



# The Virtue of HeavenEarth

an institute to preserve the practice, teaching and study of Taoist alchemical medicine



Indigo 2, 3, Ink, Sarah H. Paulson, 2022.



"Between Worlds the Angel Appears", SOG Residency 2022, LCS



Indigo 2, 3, Ink, Sarah H. Paulson, 2022.

## The Song of Genesis: 7 Stars, 7 Masters, 7 Dragons An Apprenticeship Program Year #4: 2024

To watch Love flow between is where my gaze is rested  
most of this weekend.

The conversations, the love between...

The respect in Love

From now on, I will ask my being to sit still like Shiloh,  
and if I cannot then feel the deep gratitude that her  
being is made like that.

Such love between It is to die for.

Everything hangs on this thread

The connection between the teacher and disciple

The ocean between the islands

The sky between the galaxies

Everything hangs on this thread

Look away child

From the object

Now turn to the space between

She is fooling you, you know

It is not her words

Though you listen intently

But the emptiness

Hidden within them

Are you listening?

How do you listen to the space between?

*How does God hold up the mirror  
To your own satisfaction?*

No no. Not like that.  
The mirror is **hung!**

Now, take the shape to gaze into it.

In one lifetime, I am a rabbit  
And another a hare but all in all

I am the shape it takes to  
Gaze into her eyes  
Whether it is from below  
Beneath or within the hole  
We call existence.

The Cup Runs Over / Katie West  
November 2023, 4 days of Dragon Tx's



The Compass 2018, LCS

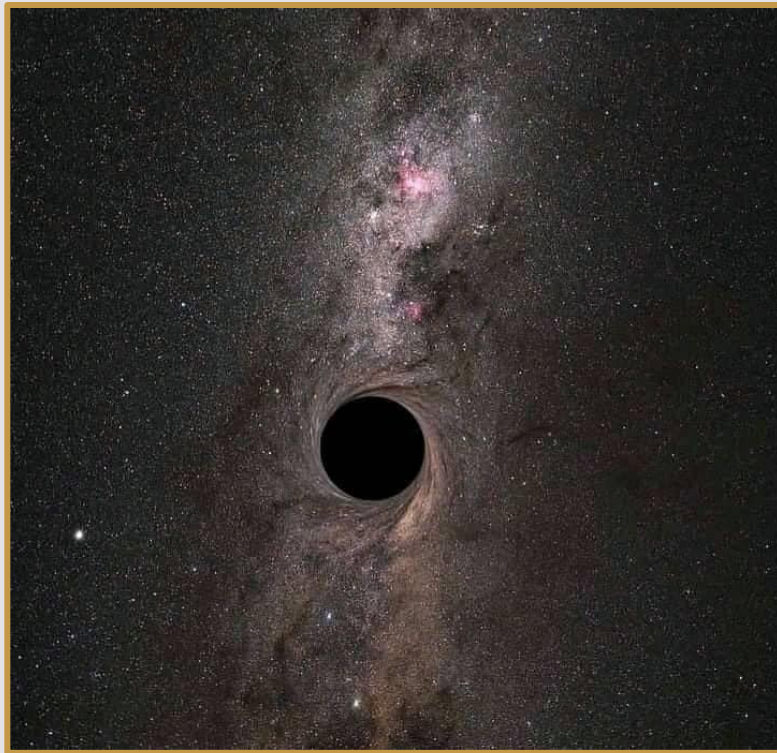
*"It has long been an esoteric secret that the spinning hearts of the lovers of God keep the world in balance." p.31 [Light of Oneness LVI](#)*



## The Virtue of HeavenEarth

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photograph of a black hole

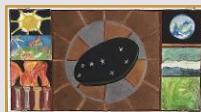
“The Masters of Love are working in all of the worlds. The work we do here is part of a multi-multi dimensional work. It is a significant part, because it belongs to this physical plane of manifestation, but there are many dimensions of this work. “We go from loci to loci in a glorious body of Light” Bhai Sahib...The Masters and their disciples, because the disciple continues to be in service to the master in the other worlds. This is just part of that. When you come into this world and you take on the karmas of this world, because you can only be in service if you accept the bondage of this world, and that is why traditionally, each lifetime, you go through all of the stages of the path, you go through all of the stages of creation—you are first a mineral and then you become a plant...you take upon yourself the bondage of Creation so you can be part of this world, and yet as physicians/mystics we are in the world but not of the world. So, we also carry this consciousness of somewhere else, which we experience in our limited consciousness here, as Longing or Remembrance, but it is part of the texture of where we have come from. It is part of this greater dimension that we are allowed to remember and that remembrance takes us into the arena of Love and Service.”

