunk spouse or child and thereby causing them to lose their job. Is this harm? Has the choice been made in fear or in love?

We have not covered the many questions that were raised on that initial page. After the break I would like to hear your specific questions and, especially, to see where we might go next week with this if there is need and desire to do that. This is a very vital area of questioning as far as I'm concerned and one which, as the questioner noted, leads us into an experiential understanding of relative versus ultimate reality. It is a wonderful place to explore the relationship between relative and ultimate within your own living daily experience. That is all.

Questions

D: Aaron has been talking about the light body, the light body template and many of the bodies we have. He's also been talking about fundamental energy and light that we are. Last week we asked for definitions of light and energy and how they relate to the use of these terms in the field of physics. I must admit I've become quite confused about all of this. I wonder if others in the group are also confused. For example, I do not have a very clear concept as to what the light body is. I'm also having a difficult time understanding the relationships between these various concepts that Aaron has introduced.

In addition, I'm not sure what to do with the information that Aaron is giving us. It seems to be rather intellectual study at this point. I realize that Aaron is taking us somewhere and needs to establish this intellectual background in order to do so. Still, I am very confused about the many ideas and terminology and how they all relate to one another. Can Aaron summarize the important points or should I go back and study the transcript?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Barbara recently saw a bumper sticker: "If you aren't confused, you simply don't understand the problem." There are some other questions I want to attend to this week. This is a large question and we'll come back to it. Yes, I am laying foundation. Yes, it's intellectual and you don't have to understand all the details of it. I think that K and D are most confused because they are transcribing and have gone deeper into it, dealing more with all the terminology I'm throwing at you than those of you who have simply heard it and let it run through you.

The reason for this foundation is that I want to work much more persistently with you in methods for the release of old karma through work with the light bodies. This is working with what I have called "scar tissue" on the light bodies, seeing that there never was a wrinkle in the paper in the first place, moving your attention to that perfect unwrinkled sheet of paper, and thereby releasing that which was totally illusion to begin with but which you've been carrying around as if it were real.

The foundation of understanding the basics of the light bodies is vital to work with this process. We will be moving much more into an experiential understanding of the process in such ways as the energy meditation that you did last week. I will simply ask

your patience here. I will continue to review and also to move us increasingly into participatory work with this and explain the ways that it relates to karma. That is all.

Question: If I chose or allowed what has happened to myself as a child, my only conclusion can be that I must be one jerk. There was no point to it.

Aaron: I am Aaron. I hear your pain. May I offer an analogy here? The child has a splinter in its foot, imbedded deep so that it cannot be reached by tweezers. The mother takes it to the doctor who says it must probe that wound and it's going to hurt. But that's the only way to get the splinter out. It is the child's decision. Do you want to allow the doctor to probe that wound or do you want to allow it to get infected and hope it will eventually heal itself?

If the child does not understand its choice, it might say very strongly, "No, leave it alone!" But there is an invasive distortion which will create deeper distortion. The child experiencing the pain as the flesh is probed and the splinter removed, might say after it's taken out, "There was no point to all that pain. I could have just left it alone and it would have worked its way out." Perhaps it would! One must trust and follow one's deepest wisdom.

For those of you who have experienced severe pain in your childhoods, you have been in the situation where you had made the decision, through many lifetimes perhaps, to just leave the splinter in and see if it worked its way out, and it didn't do so. Finally, you agreed "All right, whatever is necessary to get it out. I'm tired of carrying this pain." It might seem to you now that it created greater pain, but, my dear ones, you are only partly through the path. You're at the place where the doctor has perhaps had to cut the foot, remove the splinter and put in stitches. The child wails and says, "Before there was just a little puncture and now there are three stitches." But it will heal. It was necessary to remove the distortion.

I know this is difficult to understand when you have experienced the severity of pain that some of you have in your childhoods, but there is a point to it. It is the catalyst for your learning. It becomes the focal point of your life and, in that position, it offers the greatest potential for healing that which you incarnated to heal, as backward as that may sound. If you had incarnated into a very loving home, not been abused, the old karmic issues about abuse, unworthiness, abandonment, and whatever would still be there, but there would lack sufficient catalyst to induce you to attend them.

That choice is like putting a bandage over the wound. It might be skillful to do for awhile and see if the wound heals that way, but if you have come to the incarnation and moved into abusive situations, at some level your deeper wisdom has said, "Pull off the bandage, it's time to operate. The bandage and medication aren't working." I can only ask you to trust your lives, to look deeply at the places where there is still rage and grief, to allow that putrefaction to begin to fall away and allow the wound to heal. Not just the wound of the abuse, but the much deeper wounds of which that abuse is symptomatic. The wounds of so many lifetimes, of feeling separate, unworthy, of judging and even hating yourselves. That is all.

C: One thing that Aaron told us a while ago which helped me to understand that issue was ... Someone asked Aaron, why would anyone have chosen to be born Jewish in Germany in 1939? Why would anyone have chosen that? Aaron's answer, if we were

told that we could spend five minutes in horrible pain to learn a very important lesson and to teach the world a very important lesson, would we be willing to choose five minutes of pain? And we generally felt, yes, we would. And then Aaron said, in a soul's existence, each lifetime is only five minutes. That helped me to understand more deeply why we might make a very painful choice.

Questions: *(Several related from various people.)* If the monk had been able to forgive himself, would he have had to have that experience of being put in the hole? Does not the story imply that the monk was doomed to live out his old karma? Could not he have released it? It seems like the monk was stuck in relative reality a bit, seeing what he had done in a previous life as very real and that he had to make up for it somehow. Also, during the course of the discussion in the book, it mentioned that that monk had lived many, many lifetimes of pain because of that one act.

Aaron: I am Aaron. What trapped the monk was ultimate and not relative reality. First of all, as long as he was not repentant for what he did, the seed continued. It took new root, grew new shoots, created new seeds and replanted itself again and again, so that each being that he was experienced the effects of that particular karmic seed.

There undoubtedly came a time in the stream of that mind-body consciousness, in the karmic stream of what he was, when he did become repentant. This is where he became trapped in relative reality. There was still somebody who was repentant for something that had been done, something to be fixed. He was still taking the wrinkle in the paper as **the** reality. As long as he took the wrinkle in the paper as reality, the light shining through it created a physical plane manifestation of the wrinkle and led him into karmic experiences surrounding that wrinkle.

It was no longer the original act that trapped him, but his relationship to the act and to the self that it seemed had done the act. It was solid. If he had been able to look at the whole thing and say—not just conceptually, but experientially—"Nobody did anything, and yet I am still responsible for making amends to that energy," then all he would have needed to do is on the relative plane to ask for forgiveness, and then to do that work which I've just said I want to teach you: to release that karma, to take that illusory wrinkle and let go of focus on it, to focus on the clear paper instead.

This is very hard to explain. It is among the most profound of Buddhist teachings that through the centuries have been considered secret teachings. Masters were hesitant to offer them to people who might say, "Then I can get away with anything, all I have to do is release it." I trust that there is no one here who will distort it in that way because I do know you all and know your deep aspiration to purify your energy and to live your lives with non-harm. That doesn't mean you're always successful at that, but I feel willing to share these teachings and trust you do not need to distort them.

There was a thief who stole the calf and allowed another to be blamed for it. That happened on the relative plane. Self solidified around that: somebody who needed to feel guilt or ask forgiveness. Let us consider that to be a small piece. Because of the way the light shone on it, the shadow it cast was immense. He was unable to look at the piece and say, "It's just one aspect. It's just this one deed which, on the relative plane, I can fully repent for, pay what I owe in one lifetime, in one moment of one lifetime, and ask forgiveness." Instead, he became focused on the shadow: "It's immense." He began to feel the shadow was reality—"I am bad, I judge myself"—and

to experience and re-experience all of the guilt, all of the anger that accompanied it. Seeing that the shadow is illusion, one can simply make the skillful decision, "I do not need to fix my focus on the shadow anymore. I release the shadow. Then I attend, willingly, to that harm I have done and rectify it." And then you are free. Just that.

I am aware that there is still some confusion about this. Do you have specific questions? That is all.

Comment: (I still think) the monk would not have released the karma through being put into the dungeon because he was still a "self" suffering in repentance for what a prior self had done.

(Barbara describes her past life experience as a Native American medicine man and peacemaker and her releasing of the karmic issues surrounding that lifetime.)

Question: Then what you are saying is that the relative work still needs to be done?

Barbara: Both need to be done. You can't ignore either. But you need to do the relative work first. If you do the ultimate reality work first, it's easy to pretend about that relative reality work ... "It was all illusion so what am I fixing?" But it has to be attended; we're always responsible. So you need to do both.

Comment: So, in a sense, what's happening is our becoming aware of ultimate reality in our relative reality mode and learning to, while in this very vulnerable state, understand and release that energy as the relative selves that you are ...

Barbara: Yes, but it's less release than simply letting dissolve what's no longer necessary or useful because the work surrounding it on the relative plane has been attended to. There's nothing more to do with it. If you hold onto it, it will perpetuate itself. But there needs to be a conscious allowing it to dissolve.

Comment: It almost sounds like shifting to ultimate reality could be a way of intellectualizing to avoid the pain of the relative reality, that it then could be an avoidance as opposed to really working through the relative.

Barbara: Absolutely. That's why it's such a dangerous process. For so many centuries, these were secret teachings. But I trust Aaron. He would not be teaching them if he felt we weren't ready for them. He said we're ready to learn this.

Comment: I just want to clarify something. If you are trying to intellectualize, you aren't really in ultimate reality.

Barbara: You're not, but you're deluding yourself with the myth that you are, so you think you're releasing it in ultimate reality and you're not really even doing that, you're just turning your back on the whole thing.

Comment: It also seems that ... Aaron has said that now on Earth there are many souls who are ready to move across the line between third and fourth densities so it would make sense to me that now the teachings are not as secret.

(Barbara talks about her experience at the Tibetan dzogchen retreat last summer.)

Wednesday, March 23, 1994

Two Opening Questions

1) I just don't seem to be getting it as it relates to forgiveness. Maybe I'm forgiving and I just don't know it. I feel like I can understand from a cultural and emotional standpoint why people and myself do what we do. I can feel compassion towards other people and myself. The dilemma seems to be that I can feel compassion and anger simultaneously. Is this being truly forgiving?

2) Last week Aaron spoke at length about the forgiveness process, from both the relative and ultimate perspectives. There was the suggestion in the way he presented this material that this work is sequential, i.e. that we first work with our focus in relative reality, until the work is completed at that level, and then we shift our focus to ultimate reality for the final stages of our work. Is it useful, once one has reached an understanding of the importance of allowing our relative experience, i.e. not clinging to or trying to get rid of what is arising, to move one's focus to an ultimate perspective of allowing the self to see the reality of the situation while simultaneously working with the relative pain and misunderstandings?

An example: when waking from a frightening or disturbing dream, while acknowledging the feelings arising in and from the dream, we also acknowledge that the dream was a dream and did not really happen, and thus has no real effects in waking reality. Although the resulting emotion needs to be allowed and attended to, some of its charge is removed by realizing what is real and what is not real. Another example: at times when I have been working with the forgiveness process, I have been lifted to an ultimate perspective in which I am filled with such an unbounded love for the person with whom I am in conflict on the relative plane that my relative perspective dissolves completely and I am one with the other. When I return to a relative focus there's still pain and conflict in the relationship, but it is much diminished and seems more easily embraced.

So again, can it be useful at times to consciously move to an ultimate awareness of the situation, perhaps using a modified form of the four step process Aaron has shared with us, while continuing to work within the relative process? Can this help us gain a deeper perspective on what has arisen within us? In other words, is it useful to bring in ultimate processes at certain points within the relative process?

A follow-up. After I had written these thoughts to Aaron I was reading a poem I have written that reflects some of the pain in the relationship with my mother in this life. I noticed that even though we have resolved many of the issues between us, reading this poem brought up the emotion associated with our conflicts with each other. I began to explore this pain that has been part of my human relationship with her, pain that is not part of our present relationship, but can be re-entered, as one can re-enter a room and re-experience its energy. At the same time I was able to feel deep love for her; more a present experience.

At first I found myself shifting back and forth between the two. First, exploring the pain of our past encounters with each other, then shifting to a deep love for her as an

expression of God, not separate from me. As I continued to explore this, there began to be less space/time between these two feelings/experiences, until they finally occupied the same space/time. I was only able to stay in this place of simultaneous experience of relative and ultimate planes for a short time. It really stretched my heart to embrace both perspectives at once, as they seemed so diametrically opposed to each other. But it was enough to show me the distinct difference between authentic experience of what Aaron has described as standing with one foot in relative and one foot in the ultimate and my more familiar experience of merging my experience of the relative with my conceptual understanding of the ultimate, or my experience of the ultimate with my conceptual understanding of the relative. There is a dramatic difference between merging experience with experience and merging experience with concept. One stretches the heart, the other the mind.

Aaron's talk

I am Aaron. Good evening and my love to you all. First, my gratitude for this thoughtful and articulate question. I'm going to spend just four or five minutes reviewing a bit, summing up, some of these ideas of relative and ultimate reality for those friends who are newly with us tonight. And I also want to review some of the ideas of the light body template we've introduced through these past months, of how it manifests into the physical body. I do this both so that you may all understand the remainder of the talk, and also because there is some confusion about it, as was voiced last week. Perhaps in saying it again it will come clearer. I will be brief, though. For those who have not heard this before, there are more complete transcripts available.

You are actors on a stage, here in incarnation to learn. This play is your present relative reality. If you're going to make it worthwhile to the audience and the actors it must be played honestly and convincingly. In other words, you've got to believe it. If you just shrug off the issues of the incarnation and say, "Well, I'm just here in this body for awhile and none of it matters," why did you bother to come? On the other hand, it is an illusion, it is a play. If the actor forgets that he or she is in a play, their back will be turned to the audience, their lines may be mumbled. You must always remember who you really are and why you are here. We may call one relative and one ultimate reality. You can not say relative reality does not matter. Relative reality is the gift of incarnation. It is your opportunity to learn. What happens on the relative plane matters very much, especially in the ways that you form adhering karma. There was a question given that relates very much to karma. I'm going to touch on it lightly now and save the question for after the break. In fact, one of these next weeks I want to spend a whole session on questions about karma.

Perhaps you've yelled at another and then said, "Sorry, but I felt sick," or simply, "You provoked me," If you hurt another, you are always responsible. Part of what you're learning here is that you are always responsible. It's part of your learning to embrace the incarnation—not to deny the various emotions, thoughts and physical sensations that move through you, but to fully embrace them so that your heart may be opened in compassion. It is through this stretching of the heart that you truly learn to live with lovingkindness and non-judgment, and that you learn equanimity with what arises. Then there is no hating this and grasping at that, but space for it all. The dilemma in the human framework is that one can expend all of one's energy becoming one who

embraces everything, constantly working to be kinder, more skillful in one's affairs, and get so caught up in that one forgets that this is a play, that this is an illusion.

Everything that you practice in terms of becoming more kind, more loving, more patient, more generous, is part of your growth. It's never wasted, but you can get stuck there. By becoming the one who is kind, loving and patient, self solidifies instead of dissolves, so that you start to think, "I am the patient one, I am the kind one"; it is someplace where you can get stuck. The situation of forgetting that this is illusion, is only relative reality to be lived as lovingly as is possible, is much easier to correct than making the opposite move of getting caught in ultimate reality as an escape from the pain of relative reality. Ideally, neither will be escape nor place of fixated identity. So, we speak of this balance of ultimate and relative; one foot in each. But the idea that they are separate is also illusion. The wall doesn't exist; relative reality resides in ultimate reality. To be unbalanced is to negate one aspect of ultimate reality.

The physical body and, within that physical body, the emotional body are part of relative reality. We have been speaking here for several months of the light bodies. I am not going to go into the details of this now, except that I want to correct several areas of confusion.

We begin with a metaphor. Visualize the sun, a brilliant orb. Visualize it as if it were infinite, unlimited. Infinite not only in space, but in time. Within the metaphor let us call this God. Visualize the way you see a sunbeam; imagine the spikes that stick out from the sun in your children's drawings. Or, when the sun is at a certain angle behind a cloud, you may see a sunbeam reaching out. Again, this is metaphor. From the Infinite to each of you there is just such a column of light. Let us call that the perfect light body template. *(To avoid confusion, with so many "bodies" Aaron decided some months later that we would call this the "light level".)* It's perfect; there is nothing to amend, nothing to be changed. How could there be? It is a projection of that Perfection; it is absolutely no different in its composition from that which we call God.

We are still working within a metaphor; I am trying to offer terminology as correctly as it can be given. It is not absolutely precise to call this sunbeam the soul, but it will do. The incarnation can not hold all the energy of the soul. It must be stepped down, like a transformer steps down high voltage electricity to make it usable by the consumer. We have the light body, which is that sunbeam itself. We take a reflection of that perfect light body template; this is the aspect of the light body which will eventually energize the manifestation, just as the light body energizes that reflection. Let us call it the sub-light body.

If you looked at the sunbeam coming from behind a cloud, you will see a strand of light which comes to rest on the ground, or physical manifestation. If the light source is perfect, it's physical manifestation will appear perfect, but if clouds drifted through, the physical manifestation might appear mottled, shadowed. The light is still perfect but outside forces lead to the appearance of distortion.

To aid understanding, you might also use the visualization of a flashlight shining through a perfect piece of transparent paper. You see the light stream from the flashlight; it settles on a piece of paper on the ground, the physical manifestation. If the transparent paper is perfect and clear, the light will shine through it and hit the paper

on the ground, forming the physical manifestation, and the manifestation will also appear to be perfect. What if we take that paper and wrinkle it?

Barbara is holding here a perfect, smooth piece of paper. I'm going to ask her to wrinkle it up and unfold it again. (A smile of appreciation to those who of you who were saying, "Oh, not this again!" Thank you for your patience. (*Laughter*)) Within this wrinkled piece of paper is the perfect white sheet of paper. Can you see it? It's still there; it hasn't gone anywhere. But, if this were transparent and you were to shine a flashlight through it, what would come out on the piece of paper on the ground, on the physical manifestation, would be the illusion of all of these wrinkles.

Please keep in mind these five ingredients. We have the source, the light body which is the projection of the source, the sub-light body which is the snip of the projection, the stream-energy which flows from the sub-light body to the manifestation, and finally, the manifestation. This is oversimplified. It will do.

Now, I'm going to take this one step further, to something that we haven't talked about before. See three distinct areas: The physical body, which contains both the material body and the energy body, the chakras, energy meridians and energy fields; this is part one. Part two is the energy stream comprised of aura and, let us call it, the stream-energy which is this beam of light nourished by the source and channeled through the light and sub-light bodies. Part three is the source, light body and sub-light body. (See *J's question at the end of Aaron's talk for further clarification.*) This energy-stream does manifest distortion when there is the illusion of distortion in the sub-light body. To the best of your ability, visualize a wrinkled piece of cellophane. Brilliant light is shining through it. In the places where the cellophane has no wrinkles the light will appear less dense. In the places where there are wrinkles the light will appear denser. When it reaches and becomes manifest as the physical body, those densities, or areas of cloudiness, will manifest as distortions within the physical body.

At times in the past I have spoken of distortion of the soul and said that it was too complex at that time for me to explain it, that you didn't have the vocabulary for it. I want to clarify those old teachings here a bit. The soul in itself is not ever distorted. But as those snips emerge from the soul to express as the energy feeding the manifestations, because of past karma the mind's distortions reach up and wrinkle them. That's the best way I can describe it; it's all in your mind! Here we have the perfect sheet of paper within the wrinkled sheet. How could this sub-light body ever have any real wrinkles in it. The material in it is nothing different than the material of the soul, which is nothing different from that of God? But the mind has created these distortions, held onto these distortions, and part of your work with your karma is to cut through the illusion of the distortions.

So we have three parts: the physical manifestation, including the energy body, the light stream manifestation, and the light and sub-light bodies.

How does this manifest on the physical plane? As an example let us use anger that isn't resolved. There is an accompanying desire to blame the other, an unwillingness to become undefended and to see the other's pain because of the extent of one's own pain. We will not get into an "original cause" discussion. We can start anywhere.

As that anger's distortion moves through the energy body within the physical body, there is a contraction. It is not only that the source light shines out through the light body and is reflected by the sub-light body, this seemingly wrinkled paper, but you also send energy from the manifestation back to the sub-light body. What's wrinkling the paper? How did it get wrinkled in the first place, especially since it never was really wrinkled? The contraction of the energy body feeds the illusion, out to create distortions into the physical body and up this shaft of light. It's as if each time there is anger that was not resolved, your hand reached up and wrinkled the paper. The perfect light is still shining through. The wrinkles keep reinforcing themselves. How do we cut through that illusory distortion and refocus on the perfection, but without any aversion to the distortion? Where is forgiveness to be found?

You can start at either end. Begin with the relative reality and the experience of this anger, with an exploration of how the anger arose, and solidified a sense of self; this is an exploration of how anger has contracted the physical and energy bodies in relative reality. Or begin with the understanding that the contraction on the ultimate plane never happened; your soul isn't angry. You can reconnect with that pure energy, pure mind, and find through that energy your connection with this one with whom you are angry. And it can all be released. It's just old baggage. We've spoken about this process for many, many months, with the emotional and physical bodies.

The question that Barbara read said that last week, in speaking about forgiveness, I seemed to give the idea that it was better to do the work in relative reality first and then in ultimate reality. Yes. The reason is that you can never do too much opening and letting go on the relative plane. If you move to the ultimate plane to try to get rid of an unpleasant physical sensation or emotion, if there is any element of denial of, or even aversion to, the pain that is being experienced on the relative plane, it further solidifies the sense of self. The move to ultimate reality becomes an escape. What you are really doing is moving deeper into a different kind of distortion, one that denies what is happening on the relative plane.

The optimum practice is the balance of both. One must first create a foundation of awareness. You can not work with any of this if you're not aware of what you're experiencing. For most of you, so much within you has been denied and buried. You must first reach a level of awareness, and of readiness to find compassion for yourself and not judge yourself, so that you can let some of this rise to the surface. Otherwise you have no access to it. All of the opinions, the prejudices, the fears, the need to control, to feel safe, the manipulateness, all of that which is in all of you is simply part of being human, you begin with that. At an appropriate point where you have opened your heart to yourself, you begin to explore the experience of ultimate reality through many of the meditations we have been introducing through the winter. You stabilize the ability to rest in that pure mind or "rigpa," that ultimate reality space. You begin to really know who you are. You come back again to the pains of the relative, and then back to the ultimate.

I deeply appreciate the questioner's description of its experience, the moving to a simultaneous experience of relative and ultimate. That, my dear ones, is what you are after. It is very important to see where it's concept and where it's experience. When you can merge the experience of the relative and the experience of the ultimate, it cuts through so much fog. But you can't will it to happen. All you can do is to keep

practicing, with the inspiration of such as was shared above and the assurance that if you keep practicing it's going to come together. You're going to experience it in just that way.

A person who has had that experience is never going to see in quite the same way again, because when they move into the concept of one or the other, they are going to know that it's concept. It's like reading a topographic map. You get a firm sense of where the roads twist and turn around the mountains. The map shows elevations and so on. You see how to get from point A to point B, and locate the rivers, hills and so on that you'll pass. Then you get out there and you walk from point A to point B. When you come back and read the map again, the map is very different. The circular lines are no longer the concept of a hill, they are that hill you saw where the road twisted around and became rocky. You see where there was flooding because the river was high; it's your experience.

From this experience you start to understand that the relative being may feel anger, that it's fine for the relative being to feel anger if that's what it's feeling, and that the ultimate being simultaneously feels infinite compassion. If you move to the perspective, "I shouldn't feel anger anymore because I really do feel compassion for this being," then you are escaping into the ultimate and denying the relative. If you stay in the relative and say, "I feel anger, so this must be a sham kind of compassion. I'm not really feeling it or I wouldn't feel anger," you're denying that the perfect piece of paper exists within the wrinkled sheet. It's all there together.

When we speak of forgiveness, what we really mean is coming to a place of such deep empathy and compassion that there is absolutely no judgment of the other, so there is nothing left to forgive. The aspect of you that can experience that degree of compassion is entirely empty of self and knows its total interbeing with all that is. But the aspect of you that felt anger still experiences from a place of self. When a child has had a nightmare and cries for you and you go to comfort it, you tell that child, "It was only a nightmare, you're safe. It was only a dream, none of those monsters are here in your room now." But you must also not deny the child's fear. You don't say, "None of the monsters are here in your room, it was a dream. Don't be foolish, go back to sleep." You say, "You are safe. The monsters are not here, but I know you're afraid. Your body still shakes from that fear. Let me give you a hug. Let me sit down here on your bed." You attend to both the ultimate and the relative.

When another has caused you deep pain, you allow yourself the experience of total selfless compassion and interconnection with that one. But you also don't deny the pain. It will go when it's ready. Much of what you still are thinking of as anger at that point is just the old reverberations of anger within the body. The physical and emotional bodies are denser and will take much more time to release that energy. Just let it be.

Here is where it becomes useful to work with this four step process. For those of you who are not familiar with it, I'm not going to review it in depth tonight; it is available in transcript. Briefly, seeing the anger that you are still feeling, feeling the experience of that anger, you make the decision, "I don't need to carry this anymore. I really do feel compassion for that person. I understand why that person spoke or acted as he or she did. I see their fear and I feel deep compassion for them. This anger that I'm carrying,

it's just a habit. I'm practicing the wrinkle. I don't need to do that anymore." Then, in the ways we have described in this four step process, you make the decision to simply release it. Remember, you're not releasing the whole mass of anger, just a little bit. How many times have you practiced this habit of anger? You're not getting rid of it, you're just seeing that you don't need it anymore, that you can release it, then offering the intention to do so, and to focus awareness on the perfection instead of the wrinkle.

I've offered many ideas tonight. There are a number that I want to follow up on in much more depth in coming weeks. One area is working further with this four step process of releasing. One area is deeper understanding of karma. One very important area is that which was new tonight, working with this human energy field and its distortions, coming to understand the interplay between the physical and energy body manifestations of distortions and how that's sent back up into the sub-light body. Those are three areas to which I want to pay special attention. And I also do continue to welcome your questions about forgiveness. I think we will use forgiveness as a connector. As the questioner noted last week, it's a wonderful place to explore the interrelationships between the relative and ultimate planes. I thank you for allowing me to share with you tonight. After your break I will welcome your questions. That is all.

J: Where does the cellophane come from?

Barbara: In Aaron's metaphor, the soul is like the sunbeam coming out. We can't take the whole energy of the soul, but through karma and the decisions of what issues we will work on in this incarnation we take a small piece of that, which is the sub-light body. He is using the cellophane metaphor for that sub-light body because while it's a piece of the whole light body and is perfect just as the light body is perfect, our distortions go back up to it and distort it our experience of it. Its like looking through a muddy window and believing that the distortions are in the matter out the window and not in the glass. Then we try to fix what's out there rather than just knowing the window is dirty.

J: So the cellophane is the sub-light body?

Barbara: Yes.

Questions

Barbara: (*Reading question.*) I still don't understand why I and other people would choose to be so unkind to ourselves, especially as children. What lessons can be that important? It seems like a sinister, premeditated act of cruelty.

Barbara: I assume the questioner is talking about child abuse and things of that sort.

There are several questions here. Aaron said to read them and he will respond to some or all.

Question: If I did a thoughtless act or deed in a previous lifetime, does the punishment fit the crime? It seems like a pernicious and evil response when I just didn't know any better.

Barbara: Last week we read a story about an innocent monk who had been dyeing his robes red when people came along and said, "Ah, you've got the stolen calf in your pot; you've killed it," and they took him and imprisoned him in a hole in the ground. He remained there for six months after the calf had been found before somebody realized,

that he was still in the hole. When they pulled him out of the hole, the lord of that area was very apologetic and said, "How could we have done this to you? Please accept our apologies." The monk responded, "It's okay. I thank you! Many lifetimes ago I did steal and kill a calf. A monk was blamed for it and thrown in prison. So this was due me and now I've repaid this karmic debt."

That story brought up many questions. (*Much laughter.*) I had an interesting time this week hearing Aaron explain much of it to me. He says that he will talk about many of my questions. He wants to talk more about karma to everybody. But the question here is: If I did a thoughtless act or deed in a previous lifetime, if I've got some kind of heavy karma in this lifetime, how does it relate to that deed? The questioner says it seems like an "evil response" that if you beat a child in a past lifetime, now you are beaten as a child yourself.

Question: We're trying to explain something that doesn't have an explanation at this level of existence. Incidentally, I can buy that this is all an illusion but you must admit everybody's pain seems awfully real, so why create the illusion? Again, what lessons can be that important that we make children suffer?

Barbara: Before we get going on this, are there related questions? Those are questions of a few different areas. Does that provoke anything in you? Aaron would like to respond to it all together.

F: In today's newspaper the Dali Lama was quoted as saying that even in Nazis there is a spark of love and compassion.

M: We know karma isn't punishment, per se, however, it sure seems that way. Why?

C: This is probably too much to get into, but, Aaron says that all things happen simultaneously. If that's the case how can we benefit by past mistakes, if there is no past and everything is happening at once?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Wonderful questions. Let me begin very briefly with the last one. Imagine you and innumerable comrades walking side by side across a big field. The field is filled with rocks and boulders of all sizes. You're walking arm in arm. You see a comrade somewhere to your right kick a boulder and then stop and hop up and down, holding his foot in pain. He says, "Darn boulder, it shouldn't be so solid, it shouldn't be so heavy. It hurt my foot!" At the same time, others of your comrades left and right are doing the same thing. Some others, seeing the first ones do it, get the idea and they kick boulders. How many times does this row of people have to kick boulders before somebody gets the idea: "Maybe I shouldn't kick boulders, maybe it's not useful. Maybe if my foot hurts after kicking a boulder it's my fault for kicking the boulder. I had that choice and I chose to kick."?

Your lifetimes might be thought of as simultaneously in this way. I know this isn't quite it because the events in your life do seem to unfold in a linear fashion: you were, you are, you will be. But, if you take all of your past lives and walk arm in arm with them, you can learn from what they are, will be or already did learn. I really can not explain simultaneous time to you, it needs to be experienced. Simply put, your past lives were past lives and at the same time those ancestors of yours still exist. There are no longer in material form, or have not yet come into material form, but they still exist. Where would they go?

Visualize a burning stick, a kind of fireworks. It's one stick, one mindstream. When you twirl it, a multitude of different colored sparks fly out—pink, blue, green, gold, yellow, silver, white and red. One could say that the blue light here and the red light much higher up are different. The stick might burn at a different pace, so that it burns from the top down or bottom up. But, basically, everything that's flying out of it is part of that same stick. My fear here and my joy there, they come from the same source! These past lives of yours—what happens to that spark when it leaves the stick? It still exists, nothing ever disappears. When an oak tree drops an acorn which sprouts, it is clearly a new tree but it is also part of the parent oak. What happens to the energy that was part of that past being? I've told you over and over that wasn't you, that was an ancestor of yours. What happened to that being? It's part of the same mindstream that you are, but it also has its own independent existence. You learn from and teach one another.

When there has been distortion in a past life that has created harm for another, you as the continuation of that mindstream are offered the opportunity to work with that distortion and clarify it. You're not being punished for your ancestor's distortion. Rather, this is something that this mind/body/spirit that you are has found confusing and you need to practice it. The seed has mutated; you as carrier of that mutation are given the opportunity to correct the distortion and return to the original perfection.

It can be seen with more clarity if we look at it within one lifetime. Perhaps you have a tendency to blame others. It's very hard for you to accept your own responsibility. Perhaps you're often late, and your way of dealing with other's annoyance when you come late is to say, "Well, my car wouldn't start," or "I got stuck in traffic," "My watch stopped," "I got held up at a meeting." It's very embarrassing to have to say, "I was busy doing something and I lost track of time," so you always have excuses. Now, this isn't a major harm to another, just an annoyance. The issue is that you have not wanted to put another's need ahead of your own. You've preferred to finish that which you've wanted to do, and you choose not to be responsible for that preference. Each time you do it, others are annoyed.

The way karma works, this does not mean that you must be held up by others; that you're going to be left waiting, saying, "Where is he?" or "Where is she?" That's one possibility; that you will be offered the opportunity to experience the inconvenience that you foisted on others. But another possibility deals more directly with the issue of not wanting to be responsible, of needing excuses and with that sense of shame about self-involvement.

What is the distortion really about? Essentially it's an ego distortion that says, "I'm more important." What your karma hands you, then, is the opportunity to examine the distortion that you're more important. Why have you grabbed hold of that? What can help you to loosen that distortion, to recognize the importance of others and learn deeper respect for them? Is that not also a way of learning deeper respect for yourself?

You may find yourself in a situation where your boss is very egocentric and continually steals your work, taking what you did and saying to his superiors, "Look what I thought up," leaving you with the need to look at your own anger about why he takes merit for what you did. It's the same question: why are you elevating yourself above another; why is he elevating himself? You have the opportunity to look at his fear which makes him claim the merit for your work and hopefully to look deeper within yourself and see

that same ego functioning there, then to move to more understanding and compassion for the boss, more understanding of your own fear. Finally you move past that fear.

So, karma is specific, but it is generally misunderstood what specific means. It does not mean that because you were a child abuser in a past life you must then experience abuse in this life. Child abuse in itself was not the issue. We are not speaking of sexual abuse here. What was the issue for that being who manipulated and controlled a child, belittled and shamed it? Perhaps that being needed to feel big, strong and powerful because it felt so insignificant, and the only place it could feel powerful was with a helpless child. Perhaps its fears were intense and it very much wanted to be in control; here was something that it could control. Perhaps it had deep rage; here was a safe place to take out its rage because the child couldn't retaliate. What was the issue?

In how many lifetimes was that pattern of behavior an issue? We're just selecting one here; feeling helpless and disempowered and so becoming a very controlling human in order to override those feelings of helplessness. If that's the issue it does not mean that you need to move into a lifetime where you are abused. It means you need to move into a lifetime where you have the opportunity to explore that feeling of helplessness and how being controlling of others feels empowering, how that's illusion.

There are many ways you can explore that question. You begin with easy ones. Perhaps you move into a lifetime where you have a loving and supportive family, but one adult, maybe a school teacher, who's very controlling. It gives you a chance to explore your own sense of helplessness as related to that being's controllingness. It gives you the opportunity to ask, "Why is he or she so controlling?" Maybe you get it and that's it, you've resolved it. Maybe you don't get it, and instead of understanding you just move into more rage at this being. Then life hands you another lesson.

You are always given both the lessons and the tools to understand them. You are never put in a situation where life simply beats you without the resources to understand what has been handed you and why. But sometimes your fear gets so intense that you can't hear the teaching that's offered. You keep contracting more and more and more. It could be said that if life just handed kindness then people would learn. Often that is the way it happens, but sometimes there is a place where you are stuck and all the kindness that life has handed you doesn't get you past that stuck place. It simply empowers you to be more rash, more selfish and controlling.

For the one who moves into an incarnation where it suffers severe pain, physical or emotional abuse, deprivation or abandonment, yes it seems cruel. But life is not simply punishing you; you're not being whipped and sent into the corner to sulk. You have made the decision, before your incarnation, of what issues you want to work with in your incarnation. From that place of clarity you see the truth, you see the brilliance of the light that you aspire to merge with. You see the purity of the light body and you see the distortions.

One might use the following image. You've been given a clear pallet of paints and white paper. In your first painting the colors have become terribly muddy. These are oil paints and you can paint over the muddy colors. Here is the light body with absolutely sparkling clear color, and here is the manifestation you've created. As you are not well

skilled in how to use the paints many of the colors are muddy. You take a fresh brush, fresh color and you try again, and again and again. From that place where you know who you truly are and know your connection to God and all that is, where you experience the perfect purity of the light body, there is clear seeing that before this muddy mess can merge with that I've got to clean up the colors. How do I best do that? It is not masochism that sends you off into a painful lifetime, but deep, infinite love and aspiration to purify your energy, a willingness and courage to work at it as hard as you need to in order to finally understand.

I want to talk in a future week in much more depth about karma as it relates to the light body, the human energy field and the physical body. I want to talk about how that paper gets the illusion of being wrinkled. How the illusion manifests itself with physical reality, and how the physical reality creates the illusory distortion; how it moves back and forth. I want to talk about that in relationship to karma. I shall pause here and answer any specific questions. That is all.

C: Why does Aaron keep saying, "In the future I will talk about ..."?

Aaron: I am Aaron. When I work with a group of you there are constant questions arising in your minds. I could talk for ten hours and never finish with the new questions that arise. I'm suggesting that I will talk about this in a coming week because some of you are asking me specifically, "What about this?" It can not all be attended now. I'm simply reassuring you, "I'll get to it. I hear your question." That is all.

Barbara: C has asked is this "saying he'll talk about it" a hint to ask us to ask that question; does he want us to write it down and he'll talk about it later?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Your asking is part of your learning. If you walk out of here leaving all these thoughts awaiting your return, you're not going to get nearly as much out of it as if you carry it with you. If you carry it with you, you are bound to have questions. I can not answer what I am not asked; I can not violate your free will by imposing on you in that way. But also, your asking is an important part of your learning. So, yes, I do hope to draw out your questions, but I don't need elaborate questions. You know me well enough to know that I use your questions as a springboard to launch into that which needs to be said. I don't feel that I violate your free will in that way. But your carefully thought out questions teach you, as I'm sure the writers of tonight's questions have learned. Think about the longer question that Barbara read and the work that that being did with its questions and understandings about forgiveness based on last week's talk. That is all.

C: Aaron said that we are never given a situation where we can't learn. What about babies who are abused and die? Is there learning on the astral plane after they die?

M: I have a related question. Why do we have "earth karma"? Can we learn the lesson on some other plane? Why do we have to come back?

Aaron: I am Aaron. You have to come back because there is this shadow on the earth plane that holds you until you have found equanimity with the emotions and physical sensations of the human body. This relates to the movement from rebirth consciousness into mind and body.

The baby that is abused and dies, the child who is killed as an infant in a fire or an earthquake, this is a very different picture. Often these children have incarnated as a gift to the adults around them. Obviously, if a whole village is wiped out one has to ask what is the gift there? What might the adults around that child have learned in its first weeks or months of life? How might that baby have opened the hearts of the adults around it so that although adult and child died simultaneously from a bomb, earthquake or whatever, something was learned. What might the adult be learning who abuses a child who dies? What about the guilt of knowing that you beat a child and it died? I'm not suggesting that guilt is a skillful teacher, but it certainly is a powerful emotion. How might that being's heart eventually open to itself, how might it be lead to forgiveness for itself and to asking for forgiveness from the child?

I said to you once, and C reminded the group of it last week, that if someone said to you that you could teach somebody else a very powerful lesson and learn something deep for yourself, but it would mean five minutes of severe pain, would you be willing to do it? But each human lifetime is like five minutes in the totality of your being. You see a lifetime now as immense, but from the astral plane it's just one lifetime. What does it mean to incarnate briefly, suffer a bit and die? What about the gift of that incarnation?

