

Friday Morning Part I

[01:03:59]

>> So, Part Two. Deep breath. Hold silence of presence, meaning take the chant in. The chant is a practice, it's not kind of like a Girl Scout thing. It's a practice. It's a practice of stepping into the inside, in delight. And when you chant, you should be like total delight -- full pleasure, full delight dropped into the inside, and you kind of take it in.

So, don't lose it in a comment, like you kind of dissipate it with a little comment. It goes out. You take it in -- that's the practice. The Practice of Ecstatic Chant -- Rumi's core practice, or some form of this exact ecstatic chant, and you kind of breathe it in. When you're breathing the ecstasy, it kind of goes all through you. Ahhh.

One of the absolutely happiest things in my life is my little son, Zion, who's three years old, as Laurie can attest to, when he comes hangs with us, is ecstatic. He's just Ecstatic, Steve -- my son, Zion, he's just ecstatic. And when he was born, we said to the doctor -- I helped my good friend, Marianna, who's doing in vitro, I helped her have a baby. I only did that once, so, please, once is enough. But he's an awesome, awesome, awesome young man. He's three years old now. Can you believe he's three? Marianne was actually here doing yoga four years ago, right? She was pregnant. So, yoga worked. [laughter]. And she's doing an awesome job, raising Zion, and it was just one of those kind of great stories. She wanted to have a baby. She was doing in vitro. She was 42. It wasn't working. And I said to her, "Hey, listen. You know, Jewish genes, you know, what the hell? Don't do the incubator thing." So, we have this baby, and I was, of course -- you know, the idea was that she was going to raise the baby. Once the baby is born, you're like, "Oh my God." So, I'm very, very involved with Zion in kind of all ways, and his mother is like a super star. So, a Super Star Mom. But when he was first born, I just had one request. And Marianna is kind of, pretty much, kind of -- she's just got a very clear schedule for his life. I think he's supposed to have the first book in the next couple of years. We're not sure exactly what's going on there. But I said one thing, "As soon as he was born, I want him for the first two hours." So, the second he was born, I took him and gave him this chant, that we just did. And we spent the first two hours chanting. And we did ten chants, and we recorded them all. And just, those ten chants are his birth chants. And, now, whenever he's kind of finding like a little funky moment or something, and we'll go to the chant, and he'll just come right back to it. And it's just like unbelievably beautiful. He just, he kind of finds his way in those chants, and, then, each chant has a Torah to it, a teaching to it. And so, we recorded that week, the chants and the teachings and Marianna just kind of plays them to him, just to kind of have this kind of accompaniment in life.

So, chant walks with us. Ecstatic Chant is just a wonderful practice -- very different than Shikantaza. But it's also a meditative practice. Because on the outside, you can just think it's a fun thing to do. It's actually a practice. It's an Ecstatic Chant practice. And the idea is to actually let yourself fall in. So, I was looking for the inside of the chant, but I couldn't quite, right? And, then, Shelly helped us get -- and, then, we got it together. You're going to have to find your way in. And if you were watching what was happening, we were kind of -- notice that, we were trying to find our way in, and then, you could feel, we had found our way in. And you don't find your way in through volume or speed. You find your way in through finding your way in. I mean, you're inside of the chant, and it feels different. Then, it kind of becomes easeful. And what happens is, when you're chanting, just like when you're meditating,

your mind wanders. So, you can be doing Ecstatic Chanting, thinking about your bank account, easily. The same thing with meditation. So, the idea is the same thing with meditation, you've got to keep dropping in. That's the practice. The practice is always to keep bringing your attention back to center, letting yourself fall into the well. It's practice. So, that's the Ecstatic Chant practice.

And, again, for the whirling dervishes of Sufism, this was the core practice. Rumi's practice; **[Ephesus]*** practice. It wasn't sitting meditation. It was Ecstatic Chant, and that's what they did. That was the core practice, and, so, we'll come back to it. It's a little hard for me right now, Ecstatic Chant, but it's a beautiful practice and just awesome.

So, here we go. So, here's Part Two. Give me a time check. About 11:00, right?

>> 11:15

>> Perfect. Perfect. Can I borrow a watch? Can I borrow that? Thank you. How awesome is it, you're here, beyond. Pass those tissues back. Where did they go?

Okay. So, Part Two. Part Two is short. It's kind of Part Two of our symphony. Then, we're going to practice it, and we'll get to Part Three. Lunch is at what time? 1:00. Perfect. Perfect. Perfect. Awesome.