From A Response (2005 Giving Birth to a Dream), Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

### The Apprenticeship Program

This is a formal apprenticeship with Laura Stelmok in the medicine of the Song of Genesis: 7 Stars, 7 Masters, 7 Dragons. Each participant must formally apply and be accepted each year to enter this apprenticeship program. Those participants continuing in the apprenticeship need not write a full

2



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“It has long been an esoteric secret that the spinning hearts of the lovers of God keep the world in balance.” p.31 [Light of Oneness LVL](#)



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application again, rather a 'Letter of Intent' which will be further described below. Anyone applying to the apprenticeship for the first time will fill out the application linked below. For new applicants Laura will meet with each person in person or on Zoom. For those returning, Laura will contact you if a conversation is necessary or prudent. This training is not for anyone who wants it, nor is it to be kept from any practitioner serious about entering it. The safety and stability of each practitioner is paramount.

Many of the participants will be licensed acupuncturists, but not all. There will also be those practitioners who come to this discipline of medicine from other healing traditions, and may or may not "practice" this medicine, but for whom training in the Song of 7 is essential to their lives. These practitioners will be trained hands-on in the even more ancient practice of spiritual healing. This will be worked out on an individual basis, as requested.

Each practitioner's training is highly individualized, held within the container of the small group of similarly focused students. The apprenticeship pulls upon the deepest yearnings of the physician's vocation. It requires patience, stamina, courage and above all Love. To give oneself to the current of this medicine requires a guide. To want and to allow such guidance is necessary to enter the current of this medicine ethically, especially in this culture and at this time. To live such a grace requires mature psychological inquiry and practice. The Song of Genesis turns us toward the deep tears in the ecological and spiritual fabric of life. The Song of Genesis leads us into the wild vulnerability of life's urgency. The Song of Genesis requires that we each enter the darkness of our own forgetting.

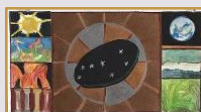
The duration of this training/apprenticeship will vary with each practitioner. How a physician is shaped in the living hands of a tradition is a wild and precise art. Traditionally one would not imagine the focus of this work being less than 15 intensive years, but with respect to this culture and time, Laura will speak with each participant individually regarding how the training is going, whether to enter the residency or not, how the training may/may not translate into practice.

This apprenticeship is given into our hearts and hands from those that watch over the roots of life here on Earth. A living trust.

### The Work of the Year

Residential Intensives and Individual Dragon Days: This year there will be two residential intensives, spring and autumn, totaling 14 days. In addition, anyone admitted into the residency will also be required to participate in a minimum of 10 Dragon Days throughout 2024. Participation in this training is for the entire year. The 2 Intensives and 10 Dragon Days will include written work during and after, that will become part of the annual notebook. All practitioners must be present in person at the residential intensives.

- **2 Residential Intensives**  
Spring: Wednesday 3/27-3/31 (5 days)  
Autumn: Tuesday 11/15-23 (9 days)
- **Additional Dragon Days throughout 2024 (minimum of 10 from March-December 2024)**  
**(In Person Only)**



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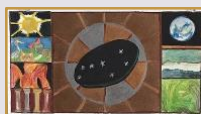
- All 6 ME Practice Visit Days have one DD each day = 3 Dragon Days for the required 10 days in 2024: 4/12, 5/9-10, 7/11-12, 8/2
  - 3/27-31 Maine / SOG Residency Weekend —Counts for 2 of required 10 days in 2024
  - 4/19-21 Vermont / Montpelier
  - 5/11-12 Maine / Whitefield
  - 6/17-21 NYC All 5 days = 3 Dragon Days
  - 10/12-13 Maine / Whitefield
  - 10/26-27 Vermont / Putney
- 15 days + 3 ( if participate in all 6 ME practice visit days)

Notebook of the Year: Each participant will be collecting her/his own “Notebook of the Year.” The purpose of this notebook is the collection of experience, the synthesizing of the teaching, for your conscious participation in your learning, and very importantly it becomes the primary medium by which you share with Laura how you are learning, your consciousness and your focus. It is from these notebooks that Laura is able to engage the individual apprenticeship with you. She will spend some time at the first intensive teaching about this book and how it can be tailored to each person.

This notebook will include pertinent notes from lectures/tutorials, some treatment reflections from the year, questions and perhaps most importantly some narrative writing, how you are absorbing and digesting the work of the year, how you are changing as the result of the work and how it is living in you. This annual book will become your library over the years. The narrative work shared in the book might also include other writings from the year and/or a summary letter/section in the notebook that is personal. For some this is a letter at the beginning, for others there is passionate/necessary writing that has been collected through the experiences of the year. This notebook is not to be scanned pages from your hand-written journal. It must be readable and organized in such a way as to be a useful document both for you and for Laura. Some people scanned drawings from their journals, which can be useful, but undigested raw journal entries are not useful for this annual notebook. It is intended to be collected throughout the year, not a 100-hour project at the end of the year. The reflective process is not optional in the on-going invitation of the apprenticeship. It can and will vary according to each person; how each of you naturally learn best and where the need for growth in the individual needs pressure.

