

Week 24 – In Summary

“The center of our being is a point of nothingness
which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is
ever at our disposal ...

A point from which God disposes of our lives, a point which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or
the brutalities of our own will.

This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us.

It is, so to speak, God’ s name written in us ...

It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven.

It is in everybody, and if we could see it, we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face
and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely ...

I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere.”

~Thomas Merton

Mountains are formed through tectonic forces shifting in the earth’s crust and volcanic activity. The forces of
your socialization have given rise to the unique form of your own mountain – each mountain in the world is
both the same and completely unique just like you. No mountain is special – but each is of unique intrinsic
value by virtue of its mere existence.

Sometimes the greatest early force results in the greatest pressure and compression of layers of raw material.
It is this immense pressure that results in gemstones being formed in the heat and pressure of the mountains
young life. This remains hidden from view and unknown until there seems to be some hint of gems stones and
then when you dig you discover rich veins of gold and silver and gemstones of very kind. These are not on the
surface – they are formed and embedded in the layers of suffering the mountain endured in its formation. It is
through the inner digging, the searching, the bringing of light into dark places hidden within, that the inner
world reveals itself and when the light of your searching is brought into the dark that the gems light up and
sparkle in the dark. It is only through the work and searching in the suffering of our lives, that the gems of joy
and love and peace reveal themselves.

Very often the spiritual journey is embarked on to attain some lofty goal – some treasure that is not really
understood. The motivation is to **escape and avoid** the suffering of your life, or the goal is to **attain and grasp**
at something that seems glittering and beautiful but of which you have no real understanding.

If you try to **avoid** (suffering) or strive to **grasp and attain** (jewels) then you will lose your head and forget the
way as the fairy tale of the Simeli Mountain, by the Grimm brothers tells us in the Ashlimon translation:

“There were two brothers; one was rich, the other poor. However, the rich one gave nothing to the poor one,
who barely made a living as a grain dealer. Thins often went so badly for him that he had no bread for his wife
and children.

One day he was pushing his cart through the forest when off to the side he saw a large bare mountain. He had
never seen it before, so he stopped and looked at it with amazement. While he was standing there, he saw
twelve tall wild men approaching. Thinking that they were robbers, he pushed his cart into the thicket,
climbed up a tree, and waited to see what would happen.

The twelve men went to the mounta9in and cried out, “Mount Sems, Mount Sems, Open up.” The barren
mountain immediately separated down the middle. The twelve men walked into it, and as soon as they were
inside it shut.

A little while later it opened again, and the men came out carrying heavy sacks on their backs. As soon as they were all back in the daylight they said, "Mount Semsî, Mount Semsî, close." Then the mountain went back together, and the entrance could no longer be seen. Then the twelve men went away

When they were completely out of sight, the poor man climbed down from the tree. He was curious to know what secret was hidden in the mountain, so he went up to it and said, "Mount Semsî, Mount Semsî, open up," and the mountain opened up for him as well.

He went inside, and the entire mountain was a cavern full of silver and gold, and in the back of the caver there lay great piles of pearls and sparkling jewels, piled up like grain. The poor man did not know what he should do, whether or not he could take any of these treasures for himself. At last he filled his pockets with gold, but he left the pearls and precious stones lying where they were.

Upon leaving he too said, "Mount Semsî, Mount Semsî, close," and the mountain closed.

Then we went home with his cart.

He no longer had any cares, for with his gold he could buy bread for his wife and children, and wine as well. He lived happily and honestly, gave to the poor, and did good for everyone. When he ran out of money he went to his brother, borrowed a bushel, and got some more money, but did not touch any of the very valuable things. When he wanted to get some more money for the third time, he again borrowed the bushel from his brother. However, the rich man had long been envious of his brother's wealth and of the fine household that he had furnished for himself. He could not understand where the riches came from, and what his brother wanted with the bushel. Then he thought of a trap. He covered the bottom of the bushel with pitch, and when he got the bushel back a gold coin was sticking to it.

He at once went to his brother and asked him, "What have you been measuring in the bushel?

Wheat and barley," said the poor brother.

Then he showed him the gold coin and threatened that if he did not tell the truth he would bring charges against him before the court. Then the poor man told him everything that had happened to him. The rich man immediately had his wagon hitched up and drove away, intending to do better than his brother had done, and to bring with him quite different treasures.

When he came to the mountain he cried out, "Mount Semsî, Mount Semsî, open up."

The mountain opened, and he went inside. There lay the riches all before him, and for a long time he did not know what he should take hold of first. Finally, he took as many precious stones as he could carry. He wanted to carry his load outside, but as his heart and soul were entirely occupied with the treasures, he had forgotten the name of the mountain, and cried out, "Mount Simeli, Mount Simeli, open up."

But that was not the right name, and the mountain did not move, remaining closed instead. He became frightened. And the longer he thought about it, the more he became confused, and all of the treasures were of no use to him.

In the evening the mountains opened up and the twelve robbers came inside. When they saw him they laughed and cried out, “We have you at last. Did you think we did not notice that you came here twice? We could not catch you then, but this third time you shall not get out again.”

But however much he begged for his life, in spite of everything that he said, they cut off his head.

Read this story very carefully and see if you can find its many deeply hidden meanings for the journey. What is this telling you about the path, the journey into the mountain, not only up and down it.

Remember that every character in the story is you. Every landscape and object in the story is a symbol of some aspect of you. All movement is talking about dynamics inside of you. All decisions are ones you have made. All relationships are ones you have internally. Every number means something. We enquire into the fairy tale as we would our own dream life. It is mythical and revealing of dynamics and processes within that are universal to all humans. This is the great appeal of fairy tales. What is it teaching us about ourselves?

The one teaching from this story that I will emphasize is that if we embark on this journey to “get something,” or to “avoid something,” you are not going to realize that the purpose of the journey has already been attained. You just have to **live in relationship to every aspect of yourself on the journey with love, with truth, with authenticity and honesty, with generosity and gratitude.** Nothing more is required. Then “Your mind is gold. Your heart is pearls. Your soul is diamonds. Your life is a priceless treasure.” ~Matshona Dhliwayo

“Chasing angels or fleeing demons, go to the mountains.”

~Jeffrey Rasley, Bringing Progress to Paradise: What I Got from Giving to a Mountain Village in Nepal