

Week 21 – The Entire Mountain

The mountain is a very complex archetypal symbol, intricately woven up with many other archetypes – the river, the sun and light, realms of evolutionary life – from minute mountain plants like the Edelweiss and gentian, to the lush tropical growth down by the sea and all the plants and animals associated with different elevations. The mountain is often seen as the center of the Universe, the center of the mandala and all life. And all the symbols and archetypes inherent in the complexity of life and death are all symbols of patterns, dynamics and processes within yourself. The mandala surrounding the mountain is your life, your story, your process.

We have spoken about the river of life having its source at the top of the mountain. As it trickles down it comes to know itself as a part of the entire mountain. It is the Life Force for all life and growth on the mountain, for forging the landscape of the mountain.

Each stage down has resulted in the water becoming contaminated in some way and the work is to see the whole – the mountain, the living water that informs the mountain, the contamination that enters the river of life and the final destination of the ocean. There is mountain goat poop in the water, fish have attracted fishermen who mindlessly leave line and lures caught in the weeds of the river or toss beer cans carelessly into the living water without any awareness of the toxicity to the water. In tragic circumstances factories lower downstream have emptied their effluence into the clarity and made the water murky. The river slows, becomes sluggish, lacking clarity, unable to provide life-giving nurturance to other forms of life.

Once the river reaches the ocean, some of the water evaporates with the heat of the sun, and clouds form and the rain then falls back down on the mountain, feeding the next stream, rivulet or river and the cycle continues.

This work has been about seeing the debris and contamination in the river. The environmental clean-up has been the work of becoming aware of the contamination and gathering it up into the heart of your own love, acceptance with deep understanding for how this happened. The gathering and incorporating (embodying) instead of denying and rejecting that it is there, is the act of inner integration and wholeness. As you reach the sea and full union with consciousness, so too, do you ascend to the very top of the mountain.

In our limited understanding and vision as a child, we saw God as living on the mountain lit by rays of glory from the sun. Now through the hard work of exploring every aspect of the mountain and its ever changing landscapes and atmospheres, weather and levels of supporting life, we realize that the god and the light are us – shining on the mountain of our lives. What was only an outer landscape is now experienced as the inner landscape of our own soul.

Instead of our vision being focused on particulars and relativities in terms of facts, figures and thoughts, the whole of who we are is apprehended and experienced as held in union with the very Spirit of Consciousness that is the ground of our being. Understanding ourselves as a very small drop of a vast ocean and yet at one with ocean precludes the possibility of pride or arrogance. It is in fact a joy held in complete humility.

As you have worked your way through recognizing what has been thrown into the living water of your life, and brought it to your heart, you are reaching the summit at the same time as reaching the ocean. At either end, things slow down. As you reach the end of the journey, the terrain has flattened out and the landscape of a delta makes for slow progress. At the top of the mountain the air is very rarified and your lungs struggle to extract the bit of oxygen that is there. Each step becomes an agony and effort, grit and determination. The ego

lessons fortitude, hard work, discipline and setting your eyes on goals are what are needed for this internal journey. What was once applied to success in the outer world must now be applied to attain the goals of the inner world.

Consider for a moment how you have approached the mountain climb we have been on, seeing this course as a mountain climb.

Have you kept up your pace?

What happened when you didn't?

What was your attitude about not keeping up or understanding everything?

Did you persevere?

Did you double down on your efforts?

Did you make excuses?

Did you give up?

What qualities did you bring to the process that helped you keep climbing?

What got in the way of your reaching the summit and the ocean simultaneously?

Where are you on the mountain?

Are you still climbing?

What did you notice in terms of the landscape on the climb?

What life-giving, reciprocal processes and relationships did you notice as you climbed?

Where has the water of your life been so polluted that nothing could grow on the mountain?

We have just three lessons left. Assess your own inner process at this point and see if you can just **see**, without any judgment. If you find a judgment, notice it and replace it with a question for yourself, of yourself?

Exercise:

- Draw a mandala with the mountain at the center to represent the totality of your life till now.
- Watch the National Geographic video of the sons of Hilary and his Sherpa, climbing Mt. Everest and reaching the top. Notice the last agony of the climb. Notice the joy at reaching the summit.