There are those in the apprenticeship program who write a 1-2 page letter following each gathering and simply collect them in an organized way at the end of the year. Nothing more than this is necessary. The reflective writing process can be done during intensives, after Dragon Days, a few hours here and there which deepens and commits to the practice. For some, long writing is essential, lest the training and the life given in every treatment vaporize. For others the reflective writing is more surgical. Either way, the collection of writing is intimate and necessary. This notebook is not intended to be a replica of your journal. It is also not intended to be an overwhelming project. It becomes a way of life, a way of dialogue with the Song of Genesis and Laura, to add a focus on the cultivation of ethic and transformation of the deep problems of power we have each one of us inherited. As well, the

4



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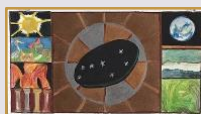
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reflective process ALWAYS reveals insight/learning from a tx/residency that would otherwise not reach consciousness. Writing from treatments must be read again and again so as not to forget what was given.

This notebook will be shared, in confidence, with Laura, by 1/15/2025, so that the curriculum and your understanding of it can gather momentum and focus over the years, according to each person's consciousness inside of the apprenticeship.

### More Information about the 2 Intensives

- The Spring Intensive is the re-scheduled Fall Intensive from 2023. We are going to work inside the SOG, inside the gathered practitioners. There will not be, as of now, patients from outside of the apprenticeship program. These days will be reflective and challenging, working in the space that has been given in trust, developing ethic and most importantly consciousness.
- For the Fall Intensive, Laura will speak with individual practitioners about bringing patients. It is hoped that each of the acupuncturists will be bringing at least one patient. Which patient you bring for treatment will be decided with Laura ahead of time. It is with your patient that you will be trained directly in the role of the practitioner. During these intensives, we will not as a default, have other practitioners or Laura complete the treatment for you. You will be supported in your learning by all present. The training will involve rigorous attention to the roles needed for the path of the master practitioner. It is important that you communicate fully with your patient that this is a teaching intensive. We cannot guarantee that every treatment will be completed during this week, e.g. I can imagine that you might be working on the treatment of one person over many months. It might require 3 attempts before you are able to walk the whole treatment. There will be at least one patient in your practice/life for whom this makes sense. Perhaps the only exception would be patients flying from afar. In that case I, Laura, might make sure that the tx is completed. It is essential that each one of you feel what it is to have to wait and work to be able to reach the depth of a person and a treatment. Without this pressure, the training is not possible. The schedule of patients will be made in the weeks prior to the residency. Patients will come for their treatment and then leave; they do not become part of the teaching week other than during their treatment. Our office will work with each of you if your patients require housing. Depending on our numbers and the resources of local practitioners, we may be able to assist them with housing. For those traveling from afar, there are local practitioners who will be able to offer one of their patients if needed.
- Like in 2022, there will be additional treatments at each intensive, with you the practitioners as both practitioner and patient assigned as we go along, to work with the 12 Spirit Points and the mystery of Ben Shen, the rooting of the shen. This is essential work in the development of a practitioner of the SOG, and much needed by all in the apprenticeship program.
- The treatment fee for each SOG patient is \$600. Treatments for participating practitioners are included in the tuition.





## The Virtue of HeavenEarth

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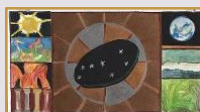
- To keep costs as low as possible for you, each practitioner will be responsible for her/his own food. The length of the residencies is important for the immersion in the medicine, but because of this the expense is greater. Sheepsfoot Hollow will have coffee and tea, condiments, oil and vinegar and a big pot of rice always available. Perhaps even an occasional desert from Spy! We have 2 ½ refrigerators, plenty of freezer space and will have some shelving for food storage. If necessary one or two people could go to the store for more food mid-week. The schedule each day will likely vary some, so keeping food as simple as possible is recommended. We will learn to follow the necessity of each treatment, each guest in how we live.
- We ask for a daily donation of \$25-50/night for facilities/housing, and for those few who may need to commute, a daily facilities donation of \$20
- We will forego wearing all white/all black clothing as we have for years, but professional attire is required. Please bring one outfit that is all white in the event it is needed.
- Please plan on having tested for covid-19 prior to coming. Any travel should be done with covid-19 safety protocols in place. Any close exposure to someone with covid-19 within 7 days of the intensive would be reason not to participate. More detailed instructions of how we will live with the pandemic this year will come later. A more detailed logistics letter will be written closer to the time of the event.