Let's introduce a word. No, let's begin someplace else. Let's begin with a website. There's a website called "PostSecret." Anyone familiar with it? PostSecret. So, PostSecret is a website that actually, one of our community, kind of Sangha Wisdom School people, Kristina Kincaid, introduced me to. We're actually learning a lot from it, because we're creating, as part of our new webplex at the Center, where it's going to go up in January, we're creating a set of websites, which are going to be called "Outrageous Love Letters and Outrageous Acts of Love," and we're trying to learn how to do it. So, we looked at this website, called "PostSecret," and PostSecret was put up by a guy, in D.C. -- a couple of people here from D.C. -- and went around handing out postcards, saying to people, "Send us your secret." And people started sending him secrets, of all kinds -- you know, Lions and Tigers and Bears, oh my. I mean, all kinds of secrets. And it became a very large website, a few books called "PostSecret," you know, a few websites, and it's become kind of a whole thing, where people are finding a place to share secrets.

Now, secrets are very funny. Secrets are something we have a very complex relationship with and, essentially, in Part Two this morning, which is Part Two of Pleasure -- that's where we are. So, I want everyone to know, kind of locate yourself in the Dharma, we're now in Part Two of Pleasure. Okay? So, in Part Two of Pleasure, we're going to be talking about a whole new symphonic move. We're beginning with secrets. Just kind of knowing where you are is everything. Okay? Secrets.

So, let me ask you a question. When you tell someone, "I want to share a secret with you," you tell them a secret, and they say, "I'm not going to tell anyone." What do they really mean? "I'm only going to tell three people. I'm not going to tell what it means -- it's kind of like your fingers are crossed. It's, "I'm not going to tell anyone...except for those three people that I tell all the secrets that people tell me, that I tell them I'm not going to tell anyone." So, the notion that secrets are kept is absurd. It just almost never happens. Now, sometimes, that's good; sometimes, that's bad.

I want to make a couple of distinctions, here. So, I want to distinguish between Secrets Sacred and Secrets Sordid. So, there's a negative secret -- a father is abusing his daughter and says, "Keep it a

secret.” That’s a secret that should be broken, obviously. But that’s using secrecy as a form, a tool of control and domination, in the worst sense of domination and in the worst sense of control. Not for the sake of the other’s need but the sake of the controller’s greed. So, we all agree, I think, here, that those secrets should be broken. Those are inappropriate secrets. Those are violations. But what happens is, in the New Age and Human Potential and Trauma Communities, that’s usually where we end the conversation on secrets. Secrets are Secrets Sordid.

As a matter of fact, the word “secrecy” itself, has come to be a bad word. And what’s the good word? Transparency. The vaunted ethic is transparency, and the bad thing is secrecy. And that’s true, insofar, as we’re talking about Secrets Sordid. In relationship to Secrets Sordid, the great liberal value correctly is transparency. However, and to the limitation of liberal thinking, not all secrets are sordid. Some secrets are sacred and we would call that “privacy.” And privacy, actually, is a very important ethic. So, I would imagine that everyone in this room has something that they want to hold privately, not because it’s sordid, but because it needs to be shared with the right person, in the right context, with the right depth of intimacy, with the right honoring. I mean, sharing it out of that context is actually a violation of your essence.

So, there’s a second kind of secret, which is Secret Sacred. Now, often, when you share with someone a secret, which is really a Secret Sacred, often that confidentiality is broken. Why do people break the confidentiality? And, again, I’m not talking about Secrets Sordid, that you have an obligation to report to Family Services -- Secrets Sordid. Because that kind of secret is a controlling dominator mechanism. But why do we break secrets? Why do so many people break -- and we’re going to come back to this, later, and Jeff and Shelly are going to guide us in an exercise to this or something like this, later this morning.

But why do people break Secrets Sacred? What happens? Why do people break secrets? And there’s some shame in this. This is a hard one to touch. So, I want to just put this in the space. I’m going to do a piece of Dharma, then, weave back to Jeff and Shelly and come back to this. Why do people break Secrets Sacred? Just quick popcorn -- anyone? Why? What happens? Anxiety fear, okay. Just put your name back in the room.

>> Chris.

>> Chris. Anxiety fear. Blowing up all pleasure caps this weekend. Anxiety fear. So, anxiety fear. Yeah, okay. What else?

>> To be better than them.

>> To be better than, because I’m holding information. I’ve got anxiety, and I don’t want to hold it. And, then -- put your name back in the room.

>> Peter.

>> Peter. It hasn’t changed since last night. You’re still in relationship to Pam. Everything’s good. Okay, I’m just checking in. I saw pictures of that place. It’s beautiful. Yeah, I got the book. Yeah, it’s awesome. It’s awesome. So, Peter says, “Well, it’s a form of power. I’ve got this secret, so I’m trading in the currency that I have.” Why else? There’s a key issue, and Burke talks about this, actually, someplace in *Rhetoric*. Go ahead. Heather, tell us your name.

>> Heather.

>> Go ahead.

