

Safe Harbor

Meditation and Message

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- Where do you find Safe Harbor? Are there people who anchor you, places that feel especially sacred? How is the HOLY revealed to you?

...if you're devotionally inclined, the ultimate spiritual friend is God, however you imagine Him or Her or It. Why not enter into a dialogue? Reverence is the proper stance in an I-Thou dialogue with the Almighty, but censorship is not required so don't hold back... Convert your feelings into questions and humbly present them. Then wait and listen....Some people find guided meditation an effective way to receive comfort and wisdom, whether they believe it comes from within themselves or from an actual being, an unseen guide... p122

Meditation adapted from "Spiritual Practices for Crazy Times" by Philip Goldberg, p123-125

As we begin our time of meditation, allow yourself to become more comfortable wherever you're sitting. Close your eyes if you'd like or simply soften your gaze.

Take three deep breaths, exhaling completely after each. Notice the soothing calm as your mind and body settle. Invite each part of your body to relax and soften even more.

I'm going to lead us on a visual journey of Peace, Love and Truth.

See yourself walking on a path through a serene woodland setting. Take in the beauty of the wildflowers and the shafts of sunlight slanting through the trees. Enjoy the natural scent of the forest, the touch of the breeze, and the sounds of birds chirping.

You come to a clearing where you see a beautiful golden dome. This holy place radiates pure light from within its walls. It beckons you with the promise of healing and revelation.

Your heart knows this Sanctuary really exists, at the core of your being.

Approaching a magnificent door, you open it and enter. A luminous space welcomes you. A seat awaits you in the center of the room. You sit and a feeling of Peace comes over you; your worries and resentments dissolve.

A hazy figure appears before you and you are filled with awe and reverence. As the being approaches, it comes into focus and you recognize a beloved presence ... or it might be no discernible figure at all, but a radiant orb of Holy Light representing the transcendent, formless absolute.

Whatever shape it takes on, it embodies unconditional love, pure compassion, and divine truth.

The figure speaks to you and the voice is gentle and strong. it says, "I know who you are. I love who you are. I know the pain you've endured. I know what you yearn for. Your journey begins anew right here, right now"

Allow yourself some time to absorb that message. Notice how it feels to take it in. The voice continues:

"I ask only that you open your mind to the omniscient intelligence of the cosmos. That you open your body to the healing power of nature. That you open your heart to the Limitless love of the Infinite. That you open your soul to Oneness."

You bow in gratitude. Wordlessly, the form before you invites you to ask any question you may have. What do you long to know? What mystery do you want solved? Take your time, knowing that you will have other opportunities like this.

When you know what you want to ask, have the beloved figure articulate the question. Remain there in silence, basking in the presence of all that is sacred, good, and pure. The reply may come immediately or at a later time. In either case, know that it springs from the deepest place within you.

The figure blesses you. It begins to dissolve into pure light and slowly it fades away. You stand and leave the domed sanctuary, knowing you can return at any time. You are at peace, empowered to take your next steps boldly and courageously.

Now return your attention to the present moment, in this room, in this body. Deepen your breath. Gently stretch any part of your body that needs attention. When you're ready, open your eyes and come back fully to *this safe harbor*.

- Where do you find Safe Harbor? Are there people who anchor you, places that feel especially sacred? How is the HOLY revealed to you?

...every space is sacred space. How can it be otherwise when omnipresent Divinity is... well, present everywhere? The Infinite is not holding back and waiting to reveal Itself. It's right here, ready for you to snap out of your slumber and recognize it. "This place where you are right now, God circled on a map for you," wrote the Persian Mystic poet Hafiz." p129

“Sacred spaces are vital habitats for the soul.(128) Divine presence is everywhere, but it is, to most of us mortals, more discernible and more palatable in some places than in others.” (130)

- Ocean, woods, sound of water, wind (Margaret and sacred source of life– water!)
- HOME– what this “unhoused” journey has been: privilege, frustration, spiritual invitation to grow
- Spiritual homes– what brought you to Unity? Many of us come from other traditions that no longer fit as a habitat for our soul

“ The sanctity of a place depends largely on the sanctity you bring to it. Wherever you are may be holy ground, but holiness is in the heart of the beholder. (130)”

“Know that this– wherever you are– is hallowed ground. Know that you are blessed to be there. Know that whatever else is going on in the world– whatever horror, whatever suffering, whatever dismal portents– you have this sacred moment, in this sacred space. And you can carry home some of its beneficent gifts like priceless souvenirs. (131)”

- sanctuary within us
- sanctuary in our homes
- sanctuary in our friendships
- sanctuary in the quiet
- in our creativity
- in our community

We also know that living in community– whether that is with our families of birth or choice, in our workplaces, here in *this* community, in the community of our

city, our nation and around the world– sometimes community means we bump up against drama and distress, aggravation and frustration

“Consider this maybe there is something extra to be gained from the difficult people, the ones with whom we don't see eye to eye and to sometimes irritate and frustrate us. You can't throw everyone overboard as briskly as you block people online. They might be relatives or co-workers or even– OMG!-- people you live with. Can you use those interactions to tap into something spiritually beneficial?(117)

“Can you welcome annoying people as facilitators of your curriculum in this life? Difficult relationships can strengthen our spiritual skills, just as exercise strengthens our muscles. They present opportunities to practice spiritual attributes we all want more of: forgiveness, compassion, love, empathy, acceptance, understanding. Sometimes it's not easy to bring forth those traits even with people we care about. But we usually do it. Can you also rise to the occasion with those you consider fools and spiritual pests.” (p117)

“If you're up to it, ask yourself if you're being too judgmental. Do you habitually find fault instead of looking for signs of goodness? Can you transform your disdain into a kinder feeling? Remember, you'll be doing it not for the other person, but to protect your soul from toxic emotions.” (118)

The gift of Lent is an invitation to become more aware, to become more awake, to release and let go of habits of mind, of habits of busyness– anything that pulls us away from our sacred center.

How are we companioning each other?

Some of us are exploring with a Spirit Group the soul-nourishing practices that Phil Goldberg writes about in “Spiritual Practices of Crazy Times.” These small groups are less about the content of the book, as rich as it is, and more about being present to each other. Last night a dozen or so of us gathered for food and friendship thanks to Fred and Kevin. (There are tasty leftovers downstairs too!

This coming Saturday night is an opportunity for fellowship, gratitude and fund-raising to help build a well for our sisters and brothers in Kenya. Each week we come together to offer the comfort of being expressions of love to each other and to co-create with God the vision we hold of a world transformed.

“Wherever you are in time and space, and whatever the circumstances may be, you have within you the ultimate shelter. External sanctuaries are vital, but their primary function is to help us locate that ever-present internal temple. Then as Thomas Merton puts it, ‘Heaven is everywhere.’” (149)

As we approach these last few weeks before Easter, can we open ourselves to the gift of the letting go of Lent, to the renewal of spring, to the joys and challenges and comfort of being expressions of love? Can we find Safe Harbor wherever we are, knowing that *this* moment, *this* space, *this* is Holy ground? Can we *create* Safe Harbor for the people we're in line with at the grocery store, or hear about on the news, for our families, for our friends, for those people who challenge us and push our buttons. If we can do that, then truly heaven will be everywhere! And so it is! Amen.