

## December 27, 2009: "Opening to the Unitary Universal Spirit"

By Joan Nelson

Pre-Prelude:

**As our strong-but-fragile planet cycles toward the light of a new year, we ground ourselves more deeply into the heart of existence. Bottom line: It's time to Open to the Unitary Universal Spirit, so we can live at a deeper, more harmonious frequency.**

**For this, it helps to understand a few things about Milton's music for today.**

**Today's Prelude is called "prelude." And the postlude is called "Prelude." And "mid"lude or "inter"lude is also called Prelude. This Prelude thing was composed by a late 18<sup>th</sup> early 19<sup>th</sup> Century metaphysical genius, Alexander Scriabin: a true transcendentalist. Fascinated with transcendence itself, he believed that everything could be reduced to energy—vibrating to finely tuned frequencies.**

**Fellow Transcendentalist and composer Dane Rudhyar apparently understood about vibes and frequencies when he wrote that Scriabin was "the one great pioneer of the new music of a reborn Western civilization...the father of all future musicians." "Father" or not, this guy with his transformative musical frequencies was way ahead of his time.**

**Scriabin spoke of creating vibrational "strings to the listener's soul." Only now is sophisticated neurology catching up with his quivering chords.**

**Here's the point as we listen to his music throughout today's service: Vibrational frequencies are only now being investigated with advanced physics, mathematics, and high-tech brain research methods. Scientists are studying the influence of auditory beats in the brain to alter consciousness and produce moments of clarity and heightened awareness that lead to intense creativity and problem solving.**

**For us, here, throughout this entire service, what's important is simply to remain aware, that these are not just notes on sheets of**

**music that Milton will be playing. They are the composer guiding Milton's fingers to create for us, here in this room, a deliberate vibrational frequency conducive to our year-end opening to the Unitary Universal Spirit.**

Milton plays 1<sup>st</sup> Prelude

**CALL TO WORSHIP: As we swing through this yearly cycle of darkness, we are called to worship by our beautiful—but fragile—spinning planet. And we are called by a deeply disturbing global crisis. The winds of change seem to be sweeping away the foundations of our current society and creating what threatens to become a permanent emergency: Economic. Moral. And ecological.**

**As the planet turns back toward the light, we will begin to think about emerging from the emergency. Right Now, however, is the time to hunker down, closer to the heart of existence.**

**Chalice Lighting: The purpose of today's chalice lighting is to help us prepare ourselves to be part of a world-wide spiritual awakening. The awakening is beginning now. And we will be part of it. But first, we must ground ourselves more deeply in the light of truth: The truth: "what-is."**

**Awakening begins when we "get" what-is: Sometimes we think what-is is good. Sometimes we think it's bad. Sometimes it looks like both. Awakening or "getting" what-is, is to go deeper than just thinking about it as "good" or "bad." "Getting"-it, is to stop perceiving what-is through the content in your chattering mind; and start perceiving it ("what-is") through the quiet inner awareness of your true (highest and best) self.**

**Sure the content of the story keeps changing. But the process of awakening does not change. This is not philosophical. It's literal. You have to "get" what-is. Now, in THIS moment. And now, in THIS moment. And THIS... You don't just "get" it once. You have to get-it every moment that you want your true self to be truly, FULLY alive.**

**The "What-is" that is "so" is that there ain't nothing but now. There ain't no yesterday. There ain't no tomorrow. All we have is NOW: The eternal now.**

**Reading: Look unto this day. For it is life, the very life of life. In it lie all the verities and realities of your existence The splendor of beauty. The glory of action. The bliss of growth. Yesterday is just**

**a dream, Tomorrow only a vision. But today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness And every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore to this day.**

Responsive Reading. Hymnal p. 543 Winter.

**As we ground ourselves at a deeper, more harmonious frequency, we are likely to get closer to the heart of who we truly are. At the deeper vibration, there is no more illusion of good and bad. Just what is: Your true—highest and best—self, the magnificent truth that our superficial culture has taught us to ignore.**

**Eckhart Tolle says, when you know what is so, you know who you truly are. And you know it with an “abiding, alive sense of peace and love.”**

**He even calls it “joy:” The joy of knowing and being who you truly are.**

Our next hymn is about actually standing together and being who we are “with laughter and elation”!

Singing Together Hymn #323 Break not the Circle.

Later on we will come to the portion of our service traditionally known to us as “Joys and Sorrows.” As you may have noticed, the Worship Committee is exploring different structures in an effort to fine-tune this part of our Sunday morning ritual. Perhaps to move it to a Scriabin (skreeé a bin) type of deeper frequency.

As part of the exploration, we will begin the new year by writing our milestone events on 3x5 cards before the service begins. The Worship Associate will read the cards.