>> Special.

>> Right, it's kind of related, Lynn, to what Peter's saying, "I'm special; I have this." Go ahead. Special, yes. Special. Put your name back in the room.

>> Laurie. Desire for connection.

>> Desire for connection. Okay, now watch for a second. Now, remember, Lynn talked earlier about kind of the experience of no connection. So, what happens -- I want to stay with Laurie for a second, and I want to kind of go in on this one. What happens when you share a secret? Find that moment. Just stay with us, right here, with Laurie. Find that moment of sharing a secret. What's your experience, when you're sharing a Secret Sacred?

>> It's juicy. It's a connection.

>> Yeah, it's a juicy connection. So, what are you getting, Julie? You're getting this hit of attention energy. You get this hit of attention energy. "I'm sharing in the secret. Do you know what Shaun told me about Brad? Wow." And, then, the person leans over, and you've got this power, and you're special; you're releasing any anxiety. And you're sharing, and it's juicy. And it creates this sense of intimacy, which is a kind of false intimacy, as Heather pointed to, and we'll come back to.

So, the reason people break secrets has to do with everything everybody said, but it all crystallizes, in how Laurie puts it together, which is, "I share a secret, because I get such a reward for sharing the secret. And in that moment, I get full attention. Full -- like the full, like, wow." And that's so seductive that most people can't resist it. Which is why -- and this is stunningly beautiful, in virtually every mystical system, to become an initiate into the system, you have to hold the esoteric knowledge. "Ecoteric" means secret. That's what the word means. So, you have to hold the secret knowledge. So, the ability to become an initiate in a mystical system is the ability to hold a secret. Why? So, people think, "Well, because I'm holding the secret."

No, it means you have enough internal center within yourself that you're not seduced -- you get that -- by an invitation to share. It's "I can actually locate myself in my own center. I'm an initiate. I'm the holder of the secret. I'm not seduced by a quick hit of what Heather correctly called, in our language, in World Spirituality, we call "Pseudo-Eros." And I want to get that distinction with you. Because, actually, what addiction is -- Part Two. And I want to introduce the word "eros," because eros and pleasure are very connected. Throughout the weekend, we're going to work with the word "pleasure," but I want to just put the word "eros" into the conversation, so it's going to be there, kind of in the backdrop.

So, what is eros? Eros is -- and we spent entire weekends on it, so I'm just going to spend a minute on it, now. But eros is -- it has kind of ten major characteristics. We're not going to go through them, but the four core ones are, you're on the inside, like you fall into the inside of a chant. Two is inner connectivity. You're connected. You feel the inner connectivity of the all with the all. Another name for that would be "homeless." So, your interiority. You're on the inside -- one. Inner connectivity or wholeness -- two. Three is, you feel the yearning force of being, moving through you, into the fullness

of desire. Not really sexual desire -- the sexual model is eros, we've talked about in this room before. It doesn't exhaust eros. So, the fullness of desire, evolutionary desire, yearning, moves through you.

And the fourth quality that I want to focus on right now is fullness of presence, which is one of the four invitations to the covenant. Presence. Now what does presence mean? Let's just stay with this. Presence means "I'm here." What does it mean, that "I'm here?" I'm here means that even when I hit a patch of emptiness, I won't go away. Okay? Now, you're always going to hit a patch of emptiness, you know what I'm saying? I don't mean emptiness in the Buddhist, meaning the emptiness which is full, sunyata; I mean straight emptiness. I'm using emptiness in the simple way. Everyone got that? Simple emptiness. So, here, Eric and I were present, then, something's going to be there, to eject you out of the Now. Then, you need to engage in the process of the Nowing and understand, what's the donkey smuggling that's happening, that's taken you out of the Now. But presence is essential. Presence is contrasted with emptiness.

So, I'm going to give you like a big Dharmic "wow," that takes you into the Now, which is life is what you do with your emptiness. Life is what you do with your emptiness. Let's just stay with it. I want to stay with the Dharma, for a second, because it's very subtle. So, what happens? So, what happens, all the time, is, we can't stay in the emptiness. And since we can't stay in the emptiness, we seek to avoid it. And that is called "a void dance." A void dance. So, we dance around the void. A void dance. We dance around the void. And when we dance around the void, we seek to either avoid the void -- I seek to avoid the void, sister; or I seek to fill the void. But since I'm in the emptiness, so there's no genuine eros there. So, when there's no eros -- and I'm not really there; I'm not really on the inside. I'm not in the inside of the chant. I'm not in the inside of the experience. I'm not experiencing the interconnectivity. And I'm not experiencing the fullness of presence. The yearning force of being is not moving through me.