What about the gift of those who allow themselves to be killed by the Nazis? This new movie, Schindler's List, is calling it all back to your attention. And, of course, it's no accident that simultaneously there are those who are saying that Nazi Germany never happened, that there never were concentration camps, that it's all a myth. You are all learning and deepening your compassion and your commitment to living with a morality and love that prevents that in the future. If those beings had not died in such a horrible way, you would all have been denied the power of this teaching. Can you thank those who have given such a gift, whether infants or adults, for the gift that they have offered? Can you know that each of you, in some of your lifetimes, offered such a gift to others? Keep it in perspective.

We're out of time; this is not a full answer. I will be glad to come back to your questions in future weeks. I find it humorous that while I do not dwell in your linear time I am still bound by its rules! I thank you for sharing your thoughts and energy with me tonight. Once again, I do appreciate your written questions of that which has come to you during the week and been powerful for you. If you have such questions and drop them off or mail them, they are more likely to be attended to the next time. I do try to shape my talks out of the questions, written and verbal, that come in to me through the week, as well as through a direction, a plan let us say, for the entire year. My love to you all. That is all.

C: As third density beings we can learn from our own experiences and past lives. As fourth density beings we will be able to learn from each other's experiences and past lives.

Barbara: Aaron says that's why it's so intense getting to fourth density; that's why we need to be so clear before we get there.

Wednesday, March 30, 1994

A note about tonight's talk

Tonight's talk was an interweaving of the reading of a private session transcript and Aaron's expansion on those ideas. The transcript itself, from March 25, 1994, begins with a note of explanation. What is presented here is the result of that interweaving, as it was presented to the Wednesday Group. The introduction to the private transcription is given in italics.

March 25, 1994

(This session was channeled and simultaneously transcribed in Barbara's study. Barbara was sitting on the floor in front of an altar, above which there is a batik wall hanging taped on a cinder block wall. The tape was coming loose and Barbara just pushed it back in place, then reached for a box of wooden matches to light candles. The match lit, flared and went out. She reached for another when Aaron asked, "Why did it go out?" Matches in this box have never done that. There was no breeze to blow it out. He suggested that Barbara retape the banner before lighting a match, said it went out because the fabric was in danger of falling on the lit candles. He began to talk about interdependent energy fields. We didn't type the very beginning.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. Visualize an object, like a match. See an infinite line of light running through that object. The object rests within the line. Find more objects: you, wall hanging, the whole room. See each one individually placed on an infinite path of light, which we will call the energy stream. Sometimes the light is tight, as a line; sometimes it's diffused, creating a wide space. When it is compacted it is an indication either of its own focusing intention or that energy has come into intactness because of pressure from without. Whether diffused or contracted, the energy stream is always comprised of a more diffused outer area and a core light line. The light line begins at the light body, or more correctly, at That of which the light body is a projection.

There is tape on the wall hanging which is losing its stickiness simply because that is what happens to tape when it grows old. There is the line coming from Barbara, which energy manifests an intention not to be harmed nor to harm this home. At a totally unconscious level the energy from the aging tape has crossed both Barbara's energy and the energy stream from the match. There is intention from Barbara to light the candles. There is not intention, but necessity, from the tape that it is aging. This is simply the condition of the tape due to the dampness of the walls and its age and material structure. It offered an indication of its age and condition just a brief time ago when Barbara pushed the falling picture back on the wall. The energy stream of the match intercepts Barbara's intention not to be harmed and the deteriorating energy of the tape. In response to that, the match lit and then went out.

If you are alert to the messages of the material elements in your life, you will find that they are responses to very clear conditions on either the physical or energy

planes. There is always some reason. Yes, the reason could be simply deterioration of the match because of conditions, just as the tape deteriorated because of conditions, but Barbara knows that the matches in this box have not acted as if they were damp. Therefore, the match is responding to some condition. What is it? When it speaks, are you paying attention? It is a matter of training yourself. Barbara was not paying attention. There is no guarantee the hangings would have fallen, but it was a real possibility. The match knew it because it picked up this interweaving of energy.

You asked, "What about the rest of us who don't have Aaron to interpret?" My dear one, pay attention! When anything acts in a way that is different from usual, stop and ask, "Why?"

We move into more complexity. I asked you to think of each object as resting in an infinite energy stream. The light body, the sub-light body projection, the object and the connecting energy stream are surrounded by this energy field. Let us give this a name. I don't want to say "human energy field" because it also exists in inanimate objects. I am going to coin new terms, light line and stream energy-field, as no existing names satisfies me. The light line is the continuum of energy from the source, through the light body to the manifestation. The stream energy-field is the energy which moves out of the light line, almost the aura of the light line. It is denser at the physical manifestation as it exists in space/time, thins to a gauziness in parts of the energy stream, and diffuses further at the sublight body. It returns to intactness at the light body.

Let us look, then, at the whole. We have the light body, the sub-light body projection, the energy stream with its core light line and its diffused area, and the object itself. All of these together rest in a stream energy-field, a space/time continuum of the various energies of the manifestation. This energy field manifests as linearity (the light-line core of the energy stream) and expands into a three-dimensional light field, which aspect constantly contracts and expands. One might almost say that the stream energy-field is the composite aura of the light body, energy stream and physical manifestation. The physical object's aura is only one piece of that total aura. "Aura" is not quite accurate because this stream energy-field tapers off to infinity in all directions. Perhaps one could call it the aura's aura!

The energy which feeds that energy stream and the physical manifestation itself comes from two places. The energy moving down the light line of the energy stream from the source, through the light body is the primary energy source. The energy from the manifestation itself is a secondary energy source. This is not energy from the physical mass but is the particular distortion of energy which is a combination of the mass's reflection/absorption of stream energy-field and the energy drawn in from earth and other mass. It is all received as light.

The energy stream flows from the light body through the sub-light body. There it assumes any illusory distortions of the sub-light body. The core part of the stream, the light line, moves into the manifestation. The outer, diffused parts, surround the manifestation. The outer "aura" of that energy stream, the stream energy-field,

creates a very gauzy connection like the thinnest of wings into the whole infinite energy of the universe. Everywhere it is connected to everything!

If the mass dissolves and has not yet come into a new incarnation, the space/time continuum of that stream energy-field will be very diffuse. There will be an intactness of light which is not incarnation but merely the present expression of that energy. The energy-stream will also be diffuse; denser at the intactness of energy, but sheer along the infinite line. The light line will appear to be dissolved until there is new manifestation.

We will not discuss here which comes first, intention to move to intactness and incarnation or the pulling together of the energy-stream into greater density at the point of that approaching manifestation.

Visualize this whole scenario of light for one object. Visualize the intersection, not of two objects themselves, but of their energy-streams and of their entire stream energy-fields. This is not just the crossing of the core energy light line, but these very sheer wings. And it's all infinite, so your energy is touched by the energy of everything else in your universe, manifest or not yet manifest.

Aaron: This is very technical. You don't need the labels. What I have just offered is a basic description of the energy process of karma. You understand that the basis of karma is that you reap what you sow. Why? Because when you send out a contraction it moves up this energy stream where the sub-light body serves as a mirror and reflects it back at you. What is a mirror but glass with a backing. The density of the contraction is sticky and becomes the backing. If you send up loving kindness and openness, metaphorically it scrapes the back off of the mirror so you can see through it. When you see through it you see straight through to the light body. The illusion of distortion dissolves. What comes back to you then is not the illusory distortion but the perfection.

When we've spoken about this in the past fall and winter, I emphasized working with this process only after there is no strong aversion to what is being experienced. If you are experiencing physical or emotional pain—fear, jealousy or any other discordance—and strong desire to get rid of that pain leads you to say to yourself, "Aaron says it's illusion so I will go to the ultimate reality where it doesn't exist," my dear ones, that's escape.

On the relative plane, which is where this incarnation is, there is that fear or pain. It must be attended to on the relative plane. When there is an openness about it, space made for it, then you are ready to let it go; not to get rid of it, simply to let it go. The process of letting go is one of working with this light and energy stream so that what you send up the stream is clarified; so that you no longer see this sub-light body as distorted, but see the ever-perfect.

We frequently use the example of the clear piece of paper that has always existed within the wrinkled sheet. When you have that wrinkled sheet of paper and focus on the wrinkles, that is a way of practicing the wrinkles. When you look at that wrinkled sheet of paper, stretch it out and see the wrinkles and see the perfect sheet of paper within the wrinkled sheet, you fix your attention in a different place, on perfection rather than distortion.

This relates to the new age maxim that you create your own reality. You know that I'm not fond of that saying because of the ways it is often misapplied to provoke guilt, and yet it is true. Of course you do create your own reality. What are you sending up this energy stream? What does it shine back at you?

I want to say to our friends who are new here tonight that this practice we are introducing is a very valuable one. You can start at either end, working with clarifying this energy stream or working in relative reality with the fears and pains of everyday life. Eventually you've got to work in both places. I only want to mention this for those of you who have not heard me speak at length about the work in relative reality. We have simply put it aside, temporarily, but there must always be a balance.

I do want to emphasize, for those of you who are confused about the precise details of this scheme, that it doesn't matter. I provide the whole scheme because there are many of you who are interested in it. If it eludes you, simply focus on two things. First, the contraction that you feel in the physical body and the way that contraction moves out of you as distortion of energy, and second, the ways that opening your heart and letting go on the physical plane can clarify that energy. We will do a specific guided meditation to give you a feel for it. We return here to reading the March 25 transcript.

We break here into two different aspects of the energy work: what you call your own energy and the crossings of energy. Let us speak here first of personal energy, leaving what I have described above as foundation for understanding energy relationships after you better understand personal distortion.

The energy in the sub-light body is not distorted. How could it be? If you have an unmarked sheet of white paper and snip off a part, it is also unmarked. Yet before your first earth plane incarnation there were distortions in the emotional and mental bodies. Before incarnation, distortion led to the illusion of seeming separation from God and desire to re-merge with that energy. This distortion created contractions in the, at the time, non-physical manifestation of that energy. Let me explain this further.

At that first moment of self-awareness, that which we call soul did not find itself separate. Pure awareness is not aware of distinction of self/other. It rests always in its own pure luminescence, which is the luminescence of All-That-Is. That which was self-aware is what found itself separate! We can call it consciousness. Although this was not yet physical matter, it was an energy with potential to manifest physically. With that first moment of self-awareness there was not yet sub-light body, but there was energy stream feeding into that consciousness which was now self-aware. Self-aware consciousness, at that point, was the non-physical manifestation. Physical, non-physical—it doesn't matter; I don't want to get into a what came first—the chicken or the egg—question. It's not relevant. Simply, energy of non-physical materialization contracted and sent distorted energy back up this stream. Since the light body itself cannot distort, a sub-light body broke off to absorb that distortion and reflect it back.

Barbara: This is Barbara. There's a drawing being passed around. In that drawing the light body is the body that's within the sun. The sub-light body is just below that and the physical manifestation is the one on the bottom.

Question: What was self-aware? Was it the light body?

Barbara: The piece of cellophane was self aware. The sub-light body. Where did it start, if there was no sub-light body until self awareness? I don't know. I don't think it matters.

M: When there first was self awareness, did it form the sub-light body?

Barbara: Yes. First there is just soul, or spirit body, whatever we want to call it, which finds itself totally merged with God, or whatever we wish to call that. There's no self awareness. With that first moment of self awareness, there is that which became self aware. What experiences itself as totally merged can not have the illusion of distortion. Because self awareness leads to a sense of self and other, we then can move into that distortion that Aaron has called the first distortion of love. We can not experience love in that sense unless there is lover and loved. So, with the first distortion comes both love and separation; then the energy moves into the possibility of further distortion. But, as Aaron just said, the energy in the sub-light body is not distorted, how could it be? He said, "If you have an unmarked sheet of white paper and snip off a part, it is also unmarked." So, the distortion (this is the hard part) in this sub-light body is illusion. We've taken it as real. This delusion, of separate self, is a primary cause of all of the physical, emotional and mental distortions which incarnation after incarnation after incarnation have carried. This process, as Aaron said earlier, is a way of explaining the energy of karma, why karma happens.

Aaron wants to say (I'm paraphrasing), for the people who were not here last week, this cellophane that he's talking about is that perfect sheet of paper that we've taken and wrinkled. As cellophane, it's transparent. If you shine a flashlight through it you can imagine what it would look like. What you see shining on the ground picks up the clear places and the wrinkled places. In a sense our physical, emotional and mental distortions are the reflections of those wrinkled places. Once we understand that they are illusion, we can begin to release them, but only if we're not getting rid of them. If we are getting rid of them we solidify them more because there is aversion to them and we're somebody trying to get rid of something. Does that make sense to everybody? It will take meditation and practice with it. Right now what you have is a conceptual understanding, which will steer you into a path of experiential understanding.

D: Aaron said "At that first moment of self-awareness, that which we call soul did not find itself separate. That which was self-aware is what found itself separate." Where did the self awareness come from?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Self awareness is infinite light and intelligence's projection as it seeks to expand and know itself. Does that answer your question?

D: Aaron's answer is very satisfying because he implied that what we are all doing here is working to expand God.

Barbara: Aaron says, essentially, yes. He says (I'm paraphrasing) that somewhere we have an old transcript about the question "Can an infinite God expand?"

M: I think that this is a chicken or the egg question. Are the wrinkles formed as a reflection of our distortions on the physical ... *(Can not hear the rest of the question.)*

Barbara: It's spiral, circular. Aaron says it's kind of like a mobius strip, it feeds up and comes back; it's continuous.

Back to the transcript, last sentence repeated.

Since the light body itself cannot distort, a sub-light body broke off to absorb that distortion and reflect it back.

Notice that I say, "to absorb that distortion," not "to become distorted." The sub-light body in itself is never distorted, but you think it's distorted because of what you throw at it. It simply reflects. It is the perfect mirror, absolutely clear so it reflects perfectly that which it receives. It reflects so you may work with it again, and again, and again, and again. When what you send back becomes free of distortion, what it reflects back is free of distortion.

Two examples. Yesterday Barbara had dental surgery. The gum was cut open so the tooth roots could be scraped clean. Local anesthetic numbed the area. There was no pain. She had an hour to lie in this dental chair while this procedure was done. In that hour she came to literally see the distorted energy she sent back when she tensed around the pressure and pulling of the work being done.

When she relaxed it was clear that there was no pain, not even real discomfort. She could clearly see the fear contraction as being old fear, a desire to protect, and having nothing to do with this moment. She was in a deep enough meditation to literally see this energy stream. When she sent fear contraction up that stream, she could see the energy reflected back. When she relaxed, knowing the fear was real on the relative plane but was a manifestation of old mind distortion, then she could see through this sub-light body, through the backing of the mirror to the perfect light body template. The sub-light body was perfectly clear. When it appeared clouded, reflective rather than transparent, it was only doing its job, reflecting her own fear energy back to her so she would know it.

Perhaps this is a key sentence. You are here to expand, as D put it, to expand God, to expand the divine as expressed within yourself. Part of that expansion is learning to live your life with more love. If there was nothing to reflect back the fear energy and let you know the fear which needed to be worked with, how would you learn? Some of you have pitched rubber balls against a wall. If you want something to come back gently you throw it to the wall gently; it returns what you throw. If you have a strong pitching arm and you throw it with all your might and it comes back to you as a fast ball and punches you in the chest. That punch's discomfort is simply saying, "Be aware; throw softer."

You can catch distortion anywhere along this chain and work skillfully at many levels. You can become aware of the contraction of fear in the physical body and with no knowledge at all of what we spoke of above. Each time fear contracts in the physical body you can be mindful of it, work not to throw that fear at another, begin to cut through the identification with that fear, and eventually find freedom from the pattern of that fear. That is perfectly sufficient.

You can also work from the ultimate reality side. Each time that fear arises, breath it out and move back to rest in pure mind, stabilizing the experience of this pure awareness. Eventually that will feed back into the relative reality responses to fear. You will start to know that the fear is not who you are and cease your reactivity to it on the earth plane. That's also a viable path.

The balance of the two is much more powerful. For those of you who are saying that you want to be finished in this lifetime, here is a balanced path. It is very hard work, but very, very potent, because you're cutting through on both planes, the relative and the ultimate. To work with this balance is to note the contractions of fear, anger, greed or whatever there may be in the physical body; to note the movements of those emotions in the mind; to note the desire to fling them at another, the desire to be rid of them; to open your heart with compassion to this being that's caught in the midst of such violent forces. And simultaneously to note how you are owning that physical sensation or emotion and identifying with it, thereby continuing it because you send it up to the sub-light body and it reflects back repeatedly until you finally can say, "I don't need to do this anymore. I've learned." We return to the reading of the transcript.

Relaxation of tension very literally smoothes out that distortion and clarity is reflected back. The shadow in these strands of the energy-stream dissolves. You begin to rest in the pure and perfect light body with no need to create further distortion. This was work done consciously with my guidance. It is an example of how re-shifting the focus to the clarity of the perfect light body instead of focusing on the illusory distortion allows truth rather than illusion to reflect back. It's circular: no start or finish. The more you rest in clarity, the more you manifest that clarity. It does get easier and easier.

A second example is of one who walked into this house and was pulled into contraction by the dog barking. There is discomfort in this one of the angry energy a dog may project. This one has experienced that discomfort before with this dog. This time there was a difference, an awareness: "This is old conditioned fear. This dog will not hurt me. I choose and intend not to manifest more fear." While there was not conscious work with the energy stream and sub-light body, the intention was powerful enough to send an energy of compassion and clarity which, conscious or unconscious, does dissolve the distortions of the energy stream. Because those distortions are softened, what reflects back is clarity. The being then experiences far less old mind fear. Its increasing clarity allows it to send up still clearer and more loving energy. The sub-light body reflects it back, a constant stream back and forth.

Without conscious intention, there is not the same force of cutting through the illusion of distortion of the sub-light body. It's more a scraping away than a penetrating thrust through it, but this work does dissolve this illusion of distortion at whatever speed.

All of what I have just described may be considered an explanation of the energy factors through which karma works.

(Break. After break, people ask Barbara to speak more about the experience at the dentist. Questions not recorded.)

Barbara: It was a very powerful experience. I've never had any real dental work in my life. I've never had Novocain. There I was lying on my back in this chair with bright lights shining down on me, the dentist and his assistant with all these sharp looking tools. I was clutching the arm of the chair! Aaron first asked to me to chant, *Om ah um*, which in itself was an interesting experience because my mouth was propped open. So, I was chanting silently to myself. I couldn't do the "um" because I couldn't close my mouth, I

was just thinking that part. But it did settle my energy. Then he asked me to take my hands and turn them face up so that I couldn't clutch onto the chair and to observe that there was no physical pain. There was discomfort and a sense of the body being invaded, but there was no physical pain. Slowly, as I moved into a deeper meditation I began to feel the stream energy, to feel what I was projecting. Each time there was a pull or scrape and my energy tensed I literally could see the difference. As I relaxed the energy and sent up simply an intention to be present with real discomfort but that I didn't need to reinforce it and have it play back, I could see this energy clarified.

I was working in two different places. One was the emotional fear; feeling invaded, wondering what they were doing to me, noting aversion to having my gum cut open, my gum which had been pain free and healthy. One was with the physical distortion that had created a pocket of infection along the root in the first place. I was able to work more with the emotional than the physical distortion, for whatever reasons.

I walked out of that office feeling so high, and my energy feeling so clear. I have to go back tomorrow and get the stitches taken out and I don't know what else will be done but I have absolutely no fear of it at all. Whatever has to happen is just the reverberations of old karma that are still working, reverberations of old fear in my body. They need to finish working their way out, but I just need to go sit in the dentist's chair and get the stitches taken out, and whatever work he's going to do, he's going to do. It's a very different feeling and I can very clearly see the way that I was wrinkling the sub-light body and taking the wrinkles for what was real. The way that I'm now seeing through it, seeing the clarity and that that clarity is what's coming down.

Important in this experience, for me, is seeing that it goes both ways, that the energy stream which moves from the body is projected up, then is reflected back down to us. There is something that I don't have quite clear yet. I'll tell you what I see but I think that Aaron would prefer to talk about it until I understand it better. I see two things in parallel, the distortion energy and also the light body energy which is always perfectly clear. I am only at the concept level of understanding; my question is, if I shift my focus fully to the light body energy that's coming down, can I end the whole thing? It seems like I could but I don't have an experiential understanding of it yet. *(Barbara's note while cleaning the transcript, April 20: Yes, I can end it, but the body may still need to experience the old reverberations of its past distortions.)*

J: ... sending that positive energy, or very clear, loving energy back up, in a sense are you bypassing the sub-light body and going right to the light body, which is the clarified energy that is reflected back, but the negative or bad energy hits the sub-light body and bounces back down?

Barbara: I'm paraphrasing Aaron. He says think of the metaphor of a mirror, which is just absolutely clear glass with a painted backing of some sort. You can't see through it, it just reflects back. This backing is self; this is the part of us that is self aware with the illusion of separate self. When you send clear energy up, this is basically what scrapes the backing off or moves through the backing. You can't send up that clear energy unless you are resting in pure awareness, empty of the delusion of separate self. Then the energy you're sending up goes straight to the light body. The sub-light body seems not to exist anymore. It's there but it's totally transparent. So, it's no different than the light body. Aaron is saying it never was different from the light body, it was all illusion

that it had this backing on it anyhow. But we've cut through that illusion and removed the backing. So what comes down is perfectly clear, it's just from the light body.

J: So in a sense the distorted energy "coats" the mirror and doesn't allow the energy through.

Barbara: Yes. Let me give you Aaron.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Visualize yourselves sitting on a sandy beach in the sunshine. The sun feels warm, wonderful. You are thoroughly enjoying the sensation of gentle warmth on your body. Suddenly there is a big, snarling dog, barking, growling! Your body contracts in fear. The sun is still shining and the experience of warmth is still there, but you've ceased to be aware of it because of the contraction of fear. This whole distortion we are speaking of is illusion, at least on the ultimate plane. It only has solidity because your mind has given it solidity. Just as the warmth is always present in the sunshine of the beach, the connection with the divine is always there, the connection with clear light is always there. But your contractions cut off your experience of it. Does that answer your question?

(Question could not be heard on the tape.)

Barbara: I worked on both but it was because the contractions of fear and so on were so strong that was much more directly what was in my experience. I was aware that there was this distortion of the infection in my gum, which is why he was cleaning the root of my tooth. But it was not something that I had felt physically. Back in November there was pain from it, but after an antibiotic there was no more pain from it. We only knew it was there from the x-ray, so, it wasn't as directly a part of my experience. I've worked more with that distortion this week when, following the surgery, I've had a lump like a baseball on my cheek, and it was really painful. So, that lead me into much more work with the physical distortion. But in the dentist's office I was working with what was more immediate, which was the emotional distortion. One can work with either one in the same way.

Question: What is the way to work with pain?

Barbara: Pain is something different than physical distortion. When I say physical distortion, we each have places in our bodies—a bad back, migraine headaches, constant sore throats, stomach problems, a toe that we stub every few weeks or whatever it may be—we've all got those places on our bodies where there is recurrent problem. That problem is something that we carry through from past karma. When we understand how we're re-creating that over and over we can begin to release the tension around it. This does not mean that it's going to cease to repeat itself. For example, I've released the tension around my deafness but I can't cure the deafness itself. If we've created a physical problem that's gone beyond medicine's ability to repair we still can make some indentations into it. I used to have very bad dizziness related to my deafness and that is far less severe than it used to be.

We work with the physical distortion in exactly the same way: seeing the way that we have contracted around the distortion with, "I don't want this, I want to get rid of it." Relax, just let it be there. You don't have to see it visually as I did. Some people will see it, some people will simply sense it. We each are more comfortable with one sense or another. We have physical senses and our extra-sensory perceptions' strengths tend to

run in the same lines as our physical senses. If we're a very visual person then extra-sensory vision is very clear. If we're a very auditory person then extra-sensory hearing is very clear. So, we each experience these distortions of the light stream in different ways.

Aaron: I am Aaron. What I've asked Barbara to do this week is to focus on the perfect gum and tooth that's part of the light body template, that's distortion free. She is simply to receive that energy, to release the energy of the distortion. This is part of that four step meditation process that we did several times this winter and will repeat tonight. When you see that the emotional or physical distortion is no longer useful, that the incarnation has finished its learning from that distortion and is simply carrying it as old baggage, then you are free to release it and to focus on that perfect light body template, allowing that to replace the distortion in the physical manifestation. Do you understand?

Barbara: Aaron says that he wants to do two different guided meditations tonight, one of which will be working with that physical or emotional distortion.

Aaron: I am Aaron. The meditation that I want to do here tonight is a very simple one: simply expanding outward.

Breathe out. *(pause)* Watch your breath move outward. *(pause)* What you will need to do is take one breath, one exhalation, and while you continue to inhale and exhale as is necessary for the physical body, focus on that one exhalation. Breathe in and out a few times and then choose an exhalation which you will watch while the body continues its breathing process. *(pause)* Follow it out. *(pause)* Follow it out beyond the walls of this room. *(pause)* See it moving through the clouds, and beyond the earth's atmosphere. *(pause)* One breath and it is everywhere. *(pause)* From that furthest place far beyond earth's atmosphere, breathe in. Again, let the body breathe as it needs to, but focus on what is moving towards you, entering the atmosphere. It has touched to stars and the planets, and now it touches the clouds and tree-tops. Through the walls of the room, draw it into your body. I will be silent. Please do this a few times.

While doing the exhaling part of it, it may help to focus on each exhalation, seeing the breath moving further and further and further away. Then focus on the inhalation. Once that inhale has come from the furthest reaches of the universe back into you, begin again.

Now we are going to do precisely the same process with energy. Sit very straight and feel your energy mass at the core of you. Then simply expand outward. Use the breath as a prop if it helps. Focusing first on the exhalation for as many breaths as you need. With each exhalation expand outward, simply letting go of the boundaries of self and allowing your energy to move out and out and out, into the universe. Allow it to rest there for a moment and then shift the focus to the inhalation and draw it back. Think of all of the energy that it has touched. Bring it back into intactness. Then, work through the process again.

Do not try to expand outward, simply expand outward. This is not an effort in pushing, but a gentle release of the illusion of boundary.

Finally, we move this process to awareness. I will not try to define this work, simply let that within you that knows it is aware focus on itself. Awareness resting on awareness, and breathe it out into the universe with each exhalation. Let it encounter whatever it will; you may find a sense of void, of nothingness, or absolute fullness and brilliant light. At the end of your journey out do not come back, simply rest there for as long as you can stably stay there. If you lose it, come back without the inhalation part of the process; simply come back and start again, sending awareness out. Let awareness float free of the body and dance in space. If thought or physical sensation interrupts and you lose it, simply start again. Pure awareness resting in the light of its own perfection. Pure mind dancing free in the universe. This is who you are.

Gently now, allow awareness to return into the physical body. *(pause)* Come into the body and note the inhale and exhale. *(pause)* Move your fingers and note the motion. *(pause)* When you feel fully back in the body again, open your eyes. That is all.

Barbara: Aaron is saying that some of you had a very nice vacation.

Questions

M: What is the difference between love, light and energy?

Aaron: I am Aaron. M, what is the difference between the river, the cloud and the rain? Each is clearly unique and yet they are all the same, they are different forms of the same matter. Love, light and energy bear the same relationship. That is all.

(Could not hear question on tape.)

Barbara: Light is a physical manifestation of energy, but also light is a physical manifestation of love, energy is also a physical manifestation of light. Love comes first, it doesn't matter if you put light or energy first.

Question: How do they change from one to the other?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Love naturally creates energy, just as the clouds naturally offer rain when the conditions are right for clouds to become rain. The condition whereby love becomes energy is simply thought and intention, the intention to expand outward. Love by its nature can not be still, it moves outward. The force of that outward expansion is energy, not creates energy, is energy. Light is a physical manifestation of that energy. Because Barbara is so much not an auditory person we tend to leave sound out of this. Sound is not as strong a manifestation of that love as is light, but it's very present. The sound of the whole universe sighing in joy and sorrow. It may be "Ohm" that is all pervading. That is all.

Question: What causes the light and sound to come into being?

Aaron: What caused the river to come into being? The rain fell. What caused the rain? The gathering of clouds and certain climate conditions. What caused the gathering of clouds? The evaporation from the sea. What fed the sea? The river. There is no beginning or end. What you are asking me, essentially, is to tell you how God began. But God didn't begin. By its very nature God is eternal; the Unborn, Undying, Unchanging, Uncreated. It has always been and always will be. So, it is God's eternalness that causes the sound and the light. Are there questions?

(Could not hear question on tape.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. You comprehend those aspects of the Unborn and Unlimited which are within your grasp. You are in human incarnation. You have physical senses: ears, eyes, touch, taste and smell. If a dog were able to comprehend that which we call God at all, It would manifest more as taste and smell than in light and sound, because taste and smell are primary senses for the dog. For the human they are more secondary senses. God manifests itself in myriad ways. The ones to which the human is attuned are light and sound. Energy which is felt through that extra-sensory perception, touch.

(Could not hear discussion on tape.)

Barbara: Aaron is saying that as L just said, they are all vibrations.

Aaron: I am Aaron. We have this distortion that we call love or God. It is a projection. Because it projects it creates a vibration. So, sound, light and energy are all manifestations which we call love or God. Love and God are not completely synonymous but I don't want to further confuse this. Love is the first distortion of that which I call God. In other words, love is the fullest expression of God.

M: How empty is the emptiness?

Barbara: Aaron says absolutely full.

L: Are you saying that God is a pure form and that love is a slightly impure form of God, or God being aware of itself in its purest form?

Barbara: I'm paraphrasing Aaron who is saying yes, because love is a distortion of the expression of that projection and vibration which we call God. God is completely pure and can not be anything but pure.

Aaron: I am Aaron. The purest expression of what? That which we are calling God can never be impure, and yet it contains within itself all harmony and all disharmony. There is no duality in that which we call God. This is all.

(Question not recorded.)

Aaron: The disharmony is also completely pure. This relates to the pure awareness work that we're doing. When you come to see that the distortions within the physical incarnation need not reflect back to the wrinkled sub-light body, but are distortions that fit fully within the divine, then you cease to react with aversion to those distortions and you cease to re-create and practice in order to learn equanimity with them. Once there is no reason to re-practice them, because there is complete equanimity, they fall away; they cease to be useful to your lives. This does not mean that you react in harm to others in those distortions, or you plant new karmic seeds and create suffering. You simply make space for this distortion. That, too, is valid. That is all. Are there questions?

J: The word God. Does that mean a supreme being, higher than Jesus, sitting on a pedestal pulling all the strings in the world? I mean, is there such a thing as God, or do people use that word too loosely?

Aaron: I am Aaron. No, there is no one up there pulling all the strings. The divine energy is in each of you. Use the sun and sunbeam image. The light body, which is the core of

each of you, is that perfect sunbeam, which composition is no different than the sun itself. But, just as a cup of water is no different from the sea, but is also not the sea and only a small part of the sea, so each of you is not God but is a projection of God. Each of you is infinite intelligence seeking to expand and know itself, seeking to love more fully.

The one who was known as Jesus, and other avatars that the earth has known, are beings in whom the physical manifestation is no less pure than the light body. There is no illusion of distortion. The sub-light body is perfectly clear, and everything that is within the manifestation of that being is perfectly clear. There have been many such avatars in the history of your earth. There have also been beings, such as the Buddha, who began with distortion in the physical and emotional bodies and so completely clarified that distortion that by the end of that incarnation there was no distortion.

What makes the story of Jesus so beautiful, and makes this such an extraordinary energy, such a powerful projection of the God energy, is that this being willingly left the light and full merging with God in which it dwelt to come to the earth plane and teach; to move into an incarnation in which it knew it would suffer. In the gift of that incarnation is the fullest expression of this distortion of love through positive polarity. Within that distortion can be seen both the tremendous learning offered by His gift, and also the pain because there has been much murder committed in His name, as well as loving kindness.

He was a catalyst, asking each being to reconsider its move to positive or negative polarity and recommit itself. You are pulled to positive polarity because you see the tremendous suffering that negative polarity creates. But please understand that service to self is also a viable path to learning. In sixth density there is a dead-end to that path. It is a very painful path. Our goal is not to convert every being to positive polarity, but for each being to extend that infinite intelligence and love in the ways that free will dictates for that being. I do not mean to imply that there can not be an earth that is positively polarized. When earth becomes fourth density it must be positively, or negatively, polarized. Much of the work that is going on today in the higher spheres is to create a positively, rather than negatively, polarized earth.

I want to speak to this question: do we use the word God too loosely? This is one of the objections to the word God. When they hear that word many people envision this puppet master up on his throne. They are uncomfortable with the word God, because of those connotations. That which we call God is in no way contradictory to the law of free will. And while I can not say it pulls the strings in terms of things being predestined, there is a flow of this God energy towards the distortion of love. For those of you who are positively polarized it exerts great influence over your choices because you so deeply aspire to purify your energy to be worthy of that divine love. This does not contradict free will, it is your choice to merge with the positively polarized path. There's no puppet master, but there's something holding out love and something holding out fear and hatred, and obviously you are pulled towards that which holds out love because that's the direction of your own distortion. Negatively polarized beings are pulled towards that which holds out fear and hatred. This leads to the whole question of what is good and evil. I believe that we are close to being out of time and can not do justice to that question in the five minutes that we have. I would welcome it on a future week. That is all.

Wednesday, April 6, 1994

(At Aaron's request, Barbara gives a brief review of the meaning of karma.)

Barbara: The word karma means action. Every action involves karma. Karma falls into two basic categories: what we would call adhering and non-adhering karma. Adhering karma can be wholesome or unwholesome. What determines whether karma is adhering or not is whether there's a self involved as the "doer" of this or that. Since every act has multiple motivation, there are parts that stick and parts that don't stick.

If there's a very skinny, hungry-looking child who walks up to me and wants an apple that I'm about to bite into, my heart's going to open and I'm going to very selflessly offer the apple. No adhering karma in that. But there's the little voice that pats me on the back and says, "Gee, aren't I the good, kind, generous one?" Okay, there there's a little bit that's still sticking. The stickiness isn't about the giving. In this case the stickiness is not in the giving; I'm okay there. Stickiness is about needing to affirm myself and feel good.

If I had a thought after I gave it, "Maybe I should have only given him half, what am I going to eat," the non-adhering karma is still non-adhering, and it's wholesome karma. There was selfless giving. The adhering karma—there can be twenty different little motivations. This one might be about fear, not being sure how much I can give, how much I need to hold onto.

If I had a hundred apples here, or a thousand, and I gave him one, there's not really any generosity involved in that. Giving doesn't have much meaning if there are a thousand apples. If there are one or two, then it's got a lot of meaning because I'm asked to give something I feel I might need. So, to learn generosity, I may have to practice that giving hundreds, even thousands of times before I can give without the little voices of fear.

All karma plants seeds. The seeds they plant depend on what we give out. Aaron used an example once about adhering/non-adhering of wearing cotton fleecy pants and walking out in a field where there were stickers. They stick to the pants. If you walk through the same field with denim pants there's nothing for it to stick to. What karma sticks to is self: this whole illusion of being somebody solid—I'm a **me**, me giving, me not giving, me being good, me being bad.

Karma is not punishment. Karma is a way of learning. As soon as we think of it as punishment, we get distorted because it starts to be a reward and punishment system. But it has nothing to do with reward and punishment. It's simply this: if I give without getting stuck in this place of self, or if I do whatever needs to be done, say whatever needs to be said without its coming from an ego-centered place, then there's nothing for it to stick to. If there is something for it to stick to, life simply points to that spot and says, "Here's fear. Here's a place which still needs work."

It's kind of like a piece of wood and sandpaper. You sand it for awhile and then you feel it. Right here it's a little rough, a little splintered, hurts a little. Sand it a little more right there. So, we just keep sanding it down, finding where the ego-self still is rough,

around what issues. And we each have our own personal issues. Jealousy. Generosity. Patience. Whatever they may be. Where are the places where we still get stuck?

M: So, when we drop our identifications of self, that would cancel karma?

Barbara: Then there's no adhering karma, which means there's nothing of "me" that I'm planting that needs to come back and learn this lesson again, practice it again, whether in this lifetime or future incarnations. I've got this one thing worked out, I'm not getting caught in it. But maybe I don't have that one worked out. So, because we have multiple motivations, the places that we haven't worked out keep popping up no matter how varied the situation.

Maybe the issue is generosity and fear and holding on. It doesn't just come up in places where I'm giving apples. It could come up if I'm just walking with a friend where one side of the path is sunny and one is shady; it's a cool day and I'm afraid to give up the sunny side of the path. Ego! Self!

M: Does it have to be so tedious? Can we just cut through? ... Shebang!?

Barbara: Yes. This is part of what Aaron is going to talk about. He just wanted me to give this basic foundation.

(Barbara reads a question about karma that someone has written.)

Question: ... Karma. I really get angry about this. When you can't even go to the dentist, Barbara, without concern for accumulating more adhering karma, I think something's wrong with the system. This is more detrimental than old traditional religions that had us feeling guilty about everything. At least confession made the slate clean again. Not so with beliefs about karma. While we are admonished on the one hand, "Have compassion and forgiveness for ourselves," we're warned on the other about picking up new karma. God forbid if you do something nice for someone and you should feel good about it! More karma! After feeling unworthy for God knows how many lifetimes, is it so terrible to feel good about yourself for some nice things you've said or done? I'm afraid all my work to show myself compassion and forgiveness is more than wiped out by my new fear of karma. Finally, it occurred to me that if this life is an illusion, then any of its by-products must also be. Do you remember the night I asked about that? Is karma an illusion? "No," Barbara said. "Yes," Aaron said. So, if it's an illusion, please, Aaron, straighten out the confusion.

(Barbara reviews her trip to the dentist for dental surgery a few weeks ago for those who were not present at that session. See earlier transcript. She also gives a bit of background information on the light work that Aaron has been teaching for those who are new tonight. See earlier transcripts.)

Barbara reads excerpts from the story about "cow karma" which was read a couple of weeks ago and has provoked several questions about karma since that reading.

Barbara talks about the idea of being caught in a karmic stream as in her encounter with the woman Joan/Miriana, and how we can choose, by paying attention, to pull ourselves out of the karmic stream.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. Good evening and my love to you all. I hear the last question and will speak to it. I want to first address the terms "balance" and "release." To balance

karma means to find forgiveness, to assume responsibility, to know that for which you are responsible and also that for which you are not responsible. To release it is to know it is already balanced and I don't have to lug it around anymore. Now I release it.

We have spent years on forgiveness meditation, on awareness work, looking to understand what you were responsible for and to open yourself to responsibility, to balance. Now I want to work on release. We're going to do this guided meditation.

Meditation

(Dots (...) indicate pause.)

Aaron: I would like you to bring into your mind some situation which created tension for you, but in which there is clearly nothing to fear. It may be a big dog in your neighborhood whom you walk past on occasion and whom everyone has told you is friendly, but there's contraction and fear when you pass it. It may be that visit to the dentist or doctor. Fill in with your own example.

Allow yourself to remember this situation and what you felt ... Allow yourself to feel the contractedness ... Feeling fear ...

Now we're going to do this release practice ... As much as is possible, I want you to feel yourselves sitting in a column of light ... See if you can feel that light as a cloak around your shoulders ... and penetrating the crown chakra ... entering your body ...