**Today will be the last personally spoken J&S for a while. So, to help move today’s sharing to the deeper frequency, we will begin with a Zen Teaching Story for Grown-ups:**

Zen Teaching story for Grownups: **The Zen Master Hakuin lived in a town in Japan. He was held in high regard and many people came to him for spiritual teaching. Then it happened that the teenage daughter of his next-door neighbor became pregnant. When being questioned by her angry and scolding parents as to the identity of the father, she finally told them that he was Hakuin, the Zen Master. In great anger the parents rushed over to Hakuin and told him with much shouting and accusing that their daughter had confessed that he was the father. He simply smiled, and replied, “Is that so?”**

**News of the scandal spread throughout the town and beyond. The Master lost his reputation. This did not trouble him. Nobody came to**

see him anymore. He remained unmoved. When the child was born, the parents brought the baby to Hakuin. “You are the father, so you look after him.” The Master took loving care of the child. A year later, the mother remorsefully confessed to her parents that the real father of the child was the young man who worked at the butcher shop. In great distress they went to see Hakuin to apologize and ask for forgiveness. “We are really sorry. We have come to take the baby back. Our daughter confessed that you are not the father.” “Is that so?” is all he would say as he handed the baby over to them.

Sermon: Guided Meditation: “Opening to the Unitary Universal Spirit ”

**We may never be able to equal the Zen Master’s life of clarity and compassion. But, when we understand his secret, and begin to apply its principle in our lives, we are more likely to start living from that deeper place of our highest and best selves.**

**In order to become a Zen Master, this man has spent many hours meditating: Thus moving his brain waves to a deeper frequency. From his deeper vantage point, he simply accepts and transcends the fact that the girl lied about him being the father of the baby. Then he accepts and transcends the give and take-away of the baby. He accepts and transcends what looks to us like an unwanted, unfair burden.**

**He accepts this change in his life plan just as he accepts the inevitability of change across the board. Because he operates from his true (highest and best) self, he accepts what-is-so without anxiety about right vs. wrong, good vs. bad.**

**The Zen Master has no need to worry about the future. Because he knows, with the clarity that comes from years of meditation, that there is only this moment, just is as it is. He is fully present to the sweet fullness of life. And to the inevitable suffering. To him, sweet fullness and inevitable suffering are just what-is-so.**

**The Zen Master is *not* in denial. He’s *not* trying to explain what-is-so by saying that God, or the devil, or the planets willed it. He’s just getting-it.**

**The Zen Master’s secret is what, in Buddhism, is called “non-attachment or non-resistance.”**

Having been diligent in his practice of meditation, he is so completely at one with his true self, that what happens has no power over him anymore.

Only if he were to lose the connection with his true self, would he be at the mercy of what happens. Suppose he were to lose awareness of his true self, he would likely resist “what-is-so.” “No. You Lie! It’s not my baby!”

Then, something else would happen. And he would lose his Mastery of Zen. It will take a lot more meditating before he can get back to the business of spiritual awakening.

This story is a classic teaching tale about how all of us have been separated from our true selves and what is-REALLY-so: The bottom-line SPIRITUAL truth which far surpasses the values and degree of awareness of our contemporary groupthink and the way it conditions us.

Our culture itself has been rendered—through conditioned learning—to ignore the awakening of humanity that’s going on—Right Now. Conditioned learning has numbed us to the vibrations and frequencies of what-is-so. We’ve been indoctrinated with the limited consciousness known to the Zen Master as “ego:” Ego is the superficial “illusion” of an individual self, isolated from the whole.

The Zen Master has released himself from the sense of isolation caused by the superficial “illusion” of a separate ego self.

Unlike the Zen Master, we are so busy trying to become who we are not, that forget to be who we really are. We have lost touch with our true selves. We have lost our connection with the Eternal Now.

So guess what. We miss out on the ever-present, living essence of what-is-so. We miss out on the joy of thinking (and maybe actually saying—“with laughter and elation”—the words, “Is that so?”

Think about how stuck you are in ego. If you were to release yourself from this ego and go around smiling and saying “Is that so?” to every problem, a couple of paramedics would come in their wagon, haul you away in a strait jacket.

But nobody’s going to haul us away from here today. After all, we did sing ( Hymn #1). Let Nothing Evil Cross This Door.” So we

**have a few minutes, here, totally safe in our protected sanctuary, to practice being at one with our true (highest and best) selves.**

**Like the Zen Master WE can use meditative ritual to ground ourselves more deeply in the Heart of Existence.**

**Let's take a few brief minutes to deepen the vibrational frequency of our brain waves (Milton will provide Scriabin's transformational harmonics while we do this.)**

**To begin, adjust yourself so your body is in alignment with your chair and the floor. Notice that the chair and the floor are simply "what-is-so." There's no point denying the chair or the floor. The strait jacket guys might come and haul you away if you refused to accept the reality of chair or the floor. The idea is to simply "be" with what-is-so in your life, just as you are with what is so about the chair and the floor.**

**Next, allow yourself to take a few deep, relaxed breaths. Notice any burdensome thoughts, feelings, beliefs or assumptions that might be keeping you from being fully present. Perhaps you're saying to yourself, "At some point in the future I can be at one with what-is-so; but only if this or that or the other happens.**