How many people here have ever had an experience of sexual desire? Just check in. Just checking in. [laughter]. Now, when you were in the middle of the height and throw of your sexual desire, and call it the most positive sexual desire you've ever experienced, you with me? Can you locate that, everybody? Can everyone locate it? Everyone got it? Can you give it sound? No, no, just hold it there. We'll just leave it there for a second, okay? Now, when you're in the middle of like that, full-throated sexual desire, do you then ask yourself, "And what is the meaning of life? Well, but what's the meaning of life?" I don't think so. It's just not what's coming up. Why? Because you're there. It's not that you've answered the question; the question becomes meaningless. You haven't solved it. You haven't worked out a conceptual scheme. You're in; you're in full-throated desire. You're not saying, "Well, well, maybe Heidegger would really help." And you're not doing the principals of loving, and you're not doing the Dharma. You're there. That's the quality of eros. It's desire. It's inner connectivity. You're on the inside, and it's fullness of presence.

So, fullness of presence means you're inside; you're in the eros. When in the eros, you're there. But, then, you hit a patch of emptiness, of the blah; of the futility; of the disconnection. So, you make one of two moves. One is a void dance -- you try and dance around it. The second move, which often conflates with the first, is you try and fill it. But since you don't have any eros to fill it with, you fill it with pseudo-eros. And pseudo-eros is every form of addiction. And what addiction is, at its very core, is pseudo-eros. That's what it is. It looks like eros, but it's actually pseudo-eros.

Now, you might ask -- and if you don't, I'll help you with the question, because I want to answer it anyway, so, I'm going to ask it -- what's the difference? How do you distinguish them? There's about ten ways to distinguish them, and let's give you one. And everyone who's been in this room before knows the one -- aftertaste. Aftertaste. Aftertaste is a key way to distinguish between eros and pseudo-eros. When you're in the middle of a great sexual experience that you think is great, it's often hard to distinguish, right in the middle, but aftertaste tells you for sure what was going on. Now, sometimes, your aftertaste is distorted, because you can't get into the Now, because you're donkey smuggling. But if you can actually get into the Now and get a genuine hit of the aftertaste -- or make it simpler.

Just take eating Baby Ruth bars, which is one of my favorite examples. I happen to like Baby Ruth bars. They're fantastic. It used to be simple, Paul. We would go into the neighborhood store; we'd want a candy bar. And I've said before -- and I repeat it, just because it's always traumatic to me. It would be easy for you to pick a candy bar. There's 3 Musketeers, Butterfingers, Baby Ruth, a Mars Bar, a simple Nestle's bar -- there wasn't Nestle's Crunch. It was like simple -- it was one Nestle's bar. It was easy. You wanted tea; you got Lipton fucking tea. You knew what tea was. It wasn't hard. Life was navigable, at one point in history. Today, you go into a restaurant, you know, you got tea. And like this huge decision you need to make, with enormous discernment. Am I right? Try to buy a candy bar -- there's 14,000 brands of a candy bar. How are you supposed to know which one to buy? And each one is telling you that if you eat me, you're going to feel better. It's very, very confusing. So, I'm working with that. If anyone else is, we can have like a 12-step group of some kind, to kind of work with this.

But Baby Ruth bars, as good as they are, Eric, are not eros. They're pseudo-eros. How do you know? Aftertaste. And it's while you're eating the Baby Ruth bar, it's such an ecstatic experience. Whatever your favorite bar is, it's just fantastic. Like the issues of the world have receded for a moment. You're in the Baby Ruth bar. You're present with it. It's kind of crunching in your mouth and just, like, it's good. It's good. And, then, you're done. You kind of go, "Should I have eaten that? Should I not have eaten that? The taste is sort of funny." So, what I used to do, to deal with that was I would eat another one. It seemed to me like the most appropriate solution to the problem. And I'd usually get to about three, which is where I stopped, and then, I'd say, okay, then, for the next like ten hours, I'd actually feel bad. And for the next week, I'd feel kind of shamed, that I actually had the Baby Ruth bars, because, like, why was I having those Baby Ruth bars? And, then, I'd kind of feel like, "Really?"

And it's this whole -- that's aftertaste. So, aftertaste always tell you what's happened. There's a beautiful text, Chris, in the old Sacred Texts, when Moses wants to see God, and the text says, **[01:26:55*]**, "You'll see me from behind." So, the mystics read it as, "What does it mean, you'll see me from behind? Aftertaste." A beautiful reading, right? Aftertaste. How do you feel afterwards? Now, again, your aftertaste can get distorted by ego. You've got to clarify your ability to get a clear aftertaste. But aftertaste gives you a sense of where you were. Eros always leaves a beautiful aftertaste. Pseudo-eros leaves you with a very funky, complicated bad feeling. Peter?

>> Does agape ever come into this?