For those of you who are not visually inclined, you may hear this vibration as a cosmic Ommm ... In one way or another, see if you can feel that very high vibration of sound or light ... allow yourself to rest in it ...

Come back to the thought of the dog ... the dentist ... or whatever the situation may be ... You may see or hear the discordance of that contraction as light or sound ... against this perfect light ... perfect sound vibration, Ommm ...

As much as is possible, relax your body into this perfect light or sound ... Rest in it ... allowing awareness to expand ... from the personal into the impersonal ... Look down on this being who you are ... See this being cloaked in light ... and within the human with its fear contraction ...

Look at the whole scene ... Here is the human who has been invaded in one way or another, countless times in its life ... so that the mere thought of sitting helpless in this dentist's chair with steel instruments in its mouth creates a rebound contraction of energy ... Is this human safe in this moment? ... Is anything bad going to happen to it? ... Who is it going to happen to? ... Is it old mind memory? ... Even if there is some pain or discomfort, can there simply be space made for that discomfort ... no need to change it or get rid of it ... just seeing it and being with it as it is ... this moment of discomfort? ...

Can you see the contraction as old baggage? ... I repeat, no getting-rid-of ... We're not getting rid of the contraction because it's uncomfortable or even because it's old, with that held as judgment against it ... we're letting it go because we clearly don't need it ... it's old baggage ... Seeing that ... make the simple decision, let it go ... simply release it ... Breathe it out ... forcefully ... With the in breath, draw in clear light,

clarifying that energy stream ... Breathe out the contractedness again ... Breathe in clear light ... And again ...

Releasing that which is no longer needed ... Defendedness served its purpose once ... now it is old baggage ... Release it ... The same may true for a sense of unworthiness ... or greed and holding ... Once they served a purpose, helping this being you were to feel safe ... Now it is old baggage ... Where do you fix your focus ... on the wrinkled sheet of paper ... or on the always perfect sheet within the wrinkled sheet? ...

Breathe it out ... audibly, if you like ... releasing with an "ahhh" ... Draw in that perfect light ... rest in it ... Send it out ... release it ... ahhh ... letting go ... Feel that burden lift ... Breathing in light ... Focusing on the clear light ... drawing it in ... Draw it in ... allowing focus to shift from the old mind which is released to the perfect light ... Please continue on your own ...

(Pause for several minutes.)

(Bell.) (Bell.) (Bell.)

Last month, we offered a four-step process in which distorted energy was released through guru meditation, through aligning yourself with the light of a great master or guru, and finding your own perfection within the perfection of that being. This is a parallel practice but, instead of using the guru, you use your own light, your own divinity. If the guru practice is more useful to you, that's fine. For some people, the personification of that light is a help. At that time, we did not speak about it as related to release of karma, so that is new tonight, but it's the same practice which some of you have been doing in these two months since we introduced it.

So, yes, on the relative plane you must do it the tedious way. You must practice over and over with awareness, seeing where you are caught and balancing that karma. And then you come to the understanding, it's all been illusion, in the same way that the whole relative plane is illusion, and I can release the whole thing. But only after balancing it and finding that there's no more aversion to it.

In answer to the question, is this whole "karmic deal" cruel? It is never punishment. If it's seen as punishment, yes, it's cruel. When it's understood as opportunity to learn, offered you constantly at your own pace, then it's very wonderful. Life always gives you the opportunity to practice.

What of this idea, if Barbara tensed, she was creating new karma there in the dentist's chair? But it doesn't matter how many times she does it. Ten, twenty, seven hundred. Eventually, she's going to get the idea, as she did, this is old baggage. And then it's balanced and released and that's it. So this idea of accumulating "bad" karma is somewhat of a myth. I say somewhat because, yes, if you kill one person or five hundred, there is a difference in what's needed to balance that. You've got a lot more balancing to do if you've killed five hundred. But it's still there to teach you: "I am responsible. And then I balance it and then I release it."

You have been sitting for a long time. We're by no means finished with this subject of karma. I'm going to pause here for a break. I would very much like to hear your questions after the break. I thank you for your attention. That is all.

(Break.)

Questions

C1: Aaron was saying that karma was illusion on the ultimate plane, but it's not illusion on the relative plane. That's the part that still confuses me. It seems like it should be real or not.

Barbara: Aaron is saying that anger is illusion on the ultimate plane, but here on the relative plane we experience our anger or fear or whatever. Remember Aaron's statement that fear is a distortion of love. On the ultimate plane we have that clear energy which is love. When we move into the distortion of self, our energy contracts around that self and creates the illusion of a solid fear or anger or greed or whatever. As we're experiencing them they seem real so that we must relate to them on the relative plane with compassion and awareness and so on. On the ultimate plane, they're not real, but we still need to practice with them. It's the same balancing and releasing. If you don't balance it, if you just release it, then there's usually getting-rid-of. Aaron asks for discussion and then he'll talk to the group.

C1: Is it illusion?

Barbara: Aaron is saying it's illusion, but with each incarnation we willingly enter the illusion.

(Group sharing about experiences with the meditation.)

C1: I do something similar in daily meditation and it feels real good for awhile. But then the old fears come back, and sometimes I can shift easily back to the higher plane and sometimes it's not so easy. But I haven't experienced releasing it forever.

Barbara: Aaron is saying that one doesn't need to release it forever. The distortion keeps getting thinner. The light keeps getting clearer. But you do have to be persistent. He's saying think about how long it took you to accumulate that distortion. It won't take nearly as long to clarify it. He promises.

C2: I can experience the higher vibration and the higher contraction. I find it very easy to distinguish those experiences and to feel them. During the meditation, I had the thought, "Oh, now I can get rid of this jealousy." And immediately it stopped working. But I'm a bit confused because it feels like getting-rid-of. It's releasing, but I would appreciate some clarification on the difference.

Barbara: What Aaron has told me when I have had the same experience was to note the aversion and be aware of the aversion as the next predominant mind movement, the next contraction. Ask yourself the same questions: what is this aversion? Am I really safe?

C2: I'm not talking about aversion.

Barbara: What was the "get-rid-of" referring to?

C2: The feeling of tightness around the experience.

Barbara: Okay, that tightness is a form of aversion, the physical sensation of wanting to get rid of the jealousy. Feeling aversion, it is predominant in this moment. You shift your focus from the contraction you were releasing to the aversion. Ask yourself the same questions about the aversion: Am I really safe? Can I just permit this feeling of aversion?

Is it just old fear that says I've got to get rid of uncomfortable feelings and hold onto comfortable feelings?

C2: I wasn't asking about fear but jealousy. So my fear and aversion to it came up and I said, "Oh, getting-rid-of ..." It blended together with the jealousy

Barbara: And a thought arose, "I'll be rid of the jealousy." You note there is aversion to the jealousy; with the arising of aversion you do the same thing as you were doing with jealousy. Once there's space on the relative plane for the aversion and it's okay—there's just the aversion, that's just the experience of this moment, but it's old baggage, I don't need it—then you release it. Do the same thing with the aversion. And then if there was a contraction that you were working with originally, like jealousy, go back to that after the aversion is released. Or if the aversion stays, just know there is aversion. There's nothing to get rid of. No fixation on it; it'll go when it's ready.

C2: Basically, the work would be to shift focus from releasing the original fear to releasing the clinging to getting-rid-of.

Barbara: First to just knowing there is such clinging. Then, when it's balanced, you can release it. Aaron says, remember you are not getting rid of the aversion. Notice the desire to get rid of the aversion. That's where the question, "Who wants to get rid of the aversion?" comes in. In this moment I don't need to get rid of the aversion. It's okay that it's here. I can just be a little uncomfortable with this aversion. Then I'm ready to release it.

C2: First, notice the aversion. Let it be there in the light. Then when it's loose ...

Barbara: It's just like your meditation practice where, if there was fear and then aversion to fear, you see the aversion to fear as separate from the fear itself. You work with it in this situation with this release process.

C2: Thank you.

F: My mind has a little difficulty with the practice, but it is a very powerful practice. I experience the release like loosening a knot. The knot is still there but it's lighter and looser. The light is very strong and soothing, but I have a hard time with it.

Barbara: I think what you're experiencing relates to what we talked about in meditation class on Monday. We want to get rid of this stuff both because part of us aspires to clarify our energy and to respond and live in more loving and skillful ways, and also because it's uncomfortable and we want to get rid of it. Fearful and loving motivation are both present. But also, we've created it in the first place for a defense of some sort to help us feel safe. So, when you say you have a hard time with this, I think you're getting into the contradiction, "I want to get rid of it, but I want to hold onto it." Maybe that's what you need to look at and work with, first with vipassana and eventually with the release process, just feeling confusion. Is this old confusion? Who is confused? Do I need the distortion of this confusion anymore? Can I release that?

F: I also think the mind stuff comes from feeling that it's just in my mind and that's not a real release.

Barbara: It's just concept?

F: Yes. But it is powerful anyway.

Barbara: Can you see that the *concept* "It's just concept" is a shield against the experience? It's part of the resistance.

F: Yes.

Barbara: Label it "resistance," touch it with gentle awareness, and keep going. Can there be equanimity with resistance, no force to let it go? It will dissolve when it's ready.

D: My question is similar to what C2 was asking originally. I try Aaron's four-step release process, but I find that my releasing is usually a desire to get rid of something uncomfortable. Is what Aaron means by "release" really a willingness to not hold on anymore and release is not an act of conscious will? Is this the essence of Aaron's message here, that we no longer need the old mind patterns?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Precisely, D. It must grow out of a willingness not to hold on. But the willingness not to hold on grows out of a place of deep wisdom and clarity that sees there was nothing to hold onto in the first place, nor anybody to do the holding. This relates to what Barbara was saying to F: As long as there is somebody there, holding on or not holding on, you're caught back into that solid self and its prior ways of defending. Then you can look at that and simply say, "Defending ..."

There's nothing bad about defending, it simply gets you stuck. It's like walking in the mud. You want to get from here to Point B and there's a muddy swamp. There are a few paths through it. You can walk deep in the mud, drawing your feet out between each step, or you can find the path. The mud route is neither good nor bad, but it takes more energy, is harder work.

When there is somebody defending, all you need to know is "Defending." Each time these old mind thoughts come up, they're a gift. They're another place to practice, and another, and another. Here it is again, and again, and again. Barbara asked C1, how long has it taken you to create these patterns? It's like doing an arithmetic workbook. Do you want to do one problem a day or a page a day or a chapter a day? Keep at it. Each time something comes up, note "defending" or "aversion." Just watch it and let wisdom mind cut through it. Illusion. Old mind. Release it. The thought is nothing to be afraid of. Do you understand? (Yes.)

There is a story that Barbara and I have been discussing this week, a Greek myth, the myth of Sisyphus, a Greek king. Through various bits of mischief and trickery, he found himself in a situation where he finally died and, according to the myth, was given an eternal punishment where he had to push a rock up a hill, a large boulder. Every time it got to the top, it rolled back down.

I asked Barbara, what is the suffering in that? Is it in the act of pushing the rock, or is it in one's expectations and opinions about pushing the rock? I would like all of you to look at this myth this week, reflect on it and the ways it fits into your own life. Are you pushing a rock up a hill? Are you doing it with the expectation that it's going to stay there, so there's a sense of failure each time it doesn't stay? What is your relationship to this pushing the boulder up the hill? You get out of bed each morning and you start to work on your boulder. Can that be okay? Can there eventually develop a deep joy and even a deep sense of peace just doing what needs to be done, free of old opinions about it?

This relates very directly to this release process and the sense of self that we're talking about, self who gets caught into the release process so that it becomes getting-rid-of or holding-on. I'm not going to talk more about the myth now. We'll talk about it next week. I would ask you each to watch that in your life. Are there further questions?

D: I have a question about the analogies that Aaron has been using. One analogy is the wrinkled sub-light body. Aaron said a few weeks ago that we reach up and wrinkle it. Then he introduced the analogy of the mirror on the sub-light body. Are the wrinkles and the mirror the same thing?

C2: And, when we are reflecting the light back up, how do we clean off the mirror? How does that work?

Aaron: I am Aaron. May I make a shift in the analogy? Let's put the mirror aside and replace it with a clear piece of glass. If the glass is clean, the light from in front and behind it can pass through it. If the glass is dirty, the dust on the glass tends to serve as a reflecting surface. The light can't pass through the dust, it bounces off the dust.

Visualize, as best you are able, this stream energy. I ask Barbara to draw something here. *(Barbara does this, with a drawing of several objects, sub-light body, and a stream of dots between each object and sub-light body. Some streams of dots are condensed, some loose .)*

Barbara: From Aaron's perspective the energy we're sending out looks more or less like this. There are places where it's perfectly clear, places where there are contractions and it draws together in a density. And, then, as the contraction opens out in the energy we're sending up, there's more clarity, it goes from black to gray, in a sense. Aaron is saying, if you can, picture millions of particles of dust. As the contraction opens out, the particles of dust are less dense. But there's still contraction. And here's another contraction. *(Barbara adds to her drawing.)* So, we're sending up these areas of clarity and of contraction.

C2: While Aaron is working with this, how are all the wrinkles of the paper related?

Aaron: I am Aaron. These are all analogies for what I see. Let me simply describe that. Your energy manifests itself as light of different density. Some of it is very clear light, completely free of distortion. That which is distorted I see almost as you would see an accumulation of dust motes, bits of density, bits of shadow. The more contracted it is, the more turmoil that particular bit of light is in.

Coming back to this first analogy, if you can visualize that turmoil as dust motes, it rises up and settles on the glass. Then it falls back down. Another way of saying it is you reach up and wrinkle the paper. I use the paper analogy because of the value that you can clearly see the perfect sheet of paper lies within the wrinkled sheet. It's a bit harder to see that the dust-free window lies within the dusty window. Pay some attention to it and you can see that, too.

At that point you know, the wrinkled sheet is illusion, the dusty window is illusion. Then, instead of agonizingly ironing out the wrinkles or wiping the glass clean, you just move through the illusion, through fog into clarity. This moment of clarity is what we're after. When C1 asked, how many times does she have to do it, in relative reality practice,

over and over and over again. But in ultimate reality there is that moment of clear seeing. Resting in that clarity, you are home; there is nothing more to be done.

We've been introducing this space of pure mind all year, in one way or another, through breathing practices and other methods. Resting in pure mind, you see the wrinkled sheet of paper and know it's perfect; it doesn't matter if it appears wrinkled. It doesn't matter if the dusty window appears dusty, the perfect clear window is still there. Therefore, I just push through the dust. I fix my gaze on the perfect light body template and not on the dusty window. Does that answer your question? (Yes.)

If you have some pleasant weather this week, I offer you a second bit of homework. Go out and lie in the grass or in a comfortable chair, gazing at the sky, and simply breathe. Send your breath out, way out, into the universe. Breathe the universe back into you. Let go of your limits. In that space of unlimitedness, see if you can discover this pure mind I keep speaking of.

What we're doing here is much like looking at an optical illusion. Some time ago someone brought in an optical illusion with a series of dots. If you looked at it just so, you could see a face in it. Some people could see it, some people couldn't see it. For those who couldn't see it, the dots were pointed out: Look, here's the nose, here are the eyes. Barbara couldn't see it. She looked and she looked and she couldn't see it. But here's the nose, here are the eyes. You all know how an optical illusion is; suddenly you get it. After that, even though there might be a moment of confusion when you look and say, "Where is it?" you never lose it again.

This is what we're doing. I'm pointing out to you, here it is, here is pure mind. I'm pointing it out to you in myriad ways so that each of you may find the tool that works best for you to catch it. Then you are never going to mistake the dusty window or the wrinkled paper for ultimate reality again. When you see the dusty window or the wrinkled paper, you're going to say, "That is the relative experience, and beyond that is the perfect light body template of the perfect sheet of paper, the perfect clear window, the perfect light body template for my physical, emotional and mental bodies. It's all there. Can I learn to see it? Once I see it, can I learn to rest in it? That's all we're doing. Are there questions?

Barbara: Aaron is saying the first step is learning to see it. Some of you have done that, and some of you are still struggling with it, as I was with the optical illusion. The second step, once you see it and stabilize the ability to rest in it, is to work with it, doing things like this release of karma, of distortion of energy, clarifying the energy in the physical and emotional bodies in that way. He doesn't want to wait until everybody sees it to go ahead, and it's okay to practice this process even if you don't clearly see it. It will all come together.

Private, April 19, 1994

Aaron to J and P (excerpts)

Aaron: I am Aaron ... (*Reference is made to the private session with K on energy streams, 94/03/25P.*) There are two parts to the working with this, J. The relative and the ultimate. First, there must not be a getting rid of fear. You understand that. There is the process that you are skillfully doing, of making space for the fear, offering compassion to the fear. But there is not dwelling in ownership of the fear, simply seeing how it has arisen out of past misunderstandings. Seeing it for distortion, there is no longer need to reenact it, but a willingness to let it go. Then we return to the same ultimate practice of light. Your practice with this with emotional distortion will facilitate your practice with it with physical distortion.

I spoke of the light body which is projection of the Source, of God, and of the sub-light body which is a projection of the light body. There is an energy stream which flows through the sub-light body and into the object. We spoke of the sub-light body as being like a piece of glass with heavy emotion as a backing that sticks to the back so that when that fear energy is allowed to rise up the energy stream, it hits that mirror of the sub-light body and reflects right back down.

One can endlessly practice the distortion. One can become very adept at sending love to it. But after a while, one begins to wonder: Why does it keep coming back? You may be very skilled at inviting it in for tea, but it's still discomforting, and there's a sense that it doesn't reflect the deepest truth of you which is fearlessness.

It is at this point that you begin to work with the energy stream itself, seeing, hearing, feeling it, even tasting it—whichever sense is most potent for you. I will use the term "seeing" so as to avoid the repetition of "seeing, hearing or feeling," but please know that it can be done with any or several senses. Seeing the distortion of fear as it rises up the energy stream, one literally smoothes out the distortion. One allows oneself to see through that glass of the sub-light body. One might almost see that there are two parallel waves arising—one is distorted and one is clear—and one makes the choice to follow the clear one.

The effort here is focused on carrying you through to the ever-perfect, the ever-fearless, reconnecting to that space in yourself. Then the energy stream carries that fearless and ever-perfect image back down. It has an extraordinarily quieting effect on the fear, like the calming and heartening effect of dawn after a long dark night. In the darkness you wonder if dawn will ever come. The sky begins to get light, but you still doubt whether the sun will come. Then there is that first ray of sun over the horizon and all the darkness is dissipated. In that moment of first light, you **know** the light is truth.

This does not mean there has not been darkness, but the darkness was only apparent absence of light. Once you know that with certainty, you can abide the darkest night with the deep truth: "The light still exists; I am simply not fully in it as yet." You can open yourself to it. The effect of this is to dispel the contractions of fear. They simply cease. It takes time and patience. It takes effort. It's not going to happen with one quick

changing of this energy stream, but it's the same work we spoke about with physical distortion. Do you have questions? (No.)

I ask Barbara to read part of a poem. (*Excerpt from Song 1 of Flight of the Garuda, by Lama Shabkar, Tsogdruk Rangdrol.*)

In both samsara and nirvana the renown of the enlightened state
Is widely heard like thunder throughout the sky.
As this always remains within the minds of beings of the six realms
How amazing that one is never separate from it even for an instant!
Not knowing that this state is within oneself,
How amazing that one searches for it elsewhere.
Although it is clearly manifest like the radiant disc of the sun,
How amazing that so few see it.
Having no father and mother, one's mind is the true Buddha,
How amazing that it knows neither birth nor death!
No matter how much happiness and sorrow is experienced,
How amazing that it is never impaired or improved even in the slightest!
How amazing that without being fabricated,
This mind, which is unborn and primordially pure,
Is spontaneously present from the very beginning!
This self awareness is naturally free from the very first,
How amazing that it is liberated by just resting—
At ease in whatever happens!

Aaron: I am Aaron. This which we speak of is pure mind, pure awareness, Christ or Buddha consciousness. When we use the metaphor of the sun and the light body, which is the sunbeam, a projection of the sun, this pure mind is the sunbeam. How different this pure mind is from the content of mind, which is what you often mistake for mind: the highs and lows, the joy and anger, the planning, the worrying, the remembering. That is not mind but the workings of mind, its content, which comes and goes. Pure awareness is the sunbeam.

Let me phrase it in this way: It is the place where you can come closest to the experience of the sunbeam and of the sun itself while in physical incarnation. In deep stages of meditation, you may come to that place of pure mind, not calling it pure mind but perhaps God, nirvana, emptiness. But in your walking and waking state, you can continually tune into that space of pure awareness. The more you are able to move from a space of connectedness with that sunbeam, the more your actions and words reflect the sun rather than the distortion. Do you understand? Do you have questions?

P: Aaron, when you speak of pure mind, is that the same as pure body?

Aaron: I am Aaron. The body is a manifestation of the mind. When there is distortion incorporated into the plan for the incarnation, this distortion manifests itself into physical distortion in the body. The most concise way I can say it is that you think it and then you manifest it into physical reality. The physical light body template has within it the potential perfect physical manifestation. The emotional light body template has the potential perfect emotional manifestation, fully open to joy and sorrow. Sorrow is not an

emotion of fear but an emotion of love. The mental light body template is essentially the pure mind aspect and the spirit light body is the soul. I. The soul is not synonymous with pure mind. It transcends pure mind. It is your own personal projection of God, but totally impersonal.

When I say "your own personal projection," it's just one of the sunbeams. Visually, perhaps, one could see it as if this sun, this metaphorical sun, were pulsating, sending out waves of energy in just the same way as the ocean pushes its waves against the shore. Each wave hitting the beach is a projection of the ocean. It's no different in any way than the ocean itself. The white froth on the wave is also of the same chemical matter as the ocean; and yet, it has a different appearance because there's much air sucked into it. You might think of that as the physical manifestation. The motion of the wave, the tumult of it—we would think of that as the emotional and mental projections. When you take out the white froth and the motion of the wave, what's left? There's nothing there that's not the ocean. In just the same way, there is nothing in the soul that is not God.

The mind is a projection of the soul. Emotion a further projection. The physical body a further projection. The physical body is a projection of each of those that comes before it. Thus, the physical body is a projection of the mind. When pure mind offers the perfect physical body to project, then that manifestation becomes a perfect mirror of the mind, but it is not the mind. When mind offers distortion, that is what is manifest. Do you understand? Do you have questions?

(Question not on tape.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. I partially interpret your question as a request to understand how to work more skillfully with the discordances that arise, and also, to know why they arise. The present physical body was not created as a projection of pure mind, but was a projection of much disharmony. It is a reflection of past karma. While the body of the infant may seem perfect, within it are all the possibilities for distortion which are inherent in that mind-body stream because of past karma. If the infant were able immediately to clarify old karma by these cutting-through-ultimate-reality techniques, it would grow up to be completely free of physical distortion. Of course, the infant can't do that. All it can do is move into its karma, experience it, eventually hope to come to understand it and finally release it.

This body is your place of learning, so you're not going to be able to keep it distortion-free. However, understanding the arising of the distortion, understanding the karmic stream from which it flows, and then being able to work with these light practices of moving back into the perfect light body, will tremendously ease the distortion.

That doesn't mean you're a failure if you can't do it. And some distortions have gone further than others. Barbara cannot physically clear the distortion which has killed the nerves and prevents her hearing. Even if she completely clears that distortion, she can't restore the nerves. I am not saying that it cannot happen, but she, in herself, cannot affect that.

On the other hand, in the hospital (*Barbara has just spent 10 days in the hospital*), because she was able to clearly see the distortion and then spent the days from Wednesday to Saturday basically doing what we just spoke about with J, spending

much of her time seeing the distortion and working with it, over and over and over again, she was able to clarify that distortion very quickly. If she had not been able to do that herself, if she had needed surgery, that's not a sign that she's a failure. It's only a sign where more work needs to be done.

For you then, P, the places where there is pain and distortion in the physical body are places that are optimum for working with this energy process. But please know you are not a failure if you work with this and there's still distortion. Simply relax into the distortion. The distortion comes from two places. One is the physical distortion itself and one is the emotional distortion created around your fight with the distortion. You must relax the physical and the emotional. They are equally important.

In his book, Healing Into Life and Death, Stephen Levine tells of a friend who had always wanted to build a house in the woods. It was his dream. He was the survivor of a serious motorcycle accident, had bad pain in his back and his legs. Then one day he was given enough wood to build his house. A wonderful gift. But he felt, "My body just can't do this." He finally decided, "No, I won't be stopped. I'm going to build my house." He remembered that when he sang, his back didn't bother him so much. So he sang. He sang hymns to God. And Stephen says he built a temple instead of a mere house.

This is another way of working with the distortion, offering love to that physical distortion. It doesn't quite fit into the relative or the ultimate practice. It's a blend of both. As he sang, from my perspective, he made space for the pain emotionally instead of contracting around the pain, thus offering release of the emotional contraction. He allowed himself to connect with the divine in himself, and thus opened the pathway to the pure physical light body, allowing many of the physical distortions to release themselves, thereby alleviating some of the pain. So, it's a broad process. Do you have questions?

Wednesday, April 20, 1994

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. My primary focus tonight is not to inundate you with further technical material, nor even to practice the use of that technical material offered two weeks ago so much as to talk more about how you may use it as part of your whole spiritual practice. This is just one part; it's a very valuable tool, and we will give you the opportunity to practice it here, but it is just one part.

As most of you know, Barbara spent last week in the hospital. Part of the time she had severe pain and was feeling much fear. She had a blockage of the intestine, probably caused by a twist in the intestine due to severe vomiting from viral cause. For several days there was very severe pain at times. Barbara was aware that the fear was not so much at the idea of surgery itself, nor fear that she would not survive the surgery. Mostly she was just afraid of the intensity of the pain that she would experience. She was aware of the vulnerability of this soft tissue area of the body. It's a place where many of you center your contractions of fear.

While Barbara's energy is relatively unblocked, while lying in the hospital bed she was able to see the places where she does block her energy, where she attempts to be controlling, to be safe. She experienced very directly how the blockage of the bowel was symbolic for that greater sense of holding and controlling. None of this is new to any of you.

You may not manifest the symptom of a blocked bowel, you may not even be constipated. Perhaps your constipation takes another form than in the bowel—a clenched throat that makes open speech difficult, or stuffed nose or sinuses. There are many parts of the body that can constrict. The question simply is: given the appearance of such symptoms, how do we work with them skillfully? It doesn't have to be severe enough to send you to the hospital. When you become aware of the arising of fear that leads to the desire to control in order to stay safe, what are the techniques, on every level, that you can use to help to work skillfully with the fear and allow the release of it?

As you note such closing in the body it's very important to remember that while there is a mind-body connection and the symptom has not appeared for no reason, still, you did not cause it conscious terms. It's not something that you turned off and now can turn on, or vice versa. Several people asked Barbara, "Why did you cause bowel blockage?" Can you see the guilt trip that gives one? "Why did I cause cancer? Why did I cause AIDS? Why did I cause heart attack?" As if you could decide why you caused it and then go about fixing it. If this was a loved one, a child perhaps, and they had a symptom of severe pain, would you ask them, "Why did you cause it in yourself?" or would you just simply hug them and love them? The question is not "Why did I cause it?" but "Now that it is manifest, what can it teach me? How can I work most lovingly with it?"

The first step in working with a physical distortion, then, is not to ask yourself, "Why did I cause it?" but simply to note that this hurt part of you needs love. Just that. Are you

withholding love there? Perhaps through metta (loving kindness) meditation, you can begin to offer that part of you more love. That's the first step.

When there is an ill or injured part of the body we tend to separate that area from ourselves, as if it were only the stomach or sprained ankle that needs healing. We isolate it, which is another way of keeping ourselves safe, by disowning the hurt part. That separation from the whole creates further stress for the injured part of the body. So part of the healing of any ill or injured area is to see that it has been separated and to invite it back in. Part of offering it love is to allow it to re-enter the heart.

When your heart is open to that stressed or distorted part of the body the heart begins to know, intuitively, what that hurt part is saying. It has a message. You can not hear the message as long as you hold it separate from yourself. This is when Barbara began to hear the message. Although she is not generally blocked and fearful and controlling, she could see the places where she was. It does not mean that the bowel blockage happened because she is controlling, but the bowel blockage gives her the opportunity to look at the places where she is controlling out of fear and to touch those fears with more awareness, to notice the physical contraction in the gut when fear arises that something may not be okay. This leads into deeper health, even without any of the exercises that we've introduced in this transcript of two weeks ago.

In this past week, every time Barbara has felt a cramp in her stomach, and they are relatively frequent because her body is not yet fully healed, that cramp simply became a reminder to ask, "Am I holding tension here? What is the tension about? How can it be touched with deeper love? Is there somewhere that I am not offering myself love, withholding that from myself?" That small cramp is like a mindfulness bell. It rings two or three times an hour. It's a reminder to take a deep breath, to relax the abdomen, to offer it love, and then to look and see if something happened that contracted her energy.

Of course, it may be that the cramp is simply due the bowels not yet having resumed their normal function, that there is food material going through that causes a cramp. But each cramp becomes a reminder to relax, to stay in tune with her body and her heart, and touch any fear or tension with love. I invite you to choose whatever part of your body offers you discomfort; a back that aches at times, sinus headaches, whatever it may be. Can that become a mindfulness bell for you, calling your attention to aversion to that pain, and to separating that part of the body away from the whole? Can you invite it back into your heart?

Some of you may begin to notice an emotion that ties in with that physical pain. It may be as simple as aversion to the pain; feeling anger. Somehow, though, they become cued to come together. That doesn't mean that the anger is causing the pain, but the pain is not really causing the anger. What is causing the anger is the contracting into a personal self that needs to be protected.

What is pain? Can you imagine having a throbbing ankle or hand, or a stiff neck, and sitting completely relaxed and aware that occasionally there is pain, but not needing to fight against the pain? That hatred of the pain and needing to get rid of it solidifies the sense of self: me against my pain. Then you get into a war with it, and each time pain arises it becomes a reminder not to compassion, but to pulling back into your separateness and assuming a fighting stance. We see people who begin with a pain in

the back or the foot and they end up with a pain in the shoulder or the gut because of that fighting stance. I'm not suggesting that pain is pleasant, but it is an invitation to pay attention and to invite that place of pain back into your heart.

The same holds true, exactly, for emotional pain. We work with it in the same way. You can be burning with a pain in the gut caused by the flu or some such, and you can be burning with jealousy, desire or rage. The more you get in touch with the physical and emotional contractions of the body the more you can begin to use these as gifts to deepen your awareness and to teach you to soften and keep your energy expanded outward, open to the world.

This work is fundamental. Everything in this transcript can be terribly distorted and misused if it is taken as a tool to escape pain. Ultimate reality is not an escape from relative reality, but a parallel dimension in which you may rest and find deeper truth as you work skillfully with relative reality. They must go side by side. With that in mind, Barbara did not begin to work with these light practices until, perhaps, the middle of the nine days spent in the hospital. This first four days were spent, literally, breathing one breath at a time. Breathing in and aware of pain, breathing out and aware of pain. Breathing in and aware of fear, breathing out and aware of fear. Breathing in and aware of aversion to fear or to pain. Breathing in and smiling to the pain. Allowing it to be there with each breath. Allowing connection, as much as is possible, to the place of pain. Acknowledging the part of herself that wanted to disassociate with the pain; how much she wanted to escape. And opening her heart to the human who simply wanted out, who felt, "Wake me when it's over."

After four days of that, Barbara experienced a very strong sense of surrender. I will let Barbara tell you in her own words how that came about, if you are interested; it's not part of my story here. Only, that she did experience a profound letting go.

We recently spoke of the myth of King Sisyphus who was given the task to push a huge boulder up a hill. Each day he would push it to the top. At night it rolled its way back down. He had been condemned to an eternity of this routine. My homework to you was to ask you to look at this myth in your own lives. After the break tonight I hope to hear some of what you found as you explored the myth.

Barbara found, quite literally, that when the boulder got to the top and rolled down she would groan and say, "Oh no, I've got to push it back up again." Of course you've got to push it back up again. Your incarnation consists of pushing the boulder up the hill; it's never going to stay there. Everything is impermanent. As soon as you think you've got it set and you blink, it's gone. You know that in your lives. You can not count on good health tomorrow, for yourselves or for your loved ones. You can not count on the fact that your job will be here next week. You can not count on the fact that your home won't burn down or be struck by a tornado. When we ask the question, "Is that okay?" what does that really mean?

It was clear to Barbara that as painful as this abdominal situation was, it was also a gift. She laid there those first four days, simply watching the struggle to get the boulder to stay put. Then she experienced a sense of profound surrender, a very deep realization that it was perfectly okay for the boulder to roll back down; that she'd never had to make it stay put in the first place. The thought it needed to stay was illusion. All that she had to do was continue to push it.

She found at that point that it rolled itself back up the hill just as it rolled itself down, just by the matter of her being, taking a breath. She didn't really have to push it up, to exert great effort, only to be willing to watch it roll up and down and allow that she was not in control. Then the pushing became a joy. There was no longer fear in it.

Take something as simple as making a cup of tea. You want a cup of tea but there is somebody in the next room waiting to talk to you who is very impatient. You can feel their anger all the way around to the kitchen. The pot won't boil, so you stand there saying, "Hurry up, hurry up." You're thinking that maybe you should forgo your tea; feeling guilt. Here is trying to make the boulder stay on the top, to fix the impatience and guilt as you fix the tea. Knowing that a cup of tea will help you listen, you can spend two or three minutes simply breathing, aware of your weight on your feet. You may choose to wipe out the sink, or look out the window, or, perhaps, just to stand. And it can become a very peaceful time. During that time, compassion may arise for the impatient one and also for the one who felt guilt. Can you see that you have the choice?

This surrender that I speak of is not a giving up, not saying that you won't make any effort. It is understanding the deep joy in the effort; the wonder of pushing a boulder up the hill; feeling the strength of your muscles; seeing what rolls out from underneath it with each turn; feeling the cool breeze or the sunshine; being alive. It's not hell if you don't ask the boulder to stay at the top.

Half way through the week, Barbara saw how she was holding this boulder of "no surgery" at the top, as if she could control it, as if she were somehow going to magically open the bowel obstruction. But she can't control it. She can pray, she can relax; otherwise, she can't control it. She came to see that she did not know what she needed most. If she needed to experience the surgery, then that's what she needed. It would offer pain, yes, and also its own lessons. And then she relaxed and simply handed it to God, with a deep sense, "I trust this whole thing, Thy will be done."

At that point, when she was able to let go of having to make it better, then and only then was she ready to work with this light practice. This is an extraordinarily powerful practice. It acknowledges the physical and emotional causes of the distortion, including such as simple genetic causes. Perhaps you have a weak back because you inherited it from a parent. It acknowledges the multiple causes. It sees the way that distortion has been bounced back and forth with an identity to it: "I am my weak back. I am my trick knee, or my sore throat." It realizes that is never who you were, and then you may begin to work very directly with this light/energy practice.

Because Barbara is a highly visual person, her practice was to see the energy stream from the physical manifestation up to this sub-light body. She could see the distortion that was being sent up, and the way that distortion projected back down. She could see that the distortion was old habit, perhaps originated in this mind/body when she was a child of five or six and had an acute appendicitis and emergency surgery. Seeing that she had held fear in her belly, she simply knew, "I don't need to do that anymore."

She was able to see through to the perfect light body template, where there was no distortion, no contraction. Mind does manifest matter. When you can cut through that distortion into the pure mind and into the light body template, you bring the potential

for the light body perfection to come back into the physical body. Of course, it takes the physical body time to manifest it, if it can do so at all. Most humans cannot manifest new limbs or nerves. This is simply beyond your capabilities and you are not a failure when it can not be done. You need not create the actuality, only open to the potential and let it carry itself however it will from there.

We're told that your body completely restores its cellular structure every seven years. So from the time that you completely rest in the perfect light body template for one body part, if there were not any further contracting of that part of the body then in seven years it would be identical to the light body template. Of course, that perfection does not happen because the old habits do not die so easily. What happens it that there is some amount of healing, perhaps considerable healing. This practice must be used however, only after the relative work has been done. Only after there is a sense of being willing to be present with the distortion without need to get rid of it, but simply to observe it and make space for it. Then you can see where it's old habit, and feeling the readiness to let it go, you do so. It's not getting rid of, but letting go of that which is not needed.

What I'd like to do now is lead you on a guided meditation. We're continually doing slightly different meditations here of opening into the light body, into the pure awareness, or God-self, Christ or Buddha consciousness. I hope that you are practicing some of these techniques at home as well. What does it mean to rest in pure mind? To rest in the divine self? As we start this meditation I'd ask you to sit up and take several deep breaths to refresh your energy. We're not going to work with physical distortion tonight, but thought, just thought. I want you to see the distinction between the content of mind and mind itself. What is mind? This is something else we can talk about after the break.

(Three dots (...) indicate pause.)

Was your mind born someplace? Sitting here I'd like you to see if you can find where mind originated ... Is mind born with the body? Of course you can not answer that with certainty because you do not remember before your birth. What is this that I am calling mind? Its essence is the most divine aspect of yourself. We've used the metaphor here of the child's drawing of the sun with little triangles that project out, each being a sunbeam. Each of your light bodies is just such a sunbeam. It is nothing but a projection of the sun; nothing but a projection of the divine ...

Visualize a line from the sun, the source, down to where the sun hits the ground and forms a patch of light ... That patch of light is not the sun itself; it is the sun in conjunction with the earth, and yet it is very directly of the sun. When I say to distinguish between the content of mind and of mind itself, it is the same distinction as the sun next to the light the sun lays on the ground. Mind's content can not exist independent of mind, but it is not mind ...

Look for mind. If it's not the thought, what is it? ... If you're a visual person focus on that image of the light line projection from God through the light body and straight into your heart ... Rest in that light ... If you're an auditory person you might hear that energy as a cosmic "Om." And again, rest in that sound-light ... Breathing in, breathing out ... Let thoughts arise ... Even as simple a thought as "hearing Aaron." Stop and analyze this

thought. From where did it arise? Is this mind, or is this the clothing of the mind, the ornament of the mind? ...

When I touch the thought with awareness, does it go? ... As the thought ceases, is there even a momentary connection with that light through any of the senses—seeing it as light, hearing it, or even just feeling its energy? ... Just rest there ... See the next thought arise. The ornament of mind ... Analyze it again ... Seeing that the thought is not the mind itself, let it go. And rest in what's left ... Pure awareness ... Sometimes we can jar the thought loose from the mind, exposing that pure mind for a moment. We may do it like this ... **Hey!!!** (*very loud*) ... In that silence, in that brief moment, could you see the mind shaken loose from the thought?

If you do not think that you are getting it, that's okay. Be persistent. Bring as much consistent mindfulness as is possible to the question: Can I distinguish mind from the content of mind? ... A time you may find that you can do this is just upon awaking from a dream. It's very clear that the dream content was ornament of mind. Sometimes in that moment of awakening there is a deep clarity, a deep sense of connection to pure awareness ...

(Long pause.)