**The Application:** The formal application is for NEW applicants. It can be [downloaded here](#). The application is due by 3/1/2024 if applying for the spring and by 9/15/24 if applying for the fall intensive. Please email your application to [the office](#). If you handwrite the application, scan the document before returning it via email so that the archive of this program can be digitally stored. Our office will arrange time for you to meet with Laura for approximately 1 hour in person or on zoom before 3/15/24. For any applicant who will need to arrange air travel, Laura will meet with you soon after receiving the application so that you may plan accordingly.

**Applications must reach us by March 1st, 2024 (if applying for the spring) and September 15th, 2024 (if applying by the fall.)**

- To download the 2024 application: [SOG Apprenticeship Application](#)

**Letter of Intent:** This letter is for returning applicants. Letters of Intent are not required for the spring intensive, which is an extension of the work of 2023, rescheduled from the fall. The letter is to be 1-3 pages long. A personal letter to Laura: where you have been inside this training, where you are now, and where you are focused in the coming year. The letter is to be a statement of purpose and intent that will hold your focus for the coming year. This would include personal work as well as the work of training as an instrument. **Letters of Intent are required for entering the Fall Intensive and must reach me no later than 9/15/24.**





## The Virtue of HeavenEarth

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### **Tuition:**

2024 Spring Residency (5 days) ~ most participants paid for the entire residency in 2023 and this weekend is a reschedule of the fall gathering. If you only paid for part of the year and still need to pay tuition for the second half of 2023:

Spring Residency (5 days) ~ \$450

2024 Annual Residency (9 days) ~ \$900/year

Mandatory Additional 10 Dragon Days ~ \$75/day

- To keep costs at a minimum, each participant will be responsible for her/his own food.
- We ask for a daily donation of \$25-50/night for facilities/housing, and for those few who may need to commute, a daily facilities donation of \$20.
- Details will be in the logistics letter.

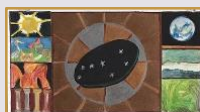
Thank you very much.

I look forward to continuing this work. I am humbled by your presence here.

With love. Laura

"The only way for a true vertical line in this world to exist is a human being giving themselves to God. For true healing to be given, it is given through such a vertical line. When a human being gives her/himself to God, when a vertical line is drawn and therefore a servant is made, through whom Grace can be given directly, a Song is sung. The "lines" may come together and this is not only an individual song of the soul." [LCS, 2018]

*Tie yourself to everything in creation / That got poured from God's magic hat.  
O, tie your soul like a magnificent sweet chime / To every leaf and limb in existence. Hafiz*



The Compass 2018, LCS

"It has long been an esoteric secret that the spinning hearts of the lovers of God keep the world in balance." p.31 [Light of Oneness LVL](#)



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### LIFE'S INTERCONNECTION

from Light of Oneness, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, pp. 56-72

#### THE WHOLENESS OF LIFE

Life is complete. Different levels of reality interconnect within life. The planes of nonbeing, the dimension of pure oneness and pure consciousness, and all the different levels of manifestation from the archetypal to the physical interpenetrate each other. Nothing is separate. Each level of reality is present in each moment of existence. And human beings are unique in the pattern of creation in that all these levels are present within us and accessible to our consciousness. We can embrace the physical plane and dissolve into nonbeing. We can be present in pure consciousness, interact with the imaginal reality of the archetypal world, and function in the mental world of thoughts.

From the perspective of life's oneness, there is no separation, no hierarchy, and no ladder of ascent; rather there are patterns of interconnection and movements of energy. Energy forms into matter or constellates into images. Life expresses itself in so many ways, each mode having its purpose and meaning, each aspect of creation reflecting the whole in a unique way. The relationship of the one to the many, of the individual to the whole, will be the science of the future. Our understanding of the way energy moves between different levels of reality will give us access to a fuller understanding of life and how to work with life's energy.

Science has shown us that the world is not the solid, three-dimensional reality that our senses imagine. As we awaken to the ways energy moves between different levels of reality, we will be able to work with the secrets of creation. And we will begin to perceive how our consciousness affects the whole, how our perception

determines our experience. Just as Newtonian physics gave us some understanding of how the forces in the physical world interact, the science of the future will offer a knowledge of oneness, revealing not only the patterns of oneness in this world, but how the different worlds interpenetrate and affect each other, and how our consciousness plays a central role in their interaction.

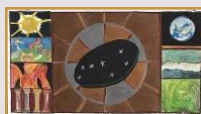
In order to begin to access the knowledge of oneness and accept our responsibilities within life, we need to leave behind our focus on self-preservation at the expense of the whole. Our concepts of separation and individual progress are creating a field of self-destruction. As we focus on our own needs, whether individual or national, we block the light and energy that should be flowing through our consciousness into the whole of life, and life is left barren.