>> Yes. I would just say it in one sentence -- in one sentence. This is a big conversation, so I'm not going to go down that beautiful rabbit hole. I don't mean "rabbit hole" as a negative. I would say in one sentence, and you'll get this -- the entire distinction between eros and agape is routed in a Christian disembodiment. I reject the entire distinction, in toto. The entire conversation of eros and agape, I think

is routed in a fallacy, which is utterly not true. It's rooted and based in a negative read of the body. Since there's a negative read of the body, we have to have a form of kind of pleasure of giving, of love, which is not eros. But it's all based on that platonic assumption. And the entire distinction -- I've written and talked about this, and I talked to about it with Christian Theologians in big, public churches. And the entire distinction of eros and agape, I think we have to delete. I think it's a bad distinction, which does us an enormous disservice. No, thank you for raising that. That's a big deal. That's a big deal. So, whoever got that, got that. Whoever didn't, didn't. But that's a big deal. So, now, let's just stay with this for a second. Let's just kind of stay with this Dharma, and, then, we're going to work it.

Gossip is the same deal -- same deal with gossip, we talked about last night. So, you come in and you want to create, you know, kind of, "I want to talk," which we never get to do, unless we're in, like, God knows, Maui, ten years ago. But we kind of occasionally read things in emails, and we really want to sit and talk. But let's say, we just don't know how to do it. It's just like, "Oh, God," so, we just start talking about someone else. "Let's talk about Nance. Her new hair cut -- really? Why did she get that new haircut, man? She should grow her hair long. Really? Is Nance having an affair with John Tarza? Really? Did you hear that going around? I heard like a rumor. Did you see they were walking last night? Did you see that last night? Did you notice that?" Anyone see that, by the way? No, no. Sorry, but you know how that works. I just made that up -- maybe. Maybe I didn't. Did I? No. I didn't. Who knows? Anyways, but that's how it works, right? I did just make that up, by the way. And that's what we do, is we catch that interest -- and even though we're all joking -- it's me and Nance, actually. But, in other words, the deal is it's a wild thing.

In other words, if we can't make contact, Kai and I, what we'll do is -- it means we can't find each other in eros. And eros has nothing to do with sexuality. It means it's genuine contact. Contact is the word. We can't make contact. What we'll do is, we'll talk about a third person, because by placing the third person outside of the circle of eros, it gives us an illusion that we're on the inside of the circle. So, being on the inside of the circle is eros. The illusion of being on the inside of the circle, by placing someone on the outside, is pseudo-eros. So, gossiping is a form of addiction, which is why the average person gossips about 36 times in a day, all the time. It's a constant addiction, because what it does, is it helps us deal with the numbness of not feeling like we're on the inside -- what Lynn called "the nothing, the blah." You're using the word "nothing," like I'm using the word "emptiness." Same word. So, I deal with it by just little, casual hits of talking about someone else. And, again, I'm not talking about kind of mega-slander. You know what I mean? I'm just talking about the casual -- Dan, it's so fucking destructive. It's so fucking destructive.

And the way you built a Sangha is by direct counter. You just talk about people's gorgeousness. But not in a way that's going to invite someone to say, "No," which is a clever strategy for slander. You're clever, you say, "Ahh," and you know, "No, no, no, not really." You've got to watch for your -- you know, the ego is very clever, and it's strategy is for gossip, so that when you genuinely -- the Sangha is about genuinely finding each other's beauty. Genuine. And we're all artists, in that deep way, that we're actually creating each other's beauty. We're an Edah, meaning community; meaning witness. Community, we said last night, a crucible for witnessing. When you can't find genuine eros, you always find pseudo-eros.

Now, how many people have ever done the spiritual practice of fasting? Fasting? Okay, great. So, when you fast -- so, then, everyone's going to recognize this. When you fast, what happens is -- I'll just give you kind of my example, but it's the same -- everyone can find the experience. I'm going to go just a few more minutes, then, I want to go to the exercise. But I want everyone to get this Dharma.

So, Part Two of the Dharma is addiction is pseudo-eros. Let's add a sentence. Addiction is the inability to stay in the emptiness. That's the sentence. Now, friends, that took me twenty fucking years to say. So, it's a big sentence, and if you're really in the field, you'll get that's a big sentence. Others are just like, "Oh, whatever." It's a big deal. It's an inability to stay in the hole. So, therefore, the way through addiction is really simple. Stay in the emptiness. Stay in the whole. And when, Mary Ann, you stay in the hole -- when you stay in the hole, it fills up. And it fills up, beloved, with your Unique Self, eventually. Now, you need the right conditions. You need to be in the right city. If you're in the wrong city, you need to move cities. You need to do the work. You need to set yourself up in the best context. And I'm not just saying this, but, basically, you stay in. You don't a void dance. You actually stay in the void, and, literally, by sitting in the void and a willingness to bear what's displeasing in yourself.