Some of you may have experienced walking outside on a beautiful day, especially in the spring, when everything is so fresh. It takes your breath away for a moment; thought ceases. What we are attempting to do here is to introduce you to this pure light body. When there is physical or emotional distortion, after you have worked on the relative plane with the distortion, making space for it and opening your heart to it, then you may look and see that this is not who or what you are, and find that you can come to rest in that pure light body and release the distortion. Slowly the energy clarifies; you find that you can manifest your energy with increasing purity, increasing love and joy.

Before we close, with whatever sense you choose to use, once again visualize your choice of metaphor for the Always Perfect—the sun, a personification of God such as Jesus or the Buddha, or that Light and energy which you might call God itself ... Visualize your own light body as projection of that, and a light line running from that source through the light body and straight to your heart ... Expanding inward is another form of expanding outward; now we're expanding inward to that core of divinity within the heart ... Feel it expand ... Feel the power of that energy coming in through the crown chakra and into the heart ... Breathe it in, breathe it out ... Feel the power of that energy and rest there ... If thought arises it is simply the garment of this pure awareness; nothing to be afraid of, nothing to get rid of, just let it be and come back to the light.

We will end here. You do not need to let go of that energy. It is and always has been a part of you. As you move into your break and social time, see if you can maintain awareness of it while you talk to one another. Even further, see if you can maintain awareness of it in those with whom you talk. That is all.

Questions

Question: *(Could not hear start. Speaking of a boulder.)* One big one that is coming to me is an emotional boulder of wanting to be somebody, and looking at discomfort with this . It can be very violent at times.

Barbara: Can you see the difference between seeing “wanting to be somebody” as a boulder that needs to be attended and just opening your heart to the part of you that wants to be somebody without judgment of that? Just letting it be there, as opposed to trying to make it stay at the top of the hill. One of the questions Aaron asked last week was, what makes Sisyphus’ punishment hell? All of this painful stuff—wanting to be somebody, or wanting to get rid of the wanting, wanting a bowel to become unobstructed—we can’t get rid of the wanting, but when we make space for the wanting it just starts to roll up the hill and roll back down, and we just watch it roll. We no longer need to make it stay up at the top. I think that we get into a myth that the boulder is shaped like a round ball with a flat spot, and if we can just get it rolled to the top the right way, with the tiny little flat space on the boulder faced down, it will stay at the top. We just keep doing it over and over, “If only there was some way I could do this.” For me in the hospital, peace began with letting go of the idea that there was some way I could do this. Really coming to understand that I couldn’t open the obstruction; all I could do was attend to the pain as lovingly as was possible.

Aaron: I am Aaron. The delight is that once you make space for the wanting to be somebody, that space opens you to the place where you’re connected to all that is, and you realize that through that connection you’ve always been somebody, but that that somebody is absolutely nobody, and that’s fine. The more you cling to wanting to be somebody the more you separate yourself from your true essence and create the painful illusion of feeling that you’re nobody, because you’ve lost your connection with the divine. That is all.

D: I have been working with these light body practices that Aaron has been giving us. I find that nearly all the time I am really wanting to get rid of something painful, especially when I feel angry. So, it was useful tonight when Aaron talked about the need to work in relative reality first. In fact, he said that ultimate reality and relative reality are parallel. On the other hand ...

Aaron: Parallel is not quite accurate. They are containers, one inside the other. The container of relative reality rests within the container of ultimate reality. That is all.

D: But the point is that I do not get done with relative reality and then move on to ultimate reality exclusively. But on the other hand, is not the point of all of this work to release old mind and old fears? In other words to have them gone. I hesitate to say “get rid of them,” but is not the point of the ultimate reality work to be free of them?

Barbara: The point of the ultimate reality work is to be where we are. We’re always free of it in ultimate reality, but if we’re still stuck in the relative pain that’s where we are. So then the point of the ultimate reality work is simply to open our hearts to the pain without identifying with the pain, without getting fixated on the pain. Aaron once used a metaphor that was helpful to me. He talked about finding a big swamp in our backyards with just slightly visible paths through the swamp where the mud is only ankle deep. We pull on hip wader boots and we’re trudging through the mud. We start

looking for the path where it's only ankle deep; sometimes were able to stay on the path and sometimes we're not. When we're not it's a lot of work to pull our feet out of the mud and keep stepping through. Suddenly we look up and we realize the swamp is only so big and that we can walk out of the swamp completely. But, we're stuck hip deep in muck! First we need to focus on how we're walking in the swamp; are we choosing skillfully to get on to the paths? Then, from the height of the path, we recognize that there is an end to the swamp, there is dry ground.

Aaron: I am Aaron. You also must remember that when you get to dry ground you need to take your boots off. Many of you move into this ultimate practice and find that you truly can rest in this pure light and awareness, but you're still dragging your boots behind you. The heaviness of the mud tends to pull you back down hill into the swamp. In a sense that is the point of this light practice. It's a way of taking the boots off. Becoming aware of the light is becoming aware of the edges of the swamp. Focusing awareness on the pure light body is moving to the edge of the swamp. The continued work with the energy stream and the stream-energy field (I am still not content with this term) is a way of taking off the boots and realizing that you do not need them anymore, that you truly are out of the swamp. Then, if you find your feet with a little bit of mud you just wash it off; no big deal.

Barbara: D has said that it is very likely that he will enter another swamp.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Indeed it is, but when you enter another swamp you only have to get ankle deep to know that you are in a swamp. And to know how to skillfully extricate yourself. It gets easier and easier. You also become more patient with your forays into the swamp and more compassionate to the human the keeps ending up in the swamp. Are you familiar with the poem that Barbara has read in meditation class called Autobiography in Five Chapters? I will ask that it be added to the transcript here.

Autobiography in Five Chapters by Portia Nelson

Chapter One: I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. I'm lost. I'm helpless. It isn't my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter Two: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I can't believe I'm in the same place, but it isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter Three: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it is there. I fall in. It is habit. But my eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault and I get out immediately.

Chapter Four: I walk down the same street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

Chapter Five: I try walking down a different street.

Wednesday, April 27, 1994

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. Tonight I want to talk to you about passion, about what it means to live your lives with passion, and why that is difficult for you. As part of this talk, we will spend a small amount of time on the technical side of it, talking about this energy stream and what happens to it when you are closed and shielded versus when you are open.

There's no one in this room who does not verbally and cerebrally say, "I want to be free, open, expansive and passionate. I want to fully live my life." If this is how you feel, what blocks it? There is also not one of you here who does not protect him or herself. It's not that it's bad to protect, but there are different ways to do so. One aspect of protection grows out of fear. It comes from a closed heart and a need to shield yourself from life, to grasp at security and safety. The other aspect of protection simply grows from wisdom.

I am not advocating that we form a Deep Spring Center Bungi-Jumping Club. In fact, such risk-taking is simply another kind of manifestation of your fear. The need to dramatize some emotion is very much a statement of trying to deny that emotion. Those who are most likely to go off bungi-jumping, or driving racing cars or other high risk pursuits—I won't say it's unilateral—but most of them are denying their fear of death. Those who can open to that fear and not need to live their lives in denial of fear neither need to take risks nor fear taking risks when appropriate.

What is security? Every being wants to feel loved. You want to feel safe, that you will not be hurt, that your needs will be met. Can you assure yourself that tomorrow you will be safe and your needs will be met? Can you assure that better by grasping and protecting than by opening your energy to the flow of love?

A story here. Some of you will have heard this one before. A man is running from a tiger. He comes to the edge of a cliff. Knowing that the tiger will not be able to climb down the sheer rocks, he starts on his way down, holding onto a heavy vine. The tiger is growling at the top. The man is a third of the way down when he looks below and sees at the bottom, there's another tiger. What is he to do? Then two mice appear on a small ledge and they begin to gnaw the vine he's holding onto. He notices on a lower ledge, just near his hand, a number of ripe succulent strawberries growing. He can't reach up to chase the mice, he can't get rid of the tiger above or the tiger below. What is he to do? Very mindfully, he begins to eat and thoroughly enjoy the strawberries.

What does this story mean? You all have tigers chasing you and you all have tigers at the bottom of the cliff, all of you. There is no way to leave this life alive. You can't do it. One way or another you're going to die, you're going to meet a "tiger." The choice is not whether you will die, but whether you will live. Do you hang on that vine saying, "Oh no, how do I get out of this?" or do you live the life that's offered to you? Can you eat the strawberries and enjoy them? This is what passion is.

It's not a matter of giving up. If this man had the means to swing himself off onto a ledge and just sit there and out wait the tigers, then he could ascend or descend. Yes,

of course, to meet his tigers again another day, but one works skillfully with one's tigers. But when one is terrified of one's tigers, one can't live.

What is it that terrifies you most? The answer is going to differ for each of you. Some of you are afraid of failure, of making a fool of yourself. Some are afraid of physical pain. Some persons' greatest fear is failing others, which is a different kind of failure. Some's greatest fear is of losing that which they love. Most of you quake a bit in any of these situations.

Through this and many lifetimes of meeting such situations, you have found ways to keep yourself, what you call secure. My dear ones, of course this security is an illusion, but you've bought into the illusion. If I keep my emotions in check, if I keep enough money in the bank, if I am polite to people and don't step on toes, then I can be secure. That's just a little of it. You each know your own mechanisms for trying to control your environment, for manipulating—and that is not too harsh a word.

I come back here to the idea that there is a difference between that controlling which comes from a place of fear and a struggling to make everything come out just right so this time you'll be safe again, and that controlling which comes from a place of wisdom. You are dependent on a job. Your boss has stolen your ideas in the past, passed them on to his boss saying, "Look what I thought of!" and it angered you. He does it again. There is a difference between denying your anger, or even allowing how angry you are but holding it tightly inward and cursing at this boss under your breath while smiling on the surface, a difference between that and fully knowing how angry you are but making the wise decision, "Right now I cannot speak up and lose my job, but I need to get a different job; the process of his stealing my ideas is not acceptable to me." It's subtle. Can you feel the difference?

In the one place, you are limited by your fear, contracted by it. There's fear and anger, "I'll lose my job, I can't say anything." But there's no compassion for the self who's feeling that pain. Instead, there is strong separation: "He stole this from me. He is hurting me." It's this, "Something outside of myself is hurting me," which contracts you and makes you want to build walls and to find a way to stay safe.

What's really hurting you? At some level, could it be okay that he steals your ideas? Is that too hard to accept? What is hurting you is not his stealing your ideas, which may be discomforting and annoying and dishonest on his part; that's not where the pain is coming from. The pain is coming from your desire to have acclaim yourself for your ideas, to be noticed, to succeed, whatever that means to you. Your pain is coming from your anger that this one has taken your pat on the back.

Again, such anger is not bad—it's just anger—but look how it tears you up. What is it about? Could one envision the scene where another has stolen one's idea and gotten credit for it, and one finds compassion for that being, sees that one's fear that he cannot be creative in himself and has to take from others. That is not telling him it's okay to steal but finding compassion for the contraction and distortion in him which makes him steal.

From this point, the open heart can respond wisely, may make the decision, "I need this job and if I say anything about this, I lose this job; but it's clearly time for me to find a different job." Or may make the decision, "I need to confront him on this, gently."

This may not seem like passion to you. In fact, some of you are questioning, "Isn't the intense anger more passionate?" Let us define the term. What I am calling passion always comes from an open heart. It is an expanding outward of your energy, not a contracting of your energy. When you find your energy contracting and can ask, "What is this contraction about?" then you can begin to touch the place of fear in you, "My needs won't be met, I will not be affirmed for my creativity," whatever it may be. You can begin to touch that with compassion which connects you to the one who has acted in a way that was discomforting to you. Then there's no longer separation.

With separation, passion is not possible. We come back to the man hanging on his vine. Can you assess the situation and eat the strawberries? What is the fear about? He hangs there: tiger up, tiger down. "I'm going to die." Of course you're going to die. Tomorrow, next week, in fifty years. Eat your strawberries and live.

Here's another one. Have you ever flown in one of those motorless aircraft? A glider. They are hauled up by a motored plane, then let go, and they glide freely through the sky. This is a metaphor for your entire life. The process of birth hauls you up, lets you go and you soar until you land. You cannot help but eventually land. Most glider pilots walk away from their landings. It's a relatively safe pursuit.

What if you were in this glider and suddenly there was a storm, and the steering control broke off in your hands because of the buffeting the machine was receiving? You can't steer. You can control the wing flaps a little to keep the thing more or less level. That's it. You're solely at the mercy of the winds. There's some chance that as you come down to the ground you'll be able to keep it level enough to land safely. Up here at ten thousand feet, with heavy winds buffeting you, there's nothing you can do. You've got a half-hour ride before you get down to the ground. What are you going to do in that half-hour? You've got no tools, no material, nothing with which to repair this steering mechanism. What are you doing to do? It's the same as the strawberries. Can you enjoy the ride?

You all have the illusion that you can steer this life that you're in. You do have the ability to keep it in balance through mindful attention. The glider pilot can maintain balance by shifting her weight back and forth. If she pays attention, she can keep it gliding, rather than turning vertical and falling. It's just a matter of staying alert and rocking. But she cannot steer it. You can keep your lives balanced but you truly cannot steer them. You don't know when there's going to be a big gust of wind or when it's going to cease entirely and you fall. You cannot control it.

We come back to passion. Do you fly your glider with a closed heart that simply says, "I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die!" and search for ways to control the uncontrollable? Or do you take a deep breath, open your heart, say "Maybe I'm going to die. Meanwhile, I've got a half-an-hour to glide in this thing and it's absolutely wonderful! The winds are lifting me, flying me here and there like a roller coaster! It's glorious! Look at the beautiful clouds and patches of sunshine and blue sky! When I get to the last five minutes close to the ground, then I will have to do everything I can, not with fear but with love, to see if I can land horizontally and safely." Until then, enjoy the ride!

How do we do this? How do we learn to enjoy the ride? Fear arises. What do we do about this fear? This is where your spiritual practice is so important. When you first begin

spiritual practice, there is often that element of control. Nothing else has given you satisfaction and ultimate happiness. You think, "Maybe I can find it through this spiritual practice. Maybe I can get rid of my suffering here." Then there's still somebody **trying** to get rid of suffering, **trying** to steer the plane.

Through your spiritual practice you start to understand your interconnection with all that is, including others who are suffering. Instead of asking, "How can I stay safe?" the more pressing question becomes, "How can I more lovingly attend to the suffering in the world?" "I" loses its central focus. Not completely. Never completely. But gradually, a little at a time.

The more you become "other-involved," the more you experience the intimate connection between self and other. The more you experience that connection, the less you fear others. The more compassionately you see into others' motivations and fears, the less you judge others. And most important, when you understand that others cannot hurt you, you begin to understand the root of your pain as growing from your own fear and you become more willing to reach out for the strawberries. The more you practice that, the easier it becomes.

So, your spiritual practice does not give you control of your life, although at times it seems to. You do find that you can work more skillfully with your heavy emotions. You do find that there's more joy and peace in your life. But you also learn, "This is not why I'm practicing. If I am practicing just to create situations of joy and peace in my life, I am moving deeper into separation and I am in for a crash when the wind buffets my plane in the wrong way. When I relax and trust the winds, when I open my heart to others and let go of some of this fear-based separation, then I can begin to live with passion, to seize this moment and the joy and wonder of it, even if I'm on my way to crashing into the ground." Then the painful catalysts of your life become sources of wonder.

Barbara spoke last month about the dental surgery she experienced, the way she was meditating during that hour, and that she walked out of that surgery absolutely high, feeling deeply joyful and connected despite the discomfort of the experience. This is possible. You are not doing it to grasp at that joy and peace for yourself, you are doing it because it's the only thing to do: to take the boss who stole your ideas, to take that situation and ask, "How can I bring love in here? What am I afraid of? How can I open my heart? How can I hear this being's pain that he's continually got to steal others' ideas?" It's the only thing to do. Plucking the strawberries.

I want to talk about this briefly from this energy stream perspective. Those of you who are new here tonight, please, simply bear with us. I am not going to repeat the teachings of past weeks. This energy stream ... I want you to visualize it with me. First, let us use the sun metaphor we've used before, the sun and the sunbeams, the individual projections of the sun, of God or the Absolute. See within the core of that sunbeam what we called the light line, moving down through the sunbeam or light body, flowing as a stream of light into the materialization of that energy which is the incarnation. It comes into the crown chakra and straight through to the base chakra.

All around that light line is what we call the energy stream. When you are open, allowing your energy to expand outward, allowing yourself to be vulnerable,

unshielded, this energy stream is very diffuse, spreads outward and mingles with all the energy around it.

By way of example, Barbara and C were sitting in the backyard today where a crab apple tree is filled with red buds about to burst into bloom. They have enjoyed that tree through many springs. They are both learning to open their energy fields and be undefended. They remarked on the vitality of the tree's energy, that they never felt it so forceful before. The tree's energy isn't any more forceful than it ever was. You are allowing yourself to mix with it, to feel it. It's not just conscious awareness of it, but your energy field is fully open.

You might visualize this, those of you who are more visual people, as if your energy was a dot of whatever color you like, filling that energy stream. Think of it as balloons, tiny balloons. When you open, lifting the cover, the balloons begin to drift out. They are subtly magnetized to the light line—they won't drift too far. By focusing energy on the light line, you can recollect them. As they drift out, the tree is also sending out its energy through its own energy stream. Picture the tree's balloons; feel the joy of that energy mingling with yours.

If there is fear, that tends to magnetize this light line, pull your own energy balloons back into the energy stream and pull skin around them. As they pull back, the tree's energy is forced out. You move back, not only into the illusion of separation, but into the experience of separation. The more dense the skin, the more separation, and the more constricted your energy.

You will approach the understanding of this in different ways. Some of you who can see energy fields will be able to see it if you focus. Some of you will simply be able to feel it. Some of you may be able to hear it. You will have to listen carefully to the tone of your energy field when it's open without skin. It hums. It comes to a much higher pitch, almost a shrillness, as it contracts.

My challenge to you this week, then ... In this lovely spring weather, seat yourself in the backyard or in a park, a place where you can be undisturbed with some very energized natural beauty around you. You will find that these trees and flowers just about to burst into bloom are especially potent in their energy. Relax as fully as you can and see if you can see, hear or feel this intermingling of your energy.

Then, consciously think about something that's very frightening or discomforting to you, something that calls you back into a defended stance. It should not be something that's present. In other words, if there's a large snarling dog running across the field, it's going to be hard to be mindful of what's happening within your energy field. Better the thought of the large, snarling dog and not the actuality of it.

Watch, listen, feel. In some way can you experience that contraction? Repeat this until you feel some stable awareness of when your energy field is open, when it's contracted.

Then, consciously allowing that which creates contraction—you're going to have to experiment here—what opens the energy field again? This four-step process that we've used is one way of releasing that contraction. You may find if you can see or hear the energy field, can see or hear the contraction, that you can simply remind yourself, "I do not need to contract here. This is old conditioned mind. There's nothing here that can

hurt me.” You must be sure there’s no getting-rid-of the contraction, that it’s truly a letting-go-of that which you understand is simply old conditioning. Then come back, allowing that skin around the energy stream to dissolve again, allowing your energy to move outward.

Those are two practices. A third: when you feel the contraction—this is the most simple practice—acknowledge the contraction, “feeling fear.” Be aware of the closing of the energy stream. Focus your attention on this light line. This is simply a way of shifting back into pure awareness, back into your natural divinity. As strongly as you can focus, using perhaps this metaphor of sun and sunbeam and light line coming down, allow yourself to travel back up that light line back into the God self.

This is not denial of the fear self. Relative rests in ultimate reality. The fear self rests within the divine self. It’s simply a reminder: The fear self is here and needs a hug. But it’s not who I am. I can come back and rest in my true divine nature, which nature is interconnection. As you do this, the fear will naturally dissolve. The energy field will begin to expand again.

These are three ways to work with the contraction. There is no right way to do it. What works for you? The first step is simply recognizing the difference between that expanded state and the contracted one. If you do only that, that’s fine. If that recognition is stable, then take it to the next step.

This has been a long talk. I do not wish to weary you. I thank you for your attention. We’ll end here for your tea and come back for your questions. That is all.

Questions

K: In speaking about physical manifestation on March 25, you stated, “The most concise way I can say it is that you think it and then you manifest it into physical reality.” Would you elaborate on this process, particularly the thinking part of the process?

This seems to have a lot to do with what Aaron already talked about tonight. He was talking about how we do not control our lives, but we can be mindful and bring balance to them. That seems to suggest that we don’t influence what comes to us. We just wait for it to arrive and then we can be mindful and balance the energy of whatever comes into our path. My experience feels more like my thoughts and my intentions and my actions influence what actually comes into my life, as well as helping me balance. And that seems to go along with the question about manifesting.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Let us use two images from earlier this evening: the glider pilot and the energy stream and balloons. When the glider pilot is open, unshielded, I visualize her energy stream without the skin around it, these balloons moving out openly. The glider pilot is simply gliding, energy stream open. There are soft and harsh phenomena which come past. When the energy stream is open, it is like standing in the middle of a park with your arms spread and a smile on your face. There are a hundred people in the park. Those who are dour, sad, raging are going to look at you with your spread arms and your smile and turn away. Those who are joyful are going to be attracted to your energy.

In this sense, I was not quite correct when I said that the glider pilot has no control over what comes. You have no control over who will walk past you on the path. The glider

pilot has no control over what types of winds will move her craft. You **do** have control over who will stop when they walk past you on the paths. If your energy is open, those who are angry aren't going to be attracted to stop. A trite but true saying, "Misery loves company." Those who are feeling miserable are looking for other miserable energy with which to commiserate.

What you send forth is what you will attract. You have no choice over what walks past you, but you have choice over what stops. How do you relate to what moves past? The glider pilot has no choice over what types of winds will move past. She does have a choice over how she relates to those winds.

When something which is contracted moves toward you, if your energy field is also contracted what you have are two shielded energy streams striking each other. It hurts. Visualize the difference: this one is contracted, this one is diffuse, open. The contracted, angry, fearful one simply slices through the other's open energy field, just as if there were balloons in the air and you swung through them with a baseball bat. The movement of the swinging baseball bat creates enough of an air current that the balloons just drift out of the way and it slices through. The balloons aren't hurt, they simply part and drift back again. When your energy is contracted, then it hurts. The balloon fixed tightly in place will be broken.

This is why this work is so important. When you think in that expansive way, when your mind is deeply engaged in its interconnection with all that is and thereby not feeling threatened, not needing to shield, then you truly manifest that reality where there is no need to shield, where there is nothing that can harm you.

One could well ask, then, if somebody is coming at me with a knife and I can be totally relaxed, is that knife going to pass through my physical body without doing harm? Theoretically, if you could be that totally relaxed and were in that deep control of the mind-body connection, yes, that would occur. More likely, the knifer would not be moved to attack. The being I was in my final lifetime in Thailand learned to meditate in the jungle, surrounded by tigers. Never once was he threatened once he ceased to emit fear energy.

In the book, Illusions, by Richard Bach, one pilot who has mastered all of this teaches the other pilot how you walk on water, how you walk through walls. Technically, yes, it can be mastered. Very few humans achieve that mastery, so, no, in reality, if this one attacks with a knife, you're not going to be able to not be physically injured by it, not because it's not possible, but because it's so difficult to attain that mastery. It's so difficult to be that totally undefended when someone is coming at you with a knife. But, truly, it is not the knife that's harming you, it's your own contraction of your energy which solidifies the self to the point that the knife digs into the tissue. I don't suggest you experiment with this one!

We're getting a bit off the subject and there are other questions. K, I feel I have not quite answered your question here. Is there something further related to this that you wish to ask? That is all.

C: You were talking about manifestation in terms of two people's energy. What about manifestation in terms of healing, or in terms of Machaelle Small Wright and her pile of

manure? (*Machaelle was working with manifestation, needed manure for her garden and manifested a cubic foot of manure in her yard.*)

(*Short discussion here about why Machaelle didn't manifest money instead of manure if she could manifest anything. Aaron says that if there was any attachment to money, she wouldn't be able to manifest money as she manifested the manure.*)

K: She wasn't manifesting the manure because she wanted the manure, she was being trained in understanding how energy moves into form. Manure's what the nature intelligences used to teach her.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Some of you have the control of energy fields to manifest the pile of manure, just pfff! here it is. You remember in the writings about Findhorn, at one point they wanted to manifest manure. They were aware the plants needed it. They manifested it no less miraculously by one of them simply going out for a walk, meeting a neighbor who was a farmer who said, "I see you're farming; I have a great pile of manure. Would you like it?"

It doesn't matter how you manifest it. This is what I want you to see. It's possible to manifest it as Machaelle did, but few of you are going to reach that level of control. You can understand intellectually how it happens. It's no less valid to manifest it by asking the universe for it and then having the neighbor offer it. The energy stream is basically doing the same thing. In the Findhorn example, the energy stream was fully open. There was no fear, "Will we get manure? Where are we going to get it?" which would have contracted the stream. There was awareness, "This is what the plants need. It will come to us."

I ask you again to use the image of the balloons. There was no constriction around them. A useful visualization might be to take the skin off, like removing a stocking in which the balloons were enclosed, but leave them tied with long strings so they can't drift too far from the light line—ten, twenty yards. They're reaching out. They're not tied but they are magnetized.

So, the one from Findhorn went out walking, sending out this energy. There are thousands of energy streams passing you. You invite in that which you seek. The energy stream from the farmer was also open, wanting to be of service to others and also to himself, wondering, how can this manure be useful? Not a fearful, "How am I going to get rid of it?" but "How can it be useful?" They simply were drawn together.

There is no likelihood at all that they would have passed without speaking. This is something I can't explain. The energy expresses itself to energy in a completely nonverbal level, one offering and the other receiving. It's almost the same magnetization. If either one had been contracted, it would have just sliced through and lost the opportunity to intermingle.

This is why, when you go to a party feeling very open, not worrying about acceptance or rejection, just fully open to what you will experience there, joyful about the opportunity to mix with others, you will enjoy the party thoroughly and find that opportunity to mix. The one who goes into the party contracted, saying, "Will people accept me? Will I find people to talk to?" is like the baseball bat waving around. There are energy fields which are open at the party. The balloons simply part as the bat swings through and then come back together with other balloons which are open. The

bat is flailing around saying, "Why can't I connect?" It can't connect because it's contracted.

Does that answer your question? That is all.

C: I am very interested over time in continuing to explore ... In the Bible it says if we have faith we can remove mountains. I always took that quite literally. (*Aaron says it is meant quite literally.*) I know that. And that is the level of faith which it takes to manifest some things, like moving mountains. Or healing. I am particularly interested in how it relates to miraculous healing. I don't need the answer tonight.

Aaron: I am Aaron. We will talk about this further because it's directly connected to the energy stream work that I've asked you to do. I do not want this to be an intellectual discussion. Therefore, enough for tonight. Go home and do the homework. Become acquainted intimately with your energy streams and then we can talk about it in a more meaningful way.

Remember that although it is possible to have the faith to move a mountain, it is not necessary for the human to achieve that level of mastery. Focus on the lessons of third density. Somewhere around fifth density you will have the opportunity to move mountains. That is all.

C: I wonder what mountains there are in fifth density?

Aaron: I am Aaron. The light body of a mountain is the template for the physical mountain itself. In fifth density we co-operatively assist the move of light body templates. That is all.

C2: Since God is not personal, what is the object of prayer? Do we pray to ourselves, focusing our own energy?

(*Aaron asks Barbara to make a stylized children's drawing of the sun. From a spot in the middle of the sun, lines project out each ray and each comes down to a human manifestation. The line actually continues through the crown chakra and down all the way through to the base chakra of each being.*)

Barbara: While this is the individual manifestation, this light line connects back to the Source. Each light body is simply a projection of God.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Your prayer is of two sorts. One is the personal prayer that comes from the ego self. It may be for another but it still is based on fear that wants this or that to be changed or fixed. A higher level of prayer is that which says, "Thy will be done," and prays that whatever is suffering or troubled or grieving, that it may find its needs to be met, whatever the highest need of that entity may be.

When you pray in this way, it's a way of connecting to your own light line, to your own divinity. The energy of that prayer quite literally moves up the energy stream and into the light body. If you follow any two of these spokes, you will see that they are of the same material: God and God. Eternal and Eternal. Whatever word you wish to use there.

Let's come back to these balloons. Along that whole light line is the energy stream, moving all the way up into the light body. What I describe here is literally the way I see it. When your prayer is open-hearted, there's no skin around the balloons. There is the

force of your aspiration to serve another, which serves as a push. Part of your energy field ascends and is redirected out to that which is suffering and to which prayer has been offered.

Even if that being's energy field is contracted with fear, it will feel the presence of your energy. Again, using the visualization of balloons, if that to which you direct your energy and prayer is open, it simply is infiltrated by your own energy balloons, feeling the touch and love of them. If it's closed and contracted, your own energy balloons cannot enter it but they rub against the outside.

You know how a cat feels when it rubs against your ankle, purring, offering you its affection? It's hard not to soften to that, isn't it, at least, if you like cats? If you don't like cats, it's probably not rubbing in that way. When the one who is constricted feels the rubbing of your energy around it, it's hard for it not to soften. It begins to release some of its skin, some of its shielding. It allows you access. If many of these beings are praying for that one, it's all the more forceful.

It is important to note that this energy you are sending through the Divine and out to the individual is no other than the divine in yourself. When I say God is impersonal, God doesn't look around and say, "This one is suffering, we'll attend to it; that one was bad, we won't attend to it." That which we call God truly is impersonal. It is infinite intelligence, but it doesn't choose or control.

Each of you is a projection of that God energy. Yes, it's made all the more forceful because it moves through the Source and back out. Let's say it picks up a silver coating as it goes through. It glistens with divinity. The power of your prayer helps to direct that divine energy because you have noticed where there is suffering and offered your energy to alleviate that suffering.

Let's use the opposite picture. If you see one you love feeling great pain, want to lift their pain, but it comes from a place of fear in you—"I can't tolerate this pain, let's get rid of it"—that fear and discomfort in you contract your energy. It tends to freeze those balloons. They can't move through the process of entering into the Divine and back out because there's no "Thy will be done" in it. Rather, there's "Fix it this way." Control. Fear. When your energy is frozen in that way, it can't move through, can't touch the other one. When the energy is constricted, instead of its moving up this energy stream and back out to the other one, instead of moving through this that we're calling God, it tends to try to reach from small ego self to small ego self, bypassing the whole divine aspect. Then it comes from the human manifestation and doesn't involve the whole energy stream. Are there questions?

C: In the Tonglen meditation which Aaron has taught us, he taught us to envision the light coming in, resting in our hearts, then moving directly to another person.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Please do not take these drawings one hundred percent literally. You are drawing down that divine energy. To simplify the practice, we have you breathe it out to where there is suffering. But, in effect, when your energy is open that breathing out process sends it back up and back down. It's simply too complex to explain it that way. For the physical human who is doing the practice, it's perfectly sufficient to simply breathe it out, lest we get lost in complexity. Do you understand? (Yes.)

L: Going back to a point that Aaron made about “Thy will be done,” in my most intense spiritual moments this is how I felt. However, on a day-to-day basis, I find that it’s okay for me to pray for specific things. And what I’ve done is to experiment on what gets the best results when I pray. To be honest, I have experimented with several ways. I have tried the Christian way of praying where you ask for things in Jesus’ name. I’ve tried praying through the guru. And I’ve tried praying just to my higher self. And they all seem to work. But when I pray to my higher self, that works consistently the best. How does that relate to this drawing about the energy stream, etc. or does it relate?

Aaron: I am Aaron. This will differ for each of you. What is most effective is that which allows the greatest dissolution of shielding, the most complete openness of energy and the least fear. For you, L, that process happens most strongly when you open to your higher self because it connects you most deeply with your own divinity. One can connect with Christ’s or any guru’s or master’s divinity and put oneself outside that field of divinity. Then your energy is still somewhat contracted, although asking help of energy which is totally non-contracted. A Master’s energy is very receptive and will draw your energy into it because its nature is total openness. Still, while your energy is somewhat contracted, it cannot fully merge with that energy no matter how open it is.

When you open your own energy by reaching your own divinity through resting in your higher self, then unconsciously you merge with all that other Christ or guru or simply God energy. All that the guru is is a projection of God. Are you familiar with the quote of the great teacher, Ramana Maharshi: “God, guru and self are one”? Once you fully understand that, you don’t need the guru anymore. So, in a sense, your working through your higher self manifests the truth of that statement, “God, guru and self are one,” and allows you simply to merge with God. That’s very powerful. From that space you can manifest very clearly because your energy field is so totally uncontracted.

Others may find the most uncontracted place through prayer through some being such as Jesus or the Buddha. If this being is seen as ultimate projection of God, as the supreme personification of the Divine, one may be so deeply inspired by and trusting and loving of that energy that calling to that energy allows the fullest opening of your energy field. So it’s individual.

There is much more we could say here. I will not continue, but pause to see if there are other questions. That is all.

C2: How does this relate to personal affirmations? It would seem to me that affirmations could be made either in a contracted way or with an openness where the prayer or affirmation could be quite specific but with the appendage, “or whatever is for my highest good.”

Aaron: I am Aaron. This is a large topic which I would like to address when we have considerably more time. I will be very brief here. I only want to link this question with C’s talk about the manifestation of manure and not of a pile of gold.

Affirmation works through this same mechanism of dissolution of the shielding, expansion of the energy stream. It is complex. I am vastly over-simplifying it. When the affirmation is made with any sense of grasping—for instance, an affirmation “I am worthy,” there’s a fear there “What if I’m not worthy?” There’s still a sense of duality: worthiness/unworthiness. Because there is fear, the energy field is somewhat

constricted. The skin is around it and the affirmation bounces back and forth, it's trapped in there, like an echo chamber.

This is very different from the selfless affirmation: not "I am worthy" which means "I am not unworthy" and blocks that fearful thought, but "Worthiness and unworthiness are illusion; I rest in my true light and being which is love." Can you feel the difference? That second affirmation contains no fear. There's nothing to grasp or be rid of, only a statement of truth.

I'd like to explore this much more deeply. I want it to be experiential and not intellectual. Again, as foundation, the homework. Get to know your energy fields and then we will talk about manifestation, affirmation and prayer at much deeper levels. Are there questions?

Wednesday, May 4, 1994

(Barbara begins by summarizing our work with Aaron over the past few weeks for the benefit of the many new people present.)

Aaron: Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. A simple statement before I start. I offer you my clearest understanding, but I do not claim to speak absolute Truth with a capital "T." I am not omniscient. I most certainly am not God, merely a humble messenger and teacher. If what I say rings true to your heart, take it into you and make it your own. If not, simply discard it.

I say I am a teacher but, truly, I do not teach you anything. What I do is to open the door to your own deepest wisdom. **You** are the teacher in allowing that deep wisdom to blossom. I would far rather that we come to these sessions as beings of different planes learning together, rather than as student and master. I do not wish others to come to depend on me, only to use me as a signpost saying, "Try this way."

I am aware there are many of you new here tonight. I trust the process with which we work. This year we have handled these Wednesday evenings differently. Rather than simply giving a talk about this or that, we've been building cumulatively through the year. I have tried to offer these talks so that someone coming in new will not be lost but, at the same time, you will not understand it to the depth that those hear it who come every week.

If there's that which is said which you do not fully grasp, leave it alone. Don't worry about it. Trust your own wisdom and opening heart to allow you to see that which is before you. There's nothing that I'm teaching here that's complex or confusing when you hear it with your heart. Truth is very simple. But if you struggle with it with your brain and try to pin it down, then it gets difficult.

We have been talking for several weeks about the human energy field. If my old friends will be tolerant for just two or three minutes, there is a small bit of background that we will offer. I would like you to visualize a child's drawing of a sun: a round disc with triangles sticking out as sun rays, like ice cream cones. If that whole is the sun, those triangles are simply projections of the sun. There's nothing in a sunbeam that's not of the sun. Yes, there may be dust and other diffused light in the Earth's atmosphere which allows you to see a sunbeam, but without the light and energy of the sun there would be nothing to see.

Let us use this sun, the round ball, as metaphor for God or the Eternal, Absolute or Divine—whatever way you wish to label that. If you do not believe in that which we call God, I offer you the Buddhist phrase taken from a sutra in which the Buddha says, "There is an Unborn, Undying, Unchanging, Uncreated." The Buddhist unconditioned or Deathless. So, it doesn't matter what you call this, it is That Which Is.

Each of you begin as a small spark of that, of that infinite energy, light and love. The essence of each being, which is totally without ego, without self, might be likened to that sunbeam. There's nothing there that is not of the Divine.

In your imaginations draw a line from the center of that sun through the sunbeam and on down to the human form. That line is what I call the light line. It conveys that core of

divinity down into the human through the crown chakra and straight through all the major chakras to the base chakra. Just as the human has an aura, this whole structure has what I have called an energy field. Around this line of light is the energy stream that projects directly out from the light line, and out from the human form. This is vastly over-simplified but that's the basic concept that you need here.

Now I want to come back to last week's work and to your homework. I asked you to watch the opening and closing of the energy field, of that energy stream. We used the image of the energy represented by balloons. I said that the way I see the bits of energy of this energy stream, it's as if the light line were a magnet. When the energy field is open, the balloons are lightly magnetized: they drift out, there's much open space between them. If there's another being next to you, your energy balloons, if I may call them that—this is not a correct technical term, merely a metaphor—mingle with one another. There's no defendedness there.

When there is fear it acts as if it sent a current through this light line, pulling in the balloons tight, wrapping a skin or shield around them. They become a solid force. I said last week that if one being's energy is contracted in that way and another's remains open, undefended against that anger or fear, the resultant swinging of the contracted one's energy is like a baseball bat swinging in a room full of drifting helium balloons. The current generated as the bat swings through simply guides the balloons out of the way. They're not hit, there's just empty swinging. You can watch another swinging in that way and, if you keep your energy open, you simply are not threatened.

If fear arises in you and your own energy field also contracts, the energy stream solidifies and gets shielding around it. Then the picture is like two baseball bats striking. There's pain. There's reactivity.

My homework assignment for you last week was to find a comfortable place, like a garden, where you could be with the beautifully emerging energy of an opening, blossoming tree or plants, a place where you felt secure, comfortable. I asked you to see if you could either visually see, not with your eyes but with inner seeing, hear, or feel your energy field opening and merging with, embracing, that of the growing plant. I asked you then, after some time of resting in that spaciousness, to allow in a frightening image such as that of a large angry dog bounding across the lawn. I asked you to see your energy contract, or feel it or hear it. Then I asked you to remind yourself, "This is my imagination. I am safe." and to see if you could again experience the opening of the energy field. The object of the exercise was to directly experience the open and closed energy and learn to differentiate the experiences of these states. Later, I'd like to get some feedback from you about how that worked.

The intention was not to force yourself to stay open but merely to begin to become more familiar with how it feels when you're open, how it feels when you're closed, to know when you are open **that** you are open, to know when you are closed **that** you are closed.

That work was all preparation for what I want to do this week. Those who have not practiced it still can do this exercise. You have to be very alert and you do not have the benefit of the practice but I think you can trust yourselves to know when you're open and when you're closed.