Life needs a certain energy in order to flourish and transform. This energy must flow through human beings because only then can it carry the vibration of conscious purpose that is needed. A higher consciousness has

always played a part in the evolution of life, helping to direct its patterns of change. This has always been part of humanity's role on the earth, but this conscious direction has been held in trust for humanity by the spiritual masters who are with us. The Confucian Doctrine of the Mean reflects this relationship:

Only those who are absolutely sincere can fully develop their nature. If they can fully develop their nature, they can fully develop the nature of others. If they can fully develop the nature of others, they can fully develop the nature of things. If they can fully develop the nature of things, they can then assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout time, spiritual traditions have pointed to the role of human beings in the mystery of revelation, in the coming together of heaven and earth. But now what has been the conscious work of the few is being given



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back to the whole of humanity. We all have the opportunity to accept a greater responsibility within the unfolding of life.

We have many cultural and psychological patterns that encourage us to avoid the responsibilities that are given to us. We prefer to remain as children. We have even characterized our relationship to the divine as a child's relationship to its parent, with a divine father or mother image. This creates feelings of safety and security. But if we look around us, we see the illusory nature of these feelings. We are not secure, and life is not safe. The destiny of our planet hangs in the balance. We cannot afford to play the part of children any more. We may not want to take responsibility for the destiny of our planet, but that is what is being given back to us. Accepting our responsibilities means that we can no longer rely on outer authorities. The mediocrity of our present world leaders, their lack of real vision, is evident, but we don't want to realize the full significance of that fact. It points not just to the corruption of our political systems, but to a deeper transition in which the real potential is being given to the individual. This is part of the shift from a hierarchical model of power and information exchange to a model of organic wholeness through which the energy of our time needs to flow.

This is so different from our present image of the decision-making process that we cannot even imagine how it could work. But we are beginning to see a collective awakening to the truth that we cannot look for any savior outside ourselves. Neither a political nor a spiritual leader is coming to redeem us. The development of individual consciousness is pushing us to take real responsibility for life—not just for our individual life, but for the life of the whole.

### THE KNOWING OF LOVE

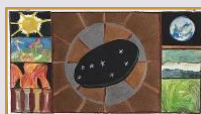
Love contains a consciousness that can help us look away from ourselves and towards the needs of the whole. Love is present everywhere at the same time. This is one of the secrets of love that is hidden from ordinary consciousness. Our individual experience of love may be determined by the openness of our heart and other criteria, but love itself is not localized. Working with love, we have access to its totality of presence. When our focus is towards our individual self we see only fragments of love, but when we turn away from ourselves we can glimpse its vaster dimension. When we work with a heart and mind that are not controlled by self-interest, we can have direct access to the oneness that is within all of life.

When we are present in love, love speaks to us. The heart's knowing is not governed by the mind, and yet the mind can learn to grasp it. In the knowing of love, the interconnections of life are directly accessible. Love knows what is needed in every situation. Love has its own language, its signs and symbols. Love comes to us in its own way, and part of the training of the lover is to learn the ways of love, to learn its silence and speech, to learn to be patient and wait for love, and then respond with immediate attention. The consciousness of the

heart, the place where love speaks to us, is always unconditioned, because real love is fundamentally free. That is why so many people are frightened of love: it frees us from the security of our defenses and conditioning, from our patterns of control.

Identifying love as just a feeling between people, we have lost touch with its vaster potential, with its all-embracing nature. Focusing on our personal need for love, we cannot see how it can connect us to the whole, for the sake of the whole. Even many schools of contemporary spirituality look only at love's personal qualities, often identifying it with emotional needs. But love is an energy source of unlimited potential that carries the consciousness of the whole.

Buddhist traditions reflect the impersonal nature of love as they describe Reality as a combination of vast emptiness and compassion. The Third Karmapa of Tibetan Buddhism wrote,



The Compass 2018, LCS

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## The Virtue of HeavenEarth

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The play of overwhelming compassion being unobstructed,  
In the moment of love  
The empty essence nakedly dawns.<sup>3</sup>

Buddhism shows us that love is not some idealized romance but a practical and potent power that is part of the essence of the universe. It needs us to be awake and attentive, watchful and present, and forgetful of our own self. Then it can take us into the arena of oneness where the secrets of life are being made visible. When we rest in the nature of what is Real, we relate skillfully in the world for the sake of all beings.