I want to get that sentence -- a willingness to bear which you experience as displeasing in yourself. Just bear it and experience yourself as being held. And we'll get to this later. You can't just bear what's displeasing to yourself, if you're not held. So, if I was deep into Christ consciousness, I would say, "Bear what's displeasing to yourself, in the arms of Christ." If I was a meditator, I would say, "When you meditate, have your own big heart, big mind that lives in you, hold you, in meditation." That's one of the ways I want to teach people to meditate. When you meditate, you actually access big heart and big mind in yourself, holding you. The Goddess is holding you. The Mother is holding you. Reality, the love intelligence of reality, is holding you. But you're actually held by reality. You can bear what's displeasing to yourself, so that you don't have to fill up the hole. You don't have to fill up the hole with pseudo-eros. You just stay in it." And, actually, my friends -- and you'll all recognize this. I certainly do -- it's the first 15 minutes, where the whole game is. The whole game is the first 15 minutes. And if you can just like stop -- just stop. Stop and just sit -- literally, nothing else, just sit. Take a position, either chant or sit and just stay in it. What happens is the hole always fills up with the eros of yourself. But if you can't stay in the hole, you can't mind the gap, then you fall in, and you've got to devour something, which is actually devouring you. You go to feast, but you're actually being feasted upon. And that's what Buddhism called the "Hungry Ghosts." Those are the Hungry Ghosts.

And, as you can see, I'm weaving -- as I promised last night -- I'm weaving all sorts of Dharmas into new sentences. So, when I say, "Buddhism called these the "Hungry Ghosts," Buddhism didn't have all the pieces we just did. I'm weaving pieces of Dharma into a new Dharma. That's what the Hungry Ghosts means. You think you're feasting; you're being feasted upon. You think you're devouring; you're being devoured. So, it's about staying in.

There's a beautiful text. You remember, *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*? Is that on Broadway anymore, any place? How many people ever saw that? That dates us all. How many people know somebody who saw it? We're close enough. So, it's about the Joseph story. Joseph and his brothers? Remember that story, his brothers sell him. They throw him in a pit, and he's got a coat of many colors. They're jealous of him. His father, Jacob, gave him a coat of many colors. They're unhappy about it. Remember, Mary Ann, you're my biblical scholar, here, along with being a Thomas

Hanna scholar. And I have the idea that I've owed you for three weeks, ready for you, here. But I'm not going to give it to you right now. I know, I know, I know, but you're staying in, that's good.

So, Joseph, my Biblical scholar -- and kind of, we're going to sit into it. So, Joseph is thrown into a pit. And the description of the pit -- the pit is described when Joseph was thrown in. His brothers are jealous of him. They throw him into a pit, they take off the coat of many colors, and they want to kill him, essentially. In the end, they sell him to Egypt. So, here's the description. I'm going to invite everyone, just for one second, who's laying down, just to sit up. Just kind of sit up. You know, posture matters. Just kind of find your -- do you feel a difference? Just the whole room shifted. Did you feel that shift? As we kind of move towards the exercise, kind of sit and find the place.

So, here's the reading. It's beautiful. It reads, **[01:37:25*]** - the pit was empty. This is the pit that Joseph was thrown in. **[01:37:31*]** -- it had no water. The pit was empty. Of course, it had no water. Why did you need to tell me it had no water? There's never a redundancy in a Sacred Text like that. So, the master say, **[01:37:45*]** - It didn't have water; it had snakes and scorpions. So, you get how a **[01:37:59*]** is read? So, Joseph is thrown into a pit. The text reads, "The pit was empty; it had no water." Well, if the pit's empty, of course, it has no water, meaning there's a **[01:38:15*]** invitation to kind of a deeper reality consideration. So, the masters say, "The pit was empty, empty of water; snakes and scorpions, it had." Water is pleasure; is eros. Water is pleasure and eros. The pit's empty; it has no water; it has no eros; it has no pleasure. But if it has no eros, it's going to have snakes and scorpions; it's going to have pseudo-eros. There's no possibility of being empty. That doesn't exist. So, either you're going to fill it with eros, or it's going to be filled with snakes and scorpions, which is every form of addiction -- every form of pseudo-eros.

So, the way to get to the eros is -- it's what Susan was pointing to -- you've got to learn practices to stay in the Now. Stay in it. And when you stay in, and you can inhibit the process of a void dance, through presence in the hole, and, then, something actually happens. And I'll give you the last example, and, then, we'll close. Okay, and we'll close into Jeff and Shelly. And we'll kind of take this into our bodies and into practice.