I'm going to ask you to do something a bit difficult now. What I'd like you to do is bring into your mind a painful, frightening, humiliating or sad situation—someplace where your ego felt threatened, where there was a churning of the stomach perhaps and a tensing of the muscles. Perhaps your boss criticized you. Perhaps you got a larger-than-you-expected bill and there was fear about it. Perhaps it is something as simple as a friend calling to break a date. While you knew you weren't being rejected, that the friend really was sick or an unexpected family member had come into town, there was still some sense of rejection. Perhaps a friend or family member or even a pet has been sick and there's fear about it, sadness for that being's illness and fear, "Will this one get better?" I'm just tossing out a few examples to give you an idea of what I want you to work with—not a major episode in your life, but something where you can sense the contraction.

I'd like you to spend a minute or two now getting into as deep touch with that pain, fear, anger, grasping, whatever it may be as you can. I'll be quiet for a few minutes. *(Pause.)*

Some of you are conceptualizing about it and not allowing yourselves to feel it. My dear ones, if the pain were not there, then you **could** not feel it. Because that pain **is** there, building a wall to screen it out does not dissolve the pain, it simply fragments you and prevents you from feeling. Try to trust me on this. I know there are many new friends here who don't know me, so you have no reason to trust me, but I will not willingly lead any being into a situation of harm. It's safe to feel this pain. You do not need to use intellect to separate yourself from it.

Feeling this pain, experiencing it, I want you to see that it's manageable. It's not overwhelming, you don't have to get rid of it. Send compassion and loving kindness to the being who's feeling it. Figuratively or literally, give yourself a hug. Remind yourself, "I am safe." But there is this pain, fear, jealousy or desire.

I want you to look very closely at what has arisen. Can you see, feel or hear the contracting of that energy stream? Can you feel how the arising of a strong sense of a self to be protected enhances separation and puts a wall around the energy stream? See if you can get in touch with that. You may not be feeling separate at all from those sitting beside you, but are you feeling separate from the human or non-human adversary in this scene that you've just thought of, some person or situation toward which there's anger? Something that you feel you need to fix perhaps?

Some of you are feeling a strong contraction, some just a very, very mild contraction. That's fine. What I want to do with you here is walk you through the steps of releasing that contraction and allowing the energy field to reopen. What we are going to do now is a new practice built on some of the old practices we've done before, pulling them together.

First, I ask you each to offer the intention that the work you do right now is for all beings, that you're not just getting rid of your own fear or suffering. As you allow your own energy to open, there's one less baseball bat swinging in the universe. This is an important step. It helps bring attention to the reality of the small ego self and touch that with a sense of mercy and non-judgment, while acknowledging that it is a manifestation of fear and not who you are. Simply offer the intention to serve all beings.

Visualize yourself sitting in a cylinder of light. Feel the light line that reaches from God, the unconditioned, or whatever you wish to call it, down through you. This is the Christ consciousness or Buddha nature. This is the place in you that is and always has been perfect and divine. Visualize at the top, in place of that sun, whatever image is most useful to you. It may be pure brilliant light. It may be the image of such a teacher as Jesus or the Buddha. It may be a more contemporary guru or teacher: The Virgin Mary, Mother Teresa, Mother Meera. Krishna. Ancient or present day.

Focus attention as intently as you can, on that image and feel its radiance moving through this light line and into the physical body. I said earlier that when fear runs through that light line it's like a current of magnetism that contracts the energy stream. This image reverses the pattern of contraction. Brilliant light ... Warmth ... The loving kindness of the beloved ... See if you can experience the way that light and energy dissolves the current of magnetism. See the dissolution of the skin in which these balloons were held ... See the balloons letting go, moving out ... Breathing ... Feeling the continuous movement of light and energy through the light line ... Turning inward, so your whole being becomes that light line ... That divinity is what you are. All the rest is merely the clothing of the incarnation.

There is a beautiful quotation by a great teacher: "God, guru and self are one." Within that light line they are one. Expanding inward ... The heart of the universe, the heart of the guru and your heart ... One heart ... Feel the pulsing of that light and energy ... moving straight through the chakras ... filling you ...

Bring attention now to that perceived threat: that boss's anger or the bill that must be paid ... As much as is possible visualize or feel, imagine if you need to, these balloons of your own energy drifting outward ... If the boss's anger is very intense, let it simply be the baseball bat that stirs through ... Watch how you cannot be harmed by it as long as you don't contract to meet it in fear ...

Sometimes the baseball bat will keep swinging. Sometimes, not making contact, it will discern that it also is not threatened and will begin to dissolve. Either way, whether the balloons of that energy open and merge with yours, or whether the kindness of your energy simply embraces that bat as it swings through, feel that you do not need to contract to defend. I want you to experience that your truest defense is no defense at all.

I'm going to be quiet for a few minutes. Keep coming back to the guru or to God, to the energy pulsing through that light line and the opening of your own energy field, and then shifting awareness to that which has threatened. If you contract as awareness shifts, allow yourself again to experience that light and love. Keep shifting back and forth as necessary

(Pause.)

That's it; that is the practice. I would like you to practice this exercise through the week in real life, living experience. When somebody is expressing anger or criticism to you and you feel your energy field contracting in defendedness, even while that talk and criticism occur, begin this practice. First express the intention that what you do is for all beings. And then open your energy as powerfully as you can, right there in the midst of the conversation. Remember this energy and light coming through the light line. The

more you practice it quietly in meditation, the more it will be available to you in the moment of tension.

Just as we've used breathing as a way to quiet yourself, here you are using this turning inward, expanding inward into the light line, into your own divinity, as a way, not quite of quieting mind, but of remembering who you are. From that place of purest being, you allow the defendedness to dissolve so that you can truly hear the other being's pain and fear. There is no aversion to defendedness, merely the recognition that it is unnecessary in this moment. Let it go. That pain and fear is just the baseball bat which never strikes you. It may strike the ego. That's not who you are. It cannot harm this divine aspect of yourself.

As you try this, I think you will see that without need to defend you can hear the other person's fear and pain. There's no longer need to be right. Compassion grows. You invite the other to stop swinging and open their own energy field. You can't force them to do that. You simply invite them by your own undefendedness. Thus, a secondary result of this practice is harmony. But you're not practicing it solely for harmony. You're not practicing it to create or allow change in another. You're practicing it simply to remember who you are and that you do not need to defend.

There have been some questions about the use of prayer and of affirmation. Several of you have asked me when we will talk about it. I merely wish to point out that this practice that I've taught you tonight is foundation for that discussion. I want you to understand how your energy field works and then we'll talk about how it works while using prayer and affirmation. That's all. Just this simple practice. Do it as much as you can this week and we will talk about it further next week.

I know that there are some questions, especially, "What if I'm really being attacked?" I would be glad to attend to these questions after your break. I thank you for your attention. That is all.

Questions

Q: Sometimes people are rude and discourteous to me at work. Why does this bother me? What can be done about it?

Aaron: I am Aaron. It bothers the aspect that must defend. It bothers the ego. It bothers the one who feels threatened. It doesn't bother the divine core. But there's fragmentation. You lose the perspective so easily. You forget that you are this divine core and begin to identify with the ego. The ego contracts and needs to defend.

When you ask, "Why does it bother me?" why shouldn't it bother you? Nobody wants to be treated rudely. Rudeness is never pleasant to experience. Even that angel within has a preference to be treated with loving respect and not to be treated rudely. Is it strange, then, that the human prefers not to be treated rudely? Can there be compassion for the human instead of judgment? That's the starting place. When you offer judgment to yourself—"I shouldn't react"—it's a way of cutting yourself off and disallowing your feelings. Then the angel and the ego get into a war with one another. We're trying to integrate them, to allow ego to dissolve.

The question to ask at that point is "Why am I judging myself?" Perhaps you're afraid of your angry response. Can there be noting "feeling anger, feeling fear and aversion to

my anger?" The more solid your anger, the more you want to shove that person who's being rude. Can you see that? When the heart opens with compassion for the self and says, "Yes, I prefer not to be present with this anger, it's very unpleasant, very uncomfortable," then you begin to offer compassion instead of judgment to yourself. Then the anger doesn't build up as much.

From that place of an open heart you begin to see the other's fear. It mirrors your own fear. Not **his** fear and **my** fear but **our** fear. Your two baseball bats. Once you understand that, you can begin to work with a practice such as the one I introduced tonight. You cannot work with it immediately. You can't work with this practice from any stance of "getting rid of" your reaction. The first step is looking at the judgment, opening your heart to yourself and the fact that there is pain and discomfort. Then allow yourself to expand into your angelness, allowing, through your compassion for yourself, a compassion for the other. Then the step we did tonight naturally follows.

The body is still feeling the physical reverberations of anger. They take longer to dissolve. The physical body is the densest body. The reverberations of the mental body dissolve fastest, the emotional body next and, finally, those of the physical body. You may still feel the tension "anger" in the physical body, but you don't have to own that anger anymore.

Anger is just energy, whether it's the person-who's-being-rude-to-you's anger or your own reaction. Anger can become a catalyst for deeper hatred when there is lack of mindfulness of the contractions and fear that lie behind it. Or anger can become a catalyst for compassion. Those reverberations of anger in the physical body can simply be a reminder, "I am feeling fear. The one who's attacking me is feeling fear. Can I have mercy for both of us? Can I allow my heart to reconnect with this rude one's heart, instead of judging him? As I cease to judge myself, I cease to judge him." Then you're ready to release it. Does this adequately answer the question or would you like me to speak further on it?

Q: Why do I get nervous when I do things that are different from my routine?

Aaron: I am Aaron. There is an ego. It's not solid but, on the relative plane, it certainly seems real. Within this incarnation you are actors in a play. You have agreed to read a certain script, to read the lines. It's a kind of improvisation. The basic scene is set. You have control over your own lines, but over nobody else's. Just as the actor in the play agrees to put on a costume, to play the part to which he is assigned, so you play the part which you've agreed to play and into which the incarnation has led you.

There are certain props for the play. One of them is ego. It comes with the incarnation. Until you get very, very clear, it's going to be part of the incarnative experience. Ego clings to the notion of self. It wants to be **someone**, it wants to be important, it wants to be loved, it wants to be in control. It spends its time trying to defend itself from that which threatens, or seems to threaten, trying to hold onto that which it thinks it needs to feel safe and comfortable. It moves into the delusion of self and other and sees everything else as that which may harm it, which may not give it what it thinks it needs.

However, you learn early that you only create your part and you can't control the lines of others. It's very scary for ego not to be in control. What ego does then is to try to set up situations which are as safe as is possible. One of the paths of safety is routine. Then

ego knows what to expect so it feels secure. If you let go of routine, you never know what's coming next. Routine, in a sense, is playing through a scene and then telling all the characters, "Okay, this is your part. You don't have to say the identical lines, but you must be true to the character and the mood of that scene." The next time the improvisation is run through, you know what to expect. People each get into their own particular act and everybody feels safe.

What happens when somebody upsets the apple cart? I digress here. Barbara's mind offers that bit of slang as the way to phrase it and I am simply chuckling at the usage of upsetting an apple cart, apples rolling hither and yon. Chaos! Can you see how much fear arises when you do not know what to expect of another, when you do not know what to expect of a given situation? So, routine protects you.

It's important to see that that same routine also traps you. You're like the swimmer in a vast and beautiful lake. There's a small roped off swimming area on one shore, twenty-five yards across. You'd like to swim for half-an-hour. You're a good swimmer, but it feels safe to stay in this marked area, swimming back and forth. How much freedom there would be to slip under the rope and just swim fifteen minutes out into the lake. You confine yourself and create limits for yourself because you fear your own unlimitedness.

You fear your angelness because to fully acknowledge that angelness is to cut ego through with a sword, and ego does not wish to die. When you move into the awareness of your interconnectedness with all that is, and deeply experience that interconnectedness, you can no longer maintain the delusion of self. To even acknowledge the possibility, "I don't need to be in control, I don't need to hold onto routine," just to entertain the possibility of that is threatening. It's threatening to the small ego self.

The more you can connect with the divine self—the more deeply you can experience this angel within you, perhaps through meditation—the more willing you become to take the risk to slip out from under the rope, swim out into the beauty of that lake and experience your vastness.

However, one must not force oneself. The timid swimmer doesn't say, "Now I must go out and swim into the middle of the lake." Why not swim under the rope at either end in another twenty-five yards in each direction? Get the feeling of how it is to move a bit past your prior limits. Let go gradually.

Look at your routines, for example, and ask yourself, can I change something just a little bit? If I always park on this level of a parking lot, can I park on the next level? If I always take the stairs, can I take the elevator, or vice versa? If I sit in my office alone and drink coffee, what if I go to a coffee break room, or vice versa? Offer yourself small challenges and watch very mindfully. "What is the fear about? How does holding to a routine allow me to feel in control? What happens within me when I don't feel in control? Can I allow myself to experience that out-of-controlness in small ways, and slowly build up a sense of my true unlimitedness?"

This way, it is a gentle process and not a judgmental "I should get rid of routine, I should get rid of ego." That's just more judgment. Work with it gently. That is all.

Q: Lately I've been seeing how greatly people suffer, how horrible the things are that happen to people. I feel so much fear because I see no reason why my family and I

should be exempt from these horrors. But to overcome this fear requires that I separate myself from these people by saying that those people in some way asked for it. But I know this isn't the skillful way. How to deal with this fear?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Truly there is tremendous suffering in the world. And yet, the experience of suffering is relative. We often see it through our own eyes and not through the eyes of another. There is a story, an old story. Several wise men have met to discuss suffering and how one can maintain happiness and connection with God even when there's suffering, how one cannot blame God for one's suffering.

They've noted that in the village where they live, in the outskirts of the village, there resides a man who is a poor farmer. This man owns land which is filled with rocks and the soil is not very fertile. At dusk when others are preparing to return home, he's still out in his field hauling in boulders. He had a son who helped him, but the son died. His wife is very sick. And yet, this man always seems to have a smile. When he comes to town, he's friendly, he's joyful.

So they resolved to go out and ask him, "In the face of all your suffering, how do you maintain this joy?" They find him in his field. His beast that pulls his plow is lame, so he is hauling the rocks out by hand. They watch him struggling for a few minutes and then approach to ask him, "With all the suffering in your life, how do you maintain faith and joy?" He looks at them with a bit of bewilderment and says, "I'm sorry, I can't answer that. You've come to the wrong person. I'm not suffering."

Suffering grows from resistance to what is. When we open our hearts to what is, there may be very real pain—physical and emotional pain, grief, loss—but that's very different from suffering. As long as you are human there's going to be pain. Who can say who feels the most pain: the mother that just lost her child through starvation or by a bullet from a soldier in another country, the mother who just lost her child in an automobile accident, or the mother who has not lost her child's physical existence at all but watches that young person destroy her or himself with drugs? Are they all suffering equally?

Those who can open their heart to the dreadful pain of their situation and the fact that they have no control over it, for whom it ceases to be **my** pain and becomes **the world's** pain—all the mothers' pain who have watched their children bear terrible wounds and heavy loads—from this place of connected heart, the pain is no lighter, but there's no resistance to it and it no longer feels like the universe is personally attacking you.

I understand what the asker of this question means when he or she looks at the fear that suffering will happen to its own more fortunate family who is in good health, who lives in a place where it may not expect violence against itself. We love those in our family, we want to protect them. The sense of separation that the asker refers to grows out of pointing a finger and saying **their** suffering, keep it distant from me. I believe that this asker needs to look more deeply at itself, and even at its own family, and to acknowledge the pain which is there.

As I said, pain is relative. If your son is not accepted to the college he wished to attend and feels rejected, hurt, angry, can you judge that that is less painful than this young man across the world who could not find adequate food today? Judging mind tries to

balance everything and says, well, starvation is worse than not getting into school. How can we judge another's pain?

What is the fear of acknowledging the depth of your own pain? Once you fully sink into the reality of that pain—and I don't mean to dwell in it, to muck around in it and find a need to rant and rave about it, only to be aware of how little control you really have in your life—then the heart connects with the whole world that doesn't feel in control, the whole world of vulnerable beings who fear their needs will be unmet. Through that connection, the fear of the pain dies away as ego fades. This is the important part.

Pain simply is pain. It's part of the human condition. Sometimes there's going to be tremendous joy, sometimes there's going to be pain. Every person who you know and love, who was born, is going to die. We grieve at death and rejoice at birth. Maybe we should grieve at birth: This poor person has just moved into a situation where he's going to die. He's just been condemned to death. And then we should rejoice at death: This person has passed beyond the immediate realm of human suffering.

I'm not suggesting that you take me literally. I only want you to see that you cannot control it, that you think your loved ones are safe but they're not. They're going to die. Perhaps they'll live a long, healthy life first. You are fortunate not to live in a place where bombs are falling. On the other hand the crime in your culture and the chances of death through an automobile accident or some such is much higher than in other parts of the world.

Let go of the delusion that you're safe. Allow the heart to connect and see that when it ceases to be **my** pain or **your** pain, and simply becomes **our** pain, the pain of the shared heart, there is space for it all. The illusion of your separateness creates the illusion of a tiny heart. How big is your individual heart—this big? The size of a baseball. The heart you all share is infinite space in which all that pain can float. Then pain does not become a catalyst for suffering. As the man in the story said, "Yes, my son died, my land is poor, my wife is sick, my ox is lame, but I am not suffering."

It really is very workable. It begins with one's deep observation of one's own fear of lack of control. It's very much related to the prior question about routine. How is the ego striving to stay safe? What if the ego begins to acknowledge both that it cannot maintain safety on the relative plane, and that on the ultimate plane the divine core of the self always is, was, and will be safe? Seeing the fear, begin to work with it with mindfulness, and then with these light/energy practices. That is all.

Wednesday, May 11, 1994

Aaron's talk

I want to start here with an energy meditation. Each week we take this a little bit further. We have been working on the practice of opening one's energy when it's closed and of exchanging energy with other beings. What I'd like you to do is sit with your eyes open for several minutes and look at these flowers. If it is useful, they may be taken out of the vase and passed around, or simply allowed to sit in the middle, as serves your needs.

Squint a bit as you look. Soften your focus. Try to include not only the flowers, but the energy field around the flowers.

(Long pause.)

Those of you in the front hold out your hands, low so as not to block others' view, toward the flowers. Those who are observing, see if you can see the energy field. Those in front, can you feel it? It's particularly intense because there are so many hands. As you feel it, open also to see it. Each of you has one or another sense that is more fundamental for you.

(Long pause.)

I would suggest that those who are in the back feel free to come up, a few of you at a time, and feel these flowers. It is more forceful if there are several of you doing it at once. The rest of you watch and see, with your gaze unfocused ... It's hard to describe the process but, if you watch, you'll catch it. The harder you try, the further you get from it. It takes deep relaxation. Just open watching. You will start to see lines of energy, almost like the lines you see when you have magnetic filings on a piece of paper pulled in one and another direction.

(Long pause.)

Are there others who would like to feel this? It will help them if hands are put out from the other side as well so they feel energy all around.

(Long pause.)

In past weeks, I have described this energy stream, which goes from your light body down to the physical body. As your physical body has an aura of energy which surrounds it, so this energy stream surrounds what I call a "light line" which is like the umbilical cord between the incarnation, light body and the Infinite. This light line is the silver cord seen by people who astrally project. It is the incarnation's link with the divine or highest aspect of itself, and, beyond that divine projection, on into the Divine Itself, into God.

I described this energy stream using the metaphor of children's balloons, that you could think of the light line as being somewhat magnetized so that the balloons don't wander off into infinity. But it's a loose magnetism so they float out a ways; there's space. As you could visualize, if a red person and a blue person were to pass, each

with open energy fields with the balloons of the energy stream spread out, they would mingle with one another.

What I would like you to do now is first to expand your own energy outward as much as you can. This is tricky. You cannot try to expand outward. Rather, you allow the natural outward expansion. The best way I know to do this is to focus inward, rather than outward. You're not pushing yourself outward and forcing your energy out. Focus inward on this light line that comes from God through your own highest self down through the crown chakra and straight down to the base chakra; feel it pulsating with light and energy. Truly rest in that most divine aspect of yourself.

Breathe in and feel the energy coming through the crown chakra. Breathe out and feel it filling you. With each inhalation, draw in more of that energy. God is not "out there," God is in here, right in your heart. Focus in.

(Pause.)

The more deeply you can rest in the divine core, the more your energy field opens and these metaphorical balloons expand outward.

(Pause.)

Now focus your energy on these flowers. You do not need to see their energy field, you have felt it. I want you to see if you can concentrate deeply and allow—whether it's seeing, hearing, feeling—allow a sensation of the intermingling of your energy field and that of these flowers. I'm going to be quiet for a few minutes while you do this. If you lose it a bit, come back to this moving in to the light line.

(Long pause.)

I am Aaron. We have lost some on the tape. It will do. When your energy field is open, that which passes by you touches you and leaves its trace which you have requested. Let us paint these balloons with wet paint, red and blue. As the blue balloons brush by your red, they leave a bit of their blueness, and your red leave some redness on the blue ones. When you know what you need—not selfishly, but for the good of all beings—and ask for it with an open energy field which allows for the free flowing of energy, that which you seek will naturally seek you.

A simply example: Several months ago, Barbara was flying to Germany and was to meet her travel companion in the Newark airport. They left it very open where they would meet. They each had their ticket and if they didn't meet until the flight, that was okay. Barbara had flown from Detroit. The friend was already in New York. When she landed in Newark, Barbara checked into her continuing flight and then went to get dinner. After dinner, she thought to herself, "It's time to meet Michele." Just that. She was not feeling any fear about it, just "It's time to meet Michele."

Newark airport is a vast place: thousands and thousands of people passing through crowded and lengthy hallways. She cleaned up her things, took her suitcase and walked into the hallway, and there was Michele, who had also thought to herself, "It's time to meet Barbara."

There's nothing amazing about this. Your minds are in contact on another level. You all have the ability to be telepathic. You do not need to manifest that now, but the inherent ability is there. When you open your energy field and allow it, making the statement of your needs without grasping, what you seek gravitates toward you. The only condition in that is that it must be for the good of all beings. Nothing strange about that either because if it's a selfish need, of course, it grows out of fear. When there's fear, your energy field contracts. What is sought might come right past you but there's no space for it. You don't recognize it when it approaches, so you may call it to you and not see it or not know it. When you are connected, open and unafraid, you naturally ask for that which serves all beings because selfishness is simply not a possibility.

I know you all have such examples in your lives. You have words like "coincidence" and "synchronicity" but, in truth, it happened because you were open and you asked.

This leads me into talking about prayer, a request of several weeks ago from a few of you. Prayer sets up a response on many levels. First of all, you do not need to consciously believe in God to pray. That which we call God does not demand that it be labeled as such in order to hear you. Second, "God," as we have attempted to define that here, does not answer your prayers. God is not a puppet master in heaven who says "Yes" to this one and "No" to that one. Nor does it say, "Pray a little harder and then I'll do it," to a third one.

There is one energy which, for simplicity's sake, we call God. It is the core of love and light in the universe. It is that which is. Each of you, in your highest energy, is a projection of that which we call God. We've used the metaphor of the sun, a child's drawing of the sun with sunbeams, little triangles, coming out. There is nothing in that sunbeam that is not the sun itself. It simply projects out from the core.

Each of you has a light body. In answer to a question, no, not entirely synonymous with soul, but it will do. Each of you has a light body which is simply a projection of the divine.

When you move into the small ego self, you are not working from that divine core, so you relate to each other from "down here" personality to personality. When you pray all you are doing is moving into this light line and energy stream, moving up to the core, to the sun, to God, and then moving out another person's light line, or another energy's light line.

Let us use an example, then, when Barbara was in the hospital last month, a healing circle formed around her one night, perhaps a dozen of you, with very loving energy. There was understanding amongst that group that they could not pray for Barbara to get better, not to need surgery. The prayer had to be simply a gift of their loving energy that she would find the healing she needed.

On a very literal level what I saw happening that night is this: Barbara was experiencing much pain and some fear. This light line of hers was clamped shut because her energy was so contracted. The energy of the group around her sent their "prayer energy," let us call it, up through their own energy stream up into that place where you are all one. And, because it was directed at Barbara, it came down into her energy stream as gentle touch.

If you're feeling contracted and another comes along and just gently touches you, it's hard to keep that fear contraction, isn't it? In a sense, that touch helped open her energy field. As it opened, the divine energy began to come through that light line again. The more it came through, the more release of her energy field, of this energy stream. Then, as these—I keep using this metaphor of balloons because it's the closest approximation I can make. The reason balloons is not accurate is that we think of them as being six or twelve inches around. But these are invisible. Think "grains of salt."—These balloons of her energy field began to expand, allowing space for the balloons of others' energy field to come in. They rubbed against each other the way a purring cat rubs against your ankle. The whole energy field was comforted, supported. It began to dance. The vibrational frequency expanded and, as that happened, the organ systems of the body found renewed vitality because of the increase in energy. It was very literally a healing circle.

This is no different than what you do for yourself if you stub your toe. If you curse at it and stamp up and down and say, "Why did I do that?" with anger at yourself, the energy field closes. As it closes ... How can I best describe this?

There are twelve basic organ meridians of the body and many junction meridians that connect the different chakras. Organ meridians relate to at least one of the seven basic chakras. As your energy field opens, the chakras begin to spin. Energy is imparted through the whole energy meridian. Those organ meridians which are functioning least are opened and allowed to function more fully.

In the case of the stubbed toe, there may be a shock to the nervous system because of the pain. Certain things shut down. When you bring anger to it, you enhance the absence of energy and it creates further damage. When, instead, you sit down and gently hold that part, sending love to it as you would to a child sitting on your lap with its stubbed toe, it very literally reopens the energy field.

It doesn't start at the toe. What you're doing is releasing the constriction around the light line so that the highest energy can begin to flow through again. That released constriction opens the chakras. The new energy comes and whatever meridians were sluggish pick up energy.

Back to prayer. Another form of prayer: asking for something for yourself or another that you perceive as needed. Perhaps you are lonely and pray for love and deeper connection with other people. When you do this from a place of fear and grasping, again, these energy balloons constrict the light line. They're jammed shut with an elastic form around them, shielding. Nothing can penetrate. You feel yourself cut off from the divine, you feel more intensely separate and lonely. The more lonely you feel, the more fear, the greater the constriction. What do you do?

If you can remind yourself of the truth: I am not separate no matter how separate I feel. I feel so separate because I've literally slammed the door shut, shut off my energy. At that point there's a choice. For many beings, when they blindly feel that shutting off of energy, there's a panic reaction and a desire to grasp energy wherever they can. These are the people you see around you who express such great neediness, clinging, begging for attention. They stir your pity, maybe even your compassion, but they do not draw you into friendship. You may act lovingly to fill their need, but you recognize that you're filling a bottomless pit.

When you can recognize this pattern in yourself, that is the first step to changing it. It's not that God answers your prayer and manipulates another energy to come toward you. Not at all. Your prayer is a way of getting into deeper touch with your own divinity. You're not praying to God out there, you're praying to God right here in your heart. When you allow yourself to feel that divinity in yourself, as we did earlier, to expand inward and rest in that light line, to know it's there even if you can't feel it at all, just to trust that it's there, and on the basis of that trust to ask yourself to relax, to let go of some of the fear, then you feel as if the light line begins to open again.

Basically the process of prayer, then, is one which reminds you enough of your own divinity that you allow the energy field to open and become connected once again into that heart that we all share. And from that place you draw in what you need.

One of you is asking, "Does God not have any part in prayer then?" God has everything to do with prayer, but stop seeing God as a puppet master. God is inside each of you. The more reverence you have for that which we call God, the more faith you have and the less constriction you experience. If it is helpful to you to relate to a personification of God, such as Jesus, that's fine. But Jesus also doesn't approve this one and disapprove that one. Rather, that energy becomes a channel for your own loving kindness. It helps you to connect the place of deepest aspiration in yourself with the core of all aspiration and love. Think of Jesus or any other great saint or teacher or incarnation of the divine as a pathway that helps lead you more strongly back into the divine in yourself. Once you have found the divine in yourself, you know it everywhere, even in the smallest insect or blade of grass.

I do not expect to cover prayer, affirmation and manifestation in one night. I will give just one more example. You see on the TV that there is horrible war going on in another part of the world, people suffering. Does it do any good to pray for them? What if their energy is so closed that they can't receive your prayer?

You can only invite another, you cannot force them. As in the example with Barbara in the hospital, had she chosen not to respond to this energy so lovingly caressing her own energy field, that would have been her choice. I ask you a simple question: If you are feeling very, very frightened and angry and a very gentle and loving being comes along, just sits with you for a few minutes, then gently puts a hand on yours, maybe a few minutes later an arm over your shoulder, simply allowing its loving energy to enfold you, how long can you hold onto that fear and anger? Do you come out of it faster with that loving energy attending you?

You cannot end war across the world, or strife in your own living room, through prayer. But you can invite those involved in that strife, personal or national, to let go of fear and reopen their energy fields. This is what your prayer does. It moves very directly to where it's aimed. It only invites if there's no grasping quality to it.

We used an image several weeks ago: When the energy field is contracted tight in fear around the light line it's like a baseball bat. If their strife frightens you and you demand they end it, it's like swinging a baseball bat at them. Can you accept that they must do this work themselves? You can't even know what's best for them. For whatever reason, they allow this suffering as part of their learning. You cannot take their lessons away from them. Your example of being willing to approach them with your open energy field is what finally can touch their heart and begin to allow them to experiment with

options to fear. Any of you who have ever responded to another's anger with loving kindness have seen this in action. All I'm doing is explaining the technical aspects of why it works. We come back, then, to the fact that you must pray with an open heart and no grasping.

This brings us back to the very fundamental question: What do I do with my own fear? That has been the subject of many, many talks here. There are many diverse ways to work with fear. One of the most simple that I know is to recognize, "Fear is present in me," and see if there can be a relaxation about that. No fear about the fear.

We have taught many relative practices: working with mindfulness, working with nurturing compassion, and so on. And we've also worked with this ultimate practice: coming back to the divine in oneself and resting there. It cuts right through it. It doesn't mean fear instantly dissolves, but it's very hard to maintain fear and hold onto it when you recognize your own divinity and your own unlimitedness.

This brings us back to the basic practice that we started with tonight, one of the many, practices we've done this winter: learning to rest in our own divinity. So, we've come full circle. I would be glad to answer your questions after the break.

Questions

Q: If we have previously been affected by another's negative feelings or prayers, how do we protect ourselves while allowing our own energy field to expand at the same time?

Q: Is it possible to be too open to another person? Can that person take energy from you? Or, can you transfer your energy to another person voluntarily? Does a person's energy field ever become depleted or only contracted?

Aaron: I am Aaron. I want to touch on these questions, leaving us time for the serial rape question (*Listed later in this transcript*). I would like to continue the discussion of these next week.

First, visualize this energy field again: the open light line, the balloons floating outward. Fear contracts it, pulls all the balloons together and puts a wrapping around it. The wrapping gives you the sense of being protected but, because of the tightness, it closes off the light line and moves you into separation.

There's something else that's possible that we haven't yet discussed. The energy field can remain expanded. You respond to that energy that seems very aggressive and angry with an absorbent shield. The shield doesn't confine your energy field because there's no fear involved. To refuse to allow another to be violent to you, to say no to their violence, does not have to be an act of fear. It's a loving act, for both of you. It is the refusal to be co-dependent with another and participate in their violence. You can then, literally, shield against that while allowing your own energy field to remain expanded. The process is less of a shielding than an allowing in and then releasing of the angry energy. There is no fear of it.

That's the first step that you learn. All of you have done that at some time. It's what you do with an angry child. The two-year-old is mad because you won't give it a cookie. It kicks you in the shins. Your energy field doesn't close in fear. You know the child needs

a hug, but you also don't need to let in all the child's anger. You naturally shield against it, or absorb and release it. We spoke of the blue balloon which leaves its touch of paint on the red. Here the blue touches but you don't allow it to leave its imprint on your energy. You accept and release. The energy is not "painting" yours.

Again picture these balloons that are spread out. In this practice, from my perspective, each balloon takes on a glow. It's as if each of your blue balloons becomes shielded individually so that the angry red balloons that are rubbing against it can't rub their paint off on it. There's just a glow to each one. The red balloons knock around in there if they are able to. More likely, that other being is angry enough that its energy is contracted, so it's more like a red baseball bat swinging through. The air current of the swinging bat sends more blue balloons drifting out of harm's way.

The baseball bat may swing more and more furiously at first. You allow and release. Here you must understand the fear of the one who feels cut off from its energy source and so grasps at, sucks at another's energy. Today, C pulled briefly into a parking space where a bus would be, and the bus dispatcher became infuriated. When C did not respond back with anger, the bus dispatcher became angrier. He was swinging his bat, trying to make contact, so that he could draw energy from her. He was more frightened because his own connection with the source energy is cut off by his contraction of fear. He swung more and more wildly. In the first practice, if you remain settled around them, eventually they stop, just like a child having a temper tantrum. Slowly, the energy field reopens and they start to connect again with your more loving energy. So, that's how it looks to me visually.

The second practice comes after the first has been learned. You allow that person's energy to mingle with yours. Instead of shielding to keep the energy fields separate, and then releasing the angry aspects, you really allow them in. When you do that, you must move into this light line very firmly. You must be deeply aware of drawing in that divine energy. Here, instead of releasing their energy, you become an active tool in its transformation.

In the second practice, you are so deep in equanimity with their fear that you can let the swinging balloon-bat connect, let it rub off some of its tension. Instead of merely accepting and releasing without penetration, you allow it to penetrate and help to transform it. This is an advanced practice; we will not discuss it further tonight.

Nobody can offer their negativity without your permission. You cannot be possessed by an external negative energy without your permission. When I say "without your permission," if you move into anger and are not conscious of that move, it's a way of giving permission.

Each of you has some balance of positivity and negativity. None of you, no matter how loving, is fully positive. When you hate your own negativity and you feel the presence of other negative energy, how can you not hate that negative energy. Your energy field contracts. You cut off your own source of divine energy. Then more fear arises. You start to look like one deprived of oxygen.

Picture yourselves all as underwater divers with hoses. This one gets angry and, in reaction to his anger, you grab your hose and squeeze it. "Oh! I can't breathe!" You

start looking for somebody else's hose that's flowing that you can grab hold of to breathe.

When you're in that state, yes, you're vulnerable and negative energy can move into you. God does not protect you, your love protects you. Your mindful consciousness of what's happening protects you. The faster you can observe the constriction of your energy and come back to center, the quicker you open up. It is that opening and reconnecting with the divine that protects you.

These are important questions. I would like to talk more about them. I would also like to go into this question of fear. Is it acceptable to you that we put these aside for now with the promise that we will come back to them next week for your further questions about them and go on into this serial rapist and dealing with fear? That is all.

Q: Aaron, how would you suggest we deal with the fear that is arising from the serial rapes in Ann Arbor?

Aaron: I am Aaron. There are two levels of response that are appropriate. One, nothing happens by accident. Those of you who are here in Ann Arbor are being offered a chance to learn something, as is this one who is hurting others. This being's negativity and fear feeds off negativity. The police have said in the newspaper, if you become violent when you are attacked, he's more likely to become more violent. You can see the pattern there. Negativity loves to create fear and feeds off of it. At a subtle level, this being's energy is feeding off the fear and turmoil he's creating. The more he creates fear in you, the more you enter into his pattern and become co-dependent with him in creating fear.

However, fear is obviously not something that can be switched on and off with a wisdom that says, "Well, it's not useful here so I'll flick it off." You cannot get rid of fear by saying "I shouldn't be afraid." Fear calls for two responses. Fear relates to helplessness. It makes you want to do something to get rid of that sense of helplessness, so it calls for the response of anger which draws adrenaline out, makes you feel empowered, gives you something to foist your hatred on.

The other response possible to fear is a growing compassion for this human right here, (*pointing at heart*) for each of you who is afraid. "I shouldn't be afraid" becomes "I **am** afraid." You begin to imagine the possibilities of harm to yourself or loved ones. Can that fear connect you to the pain all over the earth of beings who are suffering harm from the aggression of others? Can it lead you deeper into compassion for the human condition in which you are all so vulnerable to each other's reactivity? Can you cease to see persecutor and victim? Can you see that this serial rapist is just as afraid, terrified, because he feels so cut off? He's desperately grasping at energy. He would not define it that way, but his hostility is an outgrowth of his fear.

As you move toward deeper compassion, your own sense of fear that wants to run starts to dissolve. What I would call a healthy level of fear remains. This is that same level of fear which allows the energy field to stay expanded but puts up appropriate screening to another's angry energy. In this case, it's the level of fear that says, "I love to walk in the woods and I feel cheated of that and angry, but right now it's not a safe thing to do." Unfortunately, you are not at the point in your development where you can say, "My open energy will protect me and I'm invulnerable." You haven't

developed your powers of loving kindness to the point that this man's fist is going to strike at nothing. So there is a certain healthy level of fear which leads you to appropriate action for your safety without closing up your energy and moving into hatred.

The best way I know to practice all of this is in your daily meditation. A friend of ours has said, "You can't start out by lifting hundred pound weights or you're going to get a hernia. Start with ten pound weights." When you sit in meditation there are constant bits of fear that arise. You notice how your heart closes and you move to defend against that which feels threatening. Because you're simply sitting there in your meditation space and there is no actual threat in that moment, you can practice dealing skillfully with the thoughts of that threat. As you become more and more practiced with keeping your energy open and working with compassion instead of judgment when fear arises in a quiet space of meditation, then you begin to take that practice out into the world. The more you do it, the better you get at it.

Those of you who have been working continuously with mindful attention to fear are going to find it much easier to open your hearts and not judge this being. You must also use wisdom in where you choose to walk. That's not an act of fear, but an act of love, not to give him the opportunity to attack you.

Those who have not practiced this in meditation, start. Be gentle with yourselves. If you feel much hatred toward him, much anger at him, simply know that there's anger and hatred. Don't look for an on-off switch but a dimmer switch. As you meditate and work with the level of fear you're experiencing, you might use a loving kindness meditation to remind you, this being is suffering too. In fact, I'd recommend that for all of you as a way to help yourselves and to help you.

As you do a loving kindness meditation, visualize this being and acknowledge, "You have suffered. You are suffering. You are feeling confusion and fear and anger." Look deeply into this person and see how much fear he feels and see if you can open your heart to him. This practice will help you deal also with your own fear and, yes, it will felt by him although he may not consciously be able to let it in. It's that purring cat rubbing the ankles. He may kick the cat away ten thousand times but, eventually, the persistence and loving kindness is going to get through.

We're out of time. I would be glad also to address more questions about this next week. I thank you all for sharing your energy and thoughts with me this week and for allowing me to share mine ... *(Tape ended.)*

Wednesday, May 18, 1994

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. I am here with Barbara, working with the exercises we've been doing, helping her to see the contraction of the energy stream and how it's cutting off the energy flowing through this light line from the Source. There's nothing terribly the matter with her, but several hours ago she bid farewell to her son for the summer. He's off to Europe for three months. Although she has a bit of nervousness about a 19-year-old with absolutely no itinerary simply wandering through Europe for three months, deep in her heart she knows he'll be fine.