The first step in working with the consciousness of love is to realize the limitations of our personal preoccupation with love. Of course, we all want to be loved. This is a basic human instinct. We cannot ignore or repress this need, but it does not have to dominate our attitude. The lover of Truth has a deeper need: to give her heart in service to what is Real. The lover is in service to love, rather than love's being in service to her. This fundamental shift in attitude is what opens us to love's real nature. Love can then speak to us and explain how it works. Love can open us to its vaster dimension in which all of life is present.

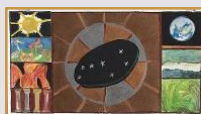
The focus of many mystical traditions has been on the way love unites the individual with the divine. This is one of love's most precious qualities, creating a longing for union, for being dissolved in love and the emptiness of love. Love takes us away from ourself into the presence of the Real. But love also reveals the wonder of divine oneness in the world. Love helps us to see the face of God wheresoever we turn. Love allows us to participate in life from the place of oneness, to experience life without the distortions of duality. Love can open the door to life in its completeness, in the wonder of its wholeness, in its beauty and majesty. Love gives us the freedom and power to live.

When we come to know the real potentials of love, we can help direct it where it is needed. Love knows our own true nature and uses it for the benefit of the whole. We can bring divine awareness into places where it has been forgotten—to the boardrooms that are only interested in profit, to the refugee camps that foster hatred. We can follow love as it flows within the patterns of creation, making our own small contribution. In our inner practice and outer life our attention is taken where it can help, where the consciousness of divine presence can unblock life's energy, where remembrance can purify, where devotion can bring warmth.

Yet there is also resistance to this unfolding of love. This is the battle of light and darkness that is taking place. In our personal practice we know the resistance to remembrance, how the ego interferes with our devotion, how our conditioning denies us our freedom. The same is true on a global scale, except that the forces of resistance are more dangerous. On the inner planes these forces are like dark walls resistant to change, places where the light cannot easily penetrate. They control much of our economy and commerce: the buying and selling of goods and also of human beings. And they are not static, but want to dominate and expand their control.

This is where those who want nothing for themselves— who love only the Truth—are needed. These forces of self-interest are threatened by the power of love, which brings freedom without hierarchy or ideology. The potency of love is that it cannot be limited, cannot be controlled. Love also antagonizes the dominance of the mind and its constructs. Love moves faster than the mind. It can subvert the most sensible process.

Encountering the resistance to love, the servant knows that all is according to His will. There is a deeper wholeness in which even the resistance plays its part. Light and dark move together, and the resistance to love draws our attention into the darkness, into the places of contraction where we are needed. We know this process within our own psyche, how our darkness draws us deeper within, into places that have been forgotten and neglected, that carry the scars of abuse. The same can happen in the way the resistance to love can carry us





## The Virtue of HeavenEarth

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into the heart of darkness, to the places in the energy structure of the world where He has been most forgotten or violated. Love draws our attention where it is needed, and the attention of the lover carries the consciousness of the oneness of God. Just as His name can untangle the blocks of our own psyche, so can our attention, imprinted with His name, work to free the energy patterns of life. Silently, through love and devotion, the healing of the world can take place.

### WORKING WITH THE FLOW OF LOVE

**Because all of life is interdependent, removing energy blocks in one part of life allows energy to flow into and transform other parts. All we have to do to affect the energy patterns of the whole is to be attentive wherever we are needed.** One of the results of global communication is that we know where there are trouble and suffering in the world; our conscious attention can immediately focus on these areas. We do not have to do anything except be aware—**the attention of those who have stepped aside from their own self-interest is a tremendous force.**

Surrendered in service, we know that we are where we are needed, and that our inner attention and prayers are used for the good of the whole. We see life's wholeness around us and know that even in the ordinariness of our daily life we are not isolated from the suffering of others. This does not mean we identify with their suffering. Our compassion is a force of healing in itself. Compassion's wisdom recognizes the way the soul is purified by pain, the way the divine can reveal itself through suffering. The attention of the heart brings light into darkness, giving sustenance to those in need.

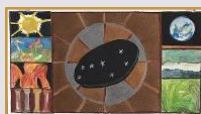
This work takes attention but no time, as love does not belong to time or to space. The immediacy of global communication mirrors the immediacy of love. We no longer have to wait to reach others. The glance of the lover, the inner attention of the heart, directs the consciousness of love where it is needed in the moment.

The work of love is never forced. It is a natural part of life. It is common sense. We care for neighbors and friends, for all of humanity, for we are part of the same community. We do not try to do anything, because that would be imposing our will. We live our ordinary, everyday life, open to life's interconnections. As we live with the global awareness that is becoming more and more present, our individual consciousness becomes more attuned to the consciousness of the world.