**Maybe you think you could get it right if only such-and-such hadn't happened in the past. Ah, yes...the "suchness" of life. If you're like me, then such-and-such happened when you were a kid. And it's still burdening you today. Or maybe you think you can't be at one with what-is-so until you read a certain book. Or apologize to someone. Perhaps you're thinking more broadly, as in, "I need to be a better person."**

**If you can't pinpoint any burdensome thoughts, feelings or beliefs that might be keeping you from being fully present, try this:**

**Simply notice how you think and feel about these instructions. Perhaps you think this process isn't going to be of any use to you.**

**Just notice any burdensome thought or feeling and observe that IT is simply something in your head. What-is-so is that THIS is what you are thinking right now. Simply observe your thought and the**

feeling that goes with it. Without resisting it. Or trying to change it. The Zen Master is called a Master because he has Mastered his thoughts and feelings. He's mastered them by moving his awareness away from his superficial illusory Ego Self and focusing, through meditation, on his True Self. From this deeper place, he simply observes his own thoughts and says, "Is that so?"

You can do it too. Try it just for a moment. That's all. One moment at a time. After all you can get the old conditioned thoughts and feelings back any time you want to.

So just for an experiment, look at your burdensome thought or feeling for a few seconds. Just examine it. Get the what-is-so of it. It's just something in your brain. That's ALL it is. Something your brain is doing. You're just looking. Looking objectively at something that has felt like a burden for a long time. Try just being with it for 5 seconds. Keep going if you want to: 10 seconds, 15, 30 seconds.

What-is-so is that all of us have been encultured to avoid getting-it about our true selves. We are just as capable as the Zen Master of accepting and transcending what-is-so.

Now: Imagine that you are given a stranger's baby and told the child is yours, and therefore your responsibility. What do you think? ...How do you feel? ...What do you say? ...Can you imagine your TRUE highest and best self simply taking the baby and saying, "Is that so?"

Right now, as Milton plays, simply imagine that Scriabin's vibrational frequencies are touching what he called the "strings" of your "soul."

Then, allow yourself to experience a few more deep inhalations and exhalations to release your TRUE self (just for a few moments) from the burden of playing a role that is not your highest and best.

Simply notice: We all pay a heavy price for living in a culture that forces us to adopt ego-selves. A culture that forces us to conform to the belief that we are somehow isolated from "the whole." Imagine how it would feel to release your deeper, authentic highest and best, true self from its isolation from the heart of existence.

**Allow yourself to become aware (just for a few moments) of the eternal now: the source of who you truly are. Imagine allowing yourself to know that your true highest and best self is available to you any time, any place.**

**Simply be aware of the sound of my voice as you surrender to the vibrational frequencies, and enjoy the sense of release from the bondage of what the Zen Master calls “time-bound ego:” The illusion of self, separate from the whole.**

**While surrendering to the magic of the music, allow yourself to notice that your brain waves have slowed down somewhat. Along with another deep inhalation/exhalation, allow them to slow a little bit more. Imagine your whole body responding to the frequency of Scriabin’s vibration.**

**From this more harmonic place—just for a moment—be still. Just Be. One with the vibration.**

**Now, like a scientist, take an objective peek at the many New Years you have seen in. Recall some of the resolutions you have made. And broken. Without engaging the old thoughts and feelings, simply notice those good intentions that got lost along the way.**

**Now, notice that this is simply what-is-so. It’s History. It’s just a story including the ordinary sorrows and joys that humanity is heir to. But, it’s your unique history. So you have you’re your own uniquely burdensome thoughts and feelings about it. Just as an experiment... Select a couple of those failed resolutions, and notice your thoughts and feelings about them. ....pause....**

**Now imagine your true self smiling and saying, “Is that so?”**

**Let’s say it out loud. Everybody: Is that so?”**

**Yes. It that IS what’s so. It is what it is. And that’s all it is. Learned, conditioned thoughts in your head.**

**Unlike the Zen Master, we can’t live, all the time, from the heart of existence. But it IS possible to be aware that, at any given moment, we can at least transcend our personal soap operas long enough to**

**bring forward our true, highest and best selves and see eye to eye with laughter and elation.**

**You and I can at least become part-time masters for a few moments now and then. After a minute or so of silence (while Milton continues to play), we will introduce the Joys and Sorrows portion of today's service. This will be our last spoken Sorrows and Joys at least for a few weeks. Please come to it. Fully relaxed and present. Come from this deeper more grounded place.**

**Sorrows and Joys—We will bring the microphone around as usual for sharing sorrows and joys. If you have a clear and certain sorrow that you want to share, please try to do so before people start sharing joys. Whether you share about your life at large, or from your experience so far in this room today, please be sure to come from the deeper, more grounded place.**

Offering and Lighting of Candles

Singing Together Hymn #367 Allelu allelu.

Spoken Benediction

**What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.**

**When we understand the Zen master's secret, we are free to be more at peace with what is.**

**After all, yesterday IS but a memory. And tomorrow IS only a vision. All we really—ever— have is NOW: The eternal now.**