More than that, through the day of helping him pack and organize himself and letting go of him, she was looking at the closeness that she's come to have with him these last few years, that they have become very dear friends of one another. So, a part of her was grieving his absence, feeling a sense of something that was present being taken away.

On the relative plane, you **do** lose things. On the ultimate plane, you never lose anything. Both are true. It was not my intention to talk about grief tonight, but about prayer and affirmation. But, in a sense, they are opposite sides of the same issue. Prayer and affirmation connect you with what is, on the ultimate plane. Grief also connects you with what is, the fear and constriction of the relative plane. Your lives are a constant continuity of welcoming-in and letting-go, or else they are a continuity of suffering of resistance to letting whatever it may be move in and resistance to letting-go.

I want to share with you a few of the things Barbara is experiencing because I think it will help you understand your own energy fields better. I ask Barbara here to move into a deeper state of trance. (*Long pause.*) The arms do not work so well at this level of semi-trance channeling, but it is easier for her to channel material which concerns her when her mind is far less involved in the act of channeling it.

Barbara has many friends, feels loving to many people and loved by many people. So her son's leaving was not a matter of fearing loneliness. There were many issues that arose. One for Barbara is an old sense from childhood of abandonment, one that she has largely grown past. She was able to see that issue and that it is simply old conditioned mind. And yet, it did contract this energy stream. Perhaps more important was the judgment, "I should be happy for him, I shouldn't grieve." Well, she's astute enough to catch that one as it comes through.

What happens as these different catalysts pass through one after another is that there is a physical reverberation of that old fear held in the body. No matter how quickly you catch it, the physical body, which carries the densest part of your energy, reverberates from that old fear. I'd like to use the visualization of a stringed instrument's string vibrating. When something plucks it, it vibrates and it takes it some time to still itself. We've been talking about this energy stream as balloons, open or contracted. Another visualization that might be helpful is a thousand strings tuned in such a way that when one vibrates another begins to vibrate, and they catch it from one another. Can you

feel that within yourselves? Somehow when you are already afraid or sad or angry, you are much more vulnerable to other catalysts that might have been easily released at another time.

I'm using this example of Barbara's experience because I want you to see that, while she was not deeply caught in the sense of abandonment nor worry about it nor feeling loneliness, and each of those could easily have been let go of had they come alone, she experienced what seemed to be a multiple attack which heightened the sense of contractedness. When such occurs, you must become aware that when the mental and even the emotional body release these contractions, the physical body, which is the densest, holds onto them. The muscles are tight. There's just a sense of contractedness.

What do we call this? It's very hard to name it. It's not quite anger or fear or grief or desire, it's some combination of them all. We talk a lot here about labeling. Perhaps the clearest label for this is simply, "Contracted."

In meditation class Monday night, Barbara read from a book a metaphor of humans as ice cubes, how they slide around bumping into one another, knocking with their hard corners, sometimes shattering the edges of each other. But some of them begin to soften and, eventually, to melt. Two ice cubes cannot merge together while they're frozen. When they both melt, they come together. You cannot merge with life when you are frozen. When you begin to melt, you find everything within you and you within everything.

The author goes on with the analogy, talking about how when one becomes mushy, one never gets fully hardened again. What is happening with many of you is that you are coming to that stage of "mushiness" or even "extreme mushiness," really thawing and moving out, letting go of your limits. And, because that experience is so frightening, you contract. It's not the same ice cube anymore. It's rather a puddle of water that's gotten frozen on the outside; it's not frozen all the way through.

But it bewilders you. You say, "I thought I was supposed to be healing and finding more joy and, instead, I'm feeling more pain. What's happening?" You condemn yourselves. You condemn the practice. But you do not look into the obvious, "This physical vessel does contract when it feels pain. Even when I understand the pain, the body still stays contracted. Then I worry and fuss over the contraction, judge it, and pull in the emotional body again as well." I hear that from so many of you, not stated that way but describing this issue: "Just when I think I'm learning, why do I seem to get slammed in the face?"

Let's look at this from a different point of view. You know that I call you "angels in earthsuits." You **are** angels. You're not becoming angels, you are angels. That divine essence is what you most truly are. You're also wearing earthsuits, everybody in this room except me and I'm not truly in this room, I'm only speaking through it. I can present you with my perspective here out of the earthsuit. I can try to carry you into that perspective. But each of you must come to see in yourself the part of you that wants to cling to the illusion of the earthsuit. It's sometimes very hard to hear what I'm saying because it's very threatening.

You have created this “ice-cubeness” about you, this armor about you, to keep yourselves safe. Until you honor that desire for safety instead of greeting it with contempt, there is going to be constant resistance every time the armor gets holes pricked in it.

You have all developed strategies from early childhood for staying safe. Many of your strategies are grown from many previous lifetimes as well. There are basically three strategies: to be aggressive and fight back at that which seems to hurt you, to move into a passive state—to smile and try to win over that which tries to hurt you—or to withdraw or deny. Each of you has a preferred one of these methods, but most of you use a mixture of all three.

This week I spoke to three different ones of you who in childhood were “good” children, children who tried to control the world by smiling, being nice and winning affection in that way. For all three whom I spoke to, that technique didn’t work. It worked to a point, but all found that after a certain point they were still threatened, they still were not safe and in control. And no matter how nice they were, it didn’t change anything.

Underneath this “niceness”—not only posturing of niceness, because in all three of these beings there was a genuine love for the people around them and a desire, not just to please others to be safe but to please others because there was love for others—there was denial of the sense of fear and a posturing as well, a posturing which hid a deep rage when being nice didn’t work, a rage grown out of the fear, “I’m going to be hurt, my needs aren’t going to be met.” Each of these three people, in somewhat different ways, found that they would shift from being nice to being very angry. Some expressed their anger, some hid their anger.

Look at this in yourselves. See if you can see what your own mechanisms are for staying safe.

As you do deeper spiritual work, you come to the point of understanding both “I have always been safe” and “Nothing is ever safe.” They are both true. Do they sound contradictory? When you are truly open and connected you know there is nothing outside of you that can hurt you on the ultimate plane. When you are honest with yourself, within this earthsuit you are wearing, you know that your own earthsuit and those of your loved ones are not permanent, that there’s nothing that can keep you safe in terms of the small ego self.

For many of you who have done deep spiritual work this is where the problem arises. You don’t know what to do with the seeming contradiction and you being to disparage that small ego self that feels frightened and seek refuge in ultimate reality. Then you move into the third coping mechanism which is denial. You may feel, “I have to believe that I am safe. It doesn’t matter if I die, I’m connected to everything.” You may give lip service to that. But the small ego and personality are inside screaming, “I don’t want to die! I don’t want my love ones to die! Or go off on trips for three months! I don’t want my life to change this way!”

You must begin to look at these four aspects of yourself and understand they all bear equal weight. The spiritual body may be the deepest truth of yourself, but you cannot be in incarnation and hide in that spiritual body. My dear ones, you are incarnate! You are here! The mental body can become a wonderful escape mechanism. It can figure things out, it can use intellect to control and thereby screen out the pain of the

emotions. The emotional body is totally illusory on one level but totally real on another, and it causes tremendous pain. And the physical body in which all of these are carried is so dense that it carries the high vibrations of the spirit and the lower vibrations of the ego, thundering against each other with distortion. It's a wonder you don't break apart, some of you who go from these high vibrations to low ones, back and forth like a yo-yo!

Our work is to integrate all of this, not to consider any one aspect of yourself better than any other. Yes, the spirit body may be the essence of you, but the spirit body has sought incarnation. In your deepest wisdom at that point of moving into incarnation, you knew you needed the catalysts of these other bodies. So, why not accept them? To accept them means to accept even the pain of feeling like an ice cube, the pain of that contraction. The only way you're going to find peace is to stop trying to get rid of those contractions and to embrace them.

This in no way contradicts the work with the energy stream that we've been doing. That's also a reality. The contraction exists and, when it is noticed and treated with kindness, it begins to open.

Barbara had the image, when she was sitting this evening, of pie dough that she was rolling out and some of it was still lumpy. You can't take a piece of dough which has lumps in it and pull it apart or it breaks. You touch it with gentleness, gently smoothing out those lumps into the surrounding material. When there is a contraction of fear, jealousy, anger, desire, you can't **attack** that contraction, but, in the ways that I have been teaching you, you can work very gently and lovingly with it, just rolling, stretching, smoothing it out.

It takes tremendous courage and honesty to recognize each lump in the dough and to have patience with it. The reward is that you start to understand that these contractions are going to happen again and again and again. To come back to our metaphor from the reading, the more you melt and lose the solid edges of the ice cube, the more you flow into everything else, and the more you **do** flow into everything else, the more ego is going to assert itself for fear it will vanish.

Ego doesn't give up easily; the ego self is a useful tool of the incarnation when you understand that it is a tool. You're not trying to get rid of ego, only to see ego in its proper perspective, to befriend it and allow it to teach you compassion. You are never going to get rid of this contractedness of the energy stream. When you're feeling very contracted, burning with anger or jealousy or desire, quaking with fear, it's simply a reminder: Have compassion. Just that. Have compassion.

You do not need to be afraid of these contractions of the physical body. You **do** need to remember the physical body is the slowest to respond. I've said that the emotional body is the slow learning child. The physical body is even slower. Long after there is clear understanding from the mental and spirit bodies, the emotional and physical bodies are still reverberating.

So, we take these images from past weeks one step further. Each week it becomes a bit more complex. I've spoken of this light line coming from God, this silver cord that connects from your highest aspect—up into the Source/down into the physical body—and how that carries energy into you. Through that you experience the truth and the abundance of the universe. When your energy field is choked with fear and heavy

emotions that cause it to contract, it squeezes the light line so that nothing seems to be coming through. We've taken it that far in past weeks. Please note my phrasing, "Nothing seems to be coming through." Actually, it's always coming through.

This is the new step: How do you begin to recognize that it's always coming through even when it seems to be choked off? We've used a number of different meditations and visualizations to reconnect with that source and re-experience the opened energy. Sometimes the contraction is so severe that you can't experience it. You simply feel cut off from the light. At that point, you are going to have to simply remind yourself: "The emotional and physical bodies are slow to respond. They're still caught in this quaking and contractedness of fear."

It takes tremendous faith to know that the divine is always there, especially when you least experience it. It's easy to trust that divine when you can move back into the experience of it, when your meditation reopens the energy field and you feel the flow strongly. I don't talk much about faith because there's no way I can teach you to turn it on or open to it. I can only suggest that at a certain point you're going to have to have faith and let yourself know, "I am connected."

At this point, I would appreciate it if somebody would read this card that is in front of Barbara about affirmation.

An affirmation in its purest form is a statement of truth. It is not an appeal to the self to feel differently.

When we use affirmations to change how we feel or to create a desired feeling, we misuse them, as transforming emotion is not their purpose. An affirmation, properly employed, serves as a reminder of who we are and becomes a beacon, offering light and understanding, that we may more clearly discern the most skillful response to our present situation. Emotions may shift and we may become more peaceful as a result of our use of affirmations, but that is a **secondary** response to new conditions and not the **primary** purpose of skillfully employed affirmations.

Aaron: We will speak in more depth about prayer and affirmation another week. I only want to say in response to this card that perhaps the primary affirmation, the primary truth, is "I am connected." It is the soul's answer to the ego which wants to affirm its separation because only through its sense of separation can it continue its old methods to stay safe.

What are you going to do with that ego? It's like a two-year-old having a temper tantrum! How do you learn to love that two-year-old when it has continual temper tantrums at the most inconvenient times? The simple affirmations, I am connected to all that is, I am connected to God, I am love ... It doesn't really matter whether you're just quoting it because you think you should or whether you believe it as you say it, somehow the simple statement of it serves as a reminder to the soul. It's like taking that two-year-old and rocking it a bit, reminding it of the love in its world.

It's the ego's job to be fearful. Without the ego's fear, what would be your catalyst for learning about connection and love? Instead of hating that ego, can you begin to love it? Thank it for doing its work so skillfully. If on one day it erupts twenty times instead of the usual five, thank it twenty times. Allow each eruption of ego to take you back to that affirmation and to that deepest sense of truth of your being.

I want to speak more to the statement on this card another week, or perhaps to answer questions during the question period. The card states no question so it needs no answer. It is a very clear statement of a truth for which I thank the writer.

I'd like to end this talk with a meditation. Last week we began with flowers and connection. This week I want to begin at the other end. I want to ask each of you to do something a bit painful or difficult, which is to think of something very uncomfortable that happened to you today or yesterday. Perhaps something embarrassing or physically or emotionally painful, something which led you to feel attacked or vulnerable. Just bring it into your mind.

If you're very observant, you may notice the contraction of the energy field. You may feel your heartbeat speed up a bit, your breath quicken. These are the body's mechanisms for coping with attack.

We can approach this fear in two ways. We have been learning to move back into the light line, to allow the energy field to open. But sometimes, when the fear is intense, the energy field doesn't want to open. Then we may work with faith and affirmation. The only rule here is that the statement must be true. "No matter how contracted, separate and in pain I feel, the divine always moves through me." "I am loved." "I am connected." "The physical and emotional bodies reverberate with my pain and cut me off from the experience of that connection. Then I must use the mental body to remember: I am loved. I am not and never have been separate. I am loved."

Can a bit of the memory of that love, a bit of the truth of that love, begin to soften the contractedness? The emotional and physical bodies will need as long as they need to quiet down. Can you be patient with them? Even if you sit for hours without feeling the energy field open, can you allow the mind to have faith in the truth of the affirmation? "I am loved. I am connected." Please sit as long as you like with that affirmation. (*We do.*)

Barbara: Aaron is asking, can you feel that the truth "I am loved" with its sense of connection, and the contraction of fear, can exist side by side? The force of the contraction has led us to believe that with fear this light line must clamp shut and that we truly are separated, but now we can start to see they both exist: the illusion of separation, the very real contraction of the energy stream, the fact that it does squeeze the light line but, no matter how squeezed the light line is, energy can always come through it. We are always connected. So, can you feel the way that both can be true simultaneously, that that can give us more patience with the feeling of contraction, less fear of that contraction and need to get rid of it?

Questions

Q: I have been having an emotionally difficult time this past several weeks. I have also been having physical pain—backache and headache—quite often. I try to treat the physical pain by relaxing my muscles, let my energy expand, and to allow the emotional pain in. However, I have only limited success in relieving the physical pain. Also, I tend to avoid medication. Can Aaron suggest other ways to work with physical pain?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Your physical pain is of two basic sorts. One is from the immediate energy contractions and one is from those contractions that are habitual and have created ongoing distortion in the physical body.

The first pain that I mentioned, that which deals with immediate energy distortion, it often manifest as something like headache. There's usually no ongoing physical distortion creating the headache. It's just a patterned habitual energy response. This kind of pain doesn't need as much intervention. When you learn how to work with the emotional patterns that are distorting the energy and creating the blockages which lead to pain, the pain usually dissolves itself.

For example of the second type, a constant, habitual contraction can create various distortions in the spine which lead to back pain. Clarifying the energy doesn't necessarily clarify the back pain. The distortion still must be corrected. Correcting the distortion does not heal the back pain; if the contraction continues, the distortion re-creates itself. In order to deal with the back pain, one must work both with the physical body to correct the physical distortions creating the pain, and with the energy body so as to be able to maintain those physical corrections.

We first need to ascertain what kind of pain is present. Is there physical distortion? This is something that most individuals may find it difficult to decide for themselves; a professional's help may be useful here. A chiropractor or a body worker has the training to distinguish whether there is physical distortion.

If you find that there is physical distortion, as is often the case with back pain—not always, but often—you may need outside help to help clarify that distortion. No matter how expert the help, the distortion is not going to stay balanced as long as there's an energy blockage. Mudra meditation is the best tool I have as yet discovered for working with this kind of energy blockage. There are many related practices. When I say it's the best tool, I am speaking of the ease with which it may be learned, that you're not sticking needles in yourself, which process of acupuncture can be very effective in opening energy blockage if you're knowledgeable and very harmful if you're not knowledgeable. Mudra meditation is at best helpful and at worst neutral, but will not do any harm. Because there is a reasonable good book available, it's easily learned. (*Aaron is speaking here of The Book of Life by Kennett and MacPhillamy, published by Shasta Abbey Press.*) Should you prefer to have help, work with a body/energy worker skilled in a technique such as polarity therapy is also useful, but the helper cannot retain the opening of energy; only you can do that.

My preferred way of working with this is to use the mudra which touches all the base chakra points in the body and the primary meridians. It is likely that you'll be able to tell where there is blockage as you work in that way. Once you find the point where the blockage exists, further mudras can be worked with that intensify their focus on that particular meridian.

Other than this more technical practice, one may simply draw attention to the area—for instance, the head—and feel the pounding or burning or tightness there, and aversion to that sensation. First work to relax any judgment of the aversion, not dwelling in the aversion nor pushing it away. The aversion is not the sensation itself. It must be attended first. Then attend the energy contraction itself; bring in energy or release it as seems appropriate.

A very simple practice is to lie down on the floor as if you were lying in a stream bed. Visualize, and allow yourself as much as possible to feel, the warm sun coming down on you. As you lie in the stream bed, the rocks don't feel hard, they just fit the curves of your body so that it's very comfortable. The water is not icy but just refreshingly cool, and there's a strong current. Your head is upstream. Allow the feeling of the water hitting your head, flowing over the skin of the body and down past the feet. Also, take that water into you. Feel it washing through, feel it washing against the headache, simply soothing from the inside and washing it away. If the ache is in the back, let it wash straight through the chakras, down through the back and through the base chakra and then down the legs and out through the feet.

A similar practice may be done in the shower, combining visualization and the actual experience of the water.

The point of this practice is twofold: one, it truly does allow you to shift the blockage aside a bit and allow the energy to begin to flow again; two, it gives you a powerful tool to choose to release pain. One must be careful that there's no getting rid of the pain, just a willingness to lie down and let it wash away. Usually we feel out of control when there's pain, helpless in the face of pain, so there's something very empowering about knowing, "I can make the decision to release it." Truly you don't need to do this meditation at all. One might almost call it a placebo, but it's an effective placebo. It's not that it's useless, it does bring your mind and energy into the focus of moving through the blockage and releasing blocked energy. It's simply that it's not necessary to do the visualization, but it's a tool.

I'm confusing some people here. You are in different places in your work with energy. May I be more specific than I usually am? J and C (*who are massage and polarity therapists*), if you are doing this kind of work on others, there's obviously no need to move into any kind of visualization, you're simply guiding the energy. When you are guiding that energy in others, it may also be helpful for you to give them a visualization which empowers them and helps them to understand that **you** are not shifting their energy, you are opening the doors so that **they** can shift their energy. If you simply tell them that they can shift their energy, they're not going to believe you because they've tried to do it and they couldn't. They need somebody to point in the right direction, to help guide it. But if you offer them a visualization to work with simultaneous to your work, it helps them to understand that they can do it.

In response to the others here who are not polarity therapists and body workers, exactly the same thing is true. You don't need the visualization, but it helps you to believe and feel empowered. Dare I say there is blockage and there has also never been any blockage? Can I throw that one out? But your body has believed the idea that there's blockage. At a certain level, you're not unblocking anything, you're only allowing your body to know that there's never been any blockage. As long as the body thinks there's been blockage, it's going to act as if there's been blockage which, on the relative reality level, does create the appearance of blockage.

J: (*Not all on tape.*) ... and that Jesus was a very powerful healer. Now, aside from the fact that he was deeply connected to the Source, was part of the reason he was able to be such a powerful healer because he understood that there was no blockage there, never had been blockage, and so he was able to easily move and guide

energy? In the Bible there are stories where he healed lepers and raised the dead and all of those healings he performed.

Barbara: Aaron says yes, and that what we're trying to do is to help people to understand that there's never been blockage and simultaneously, to relate lovingly to the blockage.

J: That's what's so hard when I have pain.

Barbara: Aaron says this relates to what he's been talking about with the light line and the way it seems to constrict and teaching us to open the energy field, which, in a sense, is a relative practice. Tonight he came into the ultimate practice, saying there's never been blockage there. No matter how much it's contracted, it's never contracted. But we experience it as contracted.

What he wants us to begin to learn is how to balance that. We feel pain because we rest in the illusion of the blockage and, on the relative plane, that does create a sense of blockage as you can experience in working with people's energy.

Aaron: I am Aaron. As long as you are trying to fix that blockage in yourself or another with a sense, "If I open it, then I (or they) will feel better," you're falling into the illusion. Anything that can be fixed, can be unfixed. If they need to come to a healer to fix it, when it blocks again they're going to have to come back. They're in a trap. When you direct your own energy to the ultimate reality that there was never anything blocked, you allow the person to reconnect ... we come back to this wrinkled piece of cellophane of the sub-light body ... you allow people to simply move through that and into the perfect light body which is already perfect.

The more one remembers that it's already perfect, the more one begins to manifest perfection for oneself, not needing the healer. But if you hide in the ultimate reality that it's already perfect and deny the pain, even though the pain is created by an illusion, it's still real pain. Thus, we need to rest in both simultaneously, which is what the affirmation and meditation was about tonight. It's a direction we will be moving in increasingly: How to rest in the reality of the light body and the reality of the pain simultaneously, not trying to get rid of or hold onto one or the other, just knowing that they're both real.

You come more and more to see that you have a choice: Where do you rest your attention, on the wrinkles or the perfect sheet of paper? As you deepen your clarity of the reality of the perfection that's always been there, increasingly you see the blockage as illusion and simply shift your attention back to the perfect light body where there's nothing that was ever blocked. Then one starts to understand that this semblance of blockage was simply old habit.

Those of you who play a musical instrument, you can learn a piece perfectly, no wrong notes, you're playing it beautifully, and then once, as you play that piano, your hand slips a little and instead of playing F you play F-sharp. Somehow when that mistake is made once, by your worry as you play it through again—"Oh, am I going to get the wrong note?"—you get the wrong note. And suddenly, four times out of five you're playing the F-sharp instead of the F. But the perfect piece was already there.

Can you see how your hand goes to the wrong note precisely because of the worry, "Will I play the wrong note?" You're focused on the wrinkle. When you rest and simply know, the right notes are there—for a dancer it's the same thing: the right movements are there—then you don't need to repeat the wrong note. Your body doesn't need to repeat this physical contraction and distortion. Increasingly, there is connection with the perfect light body template.

Do you have questions? That is all.

J: Is that why my back keeps hurting every morning?

Aaron: I am Aaron. F-sharp! That is all.

Barbara: Aaron is asking, can you all see how you do that? How the perfect light body template is always there and we can be connected to it at one level, but as humans we can never maintain perfect connection to it. But as soon as we slip and are not connected, then we get so contracted around the distortion, that we keep repeating the distortion.

He says there is a term in Freudian psychology, "repetition compulsion." This is repetition compulsion of the physical body, just as that is repetition compulsion of the emotional body. He would like to explore the karmic roots of repetition compulsion in the physical and emotional bodies.

C: Repetition compulsion means our tendencies to repeat patterns which we have learned from our families, in our relationships. It's just a very, very basic human pattern. It would be very interesting to have Aaron talk about that.

Q: In the discussion of repeating patterns physically, F-sharp can also be noticed in relationships. Then you started talking about it, so ... I can be able to respond openly and lovingly to something, but if I have felt hurt about it in the past, then I can worry that I will again and I will again!

Aaron: I am Aaron. What seems most important here is to see how you get a hold of this F-sharp, be it physical or emotional, and worry about it like a cat playing with a mouse. You're fascinated with it. We've talked about some of this before. I have said that you like your problems. You're very attached to your problems. They're part of who you think you are. The ego self doesn't want to let go of them. It's not that it enjoys having problems, but that it enjoys being able to solve problems. Then it feels empowered. So, what you need is a new way to feel empowered without needing to invite problems in and solve them for that empowerment. When you can feel empowered by simply moving into the truth of your connection to the divine, then the problems become totally irrelevant. There was never a need to be a problem-solver.

As long as you're in human form, though, the contractions are going to keep coming up. It's got to be a two-pronged approach: compassion to the human who's feeling anger, confusion, physical pain, and, simultaneously, awareness, not that this is illusion, but that in ultimate reality I can cut through the heaviness of these contractions and reconnect to the perfect light body template, I can rest my focus there, not in denial of the physical and emotional body's contractions, but in a spaciousness that also includes those. There's nothing to deny.

Part of the denial is the desire to escape from the ferocity of that contraction. It's painful, it burns. So the mind starts playing with, how do I get rid of this? And you simply forget, I don't have to get rid of anything, just move through it and back up to the deepest connection and rest there.

We keep coming back to this: Rest in your own deepest truth. And if there's pain, there's going to be pain. When it's ready it will go. But when you find yourself able to rest in that truth, from that place of truth the pain isn't necessary anymore, so it goes faster. And there is more space for it, less fight with it while it is present. But you can't do it because you're blackmailing the pain to try to get it to go faster. That doesn't work. Just making space for it and reconnecting. That is all.

J: Every morning at about 4:30 my middle back is in spasm. This has been happening for three months, every night. Once I get up and move I'm fine. I fall asleep. The next night I'm not in pain, but I wake up.

Barbara: How many hours can you sleep before you move into a spasm?

J: About five.

Barbara: Aaron is suggesting that you set an alarm for about an hour before the spasm, that you get up and do some gentle yoga for about fifteen minutes and go back to bed. Not anything very active, just moving and stretching. Do it with your eyes closed, half asleep. He thinks then you may be able to go back to sleep for three or four hours.

J: What is interesting to me about it is, it's not freaking me out. It's been okay on a certain level. There seems to be space around it. But there's also a sense of wanting it to stop and, I guess, get rid of it. I have been swimming, doing yoga, getting polarity massages, acupuncture, doing all kinds of maintenance stuff to help strengthen the muscles because it still feels like the aftermath of my surgery and my body's trying to find some balance. It feels like what's happening is that after I fall asleep my body is somehow still contracting as a memory to protect my insides.

Barbara: This is the core of it, I think. There are all these memories of ways to protect and the holding of the body in a tensed way to protect creates the spasms. Aaron is saying it's like going back to the piano and the finger keeps hitting F-sharp by accident and it just becomes such an ingrained way of doing it, that ... He says what you need to do is take the F-sharp key off the piano, literally, so you can't play it wrong.

J: It's like a skip in a record.

C2: What works for me is I accept pain and then it tends to go away.

Barbara: That's another very good way of doing it, just to wake up and know how much pain there is and see how much aversion to it there is and ask yourself to relax, over and over. How do you accept it? What's the process you go through?

C2: If you don't, it will hurt anyway.

Barbara: So, what happens to the fear at 3:30 as part of your mind is saying, there's going to be pain in a little while?

C2: There's going to be pain, whether you think that or not.

Aaron: I am Aaron. I thank you, C2. There's going to be pain anyway. It's kind and loving to the body to find patterns that avoid the pain where it's possible. Sometimes it's just not possible. One must ask oneself, how much of the pain is related to fear of the pain? What happens if I just lie here? J, you say you get up at 4:30. Two different approaches: the one I first suggested and simply waking up and lying in bed, feeling the power of this pain and trying to understand how much the fear of the pain is creating the pain.

What I mean by that is that within the sleep there is a small spasm. Then the body contracts more to fight the spasm and the spasm enlarges. The bigger it gets, the more tension to fight it. In effect, your body is still fighting the trauma of the surgery, as you noted. It feels back pain and reads "Abdominal pain; contract; protect." A different kind of retraining than arising and stretching to avoid it altogether is to begin to greet that first spasm with an "Aha, here is the spasm." Very gentle, very loving. Notice any contracting around it. Ask for help. Ask for spiritual energy workers and body workers to come and massage and gently release the contraction around the spasm. That original spasm is going to keep shrinking and shrinking and shrinking.

You can do it with lucid dreaming. The spasm does enter the dream and, at that point when you're still asleep, you can remind yourself, "I need to be very relaxed about this pain, to focus love to it in all the ways I've learned."

Ultimately, this is much more where healing is to be found than getting up an hour before the spasm. Both can be effective, but this will lead to a deeper knowledge of how to work with the spasm. The getting up is a way of connecting to the ultimate reality that there never was a spasm in the first place. It breaks the pattern. So, I don't want to say that one is better than the other, they're just two different approaches and the learning will be different in each. One is more of a relative practice, one more an ultimate practice. Do you have questions?

Barbara: Aaron is asking, can you see the difference, all of you, between the two practices of getting up, breaking the pattern by changing it, and accepting the pain and just learning how to relax into it. He says they are not mutually exclusive. You can do one some nights and one other nights.

(Talking about Aaron's statement that the physical body is the densest. How can we use that fact to relax tension?)

Barbara: I find when I wake up with my mind contracting—worrying about what I have to do, how I will get it done and am I doing the right things—if I shift from the mind questions to the physical sensations of the emotions, which for me is right here in my abdomen, then it changes it completely. It's just a physical sensation. The emotion doesn't have that much force anymore. My focusing on it was giving it solidity. Suddenly all that's there is a thought and a physical sensation. It becomes much more workable.

Wednesday, May 25, 1994

(This is the first "anything goes" night, to be held the last Wednesday of each month. Questions on any topic are welcome. We have deleted those questions not applicable to the book.)

Aaron's talk

I am Aaron. My greetings and love to you all. Many of you have dim but real memories of times when you were not incarnate. You may not regard them as memory. They may come through as dream or in meditation. You may think of it as fantasy. But at some level, you are remembering. Most especially, you are remembering your deep connection with all that is.

On the astral plane, you have no physical body. You are telepathic. You still have an emotional body and there may be reactivity to that emotional body. But for those of you who are fairly evolved, as you all are, there is at least the ability to view the emotional body with some degree of equanimity on the astral plane because there is no veil that separates you from your spiritual truth. Because you are telepathic and do not feel any sense of separation from the divine while on the astral plane, you very fully rest in one another's energy and find tremendous joy with that.

Each of your bodies has its own frequency vibration. The physical body is the densest and has the slowest vibration. The spiritual body has the highest vibration. Most of you have seen a stringed instrument where one string is plucked and held on a certain note, another string that is in tune vibrates along with the plucked string, even though it has not been touched. In just the same way, on the astral plane when you are in tune with another, your spirit and mental bodies vibrate in harmony with one another. In a sense, you keep each other moving, keep each other vibrating at higher and higher and higher pitch because the joy of that experience heightens the frequency vibration. There is such gladness. As you vibrate at a higher frequency, so does your partner—or partners, it may be plural.

When you are experiencing that, the emotional body, for that time, seems to dissolve, or at least the heavy aspects of it seem to dissolve. There may be joy, gladness, love. There will not be thought, in terms of conceptual thought, but very pure awareness, and the spirit body itself which vibrates.

With this as background, what I would like to talk briefly about is some of the sexual issues you get into when you move into a body and it doesn't vibrate in the same way, leaving you feeling bewildered, separate, and unsure how to work with this dense energy that is the physical body. I do not want to make this a long introductory talk. I am going to touch on certain ideas. If you are curious to hear more, raise your questions during the question time.

One of the most frequent questions that I hear privately about sexuality is about the discrepancy between the experience of the physical body and the experience of the higher bodies. Some of you find that you can move into deep harmony with another on the physical plane while withholding your higher energies, not feeling a spiritual merging at all. Or you can feel a deep spiritual merging with another, but as soon as

touch and physical sensation is involved, you pull away. You want to hide in that spiritual merging and disown the body. What's happening here?

I see several issues as primary. First, many of you are working with fear, wanting to be in control, to feel safe. You don't want mess in your lives. You want to know that everything is orderly and neat and then you feel secure and comfortable. No surprises. Your physical bodies simply are messy. Bits of skin flake off. Hair falls out. There are small sores, places of varying degrees of sensitivity to stimulation.

When you are touched in certain ways the physical body responds. It's like that knee-kick response when a doctor taps you just under the knee and the foot shoots out. You don't like not being in control. That's one part of it. When we take that to its logical conclusion, extreme sexual arousal and orgasm leave you feeling out of control. It may be minor, and certainly there may be pleasure involved, but that sense of being out of control does create fear and contraction of the energy field.

That contraction takes us directly into the lessons of the past few months. When the energy field contracts with fear, you feel cut off. You feel cut off especially from the divine energy that is moving into you. When you experience that sense of being cut off, you immediately reach out to grab at energy where you can. A fear reaction. Then, instead of merging your energy fields with your partner, you begin grabbing at each other's energy fields. How could you possibly experience a spiritual merging when you're like chickens picking at each other, each trying to get the worm? And then you ask, what's wrong? Why do I lose the sense of spiritual connection when I move into a deep sense of physical arousal?

My dear ones, you are here in physical bodies for a reason. Some of the sensations of the physical body are highly pleasurable and some are very painful. As long as there is grasping at one and pushing away the other, or as long as there is extreme desire to control the experiences of the physical, your energy fields are going to be contracted. That does not preclude physical arousal, but it cuts you off from mental and spiritual connection when physical arousal is present.

The other way some of you handle it is to tune out the sensations of the physical body. You connect deeply with your partner with love and profound spiritual connection, but you don't let yourself feel the physical sensations because to do so is to lead into that fear of losing control. You've learned that you can maintain the spiritual connection by denying the body.

So many of you ask me, how can I bring this together? How can I experience physical arousal and orgasm and, simultaneously, maintain that sense of deep spiritual connection? To do that, you are going to have to look at the fear of loss of control. It's not just in sex, it's in all of your life: the fear of heavy emotions, the fear of someone being angry at you or your own anger, the fear of all the small messes that enter your life, the people that change their minds, the plans that fall apart, the relationship that doesn't work or the job you didn't get. The more you work with fear in a conscious way, using all of these practices we've been learning to keep your energy field open, to be mindful of the contractions of that fear and work to release it, the more you are going to be able to bring that practice into your sexuality, to be aware of the contractions of fear that occur within the physical body during sexuality and not to get caught in them.

There's one other area of sexuality I'd like to talk about. So many of you feel guilt about your sexual fantasies. A fantasy is simply that: a fantasy. There are no good or bad fantasies. If you can only achieve sexual satisfaction by acting out that fantasy and it discomforts your partner, then you've got a problem. You cannot force your fantasy on another whom it discomforts in terms of acting it out. But if you enjoy a fantasy, what harm is there in it?

Some of you who have spoken to me have sexual fantasies of violence. You don't need to act them out, but you fear that they separate you from the spiritual connection with your partner. It's very hard to feel spiritually connected and loving with a partner and, simultaneously, to have a fantasy of being beaten or tied or beating another. It confuses you. You ask, "Where do these fantasies come from? How do I get rid of them?"

You do not get rid of them by judging them. You release them, if you feel they are not useful to you, by moving into deeper understanding of them. You ask yourself, what if I didn't have this fantasy? What if, instead of a fantasy that involved force, there was a fantasy that involved gentleness? And then you may begin to see that that gentleness is very frightening in some ways because it does draw you deeper into a heart connection.

I simply raise this question, do your fantasies protect you by keeping you within the physical aspect of your sexuality and separate you from a deeper mental and spiritual aspect of sexuality? If so, are you choosing those fantasies because it is too frightening to move into that intense connection with a partner on the spiritual plane, to then experience the arousal of the body and lack of control and not know what to do with the fear and tension that may accompany that lack of control?

There are many other reasons for your fantasies. Many of them spring from past lives. Many of you experienced arousal of the physical body at some time in a past life in a situation in which that sex act was forced upon you. The body was touched and it responded. There is a certain excitement in a sense of helplessness because you can let go of your fear of loss of control. There's nothing you can do about it, so you let it go. Then you begin to repeat that pattern, to move into fantasies similar to that actual experience because that sense of helplessness is a protection against fear of loss of control. Can you see that?

So, many of these fantasies relate to control issues of one sort or another. I simply ask you to remember there are no "good" or "bad" fantasies, but some fantasies **do** make it more difficult to move into a heart connection with the partner. If your fantasies are doing that and you want that heart connection, then you need to ask yourself, why am I not allowing the heart connection that I want? Begin to look at the reasons, at what fears may be present.

There are many, many other questions that are frequently asked privately about sexuality—so many, that we could do a weekend workshop on it. I've promised a short opening talk tonight. I would be glad to answer any other questions that you may have. If you're timid about speaking them, please write them. That is all.

Barbara: Aaron is saying that one other area of questions that comes up frequently in private sessions is the confusion when we experience a mixture of our masculine and

feminine energies and don't know how to deal with those truly harmonious but contrasting parts of ourselves.

Questions

(J asks about whether it is useful or advisable to work with mudras with an acupuncturist, i.e. giving the acupuncturist the charts of mudras and asking that needles be placed in those specific points.

Barbara briefly explains mudra meditation practice.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. My answer here would be conditional upon the degree of awareness of the one who was receiving the energy work. One who is a qualified acupuncturist generally is sensitive to and aware of which meridian or meridians need to receive these needles, which chakras need additional stimulation. If you are going to an acupuncturist, are you simply going to someone who is knowledgeable about the insertion of needles to put in the needles, serving as your hands, or are you trusting yourself to their insight about the blockages in your energy system? That's question one.

If they are serving simply as extensions of your hands with the skill to properly insert needles, and if you are qualified yourself and aware of where the blockages are, then it's reasonable and useful to direct them. However, my preference here would be to entrust yourself to this being, to give them feedback about what you are experiencing and not need to direct the show. There may be some combination of your energies, but the one who is outside of your physical body, receiving your energy feedback, is in a better position to ascertain what is needed sometimes than you are. Your feedback is very valuable, but I do question why the need to control it.

A second and related question: Is it more useful to insert a needle than just to touch at that point wherever it may be. The needles do stimulate energy at a deeper level for most people, except for those who are very sensitive to and receptive of energy stimulation. Once you have come to an understanding of the energy meridians in your body, you don't even need the touch of mudra meditation, only the thought brought to that area. Some people develop such a high degree of sensitivity to that stimulation that the insertion of a needle would be overpowering. So this is individual.

Finally, should it be combined in any way? I would say absolutely not. Let me qualify that. If the needle is inserted at a chakra point and twirled in that point, creating that stimulation of that channel, your own attention to that chakra is very similar to the touch of the mudra and is fine. But if the acupuncturist is putting the needle in, I would definitely not suggest that they also bring their energy, separate from the needle, to that point. This would overstimulate. The needle in itself or the touch, but not both together. Your own attention is different because you have a strong sense within you of how much stimulation to allow and when to back off. Does that sufficiently answer your question? If not, will you voice any further questions? That is all.

K: I've been reading a book about a physical condition where people's senses are linked in such a way that some of them hear colors and some of them taste shapes. Yesterday, Aaron was talking about how beings who have had sensory experiences on the Earth plane have a richer sensory experience on the spirit plane. So, when I was

reading about these people whose senses are linked together, I wondered whether that was a movement toward what Aaron experiences. Do we hear colors on the spirit plane? Are the senses experienced together in this way?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Here you are, encased in a body. You have a tongue that tastes, nostrils that take in scent, ears that hear, and so on. Each part of the body is especially created to pick up a certain kind of stimuli. When you no longer have a body, what part of you hears? There no longer is a mechanism with bones that vibrate and nerves that carry that vibration. You no longer have the retina, lens and other eye equipment. What sees?