During the last millennia the focus of many spiritual traditions has been on the inner journey of the individual, the solitary path of the soul back to God. In contemporary Western spirituality, this has been combined with our preoccupation with individual fulfillment. But the focus on the individual journey has not always been the primal spiritual emphasis. In previous eras spiritual training was more concerned with the well-being of the tribe or the whole, as is still reflected in the role of the shaman. Martin Prechtel makes this comment in his experience of the Mayans:

The New Age falls pretty flat with the Mayans because,  
to them, self discovery is good only if it helps to feed the whole.<sup>4</sup>

In the Mahayana Buddhist traditions, the quest for realization is intertwined with the bodhisattva ideal of service to all beings. The bodhisattva vow taken by many practitioners commits one to returning to this plane of existence until all beings have attained enlightenment. On the Sufi path the road to union with God leads to the state of servanthood. Sufis are known as "the slaves of the One and servants of the many." And there has always been the tradition of the awliya, the friends of God, who look after the well-being of humanity.





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It is time now to return to this emphasis on paths that are in service to the whole. Experiencing the union of the soul with Reality is always the primary stamp of the mystic. But our perspective on this mystery can change and evolve. As our collective consciousness becomes more attuned to a global awareness, the mystic can also bring this perspective into her work of reflecting what is Real into the world. The lover can see how she can participate more fully with the whole, how she can give herself more completely to the life of the One.

By giving herself to God, the lover gives herself to life. If we believe in His oneness, there is nothing other than God. In the words of Abu Sa'id ibn Abî-l-Khayr,

Sufism consists in turning the heart away from anything  
that is not God. But there is not anything that is not God.

Living this oneness unites our inner practice with our service to life. However, our culture's reliance on rational thought is an obstacle to living from a place of oneness. We are used to approaching the difficulties of the world with solely a linear, analytic attitude. The ways of oneness cannot reveal themselves through rational thought, because rational analysis tends to separate the parts from the whole, thereby losing the greater perspective.

If we look to life with a consciousness of love as well as rationality, oneness will open its doors. The secrets of life's oneness will become visible. The oneness of love within our heart will interact with the oneness within all of life and reveal to us the way oneness works in the world. Without this new knowledge, humanity cannot evolve from its present predicament. We have been given some of the tools of oneness in the form of global communication, but we do not know how to use them. We see their function in terms of the individual. We do not know how to let oneness speak to us, interact with us. We still see ourselves as separate from life. Through the light of oneness we will be able to see the larger picture, and learn how to work with what we have been given.

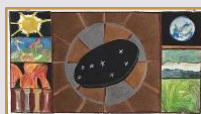
The mystic knows that what we need is always present, but we have to transform our awareness. We need the humility to be taught how to see our own world afresh. For the Sufi life is always the greatest teacher. Life will reveal to us what we need to know. His oneness imprinted into our heart will interact with the oneness present in life. Our own direct perception of nonduality, of belonging to what is Real, can infuse the currents of oneness that flow through life, and a new way will be born into consciousness.

### ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY

With each step in the development of consciousness there is always a sacrifice. We understand this as individuals; we know how at every stage of the path something is lost. Consciousness itself demands the loss of innocence, the expulsion from paradise. In order to embrace a consciousness of the whole, we have to surrender our illusion of autonomy. The idea that the individual has the possibility or right to determine her own life is one of the hallmarks of our culture. It gives us the illusion of freedom and self-determinacy.

The evolution of consciousness always means more responsibility, and increased responsibility often appears as a loss of freedom. The adolescent who steps into adulthood and becomes responsible for others in his family or community may feel the pain of an apparent loss. But real responsibility gives us the freedom to participate in life in ways that are closed to adolescent self-centeredness.

Western culture, which clings to the idea of independence rather than embracing the reality of interdependence, has the quality of an adolescent who refuses to accept the effects of his actions. This pattern





## The Virtue of HeavenEarth

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is visible in our national politics, as well as in the principles that ground our free-market economy. What we do not realize is that this inability to accept responsibility for our actions not only has negative global repercussions, but blocks us from accessing powers that belong to us. With each step in maturity we are given access to another level of our human potential. The illusion of autonomy—whether individual or national—constricts us within the sphere of our own limited power.

The shift towards maturity will allow us to reconnect with life with an attitude of inclusion: the different parts are acknowledged as belonging together. This fundamental shift in attitude allows life to communicate itself to us more directly. This is not an ideological approach but a way of life that recognizes the oneness that is inherent in creation and within us. This simple step will allow our consciousness to function on a different frequency, one that is much faster and more efficient. And most important, on this frequency we are directly and consciously connected to all of life.

Our individual consciousness has the capacity to function in this way: to see each part in relationship to the whole. Through the dynamics of oneness we will come to understand the way each individual part relates to the whole, just as we are now preoccupied with analyzing how individual parts interact with each other. We will come to understand the laws of economics as well as the laws of nature from a perspective of wholeness.