So, when I was fasting -- there's five fast days in my lineage, and I practice, as Jeff said, what we call the World Spirituality Lineage, and God willing, very soon, we're going to have a book which is about World Spirituality practices. We're looking forward to that book. I'm working on it with Tom. He has this strange idea that you should make a living at the same time and run his company and -- all of these, which are not understandable to me, but he's doing these things. But, somewhere, along the way -- and he's making gorgeous songs, which I heard one of yesterday. But we're going to have, actually, a very, very beautiful World Spirituality practice book, that's actually, I'd say, halfway done -- significantly, maybe more. It's a beautiful book, based on a "Wake Up, Grow Up, Show Up, Open Up," with practices in each section, to really put into the world, how do you do this World Spirituality practice? How is it done? And it's going to be more like a catalogue. Like, who remembers -- and we're going to date ourselves -- remember the "Whole Earth Catalog?" Yes, "Whole Earth Catalog". So, this is going to be kind of like the "Whole Earth Catalog." "The Whole Earth Catalog" is the model of it. It's a World Spirituality practice.

So, one of the practices is fasting. So, what do you do when you fast? So, I remember fasting. You had these five fast days a year, so I'd practice, both in World Spirituality, and I practiced, also, in my native

lineage. So, in this native lineage, there's a fast day in which you're not kind of in, kind of Temple consciousness, but you're kind of doing your stuff, but you're also fasting. So, I'm sitting, fasting. It's like ten in the morning, and you're not really supposed to be hungry in a fast at ten in the morning. This is a fast that you didn't fast the night before, so it started just in the morning. [laughter]. I often don't have breakfast. There's no particular reason to be hungry. And I tell you what, and I'm feeling like, "Chocolate-covered raisins; chocolate-covered raisins." And I reach for chocolate-covered raisins, and I go, "No, it's a fast day." Right? And, then, I kind of just stopped for a second. And this is like thirty years ago, and I'm like -- and the only real source of Dharma is yourself. You've got to always find it in you. But, otherwise, it's not alive, and it feels like it's not. That's why most Dharmas do not feel like living, because most teachers read Dharma in books. The only place you can really find Dharma is just in your -- it's always there. It's always, every second, happening. So, I'm like, "Why do I want fucking chocolate-covered raisins? I don't even like them that much. I have this craving..." Literally, they call an addiction a craving? It was like an intense craving for chocolate-covered raisins.

So, I sit in it. I realized, "Uh-ha!" It was like so patently obvious, I felt -- like a blithering idiot that I was, for not getting it. I was sitting there reading an article in a magazine called "Tradition," which was the kind of Orthodox publication, and someone who had come to a bunch of talks I had given, had published on the topic, clearly influenced by the talks, something I hadn't gotten to publish yet. I had it formulated. I kind of felt like he kind of ripped it off. It was kind of annoying to me in that point in life. It was like, "I should have published it myself and why am I building this organization" and the whole thing. But, of course, none of that was conscious, because my conscious vision of myself was I was being very generous to him. Here he was, at the lectures. It's so sweet that he took this material and got it published in the world, and I'm so glad that he did. It occurred to me what had happened. And I explained to myself how generous and loving I was to the person, for having published this piece that I had gone through. And I had kind of completely put into shadow my utter fury for the fucker, for taking my material and fucking publishing it, without even calling me or mentioning me. So, this was thirty years ago, and that's kind of the mode -- you're kind of 20-whatever, and you're kind of like -- because I had put into shadow my anger at it -- so that kind of went into shadow.

But what happens was, in order to cover it and keep it in shadow, this craving to fill the empty moment or the nothing moment or the disconnected moment kind of rises up, and I want chocolate-covered raisins. Now, had I not been fasting, what would I have done? I would have reached for the chocolate-covered raisins, gobbled down a box, and be done with. And never actually gotten to the realization of what's actually happening, and my own positive self-interpretation of that time, as being magnificent, generous and kind -- "and I'm delighted that you published this paper, because, of course, it just needs to get into the world," would have remained in my 22-year-old mind, and I would have actually not known what was going on. Which means that: A.) I could have never gotten into real generosity. I would have stayed in a kind of pseudo-generosity. And it would have just built and festered in some way and become part of some sort of false self.

But the process of fasting inhibited the pseudo-eros process. That's what fasting does. What fasting is about is not abstinence. The process of fasting is to inhibit the pseudo-eros process, so that, when you reach for Eros, you do sexual fasting; you do food fasting; you fast from anything which can give you a quick, pseudo-eros hit, in order to become aware of how you're deploying it. So, you don't fast because

food is bad, you fast, because you want to re-engage food as eros and not as pseudo-eros. You follow? You need an inhibitor mechanism. That's what fasting is. So, fasting is a form of mindfulness, essentially. Fasting is a form of mindfulness that allows you -- so, let's say you're engaging in tantric practice. You should do a tantric practice for three months, then you should stop it for three months. And, so, that's going to become habit, so you can actually see what's happening. You can experience the process, in a more awake, alive way. So, you've always got to watch this play of eros and pseudo-eros.