In the physical body, your range of vision or hearing is extremely limited, only to that which is considered audible sound or visible light. Because you have no sensory tools in the non-physical body, you are not limited anymore. Now, truly you are not limited in the physical body. I'm not making an audible sound, but Barbara hears me perfectly and sees me as well. Those of you who see auras or energy, what part of you is seeing that? You've learned that you must look at it in an unfocused rather than a focused way.

On the astral plane and beyond it, then, once you let go of the illusion that you see through eyes or hear through ears, you learn that your whole energy field absorbs sound and hears it. Your whole energy field absorbs light and sees it. It's not something you have to learn. Rather, you unlearn the physical experience, the limitations of the physical experience, and then you move naturally into sensory input through the entire energy field.

Those in incarnation who hear light or smell shapes or whatever may be remembering that ability from a discarnate stage. It's not going to put them ahead on the astral plane; they're simply able to do it here. Actually, it's something all of you could learn to do here, to sense with your entire energy field. Is there any use in doing that? Not particularly. It's not that there's reason to avoid it, but you also do not need to train yourself at it. As you relax and allow yourself to listen deeper and deeper, you do hear your spirit guides, for example. You do hear what I could call "the great hum" of universal energy. As you relax and allow yourself to see, you do see the vibrating energy from everything around you.

But you are in incarnation. You must continue to relate to the incarnation as human. That doesn't mean denying these extra senses, but there's also no need to grasp at them. Rather, relax. Get in tune with your energy field. Start to feel how it relates to other energy fields and all of these extra senses will start to be more and more available to you. But don't think of it as practicing so you'll be better at it when you leave the body. When you leave the body, you'll experience what comes next. Just that.

I do not see as you do. The way I see all of you is very, very beautiful. And yet, when I look through Barbara's eyes at all of you or at a butterfly or at a rainbow, it's exquisite. Can you compare a Rembrandt with some abstract modern painting with exquisite color and harmony and say that one is better or worse than the other? They're just different. Does that answer your question? (Yes.) That is all.

Q: How does surgery on the physical body affect the mental, emotional and spiritual bodies?

(Aaron asks that those who have had surgery share their experiences with the group, especially how the surgery affected the other bodies. Several share and their experiences are very different from each other, ranging from extreme feelings of being invaded to relative peace during surgery, including a near death experience. The idea of surgery as being a form of rape is introduced. These comments are on the tape but are not transcribed.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. If you have a flowering plant in your backyard and simply walk out and whack off some branches with the intention of bringing them in and putting them in a vase, with no explanation to the plant, it traumatizes the plant. The plant will not offer you as profuse future blooms. When you speak to the plant first, explain what you're going to do, thank it for its beauty, ask, "Which branches shall I cut?" and cut just those, the plant continues to bloom profusely in enjoyment of being appreciated. Your energy and the plant's energy are interacting with one another.

Unfortunately, this idea is not taught in medical school. Most surgeons do not speak to the body part nor to the body itself before they operate. There is simply that organ that needs to be removed, or this area that needs to be stitched. Occasionally, there is a surgeon whose energy has profound respect for that upon which he or she operates. It has the patience to explain, not just to the conscious mind of the patient but, while the patient is anesthetized on the operating table, to address its energy, to apologize to that flesh before it cuts. This makes a profound difference.

I know it's awkward to ask your surgeon, "Will you talk to my stomach or heart or whatever before you cut?" The surgeon may send you on to a psychiatrist! However, if you can find that surgeon who hears and understands you, then there will not only be less physical trauma, but there will be less trauma to the other bodies. They will participate with the surgeon in the healing rather than contracting and shielding against this rape of the body. That is all. Is there other thought that you wish to share?

C: I believe it is most important for the person who is going into surgery to speak to their own body parts to explain themselves what is going on and to ask the body to cooperate in the process. Could Aaron speak to that?

Barbara: Aaron says yes, considering that most surgeons won't understand what you're talking about and even if they did, yes, that is your responsibility to your own body part. But the surgeon's energy is directly working on your body and if that is done with love it really makes a profound difference regardless of what you do.

Q: Does surgery put wrinkles in light body?

Aaron: I am Aaron. The surgery itself does not put wrinkles or scars on the light body. Your relationship to the surgery puts the wrinkles or scars there. When you are contracted in fear and your energy is fighting the experience, then there are scars on the light body. Of course, they're illusory scars. The light body can't really have scars. But there is the illusion of scar. Let's call it a painted line over the top of the light body. It doesn't penetrate in, but it is so finely crafted to look like a scar that you believe that it's a scar and react accordingly. Does that answer your question?

(Barbara talks about the dental surgery she had a couple of months ago, and how she worked with the light body to "erase" the illusory scars from her appendectomy as a child.)

Q: For the past several months, my partner and I have had a lot of conflict. In fact, it seems that all we do is have pain because of conflicting needs. While I do not have a specific question to ask right now, can Aaron address this issue? How can I deal with this conflict and pain?

Aaron: I am Aaron. There is someplace basic where you've all got to start. In agreeing to incarnate you agreed to experience pain. Even if somehow, miraculously, you get through the entire incarnation without physical or emotional pain, eventually you're going to die. Unless you are truly a fully realized being, there is going to be some emotional pain around the loss of this body to which you've become attached. Realistically, none of you are completely free of physical or emotional pain.

There are two different questions here: one concerns relationship and conflicting needs, the other concerns dealing with that pain. In actuality, the questions are connected because once you relax a bit and stop fighting the pain, you find that the needs are not quite as conflicting as you had thought. When you are able to be relaxed you can hear your partner's needs instead of needing to defend against them. So, as long as you're fighting and trying to stay free of pain, you're in a position where it's very difficult to hear what seem to be conflicting needs which jab at you.

Let's talk about pain first, briefly. Nobody wants pain. I am a sixth density being with a deep sense of equanimity and I don't want pain. I'm not saying I fight against pain, but I certainly don't invite it in. I said to you earlier that incarnation is messy. A part of you wants so deeply to be secure, safe, in control. People come along and have different ideas than you do and challenge your ideas and opinions and you tense up against that challenge. Messy! Fix it!

The literal expression of this is two people who share a home, one of whom is very neat and organized and one of whom is chaotic. Their chaos is tossed all over your order. In fact, that happens figuratively in all human relationships because somebody else's order is your chaos and vice versa. You each see in a different way.

Several months ago somebody volunteered to file some information for Barbara. Barbara was not explicit as to how she wanted it filed. She said, "Put it in alphabetical order." So the filer put it in alphabetical order, not by last-name-first as Barbara would have done it, but alphabetically by subject matter. It was his perfect order. To Barbara it was chaos until she relaxed her fight with it. Then it became order.

When someone inflicts their chaos on you, you tense up. When you are in relationship with another, regardless of whether it's partner, parent/child, friend, you are constantly confronted with another person's seeming disorder. When you look at your response to that and begin to see how much tension it creates for you, begin to allow yourself to relax. This doesn't mean becoming a doormat to another person's debris. If you share a home with somebody, you have a right to insist that the shared rooms meet both of your standards. And in the same way, that your shared experiences meet both of your needs as best as is possible. But to do that you have to hear one another. And you can't hear one another when you're busy shielding.

The happy aspect of this is that a relationship is the perfect situation in which to practice all the work that we've done this year: When I feel threatened and my energy field contracts, can I be aware of it? Can I attend to it with compassion and an open heart? Finally, when I see that that contraction is simply conditioned mind, can I use these energy practices to release it?

Why are you in incarnation? Why are you in relationships in the first place? This is a classroom. Yes, the relationships are there to bring joy, but they're also your learning tools. Think about it. Are you in relationships so you won't be lonely? If you're in relationships simply so you won't be lonely, cease incarnating. Stay on the astral plane awhile. There's no loneliness on the astral plane. Come back to incarnation when you're ready to move into relationships not only as avoidance of loneliness, but also as tool for learning.

I'm not saying that your relationships don't give you joy and connection and alleviate loneliness, but that's not the primary reason for them. Get it in focus. Once you have that clear perspective then the other person's disorder or chaos ceases to be a personal affront to you. You can be relaxed about it and say, "Great, here's another chance to practice." It might be a "Great" with clenched teeth, but still you know here is chance to practice.

So, there's going to pain. Can you change your relationship to that pain, end the war with it? Can you end the war with the chaos? In short, can you allow yourself to be vulnerable to whatever pain, chaos, confusion is around you and keep your energy and heart open? When you can do that then you are going to be able to hear your partner and to work out mutually satisfactory compromise, and to become more tolerant of those areas where compromise is difficult. That is all.

C: Yep! We are responsible for it all.

Barbara: Aaron is laughing and saying that you keep trying to find a way out of that. It's very basic. **But**, most of us, even though we know better, still spend our incarnation trying to find a loophole.

Aaron: I am Aaron. The only loophole is that there are no loopholes. Do you understand that? You're looking for a loophole to find freedom from your pain, a way out of responsibility, a way out of suffering. The true loophole is complete equanimity and acceptance of the fact that there are no loopholes. Once you fully accept that, you allow yourself to stop struggling with your life and move into a place of relaxation. When the energy field ceases to get tense and fight, then you find great happiness and an end of suffering. So that's the loophole. That is all.

C: That sounds like a Zen koan.

Aaron: I am Aaron. The entire idea of the Zen koan derived from life experience. For some people it's too difficult to see it within their own lives so an artificial construct helps to focus attention. Your life is a koan. The central riddle is, is there a loophole? Once you discover that the loophole is that there is no loophole, then you can relax and stop fighting, stop trying to find it and just get on with it. That is all.

Barbara: Aaron, I think of a loophole as being a shortcut that makes things easier. Somehow I'm feeling resistant to what I think you said. I'm not sure if I got the whole

thing. But you're suggesting that resignation is a loophole and that sounds pretty harsh to me.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Resignation and equanimity are not synonymous. When you think of a loophole that way, as a shortcut, I ask you to visualize yourself walking from point A to point B and there's a steep mountain in between. There's a path. A signpost says very clearly: To B. You start climbing. It's steep and rocky. You see a path off to one side and you think, "Maybe that would be easier." It leads to a hundred foot cliff. You come back to the trail to point B. You see another path. It leads to a steep ravine with a raging river running through. Where is your shortcut?

Truly this acceptance, "There are no loopholes so let's get on with it," is the easiest way. If this is the road to point B, just lift your feet and walk. Can you see how much pain you create for yourself in your struggle against this road and your desire to find an easier route when in fact you know there is no other route? The only way out is the road, one foot at a time. And, in fact, although this mountain may rise three thousand feet in elevation, one foot in front of the other isn't going to rise more than a few inches. You don't have to climb three thousand feet. With each footstep you only have to climb three inches. What's hard about that? Don't look for point B, look for the next step and stay there, one step at a time. Be here in this moment, fully, and before you know it you'll find yourself at point B. That is all.

F: Can the lifestyle of a monk or the sanctuary of a monastery be a shortcut? If we can eliminate much of the gross external stimuli, can't we accelerate and deepen our practice?

Aaron: I am Aaron. I hear your question, F. It depends where you are. Let us use an example of an athlete that needs both to sharpen his or her throwing or catching skills and his or her stamina. If he or she has worked hard to deepen the specific athletic skills, then it will be most useful for them to move into a training that heightens the stamina. If they've already heightened the stamina, it is not useful to heighten it more and disregard the specific skills.

You need to do both: to come to a place of deep rest inside yourself where the small ego self is not violently flaming out, where you begin to have a deep sense of the truth of who you are, and then you need to bring that truth into the world and see how you can learn to maintain it in the face of outside catalyst. Many of you then have been monks in many lifetimes. For the many of you your final lifetimes incarnate are not as monks, but are learning to use that wisdom within the world. That doesn't mean it has to work that way. Some of you have learned how to use that wisdom in the world and need the final time to go deeper and come to a place of rest. So there's not one answer. Both are useful.

There is no one presently in this room who would best be served by joining a monastery in terms of your present spiritual path. There is no one within this room who would not benefit by lengthy—by which I mean not just a weekend or even a week, but several weeks or months—periods of solitude and intense spiritual practice. Then take that back into your daily life and see how it works. When you're feeling a little bit lost, you come back to the solitude again.

There are different kinds of monastery experiences as well, those in which the participant lives simply in a cave or hut very isolated from the cares of the world and those where the participant is asked to be in the world although with certain vows of poverty, celibacy and so on. Those vows which protect you from the catalyst of the physical body and the material nature of the world also slow your learning down in some ways. Does that answer your question?

It is after ten but if we may have a just a minute of silence and thought to this loving world which we aspire to bring into birth, not grasping at that creation, but enjoying the wonderful potential of an Earth that is free of suffering and filled with loving kindness, joy and peace. (*Long pause.*)

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you a good night. That is all.

Wednesday, June 8, 1994

Aaron's talk

I am Aaron. My love to you all. Barbara was just meditating in the backyard, eyes open and looking at the young evergreen trees. As she was sitting in meditation posture, she felt very much like those triangular trees and about the same size. Breathing in and breathing out with her eyes open, she very much experienced her connection to the tree. I won't say "becoming the tree," because she has always been the tree, she can't become it, and the tree has always been her. She experienced the falling away of boundary.

Moving into that sense of connection with the tree, she experienced the tree's roots into the soil and the sun being absorbed by the needles. She felt her own connection into the soil. She felt this light line moving in and nurturing her.

I am not suggesting that you would experience precisely what Barbara experienced. Whatever you experience is fine. What I would like to ask you to do is to take a cushion and blanket, whatever you need, or a chair if you prefer, and sit, eyes open, exhaling and moving your energy into a tree, inhaling and absorbing the energy from the tree. Just that. Wherever it takes you is fine. If your mind starts to wander, simply come back to the tree as primary object. Just resting in that treeness.

I know that it is cool out. We will keep it short and then gather back in here to talk further. That is all.

(Break while group goes outside to sit.)

Aaron: I am Aaron. I'm not going to give a long talk tonight. Rather, I want to have you share your experiences and to answer questions. Before I go any further, will you share some of what you just experienced? Please remember this is not a competition. There are no good or bad, wrong or right experiences. Whatever happened was fine, even if it was just sitting and looking at a tree.

My hope is to give you tools to work with during the summer which will deepen your awareness of that angel in yourself, your own divine center and your connection through that center with all that is. These are just tools to deeper awareness. Like any tool, they are only of value if you practice the use of them. Words cannot take you where the experience of sitting with a tree, a cloud, a flower, an ant, a friend can take you. That is all.

Discussion

D: At first I wanted to tell myself stories about the tree and me, so I let that go. It seemed hard to concentrate on just the tree, but then I opened up to everything. I experienced a vibration of everything. Then I went back to the tree and that was more quiet.

Barbara: Aaron is asking, when you experienced the vibration of everything, was your own vibration part of that everything?

D: Yes. For a little bit, but then I felt my heartbeat and that separated me from the vegetation because they weren't beating.

Barbara: I'm paraphrasing Aaron who is asking, can you all see how as you let go of self there is the distinct vibration of this versus that. They're part of each other and vibrating like instruments in an orchestra in relationship to one another. But none of them have any separate self to them, they're simply doing a dance together and you're part of that dance. But then, the heartbeat or the brain, thought, something intrudes and brings back self and the illusion of separation again. It's okay ... Let Aaron speak.

Aaron: It is of no concern that there is this illusion of self. If it's there, it's there. We're not trying to get rid of one and replace it with the other, but to understand that both coexist: the relative reality which contains the illusion of a self and the ultimate reality which is free of any separate self. I do not expect that you will ever fully immerse yourself in that ultimate reality. Indeed, to do so will be to deny the relative reality which is part of the picture. I only hope that you can learn to rest in both. That is all.

Barbara: Other comments?

J: I started feeling these waves of energy moving through me: very strong. One was startlingly strong, it shook my own energy. I was breathing in the tree and breathing back to the tree, back and forth, and could feel this cycle of energy moving through me, moving through the tree. It was wild!

Barbara: I'm paraphrasing Aaron who is saying, that's why he asked you to work with a smaller tree. (*J had begun with a large tree and Aaron asked him to move to one closer to his seated size.*) The waves of energy from a big tree would have been overwhelming so that you could not have kept cycling it like that.

J: The first wave that swept through me startled me. It was like a head rush, like drugs.

D2: I was skeptical that I would feel much of the tree energy. And so I sat and I thought a lot. My mind was very active, thinking about some work that I am in the middle of. But I just kept coming back to the tree. Then at one point, I felt very compassionate towards the tree. I noticed that both the tree and I had mosquitoes around us and I felt this compassion for the tree that could not defend itself against the elements and bugs or other things. Then I thought that the compassion I was feeling was really compassion for myself when I feel like I cannot defend myself.

C: I also sat in a big nest of mosquitoes and was watching a lot of them flying around the tree and they were biting me. I frequently have been sending love to trees, this spring in particular. I've done it a lot, practically every morning. But I was feeling a lot of resistance tonight. I was noticing the bugs and noticing my resistance and just sitting with it and recognized that I was afraid of connecting strongly with the tree because there was so much longing for that deep connection. I know the connection very well and I was defending against it because there was a lot of sadness connected to it that I didn't really want to get into. I was just watching it all.

Barbara: Very hard. We all want that connection and we're all afraid of it. Anybody else?

F: As often happens with me in the woods when I focus like that, I begin to pulsate and it feels like I am pulsating with the entire nature world much like a heartbeat. This usually leads to a loss of self. Tonight that happened until I kept getting bitten.

Barbara: Aaron ended sooner than he intended because people were getting bitten. I had been sitting out there just twenty minutes earlier and there were no mosquitoes. They suddenly swarmed. Anybody else?

C2: I felt much more connected to the little red flower in front of my tree than the tree itself. I kept looking down to the flower. I watched the flower.

Barbara: A tree, a flower, clouds, any of these things with eyes soft and unfocused, just allowing energy to move back and forth ... Sometimes it's very helpful to do it with a tree that's just about your size whose energy is very much equal to yours, but it may be much less threatening to do it with a flower. It may feel very inspiring to do it with a big tree and feel the power of its energy. Try it with all kinds of things.

D2: What about doing this with animals?

Barbara: Absolutely, Aaron says, and with people with their permission. Anybody else? Within my gaze were J and C and C2, just within the field of my vision, and four trees. At first there were three people and me and four trees. And after a while there were just eight energy fields just moving back and forth and they really stopped being trees or people. It was amazing. You had the form of J and the tree had the form of the tree. It wasn't that you were merged into one so much as you were just both energy. And both of you as you were sitting with your trees. Then the mosquitoes started bothering me and I lost that sense of just different energies and started looking at my aversion to the mosquitoes. They were all swarming around the tree in front of me. I started doing the same thing with the mosquitoes, just allowing myself to be open completely to their energy. Then I had such a deep sense of compassion for the mosquitoes and really felt a lot of love for them and the very difficult life they live.

It's hard to explain this. I had a sense of all of us, people, trees, mosquitoes, needing to feed off of other energy. The mosquitoes do it literally, but we're all mosquitoes in a certain way, picking up energy from other people. As I stopped disliking the mosquitoes so much and really allowing myself to be present with their mosquito experience, I started to see that part of myself that's like a mosquito, that wants to pull energy out of where it can. I began not to have so much aversion to that in myself. That's just how we are: we give and take energy.

Aaron: I am Aaron. I will speak rather briefly and then I do want to turn the microphone over to all of you to hear your questions. We began this year looking at the balance between relative and ultimate reality. I said last September that we'd spent several years learning to work with the catalysts of relative reality and that we were going to focus our energy this year on learning the tools to allow ourselves to be more fully present with ultimate reality. To differing degrees you have mastered many of these tools. There is not one of you who has not learned to recognize those moments when you rest in ultimate reality. Some of you are more stable there than others, some have practiced it more, but you've all learned the first step of it which is to recognize that core of light in yourself, to recognize, one might say, your true nature which is light, and to recognize that not as concept but as experience.

Now we come to our summer break. It is a wonderful to take what you've been hearing and practice it. You have all heard me say that the only real emotion is love, that love in itself is a distortion of awareness—which I will not explain here as we have talked of it before—but that fear is a distortion of love. We have looked at that balance of love and fear in the catalysts of your lives: the inmost catalysts of your emotions and how those emotions are a gift of the incarnation, the next outer circle of catalysts which are the immediate events and people in your lives which give rise to the emotions—these are your family, your relationships, your work, your friends, the immediate situations of your home and environment—and finally, those catalysts of the more outer world, the non-personal environment. When I say non-personal, the pollution of a river 5000 miles from you does not affect your everyday life in the same way that pollution of your air in this immediate environment affects your everyday life. But, of course, there's nothing non-personal about pollution or war even if it's thousands of miles away. We relate to it differently, so this is a further-out circle of catalyst.

I hope that this summer you will begin to look at these myriad catalysts in your life and at your relationship to them, that you will begin to understand that skillful choice comes best from this place of balance between relative and ultimate reality. When you are stuck in the relative, you may go on a campaign against those polluted rivers or a campaign against this war, but there is this person trying to fix the world and attacking the world as if it were broken. The balanced perspective allows you to know that the polluted river is creating harm for many beings and to work skillfully on clean-up of the world environment without violence or attack.

We speak seeming paradoxes, such as, "There is nothing broken anywhere, so fix it." Do you understand that? It's not the fix-it of the fixer who fixes, subject to object. It is the fixing of the being who attends to that which is intimately a part of itself with precise and loving attention, which allows that which has become distorted to undistort itself. It is the perspective that knows that nothing needs to be fixed, that doesn't grasp but allows that which has been knotted to unknot, that which has been tangled to untangle. There is nothing broken anywhere, so fix it; allow it to heal itself.

I want to hand you that thought for the summer, that seeming paradox, and ask you to work with it. There is nothing broken in yourselves. Your anger, your fear, your jealousy, your greed, these are not places where you are broken. That light line is unbroken and always has been, always will be.

Notice the wrinkles in yourself, in your families, your workplaces, in your world. Learn to come to them with an open heart that does not demand that they be fixed but treats them with loving attention and concern. Within those two attitudes is a world of difference.

Most of you practice meditation regularly. Within that meditation practice, now that you have summer, lie on the grass, meditate for awhile, eyes open, watching the sky, day or night. Follow your breath out. What happens when it comes to the end of your atmosphere? How far out does your breath go? Any end to it? Does it go on out into the universe? Breathe in. Are you only breathing in the immediate air in your vicinity? Are you not breathing in your entire galaxy? The universe? Everything? Any limit to what you're breathing in? Allow yourself to feel at home in your universe.

Now do the same thing with awareness. Send your infinite awareness out. Breathe in the unlimited awareness of the universe. Rest in that pure state.

Mindfully through your days, notice each time barriers come up, each time you experience a boundary to the self. Note that that arising is a manifestation of fear and, with a deep degree of kindness and gentleness, ask yourself as much as is possible to let that boundary dissolve again. Spend your summer connecting, not only to the flowers but to the mosquitoes, not only to the sunshine but to the storms.

Try to find the experience of that light line within you and the light line within the tree or the rabbit; follow them up and find God there. Feel your brother/sisterhood with all that is through the divinity in each of you. This is not only a very joyful practice, but is the best tool I know to take you deeper into ultimate reality and your interconnection with all that is.

We certainly are not finished with these energy practices. We will be continuing with them in the fall but less intensely, expanding into some new directions with our work. Remember the various meditations that we did through the winter, especially this four-step process with which many of you have been working, this process of recognizing that which is old conditioning, recognizing that it does not need to be re-manifest in this moment, and allowing the willingness to let it go. Just, "I don't need this fear, or jealousy, or greed anymore." No judgment about it. Just "I don't need it. I see how it's arisen and I let it go."

I hope you will continue that practice over the summer but, along with that, rest in this place of pure mind within. It makes the letting go very different because from that place of inner divinity there's nobody to let go and nothing that ever needed to be let go. The more fully you can rest there, the clearer you will understand who you really are and the more joy and peace you will experience. That is all.

Barbara: Aaron would like to concentrate on whatever questions people have. He asks, do you understand at some level what he means when he says "Nothing was ever broken, so fix it?" He's saying that's not something the brain can grasp at all. It's got to come from a much deeper level. Do you want to talk about that at all? He says it will work easier if you take one part of the phrase at a time, looking at the arising fear which says, "I need to fix that," and asking, "What's broken, what do I need to fix?" Coming to the place of clearly seeing, "It never was broken; it's just my fear and need to control. Can I trust that it's as it needs to be?"

Aaron: It is polluted because the people who live along it need to learn to be more interconnected with their environment, need to learn that they are responsible for what they create. The "it was never broken" comes from the recognition "it is as it needs to be." There is an order in the world. The "fix it" comes from recognizing your responsibility. Your job, once you understand that the river was never broken, is not to go on campaign to clean up the river, but to help to teach those who live along the river that they are responsible for cleaning it up. Can you feel the difference?

You see that it's doing harm, that it's creating pain for many sentient beings. You don't turn your back on that pain. The need is to understand clearly what needs to be fixed. Then you don't enter into it as "I am the teacher and I'm going to show you how to do it." Perhaps you talk to the people who live there about how sad it makes you to see this

pollution. You help them to understand their responsibility for creating it and that they are empowered to clean it up if they wish to. Teach them how to do so.

In a sense, your work is to empower others to do their own learning so that the conditions which have created pain, but have been catalyst for their learning, will no longer be necessary. You cannot “do” that learning for another, but you can help to empower them. That empowerment grows out of a place of non-separation with them. Through your own recognition of your own empowerment, you empower others. Through your own recognition of your own divinity, you help others to find that divinity and self-respect within them which leads them to make the changes they need to make in their lives.

Here it doesn’t matter whether it’s a polluted river or a dysfunctional family. On one level the dysfunctional family is broken. On another level it is the creation of those who moved into that family for learning. Yes, you may wish to protect those who seem innocent, as babies, to see that they are not harmed by the situation; but you cannot fix another, you can only empower and inspire another, and then the need for the dysfunctional family will cease to exist. That is all.

Barbara: I am paraphrasing Aaron. He says, keep this phrase in mind. It’s a kind of slick phrase, it’s simple, but he thinks it will keep coming into your attention. There’s nothing broken—attend to that part of it.

So fix it—how do I fix it? Aaron asks if the question, how do we bring more joy into our own and others lives is an important question for everybody? He wonders if that would be a starting place? If so, he would like some of your thoughts about it. Where are you stuck with not finding enough joy in your life or feeling that you’re not giving enough joy to others lives?

C2: I get stuck when I feel like I should be working on these hard issues or I notice my attachment to having them resolved.

Aaron: I am Aaron. C2, even if you try, can you avoid working on these issues? That is all.

C2: No. *(Laughs.)* They follow me everywhere.

Barbara: He’s saying, so what are you worrying about? I think what C2 is really saying is that she gets stuck with her self-judgment when she sees aversion to the work that lies before her. Do you have thoughts about that?

C2: There’s a part of me that doesn’t want to let go of things that I am ready to be done with ... *(Tape ran out. Tape begins.)*

Aaron: I am Aaron. Please remember that you never have to let go of anything until you don’t feel you need it anymore. We come back to this image of the person with the broken leg who needed a crutch. There was excruciating pain with any effort to put full weight on the leg. The crutches became habit. The cast is off. The first steps with the cast off, there was pain, so one is still using the crutches. One does not have to let go of the crutches until one is ready, but one must also recognize that as long as you hold onto the crutches you can’t run freely through the meadows and chase butterflies. It is you who limit your joy. Your fear, more specifically, and your unwillingness to give up that fear, limits your joy. This doesn’t mean that you go on a campaign to get rid of

fear, only that you develop the courage and willingness to trust that you will know when it's time to let go of a crutch and will do so. It's not skillful to let go of the crutch while the leg is still broken.

Trust your deepest wisdom to know when you no longer need your jealousy or greed or sense of unworthiness, to know when you have grown beyond those and they're simply old habit. This is where we move into that energy practice and letting it go. It is the hardest thing you will ever be asked to do as humans, to let go of the accumulated debris of so many lifetimes and come into the fullness of your true self. It truly is your final thesis and it's hard work. Honor yourself that you are willing to even consider this work. And remember that once you have done it, there is tremendous joy in running barefoot through the meadow. No crutches. That is all.

F: I find that often when I'm having too much fun in the meadow, I get a sense of guilt and I look for usually international issues that touch my heart, usually of great suffering, and remind myself that I should perhaps be suffering a bit more. So I read "The Nation," get angry again.

Barbara: Aaron said something to me as you were talking and I asked if I should say it out loud and he said no, he prefers to avoid ethnic jokes. But then he said okay. "Jewish mother complex." That sense of guilt: Other people are suffering, I should be, too.

F: I was raised with a strong social awareness and compassion. I have to learn how to integrate my inner peace and joy with active social work.

Barbara: I'm paraphrasing Aaron. Your own peace and joy are genuine as is the suffering in the world, as is the occasional suffering within you. He is saying we all need to find that balance in ourselves, that many of us stifle our own joy out of that sense of guilt and then ...

Aaron: I am Aaron. This may seem contradictory at first glance. Many of you work a bit deviously to continue to manifest suffering in the world, although you would so strongly like to alleviate that suffering. You push—guilt is not the correct word, but it is the closest approximation to the correct word.—Let us go back to that polluted river in Peru. Perhaps you feel anger about it. You may not recognize that your anger is not so much about that polluted river so much as the polluted lake in your neighborhood, and verbal and noise and other kinds of pollution, emotional pollution, that are constantly running past you. You feel helpless to correct that endless stream of pollution in your own life. Here's something you can fix over here in Peru. Fix the rainforest. Fix the environment. Not that it doesn't need help. Certainly it does. But then you can perhaps make those people, those governments, feel guilty. The manufacturers; whoever added to that pollution. In so doing, you can feel self-righteous: "I'm helping resolve a major problem in the world." And it also frees you from having to look at the stream of pollution in your own life and to which you are probably contributing.

When I said, laughingly, "Jewish mother complex," we have this stereotype which, of course, is in no way limited to one of the Jewish faith nor to a woman. But this stereotype of one who has great love for those around it, great love for the rainforests and the rivers and the atmosphere, but is not able enough to be honest with its own

needs so it pushes its fears on the other, tries unconsciously to create guilt in them in the hope that somehow they miraculously will resolve its own pain.

When you're concerned about a river on the other side of the world, or even on the other side of town, what else are you concerned about? There is nothing wrong with attending to that which pollutes the river but, simultaneously, attend to your own internal pollution, both as receptor and as giver. For you will find that when you do this, you stop feeling guilty about your joy. You find that you can happily play in the meadow because you've become honest with yourself and recognized that there are nettles and wasps in the meadow and that's okay. The meadow is no less beautiful for the nettles and wasps. When you feel that sense of guilt, my belief is that it stems from your enjoyment of the meadow and recognition that your enjoyment has grown out of denial of the nettles and wasps. Can you see that?

Barbara: Aaron is asking then, after the break would it be useful to talk about the ways we may work skillfully in the world and the ways we may increase our own joy and playfulness? This interrelationship: How, when we become more honest about our pain it stops being "our" pain, "their" pain, we stop trying to fix "their" pain as an escape from "our" pain. And, once we can be more open about our pain, we can also experience more fully our joy. He asks, would you like to talk more about that whole thing? If so, he would like to hear specific questions about it after the break. He's saying, you're not limited to that. He would be glad to talk about anything. That's just something that seems primary to many of your concerns, especially the question, how do I find more joy and what gets in the way of finding more joy for myself and others?

(Break.)

Q: I have been looking at the reasons I hold myself back from feeling good about my accomplishments and my abilities. For me, this is connected to feeling like I'm competing with others. Part of this, in turn, is really an old childhood wish to be accepted and valued by my father. My fear that I am not accepted and valued leads me to feel uneasy about competing and tense about feeling proud about my abilities. Would Aaron like to comment?

Aaron: I am Aaron. This is a complex question and I'd like to break it down into parts. First, each of you has a wish to be unconditionally loved. So often when you're children you feel that the love you receive is conditional. When love is given, part of you wants to reject it: "Don't love me for being smart or kind or capable, just love me because I'm me." Some of you then refuse to be smart or kind or capable or whatever in order to hope to gain that unconditional love.

Another aspect of this—I'm laying parallel foundation bricks here upon which we will build—is that you were not born a blank slate. The issues of worthy/unworthy, accepted/rejected, have come from many, many lifetimes. In effect, you have recreated those conditions in this lifetime as you have done so many times before. You are trying to learn that there is no duality, there is no acceptable/unacceptable, no worthy/unworthy. So you keep creating the conditions of unacceptable/unworthy, hoping that you'll finally make sense of it.

Finally, for many of you there is some or considerable anger with the birth family, but there was this young child that you were that needed to be loved and agreed to play

the part to which you were assigned with the unstated agreement, "If you do this, then you'll be loved." Some of the parts that you were offered were horrendous and everything within you rebelled at being abused or ignored or abandoned. But it seemed to be the only way you could be loved, so you agreed to play the part. Others of you rebelled and said, "No, I won't play that part. I won't be the abused one, or the caretaker or whatever." You're working in a different way. To avoid complexity, we'll save that path for another time and hold our talk to those who agreed to play the part.

Part of that agreement was not to be good, for some of you. For others of you, part of that agreement was to be the "good" one who never complained. It doesn't really matter which way it went. The point is you could not be who you were, you had to be the one in the part assigned. Regardless of which part it was, for many the fear of competing grew out of agreement to play the part. With whom were you competing? Parents? Siblings?

In competing, you are giving voice to the part that says, "What about me? I need. I want. Pay attention to me." The intensity of that need is so strong; the pain of not being attended to is so severe. So, one of the things that many of you did with that sense of competition is to bury it, to bury the "I need" or "I want."

In some way, competition became a dirty word—not only because of its connotation of grasping for the self, but for a much deeper reason as we just expressed, that that sense of competition introduced a needing aspect of the self which was too frightened to allow in such pain.

Now you are adults. Many of you are still casting yourself in similar parts through old habit. To succeed, in terms of flowering in one's relationships and work, is great joy or might be. But there is still that dilemma: I've got to keep this buried.

Competition is not a dirty word. It depends from what stance one competes. If one is taught to stomp over others in order to get ahead, then one unleashes all the potential violence, grasping at fear in one's nature. If one is taught to compete simply for the joy in doing one's best, of expressing one's energy fully, then one understands that that expression ends where another's back begins, that one cannot climb over others. It's not competition which is the problem, it is the discomfort with the potential grasping in one's own nature. That discomfort has grown out of that original grasping, "I need, I want. How do I speak up for myself? I can't, I've agreed to play their game." With that agreement, it was all stuffed into a hole.

To work with this is a two-part process. It does not involve meticulous analysis of old history, old motives. It's enough to simply recognize: "In this childhood and in so many past lives, I've fallen into this pattern." "Who" has fallen into the pattern? This present being in this present job or relationship? Yes, this present being is the outcome of all that's gone past, but in this moment there's just this.

How can I better express this? Let's look at a river. Upstream, pollutants are being poured in so that one cannot safely put one's face in the river. One learns how polluted the river has become. One needs then to work in two places: To understand the source of that pollution, and end it—that is, the looking at one's childhood and past lives and seeing the misunderstandings—and then one can put up filters and purify the water. One does not need to identify every source of pollution. You're not going to be able to

find every source. You filter the water right here in the river, create a safe area for swimming, perhaps don a mask if it's necessary, and dive in. Right here, at this point in the river, I can swim. Right here it's safe. That doesn't mean there are not still pollutants pouring in from above, but right here I can swim.

Old fear. Old conditioning. It's going to keep arising in your experience. You have the choice: Is it going to stop you from experiencing success, joy, openness? Or are you going to look at the situation and say, "It's old mind; right here, I am free"? The first leap into the river is the hardest. Obviously, this is not a perfect analogy at all, but I hope it will help.

Then there's one more step. Here's where the river analogy fails. The old ideas of unworthy, rejected, no-good—they were just ideas. The river really does have pollutants in it, but this lifestream of yours—in one sense, yes, it's got what seems to be the reality of abuse or abandonment or other kinds of pain; on the other hand, they're just things that happened because they needed to happen. But the one to whom they happened was never bad, not in this or past lifetimes, was never unworthy. This is the third step.

It does not take analyzing of history. There's nothing in the past that you need to change or fix, just know it for the old mind conditioning that it was and let it go. How to be joyful? How to experience the joy of manifesting one's energy fully? What blocks it? Look deeply. Recognize that in this moment it's simply not valid anymore and let it go. It's the "crutches" story: The leg has healed, let go of the crutches.

This is the place where some of you get snagged. It's not that you don't believe the leg is healed so much as that you fear, "What if I step on it and break it again, I better carry along the crutches anyhow?" You don't need them. Some of you are carrying along those crutches, a hundred pair of them, and staggering under the burden. I speak especially to several here who are somewhat of collectors and use their assorted collections as excuse from diving into the next step of their lives. "How can I run across the meadow. I know my leg is healed, but I've got to carry these hundred pair of crutches?" Well, put them down.

Why did you start to believe you had to carry them in the first place? Look at that deeply, at that fear, that one moment when you said, "Yes, the leg is healed. I see I can walk. But I better hold onto the crutches. What if it happens again?" That is the point that traps you, that "What if it happens again?" Do you want it to happen again? If you do, it will. If you choose that it not happen again, then why should it? It's your choice. This is what you must come to see. It is your free will choice to re-manifest that old pain or to let it go.

To a certain degree in your childhood, you were not given that conscious choice. It was thrown at you. Yes, you were a participant, but you were also not free to choose in the way that you are now. Now you understand how it works.

It's like watching a mob scene where people are becoming increasingly angry and violent. You may feel, "I could steal away quietly, I don't need to participate." Or you may feel, "Well, there are so many people around, I'll get hurt if I don't participate. I've got to do what everyone else is doing." And then you say, "It's their fault. They started it."

I just did what everyone else was doing." It was your choice. If everyone else is carrying their crutches, you still don't have to. Especially not a hundred pair.

Look at it. And then one by one, lay them down. Feel how wonderful it is not to carry that burden. Experiment with that. Quite literally. Find one specific crutch like "I can't do this. I'm unworthy. I'm not strong enough, or wise enough or good enough." Give up on analyzing where it came from, just recognize, "I don't need to carry this old concept anymore. I leave it here." And let your energy move forward to express its fullness. That is all.

Barbara: Are there any questions related to that? Aaron is suggesting the question of competition, not being a success, not manifesting our energy as fully as we can for various reasons is one that we all do in many ways. It's part of our human experience. He wonders if people want to talk more about that. Are there things that you'd like to achieve in your life where you find yourself blocked and you don't really understand, "What is this blockage about? If I would like to do this, why can't I do it?" He's asking if that's a question that people want to raise and talk about.

Q: I just read Yogic Scriptures and Other Spiritual Writings. I almost get the feeling that God views us as I would view artificial life. What really is the purpose of withholding so much information and knowledge? It seems gamy. Is it sport? Isn't faith really giving power to someone else? I can't imagine needing so much knowledge if I indeed am the Creator.