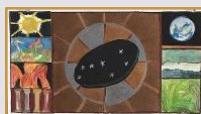
### NEW CENTERS OF ENERGY

When we collectively accept our global responsibilities, energy will begin to flow through the conscious interrelationship between the individual and the whole, spinning a new form of wisdom into existence. The energy that can only come from a lived understanding of wholeness will activate certain energy centers in life that have been dormant. And the individual is a microcosm of the whole. Just as energy centers in life will be activated, so too will patterns in the brain that now exist only in a state of potential.

The release of energy and knowledge from these centers will change life as we know it, enabling a different level of evolution to take place. Only then will we begin to understand our place within the galaxy and the flow of forces that interact with our planet. We are not an isolated planet whose unique chemical mixture gave birth to life, but part of a dynamic outpouring of love and energy throughout the universe. The universe is a living wholeness whose forces and energy patterns flow and interact. The mystic who has stepped beyond the confines of the ego has glimpsed this vastness of our real nature. Our concept of our planet as the entirety of existence is as limited and mistaken as our identifying ourselves as our egos. Astrology and astronomy point to the influence of other planets on our individual life, but there are also more powerful and more distant forces at play, whose influence we have yet to discover and understand.

Focused on our individual self, we remain isolated, and our consciousness can only assimilate knowledge that reflects this attitude. As we accept the wholeness of creation, creation can speak to us in the language of wholeness. Our consciousness can then expand to assimilate a horizon not delineated by self-interest. The mystic knows that consciousness can expand and expand, that its potential is unlimited. We are made in the image of God and carry His unlimited potential within us. Taking responsibility for our planet, we will begin to see our place within the larger framework of our galaxy. The knowledge that belongs to this stage of our evolution can then be given to us.

If we can recognize that life wants to teach us, we can take the next step in the development of consciousness. Human beings belong to all of life, and creation needs our attention, our participation. The simplicity of our relationship to life is overwhelming. Life, the ecosystem, is not a complex problem to be solved. It is a living organism that needs to be related to. Through this relationship life can use our consciousness to untangle the knots and imbalances that we have caused through our ignorance. As the Biblical prophet Hosea so accurately describes our time, “There is ... no knowledge of God in the land.... Therefore the land mourns.”<sup>5</sup>





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Without our conscious participation, the knowledge of divine oneness that we hold in our hearts will never nourish the planet, and we will limit the next step in our collective evolution.

### CONNECTING LEVELS OF REALITY

The inner and outer worlds come together in the human being. Different levels of reality that exist within us are mirrored in the outer world. The vastness of our inner emptiness is reflected in the vastness of outer space. Mystical experiences can show us how the ego is like a small planet in endless space; coming back from the beyond and entering the ego is like landing again on this planet. Suddenly one is present in a reality—with personal problems or collective difficulties—which a moment ago seemed so insignificant. But then one discovers a different purpose emerging, a purpose that combines the vastness of the infinite with our presence in this world. Recently a friend had an experience that pointed to this:

I felt in the night while I was sleeping that I was drawn out of my body while fully conscious, in a kind of very long and very thin channel. Then I lost physical, emotional, and mental consciousness, and was thrown with an unbelievable speed into the infinite emptiness, whirled around in intergalactic spaces. It was such freedom, being without identity. There was Nothingness, yet it was very dynamic. Then there was this enormous field of energy of the Brotherhood, the Helpers of humanity, our spiritual ancestors. They made absolutely clear that our connection to them is to be brought down to earth through us and that this is needed for the world situation.

When the friend awoke, she knew the importance of this experience. She wrote, “And may I never forget for one moment what I was shown! Just through the connection, through them and then through us, what is needed can be given. It was absolute; truth. With the grace of the Beloved never will it be forgotten.” The friend was taken into the infinite emptiness where the masters of love are present, and then she was shown the meaning of our connection with their energy field, how it is needed in the world. This connection allows energy, love, and knowledge to flow from one level of reality to another. This has always been the way humanity has been helped. But in order to live this connection, it is necessary to step out of the ego and embrace a vaster dimension of consciousness. Otherwise, the doubts and distortions of the mind will destroy the connection and nothing can be given. This is not spiritual science fiction but the way the world has always functioned.

The masters of love need their servants in the world who can be present and yet have the experience of inner realities where we are absent to self. In the intergalactic spaces of infinite emptiness there are pure love, wisdom, power. There are forces waiting to help us. We are working together as part of an opening of love that is so vast and full of so many miracles. And yet the insignificance of our ordinary self has a part to play. We are needed by love. Through us the higher frequencies of love and oneness can interpenetrate the world.