Here's the last thing. Remember the cherubs? I'd say three-quarters of the room remembers the cherubs, right? A show of hand, on cherubs? Yeah, okay. So, there's two cherubs, Chris, which we won't go into now, but in the Ark of the Covenant -- *Raiders of the Lost Ark*; *Indian Jones* -- that Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem? In the Ark of the Covenant, above the Ark, there are two cherubs, who are sexually inter-twisted. Lynn and I spent last weekend talking about this, in some way or the other. And those two cherubs are sexually inter-twisted, not because the Temple is about sex. The Temple is about eros, and the sexual models eros. But for our purposes, we want just one sentence, which is the sentence, here, and like for me, a sentence is worth being born for. It's so beautiful. So, the voice of God -- remember, Lynn, we said last week, we're going to add a whole new piece, here. The voice of God speaks from between the two cherubs. **[01:44:51*]**. And Gerry said to me, by the way, he said he's so happy that Hebrew verses are being spoken in Shalom. He's like, "Oh, good, we have Scripture on this." So, the text is, "I will speak to you from between the two cherubs." So, the voice of Spirit speaks from between the two sexually inter-twisted cherubs. And we're not going to go into the sex-eros thing, because that's not our topic. But just the sentence, "The sexual models eros." So, now, the word, in Hebrew, is "The voice of the Divine speaks me bein, from the empty space between the cherubs." Now, how beautiful is that? Meaning -- so the word "bein," Eric, is the empty space between the cherubs. So, what happens? In the emptiness, you see it? If you stay in the emptiness -- the voice doesn't speak from the cherubs. It speaks from the emptiness in between. You stay in the emptiness, and from the emptiness, the voice emerges. It's like, "Wow."

Now, the word "bein" in Hebrew, has two meanings: the empty space in between and binah -- and binah is wisdom. Binah -- wisdom. And binah is the **[01:46:08]** in Aramaic, the upper Goddess; the feminine Goddess Divine; the divine feminine. So, people talk so much about the Divine Feminine, but they have no clue what it is. They just throw it onto everything -- the Divine Feminine. The Divine Feminine is the Wisdom that comes from staying in the emptiness. That's the Divine Feminine.

The Divine Master is something else. The Divine Master is in the fullness, analyzing, creating categories, schemes, twenty faces, thirty -- then, when we chant, this space between the words and the Dharma is the Divine Feminine. The words are the Divine Masculine. Like, right now, that space between the words, that's the Divine Feminine. That's **[01:47:05*]**. I'll speak to you, me bein, from the between -- the empty space in-between.

Now, all of this is just words, Holy words; framework words; Dharmic words. And words create explosions -- that's good -- and everything finds its way. Dharma is like, "Wow." And it's in everything. It's in everything. And let that Holy breaking be a breaking open in us. The word for "breaking" in Hebrew is shever, and shever has two meanings. Shever is breaking and shever is sustenance. **[01:48:08*]** There's nourishment; there's sustenance in Egypt. So, in the cabalistic image, there's the

breaking of the vessels, but it's the sustenance that comes from breaking.

Something is broken -- there's nothing more whole than a broken heart. And the way you get to the wholeness of the broken heart -- and the physical world invites our Dharma, because it's all in one, in the Holy of Holies. The way you get to it is, something breaks. When something breaks, you seek to cover it and close it and fill it with pseudo-eros. But if you stay in the breaking, when it breaks, it's open. It's empty -- then, there's nothing more whole than a broken heart. And the Sacred Text reads, "And let these words be on your heart," the Book of Deuteronomy. We have Scripture on this. Let these words be on your heart. So, Augustine, the great Christian teacher says, "Why should they be on your heart? Shouldn't they be in your heart?" So, Augustine says, "Only when your heart breaks open, do they fall in your heart." That's what it means to stay in the emptiness.

So, all of this is just words, until we learn it in the stories of our own lives. So, Jeff and Shelly, we worked together last night, and they're going to bring us a way of just feeling this, knowing this in the first person. So, my suggestion is, we take, right now -- it's now 11:58. What we're going to try and do is, is to really hold the practice. We're going to take a ten minute break, and we're going to ask everyone to take this ten minute break in the silence of presence. So, in the break, we're in practice, as if we were at a sitting meditation, because we're in a meditative retreat. So, we're going to take the break in silence of presence. We'll start again at 12:10, and we'll just kind of stay in the hole, and let it kind of fill up, in the break.

Amen. Have a beautiful break.