Aaron: I am Aaron. It is indeed not sport, nor does that which we call God want you to pay homage to It so much as to pay homage to your own divinity and to manifest your own free will to learn what you incarnated to learn. God does not pull strings. God doesn't make decrees: This one will live; this one will die. This one will succeed and that one will fail. Your own genetic make-up which is karmic, your own karma, your own past acts and choices create the next moment.

Faith. The primary lessons of third density are faith and love. Fourth density is compassion and fifth density is wisdom. That does not mean you don't learn wisdom and compassion in third density. But there are those who put aside faith and love and deepen the learnings of compassion and wisdom to the exclusion of faith and love.

Your incarnate experience is the perfect opportunity for these learnings of faith and love; if you miss them here you're not going to have the chance to develop them in such perfect conditions again. It's like the child who was sick for a semester of third grade and missed learning how to carry numbers in addition. It may figure out some semblance of that, but forever its arithmetic skills will be distorted a bit unless it comes back to that skill which it missed.

Faith is not giving over your power to another. Faith is finding the place of deepest empowerment within you. I would ask the questioner to read a past transcript which Barbara can point out. It's immediately available. I will not repeat the information in it now.

You move into the incarnative experience agreeing to this veil of forgetting because it is only within this veil that deepest faith can be developed. If there were no veil, if you immediately upon incarnation and throughout the incarnation knew who you were, how could you learn faith?

You wonder, why is faith important? It is faith which pierces holes in the concept of self. It is faith which leads you to the deepest experience of emptiness of self. Faith in what? Faith in your true nature as divine. Faith in the whole system. When you do not believe in your own divinity, your ego self becomes dominant, working eternally on controlling, manipulating, forever caught in the delusion of separation. You cannot let go of that delusion of separation by willpower.

You may well ask, if the delusion of separation only exists on the Earth plane, why do I need to experience it in the first place? Why not just stay with the reality of non-separation? It is the difference between that which is learned by concept and that which is learned by experience. That original spark of God that you were knew that it was not separate. One of its choices was to remain with that knowledge of non-separation and to evolve on the non-material planes. It still had moved into the awareness of self and other though, of self-awareness and God. As soon as it found itself experiencing itself as a spark of God, there was spark and there was God. One way or another you've got to move through it. On the material planes, it knows that that's delusion, and yet it still experiences the pain of that delusion. It then may make the choice to move this way or that—perhaps to move into a material plane, to work with the various catalysts that plane offers as a way of learning. A primary catalyst of the Earth plane is the veil of forgetting.

So, why do you need faith? I said it pierces holes in separation. It goes where willpower cannot go. Your faith allows you to trust enough to move out of the illusion of self and into the full experience of connection. Once it's experienced, you don't need faith anymore. Faith becomes verified and then you know. So it punches holes in the ego; it allows the ego to dissolve.

As the ego lets go of its need for power, the deeper self understands that it has always been empowered. God is not playing with you. God is holding Its hand out to you and asking you to recognize your own divinity and power and move back into that non-separation with the divine. That is all. Does that answer your question or would you like me to speak further on it?

Q: I can't understand why I chose a material plane ... *(Tape ran out. Tape begins.)*

Barbara: I'm paraphrasing Aaron. He is saying that it's like the stage of childbirth, that very painful stage just before the cervix is completely open and the baby is born where you are wondering, why did I get into this fix? And then the baby is born and you understand. He says you chose wisely.

Aaron: I am Aaron. You choose wisely. It's not the only choice possible but each of you is unique, even from the beginning as that spark. Each of you has a sense of your own strengths and weaknesses. That spark doesn't spin a dial, play a game of chance.

In essence, this Earth experiment—for that's what it is—has given the universe a place of learning which includes the physical and emotional bodies together with the mental and spirit bodies. We're finding that those who travel that path move into the higher densities much more highly evolved, with much greater degree of compassion, of wisdom, faith and love.

You tend to think of it as a schoolroom where, to graduate from eighth grade, you've got to have mastered these skills. But, in fact, there is no limit. There are not a number

of degrees of compassion and once you get to the top, that's it. In fact, those of you who are entering the learnings of compassion in fourth density, come to that learning with so much deeper love and wisdom, so much deeper sense of compassion already that you teach those of us in the higher densities. You give a gift to the universe.

This gift, in a sense, expands the divine. Just because God is that of unlimited wisdom and compassion, doesn't mean it can't have more. You bring more in. That is your gift to the universe and that is why that courageous spark that you were, understanding that it had the capacity for this learning, agreed to move into this learning. That is all.

Barbara: I have a very strong sense that I've gained from Aaron of the rightness of everything. It may not make sense to me right now, but I've really come to trust that it will make sense some day, somewhere, and I don't need to figure it out or control it or worry about it anymore. It's just everything is just as it needs to be. Trust the whole thing. I don't need to know where I'm going.

It's become the difference for me—I find this is true in my daily life, too—of needing an accurate map that shows me step-by-step where I'm going before I take the first step versus being willing to just go down the road. I no longer need the map. I know the end is there.

I just drove to Philadelphia last week. I used to get a Triptik and check off the pages. I didn't even have a specific Pennsylvania map in the car. I had an atlas with a general sense of "I'm here and I'm going to Philadelphia. When I get there I'll find out where I need to go." I drove there alone and it's the most enjoyable trip I've ever taken. I saw the scenery so much more. I just was where I was. I wasn't even looking at the odometer, asking "How far am I?" Just, "I'll get there when I get there." Looking at the mountains, looking at the trees, it was wonderful.

I think we really can develop that in our lives, to learn to stop asking, where am I going? and just be here and enjoy the journey.

Aaron keeps saying that to me, "Enjoy the journey, it's why you're here." Don't forget to stop and smell the flowers, that kind of thing.

D: ... my physical body interacts with my emotional body and I can't control it. I try to let it be. It is frustrating. Monday and Tuesday, everything was working great. I want to hang on when hormones are right and everything is easy.

Barbara: Does that seem unusual to you?

D: No.

Barbara: We all do. I have a sense that you're judging yourself for that.

D: It seems like magic when everything works easily. No effort.

Barbara: One of the most important things I've learned from Aaron is when something doesn't go right, instead of forcing it, to stop—whether it's something physical, like I'm trying to disconnect this from that and it won't disconnect, or the whole day is going wrong, something emotional, whatever—just to stop and ask, what's wrong here? And, just the way you look at the way something is coupled to find out instead of breaking it apart, how does it work? How does it work if I'm feeling tense and blocking my energy?

I've become much more attentive to that and I find it really makes a difference. There was an example in one of this spring's transcripts. (*Barbara describes here the experience of the tape above her altar coming loose, the match going out, Aaron's talk about "threads of intention."* See March 30 transcript for details.)

Our energy fields do really interrelate with everything and if you stop and ask yourself, why is it going wrong? Am I forcing it instead of working with it? Then you start to notice the place of fear. It wasn't a big fear with me, it was just a "let's get on with it, stick the tape on the wall, I don't want to be bothered with it," instead of attending to those little details. Things start to flow and we start to work with that flow instead of pushing it. It doesn't mean that everything's always going to go right, but it doesn't seem to go as wrong for as long because you get more in touch with "Where is it going wrong?" and "How am I aggravating the situation through my grabbing or fear?"

Wednesday, June 15, 1994

Aaron's talk

Good evening and my love to you all. I am Aaron. I want to start tonight with a simple exercise. We've spent much of this year looking at ways that you shield yourself when fear, anger, desire, or any unpleasantness arises. We've often talked theoretically about the truth that you are unlimited in your deepest essence, and about that of you which is divine and is connected to every other bit of divinity in the universe. In this way you truly are one. We've watched the coming and going of walls. We've learned how to notice those walls as they are in process of being built. You watch, not to get rid of them nor with judgment against them, but simply to notice that the walls herald the arising of fear and a sense of being threatened. You ask yourself if this fear is realistic in the present moment; if you need to defend yourself here, or would it be more skillful to relax and let down your boundaries again, to reconnect?

We did an exercise here one night in which I asked you to look in each others' eyes and then withdraw your gaze. Tonight I want to do something much simpler. I'd like you to join in pairs, facing one another, eyes closed, holding two hands with your partner. Allow your connection to be expressed through your hands.

(Dots (...) denote short pauses.)

Breathing in and breathing out ... Focus simply on the connection that you feel ... Be as aware as you can of even the subtlest degree of shielding; the subtlest withdraw from the other's energy; or unwillingness to fully open your own energy ... No judgment about it, or if judgment is there simply notice that as well ...

If you notice some resistance to opening yourself fully, simply label it, "resistance, resistance." You're not attempting to get rid of this resistance, just to know it's there. Softening your energy around it ... You may visualize your energy fields, or feel them ... Just allowing the flow of energy between the two of you ...

Does the question arise: "Can I trust this other person? What if I allow myself to be completely open and vulnerable, and then they hurt me in some way?" ... Now, certainly in this situation they can't really hurt you. But you might feel, "What if I sense a grasping of their energy, a pulling of myself into them?" ... Do you fear losing yourself? ... Just look at what's there. ... Or is there a desire to hold on to the other's energy? ...

Please note that all of these fears arise on the egocentric self level. Within the divine self there could never be a betrayal of trust, so you are allowing yourself to open your own divine-self energy to that of your partner ...

When I finish talking in just a moment I would like you to drop your partners hands. I want you to notice as you drop those hands how it feels. Is there a sense of lost connection? Or is the connection maintained without the physical touch? Do you feel abandoned by your partner, although the dropping of hands is a mutual experience? Is there any sadness, or perhaps a sense of relief? There's no right or wrong way to experience this; whatever you experience is fine. Just watch closely and see what's

there. Please drop your hands now. We will be silent for a few moments while you investigate this. *(pause)*

Can you come back to feeling the other's presence? To allowing your own energy to be open without the physical touch? ... Once again, take your partners hands, very mindfully, aware of what arises in you as you reconnect physically ... *(pause)*

There is no right or wrong way to experience this. I merely want you to move into deeper awareness of the ways that you shield and open your energy, and how it feels. With as little turmoil as possible, I'd like you to drop just one hand and turn in such a way as to form a circle, so that we are all holding hands around it.

Feel the safety and loving energy of this group. As much as possible allow yourself to drop the shielding and fully open to the energy of this circle ... Of course, it doesn't have to be perfect; there is no such thing as perfect. You'll be as open as you can be ... Simply resting in that energy, feel yourself cherished by that energy ... Some of you are experiencing a sense of sadness because it's so good to rest in the energy of this circle, and you wish it could be humankind's constant experience. And some of you are feeling an intense joy as you allow the energy to move into, through, and out of you, and share it.

Very gently now, I'd like you to keep your eyes closed and slowly withdraw your hands just an inch or so from the other, then a bit more ... I want you to see if you can feel the presence of this energy and maintain whatever degree of openness you can with it, while letting go of the physical contact. Your energy fields do not need physical contact to connect; you know that. When you walk into a room where there is anger, you feel that anger immediately, you don't need someone to hit you. When you walk into a room where there is love, you feel that love.

For many of you, when another withdraws its immediate attention, its physical contact, gaze or conversation, you experience a contraction of your energy field, a sense of abandonment ... It may be very brief, but it is a repeated pain in your lives. It's true that at times another does withdraw its energy. It is not rejection of you when another withdraws its energy, it is simply another withdrawing its energy ... If that being is angry at you, and its withdrawal is a form of rejection or threat, it still doesn't mean that you are bad or unworthy, only that the other has withdrawn ...

Such coming together and withdrawal of energy through human, animal and plant, is your constant, daily experience. Through the summer I hope that you will be aware of the ways you contract and release your energy in a constant dance in relation to that which is around you, and that you may begin to relax a bit, and allow other energy to withdraw itself when it needs to and return when it needs to, without drawing judgments against that movement. Without fear of that movement, but keeping yourself open and connected. Connected to the others' joy or pain.

May all beings everywhere come to know their deepest connection with all that is. *(Bell.)* ... May we all learn to keep our hearts open, that we may not fear another's pain, but meet it with compassion. *(Bell.)* ... May we all love and be loved, and in that way express our deepest truth. *(Bell.)* ...

Tonight is our last meeting for the season. There have been many very specific teachings through this year. I'd like to devote tonight just to answering questions and

giving you a bit of homework for the summer. Especially I'd like to guide you again into that which we ended with last week. That is: the idea, "There is nothing broken," even though there are places where the world seems to be in ecological disaster; where there is violence; war and crime; even though there is illness; there is nothing broken. We learn to trust the universe we live in.

The second half of that is: "so fix it." Fix it not with a sense of fear, of "It's broken, it's wrong, I must change it," but with a sense of love, which allows you to meet that which causes pain in your world with love rather than hatred, and to give your energy skillfully to movement in a new and more joyful, peaceful direction.

I explained this last week, I'm not going to speak about it in depth tonight, only to remind you that I offer you these two exercises for the summer, to be aware of your energy and the ways that it opens and closes, aware of what you are offering to the world and receiving from the world. And parallel to that, to notice whether you view the pain of the world as, "Damn it, it's broken," forgive the language, but with that sense of outrage, or whether you greet it with a sense of sadness, concern and willingness to open your heart even more to that place of distortion and misunderstanding, to keep your own energy open and loving, so that that which is distorted may undistort itself naturally, through the power of love.

This doesn't mean there's not hard work involved. Somebody's got to go out and campaign, perhaps; alert the world, talk about the environmental disasters and so forth. It takes courage and hard work. But it doesn't take hatred. It most certainly doesn't take a confinement of your own energy but a release of your energy. So this is where we start, just with the simple exercise that you did tonight—noticing when you are contracting in the face of any catalyst, human or otherwise, and teaching yourself how to release that contraction and re-open so that you may work with that being or situation, joyful or painful, with love. That is all.

Questions

Barbara: We are asking what people experienced during the exercise.

A: I was feeling very connected to M while we were holding hands and when the entire group began to hold hands. It's always very pleasant for me; I really like this energy.

Barbara: What happened when you dropped hands with M?

A: I still felt connected. Maybe not as intensely, but definitely connected to her.

Barbara: Aaron is asking anyone: with the dropping of hands did you feel any sense of abandonment by the other and a closing up of your energy?

C: No, because we were all told to do that, so it's quite different from having someone suddenly walk away.

Barbara: Okay, for you it's different. Aaron is saying, for some people it's a totally illogical response, you know you're not being abandoned, but the withdrawing of another's energy makes you tense up. He is asking if anybody here is conscious of experiencing that.

M2: Not tonight, but definitely sometimes. Even if I'm just shaking someone's hand or putting my arms around somebody, when it stops ... I know it has to stop, I can't walk around for the rest of my life with my arms around someone, but I feel that separation and pain.

Barbara: So, it's not abandonment, specifically, but pain.

Response: Tonight, while we were being very conscious of the energy fields, it was very easy for me to continue to experience the energy fields. I was experimenting with moving further and further away and I could feel your energy; I was sitting in your energy field, I didn't have to be touching you at all. I have been very aware of how large energy fields are; over what large distances we can connect when we choose to. I think that there is some kind of mental opening to it in order to be able to experience it. I assume that those energy fields are there all the time, but somehow, with intent, it is stronger or more powerful or something. I would enjoy having Aaron's comment on that.

Barbara: I think those energy fields are there all the time. I remember when Mike was at the North Pole. We tried an experiment; there were weeks when mail communication was not possible and I was going to try to tune into him. I got many of the images that he later described to me in person. There were times when I really felt his energy and they coincided with the times he had written in his journal that he had sent it. That's the only time that I tried that long of a distance.

C2: I tried it when we were with Mother Meera. The darshans were at particular times. Both C and K were specifically focusing on connecting and when I connected mentally with those two, it was stunning how powerful it was.

A: I felt a sense of loss when I left Seattle on this trip because I wasn't going to be able to see N as I had been, but in a subsequent meditation there was a very strong link and it was as though she was in the room.

Barbara: Other sharing about tonight's experience?

Response: The feeling of fear. I have just described how I can and have experienced connection over space, and yet I do experience that kind of separation, very strongly too. I know it's a difference in me, but I'm curious about how that works, energetically.

C3: I am also curious about ... I believe that same kind of connection with God or the divine, the light line that Aaron has been talking about, similarly is always there and similarly I am often not feeling the connection. Is it the same kind of connection and lack thereof as with other people?

Barbara: Aaron has described in detail that when we close up and contract our energy, we squeeze this light line, in a sense. He says it is an illusion; we really can not prevent that divine energy from resting in us, it's always there but we lose the touch of it. It's like touching something and, if you're focused on it you really feel how it feels, but if your mind is wandering you can be touching and there is no sense of being with it. When there is fear and contraction we lose the sense of that divine essence in ourselves and others, and we move into the notion of self and other.

C3: So that description of squeezing off the light line is similar with other people? Do we have light lines between us?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Sometimes there really is threat. Here is an angry person and he wants to hit you. Here is flood; the waters in the river are rising and they are going to overflow, destroying many homes and, perhaps, claiming lives. There are many very real threats in your life. I most certainly don't want to lead you into judging yourselves when there is a contraction of fear because of a real threat. I want you to see how that contraction is a learned, patterned response and that it's not helpful to the moment. At the time when a fight or flight reflex might save your life, and the rising adrenaline of fear reaction helped you to fight harder or flee faster, the response was useful. You've simply carried it over lifetime after lifetime; it is habitual response.

What we're talking about here is looking at that which we claim as human nature and coming to understand it is not human nature, it is patterned conditioning and you can free yourself of it. When you understand how fear arises in you, how it cuts off your energy field, you also begin to understand that you don't have to do that. That doesn't mean that you don't work as hard as you can to sandbag against the flood. It doesn't mean that you don't respond as skillfully as you can to this one who is approaching with clenched fists. But is it skillful to hit back or to flee? Sometimes it may be skillful. Does the fleeing need to be with hatred for that from whom you flee, or can you flee with a sense of compassion for what has hurt this being so much to make him attack you in such a way? Must there be hatred of the river? Or can there be understanding that this is the nature of the river? The more you live your lives in hatred, the more contracted is your energy, the more separate you feel and the less purely you can manifest your energy in the world.

There is a wonderful story about Mother Theresa. Someone commented on how many people she feeds and how much housing she offers people; how much real physical help she offers. She said, "Yes, but any agency could do that. We're not here to feed and house people. We're here to teach love." This is the core of it. When you begin to understand your own patterned responses, your own conditioning, and find freedom from the conditioning of fear, you can begin to live your lives in love and to teach others. That does not mean being a doormat for other people. When somebody makes a request of you out of their own fear, pushing you up against a wall, you have a right to say no. Is it necessary to hate them? The more closely you watch every minute arising of fear in small, unstressful situations and begin to understand how it works in you, the more freedom you're going to find to respond with love in traumatic situations .

A: Was the lessening of intensity that I felt with M when we let go of hands a form of contraction?

Aaron: I am Aaron. Not quite a contraction; more it was a lack of trust that the energy that flowed between you still flowed as intensely. Perhaps one could say, yes, it was a minor contraction. There are two ways to talk about it. As I watched you the open energy moving directly between you dropped a bit, but not immediately. You let go of hands, the energy continued to flow as strongly between you; then each of you had the thought, "Can it maintain that intensity?" and, perhaps, a bit of distrust that it couldn't. With that came a small contraction in the energy; not of feeling abandoned or going away, but a fear that you couldn't maintain the connection. With that fear you couldn't maintain the connection and the energy level dropped. It is not that the real energy level dropped; it was still there, you couldn't feel it. It was like you had put gloves on and couldn't feel it anymore. Does that answer your question?

C: You talked about fear arising when we dropped hands. I am wondering if anyone else experienced fear when beginning the exercise?

Barbara: To the group: Did anyone experience fear when beginning the exercise? *(Several people answer affirmatively; someone says, "resistance.")*

C: I felt a lot of pain around being with a young male, and knowing that it had nothing to do with F, who is open and loving. But old mind, feeling invisible and dismissed by many.

Barbara: I think that's, perhaps, something true of our generation of women; a sense of invisibility. What do you think?

A: I think that, to a degree, yes, that's true. Or that we should disappear.

Barbara: I am older than other women here, besides C. I think that we were taught to be invisible and had a great deal of resentment against that when we were children. Do you know what I mean?

C: ... with young men, and yet it puzzled me because on two of my previous trips a young man became very friendly with me and both times called me "Mom" in a very open, loving way. *(Tape is turned and some was lost.)* ... most of the time, and I tried to feel his face and let that be okay, and not judge it.

Barbara: ... *(Some lost.)* Sometimes there's fear. I think it's very important to understand that it's not the existence of fear that causes separation, but our relationship to the fear. There can be fear and a kind of openness about the fear. A compassion for ourselves with the fear that allows our energy still to stay open.

Aaron wanted me to talk about something related to staying loose. A couple of years ago Peter went on a class trip. I took him to the train station. The kids were all there waiting for the train. I said good-bye and stepped out from the platform onto the parking lot when somebody tapped me and I turned to talk, with one foot out in the parking lot. I was turned and talking when a car started backing up and rolled over my foot. People started screaming, "Stop, stop!!" so the driver stopped, on my foot! She opened her door and got out, saying, "What's wrong?" She saw the car on my foot and said, "Oh, my God!" She ran back into the car and couldn't get it started because she was so over-excited. She finally did get it started and pulled forward. It was very painful.

I was able to just be there with this car on my foot, feeling my fear that my foot was going to be mangled, without resisting. I was just breathing with the pain, staying soft, keeping my energy open. When she drove off I sat down. Some people asked if I wanted to go to the hospital. I wiggled my toes and everything worked; I got up and walked on it. I drove myself to the doctors' office, where it was x-rayed. The doctor said that she couldn't believe that it wasn't broken. I told her the story and she said it was because I had remained completely relaxed. If I had tensed at all I would have had many broken bones in my foot.

If there's a car on your foot, there's a car on your foot. Getting angry and pulling, while it's a natural response, is not going to do any good. As you can see the fear that wants to pull and resist and shove the car away, and just relax around the whole situation, then things don't have to get broken. If you can't relax and there's tension, just know there's tension. We don't need tension about feeling tension!

Is there anything else that people want to share about this particular topic or about the exercise before we go on?

C3: I was talking to M2 and A about it and I think that we came up with some good ideas, but I'm curious. When Aaron talks about being able to be sad or angry, or whatever, and still be open, not constricted, does expressing the feeling in a way such as crying or screaming or something effect our energy in itself, as opposed to sitting and watching it calmly. I know it's an area in my life that has had a lot of confusion, so I am asking out of curiosity. Does expressing emotion outwardly effect our energy in itself, as opposed to just sitting with and watching the emotion in a calm way?

Aaron: I am Aaron. I hear your question. Emotions are something that you experience, not think about. Within the experience of the emotion, the anger, for example, may feel so built up, so strong, that it's got to be released. If there is that feeling and you allow the release of it, it's not necessarily practicing your anger but experiencing your anger.

This is subtle. There are times when the anger simply pours out of you, like a pressure valve letting go. As it pours out another part can be watching it pour out. It also does not have to be directed at something. The anger may be at another being, for example; but you don't have to scream at him or her. You can go out and kick a stone or hit a pillow. Yes, in a sense it's practicing the anger, but if it's done mindfully it's just opening the pressure valve.

Here's the subtle difference. If you are present with that anger you may sense the need to release it and be able to shift your focus from the anger itself to the discomfort with the pressure of the anger and your desire to get rid of it by releasing. Seeing that, you may understand that you don't have to release it, you can just notice how uncomfortable it is. The release of the anger, then, becomes increasingly less necessary the more mindful you are of the distinction between the anger and the discomfort with the anger. **It's not the anger itself that leads you to release it, it's the discomfort with the anger.**

This is a process, then. When you're first working with these emotions you notice the emotion and allow yourself to fully feel it, and if in that fully feeling it needs to be expressed, you go ahead and express it, taking care not to harm others through that expression. As you get closer and closer to the full experience of that anger it breaks into its parts of the anger itself and the discomfort of the anger. You find less need to express it and more ability to be there with the intensity of that discomfort.

In direct answer to your question, yes the expression of it is a form of practicing of it and, ultimately, it's not the solution. It's one step on the path. If for a brief period of months or even years you must practice your emotions in order to fully be aware of and experience their existence, then that's what you need to do. Slowly you learn to be more skillful with it. You do not desist from expressing the emotion with a judgmental, "I shouldn't do that"; you simply become aware of the discomfort of the emotion and learn to make enough space for that discomfort so that you no longer feel the need to express the emotion; there's just the emotion and there's just discomfort, and each one passes and then it's gone. It's a process of learning. Does that answer your question?

Question: Can Aaron speak a little about the fear that some people were feeling with the exercise earlier?

Aaron: I am Aaron. You're each unique; so there are many kinds of apprehension and resistance. Basically they tend to fall into two parts. A fear of being harmed and a fear of harming others. When there is fear of deep intimacy and sharing of energy, it generally relates to both of those fears. First is fear of being hurt. If you open yourself to another and expose the depth of your need to be loved to yourself, allowing yourself to feel how much you want intimacy, you will feel more pain if you are deprived of it. So, you don't allow yourself to feel your desire for intimacy in the first place; you won't take that risk, you'll stay just a bit defended. When I speak of intimacy please remember that there are 360 degrees in a full circle. Most of you in this room are somewhere between 200 and 300 in your ability to open to intimacy. You have learned to open yourself to another. You're not social outcasts. None of you in human form is going to reach 360 degrees. You're simply working this brighter/dimmer switch; allowing more and more open energy to flow through. Acknowledging that one can always be more open, that there's always going to be some slight barricading of energy, one may observe the fear: will I be hurt?

There is also amongst most of you fear or suspicion of yourselves. You know the depth of your own anger and potential for violence. It may be abhorrent to you that there is such potential for violence within you. So there's some degree of fear and you wonder: "If I fully allow my energy to be open to another, am I going to harm them in some way? What if they accept my invitation of my open energy and open their energy, and then this potential for withdrawal, for selfishness, for greed, what if that pulls me back into myself? What if I hurt them? I don't think I'll risk it; I'll stay a bit closed." All of you experience these thoughts in differing amounts. Watch those fears in yourself. Would you like me to speak further on this, or is that sufficient?

C3: I've been working a lot in my life with that balance of noticing fear of hurt if I stay open and yet not wanting to shut down. And I feel like I've heard it before but I think I would like to hear Aaron again talk about the balance that we are working with as humans; that we can never be fully 360 degrees open with each other. And when one being is more open than another, I guess it's just watching the feeling of rejection if the other people aren't able to open. But, my primary question is: is it always better to open? I know it's not if there is a real threat, like he was talking about earlier, but I have confusion around that.

Barbara: Let me speak to this very briefly before Aaron does. I am aware, when I am working with somebody who is feeling a lot of pain or anger or going through something traumatic, that if their energy is very strong I sometimes need to shield myself against it. I can shield myself without being afraid of their energy; it's just a skillful thing to do. It's like if somebody was throwing snowballs at me and I had a piece of plywood, and say they were icy snowballs that would really sting; I don't have to be afraid of them, or hate the person throwing them, but it makes sense to hold up the piece of wood. The problem that we get into is that as soon as we hold up the plywood and are shielding we also start to feel anger: "They shouldn't be doing this to me," and there is a sense of separation. Shielding does not have to lead to separation if it's done skillfully and lovingly. It's part of this whole unwholesome codependency issue; that we don't have to get into negative codependent patterns with people so that we're

hurting them and ourselves by being doormats for them, but we also don't have to hate them. How do we find the balance?

Aaron: I am Aaron. I ask you to look at the whole issue from a much broader, spirit perspective. We come back to the basic fact that this earth is your schoolroom and you're here to learn. You are moving through third density and preparing yourself to graduate from this plane, to move into fourth density, to be more fully spirit, without the physical manifestation. We've spoken of fourth density experience as that of coming together as group energy, much as you did tonight. On that level all beings are telepathic. I've asked you here many times: if everyone in this room were telepathic this evening and could read all of your thoughts, would that be okay? It's not that the thoughts are bad or good, but that all of you have thoughts about which there is some shame. The thoughts themselves are just thoughts. When you contract around those thoughts and judge them, feel guilt or shame against them or pride about them, then your feelings of shame and pride cause pain to yourself and others. The same goes for others' thoughts. If somebody in this room was thinking something negative about you, not liking your hairstyle or whatever, would that cause you pain?

Your readiness to graduate from this plane is not an ending to emotion but equanimity with emotion, a sense of complete acceptance that sometimes there is lovingkindness, patience, generosity and joy within you, and sometimes there is jealousy, greed and pride, and it's all okay. That does not mean that it's okay to act it out, but it's okay that it arises; it's natural for a human.

The earth plane experience gives you your opportunity to practice; it's as simple as that. When there are others with conflicting energy fields, when you feel threat from another and your energy field contracts, you are given the gift to learn to work skillfully with that contraction, not judging it, just watching it move through you, seeing the old mind conditioning that's given rise to that sense of fear, asking yourself, "In this moment, am I really threatened? In this moment am I really unworthy? In this moment do I really need to defend or is it old conditioning?" You begin to see how often it is old conditioning. You learn to recognize the difference, old conditioning versus real threat or need.

You learn to act skillfully without fear or grasping. Perhaps you're freezing or shivering and somebody offers a blanket; you respond, "Yes, I need it." That "Yes" doesn't need to come from a place of grasping or fear. Suppose that you are with someone who had fallen through a hole in the ice and is not only cold, as you are, but wet. You may be able to look at your fear that you're going to get sick, for example, and very lovingly offer the blanket to the one who's wet, knowing that, yes, there's discomfort, your teeth are chattering and you're uncomfortable, but you don't have to grasp at this, you're safe. Or, if you are the one who fell through the hole in the ice and are literally in danger of severe hypothermia, then, yes, it's fine to say "I need the blanket." Again, there doesn't need to be fear around it, or clinging; just a clear statement of your need right now.

There is a tremendous difference between the contraction of energy through fear and the contraction of energy simply because the physical being is responding to hunger or cold or pain. You learn to see the different ways your energy field is. To know your needs and be comfortable stating your needs, without grasping. You come to know

what makes you uncomfortable and be able to step away from that, without hatred of it.

Then the energy field reacts differently; it doesn't contract anymore, it simply moves. On the astral plane you will still be confronted with those beings with angry or greedy energy. If you haven't done this work and you're fully telepathic with that being, you're going to cause each other tremendous pain. On that same astral plane, when you have done this work and there is one whose energy is angry or wanting, it's simply going to lead you into deeper compassion.

One of you is asking, "Why will there be others with these emotions on the astral plane?" I repeat, very few of you fully grow beyond the rising of emotions on this human plane. Your graduation to the next plane of your being does not necessarily imply the cessation of emotion but equanimity with emotion. On that plane you're still going to experience the arising of emotion; you're not going to be ashamed of it and need to mask it. You're not going to be frightened by it and need to express it. At that level of your being you learn from each others' experience because there is no sense of shame; nothing to be denied or forced upon another.

There is one more thing that I want to say in relation to C3's question. This is a shift to another topic. When you are sexual with another being and share your bodies in that way, your energy fields become very, very open. They remain open for some time after you have finished the sexual act. Sometimes the acute force of that openness is frightening. Immediately afterward there may be a sense of fear of having been that open which causes emotional withdrawal, a constriction of that light line; a sense of pulling away from the other. Each of the partners, feeling that withdrawal, may feel further pain. It's important that you begin to understand the mechanism.

The bodies respond in the following order of quickness: spirit, mental, emotional and physical. Where there is that intense sharing of energy and then it's over, the mental body pulls away first; then the emotional body pulls away and finally the physical body. Understanding that, you can watch it with more of a sense of relaxation and enjoy that physical feeling of the very literal connection of your physical body energy fields. See how your emotions play with that; there's either clinging to it or aversion to it, depending on your own emotional makeup. I mention this just because it's a source of discomfort for many of you. All the bodies don't react at the same speed. Accept that as a natural part of being human.

The reverse is also true. When you move into physical relationship with another being the spirit and mental bodies pull together first and the physical may not yet have moved into full harmony with its partner. You may ask yourself, "What's wrong? I'm feeling so open and loving but not yet ready to express my love physically." Well, the physical body moves slower. Very literally the physical energy field moves slower; give it time. Are there further questions? That is all.

Barbara: Aaron is suggesting that if there are no specific questions he would like to talk a little bit about joy.

Aaron: I am Aaron. Some of you regard your spiritual work with a great deal of solemnity. Certainly the work that you are here to do is a serious matter, but if you regard it as drudgery it's going to make it that much harder. I'm not suggesting that

you paste on artificial smiles, only that you begin to allow yourselves to come into contact with the very real joy in your lives. This is not denial of the pain in your or others' lives on your planet.

Remember that you are these angels that we keep talking about. The divine is within you, and the fullest expression that I know of the divine is that of joy, of song, of love. Each of you has that as your core. So my final challenge to you as you begin your summer break is: can you get in touch with some of that joy within you?

You are not betraying yourself to feel joy. You are not betraying the earnestness of your work and the deep aspiration that you have to manifest your energy more purely; instead you are allowing yourself purer manifestation of your energy because joy is the purest manifestation of your true nature that I know of.

You might ask yourself the simple question: what blocks this joy? What gives me the idea that I ought to walk around feeling sad? Where did I learn that? How did I come to that misunderstanding?

Give yourselves time. Stop and be present with the sunset, a flower, a child's laugh; with raindrops, with grass growing, with the smell of newly cut grass. Stop and be, instead of racing through your life trying to fix everything that's wrong.

This comes back to that earlier assignment: **nothing is broken**—everything that is “wrong” on the earth is a gift for your learning. It is a distortion that is present precisely because it offers somebody what it most needs to learn. **Knowing that nothing is broken, that on one level everything is perfect just as it is, you need not fight your lives but can come back to those distortions with love, with joy and fix it with love. Let it touch your heart; let yourself feel the pain of it and come to know that your pain and your joy are one, are non-dual. When you open your heart to your deepest pain and begin to work skillfully and lovingly to rebalance that distortion, you begin to find a tremendous depth of joy in your work and in your world. Allow yourselves to know it; it is not a betrayal but the fullest expression of you.**

As you begin your summer, I ask you to bring these teachings with you, to watch your energy fields with mindfulness, to be aware of the arising of contraction, to watch contraction with increasing equanimity and allow the release of that which is clearly not needed in this moment but is merely the voice of old mind's fear. But above all, I ask you to practice joy, to find the core of that joy within your own fear, unlimited selves. As much as is possible, dance with life throughout this summer; enter it fully and dance!

I thank you all for sharing so deeply of yourselves this year. I look forward to resuming our work together at the end of your summer. Please remember, as you go through these months of summer, that you are not alone; if you only knew now dearly you are loved you would never again feel lonely. Go with joy and courage, laughter and tears, and have a full and rewarding summer. That is all.

Deep Spring Publications

NEWSLETTER

Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry Newsletter: 8 ½ x 11, stapled, 20 pages

The newsletter, published three times a year, is offered on a donation basis. Our cost to print and mail this to you is \$7/year (\$10 Canadian).

BOOKS

We offer books at our cost, including mailing. All our books are 8 ½ x 11 and Cerlox bound.

Aaron: 1995 expanded edition, 123 pages. Includes many new chapters and a new format. \$10 (\$14 Canadian)

This is a basic book of Aaron's teachings, with selections taken from the most frequently asked questions: Who are we? Why are we incarnate? How can we best do the work we came to do? How can we live our lives with more wisdom and love?

Christmas Stories, A Collection of Memories from Aaron: Newly updated, 97 pages. \$6 (\$8 Canadian)

Aaron's inspiring memories from the past life in which he was a "simple shepherd" who knew and loved that teacher we call Jesus. Each year at Christmas Aaron has shared memories with us as "teaching stories."

No Chain at All: 150 pages. \$12 (\$15 Canadian)

This is very much the heart of what Aaron's been teaching. While you can just read through it, the book is really a workbook which invites your participation. To quote Aaron, *"I find the expression of this law of dependent origination to be one of Buddhism's most valuable contributions to the planet. It is called 'The Chain of Becoming.' Teachings speak of the way we have each become caught in this chain, moving blindly from one incarnation to another, never able to find freedom from suffering. This is real, on one plane. Yet on another level, there is no **chain at all**, nor has there ever been. You are free. You have always been free. In the coming months we will explore these truths and come to see that they are not contradictory ..."*

The Path of Natural Light, Parts 1 and 2: Part 1, 224 pages. Part 2, 230 pages. \$14 each part (\$20 Canadian)

These are **complete** transcripts of the 1993-1994 Wednesday night classes on relative versus ultimate reality, and light/energy work. From the book: *"I see our work then as finding that balance between relative and ultimate—the horizontal plane of healing and the vertical plane of knowing there was never anybody that needed to heal. With wisdom and pure awareness, that sense of self dissolves ... the whole notion of fragmentation was an illusion, but it is the illusion of the relative reality, and the suffering*

within that illusion must be attended. The human manifestation needs healing ... In past months we have been discussing the light body, the perfect, unwrinkled sheet of paper, the illusory wrinkles and how the physical, emotional and mental bodies reflect those wrinkles ... We move ahead with this caution: what I teach is not escape from your humanness, but deeper embracing of that humanness, wrinkles and all ... again, I remind you, you are not getting rid of. There was nothing there to get rid of. Rather, you are freeing yourself of the delusion that there was something that needed to be gotten rid of."

Seven Days: A Journey Into Awareness, Days One to Three, Part One: 105 pages. \$9 (\$12 Canadian)

There have been many requests for a book from Aaron about meditation. This book offers in-depth material on meditation practice with specific "how to" instruction. In November 1996, Barbara and Aaron offered a three day workshop/retreat in Mexico City. In April 1997 they returned to lead a four day silent residential meditation retreat. This book contains the transcripts of all of the talks and instruction, offered by both Aaron and Barbara, during the first three of those seven days. The first days deal more with spiritual inquiry and basic instruction in vipassana or insight meditation. There is a progressive deepening of instruction. There is also considerable discussion of working with heavy emotions and the various painful catalysts of our lives, with specific instruction offered for meditation with heavy mind states, resistance, restlessness, physical pain and other difficult states of mind and body. "Days One to Three" is the November workshop. "Days Three to Seven," the April retreat, will be available later.

The Awakened Heart: 147 pages. \$12 (\$15 Canadian)

Approximately 1300 years ago, the Buddhist Indian monk/poet Shantideva wrote "The Way of the Bodhisattva," elucidating an important part of the Buddhist path. "The Awakened Heart" is not commentary on the poem, but uses it as background. In Aaron's words: *"For many years you have heard me talk about making space for the heavy emotions. A primary emphasis of my teaching has been that it is not bad to feel emotions, that when certain conditions are present, certain emotions will arise ... I teach people to make more space around the emotion ... If you don't want those emotions to arise you must begin to look deeply at the conditions out of which they arise, primarily the conditions of fear, of the illusion of separation—separation from other beings, separation from the divine ... Through a series of practices and exercises, one could more deeply open to that highest aspect of the self which does not choose to invite in the conditions which give rise to such painful emotion. This is not a 'getting rid of' anything, rather we note that side by side there is the tense and frightened human and there is the innately loving, open-hearted human. You have a choice: you can enact your fear or you can choose to note your fear, to observe that the loving Awakened Heart is always present, to nurture it, and to enact that loving heart. You always have a choice."*