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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE DEVOTIONALLY LIVED LIFE

### DEVOTIONAL LIVING

This is a handbook for busy people. I expect most of us are working to earn money. Those of us who do not have to earn their daily bread are, in great majority, still maximally busy. I know of no one in my own personal life, of any age, who is able to be vertical and active in the normal sense, who is not wedging into her life and days as much as she can. Speculation that it is the information age, the computer and humming modem, fax, cellphone and other electronic assistants that are intensifying our working days is likely substantively correct: we are wired into and available to each other in a way no group of people on Earth before us has been. Since fourth density is an environment of groups working to increase harmony and pursue common goals, this communications network is a bit like training wheels for the upcoming density of love.

This handbook is for people who are willing to work with ideas about what point of view we wish to use in order to see our world more deeply and clearly. Perhaps we are physically better set up now to interact and network than we ever have been, but until we transcend the usual worldly attitudes towards others and towards goals of rank and status, we will be unable to find our way to devotional living in the midst of the rush of noonday life. We will be forever stuck on one thorn or another of the outer world and its catalyst. The beginning of devotional living is the decision to attempt, in each circumstance in which we are concerned, to live a life based on faith instead of fear: desire, will and hope instead of details, facts and personalities.

The first vocation of each of you, by your very nature, is the vocation of living a life of devotion and faith. In this way, the deepest portion of your true nature is also the basic portion of the outer experience. When this attitude of mind, this bias or prejudice, shall we say, is realized within as a true desire, that which is within you of love has, for the first time, a voice. That voice is a voice which speaks in silence.<sup>1</sup>

The silent witness of a life lived by faith seems something that would not show itself to the world. Often, it does not, in any obvious way. But the gift of each day's living of such a life is inestimable. It is never an easy thing for us to move beyond the outer setting and structure of a difficult situation and

find the aspect of it in which the sacred nature of existence and the open-hearted love of our essential self can work its magic upon the outer picture. It requires a dedication of the self, a resolve of will, a persistence of effort: a choice, in short, to claim a degree of mastery over the outer world.

An attitude is only one word, yet this attitude is the key to the spiritual devotional life, for all things are sacred to the one who has the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the heart to understand.<sup>2</sup>

The model for the devotional life used to be retreat. Even as recently as five years ago, I was still finding the time to go into spiritual retreat once a year. It was a rush to clear the weekend, but I felt it to be worth it to stop completely and rest in spirit for just a few days. However, our group retreat died for lack of attendees. Even though some few people in transition and inspiration find the time still for all sorts of transformative workshops, in the usual run of things we are simply too overlaid with Atlas' load to shrug it off and go into retreat for the weekend. We shall have to do this retreating without retreat, in the context of our everyday life. This means that if we choose to live a devotional life, we will be living a multi-layered existence.

It is the burden and the glory of those who do live a religious, spiritual or devotional life to live on two levels at once, for the level of the outer world is, indeed, the either/or of service to self or service to others and the dynamics of that life are unforgiving. Yet still, within these outer appearances lies an inner reality which only the heart of humankind can know or experience.<sup>3</sup>

I trust that we are aware of how tricky a *beau geste* this two-layered living is! Remaining aware of the salient outer details and functioning competently on that level, and at the same time living by spiritual and ethical principles and the invocation on a constant basis of open-hearted love's clear path through our energy system, is most subtle work. Seeing others as souls when they are such efficient mirrors for catalytic action is a powerfully difficult challenge.

Because one needs to live that which one has learned, it is most often the case that the one who too quickly undertakes the higher spiritual, almost discarnate skills of devotion, may well have been leaving behind a neglected body, an unloved body, and without the knowledge to do any other, the neglect of the spirit child within, which was born in each entity when each entity first chose to seek the truth with all of his heart.<sup>4</sup>

This willingness to heal and accept our child within is essential if we wish to release ourselves into the open heart in a safe and confident way. If we think of the spiritual self within as being born when we awaken within incarnation to our spiritual identity, and gradually maturing as we work on our selves, our attitudes and emotions, we can see that this inner spiritual child will need continuing help. Every time we get off-balance because of the catalyst of living, we will be vulnerable to being pulled off our center of love within the open heart, and into the wilderness of the chaotic outer picture. Then our insecurities will surface, letting us know just what work we do have to do right now with that inner child. Perhaps, in the rush of action, we cannot make the time for this work at the exact moment we generate the situation and receive catalyst, but each day finally ends, and we can promise ourselves to reflect and work on what has occurred as we relax and get ready to rest for the night. As always, my chief recommendation in this regard is some regularized form of meditation, contemplation or prayer.

We encourage each so to arrange the daily habits that the center of being is given respect and pride of place within the daily life. As always, we suggest a daily meditation, a turning in and out of season towards that infinity which is the unarticulated love of the one infinite Creator. The challenge for each wanderer is to be able to dwell in this particular illusion, to enter fully into the processes of becoming a transformation yet remain at the center of being, consciously turning again and again to love itself.<sup>5</sup>

The devotion inherent in the desire to turn to pure love is powerful, and I encourage us to hone that desire to rest in the open heart, at the same time that I caution us against becoming so focused upon our will and desire to serve and to love that we gain too great a sense of the goodness of our efforts and ourselves, and end up feeling prideful about our walk. This sets us up to defend the self. This is a very easy error to make:

As long as you think that you have a self that you need to defend, you shall be working with spiritual pride, and so entities for the most part are working with this. No matter how persistently, purely and devotionally you have sought year after year, yet still there is the sense of: "I" am searching, "I" am looking, "I" am seeking to become the best that "I" can. Conversely, we have found that coming into a fuller awareness of self is actually a process of subtraction, simplification and elimination of things from the defended self until finally the self is empty and the barriers are down.<sup>6</sup>

In my own life, I have found this to be very true. Gradually, there is less that catches me in the net of contraction and fear. Little by little, I find myself listening as well as defending. One day, I would like to see all defenses gone, and the need only to love, accept and forgive. It is a goal I shall probably not meet within this incarnation, yet every tiny drop of fear and tightness that falls away from me feels so wonderfully light and roomy that the quest to let go of more draws me endlessly. Certainly, one key to allowing this gradual release from fear to take place is staying in the present moment:

Yesterday's change is moving away behind you, tomorrow's change is not imagined. You need only focus upon the present moment as you perceive it.<sup>7</sup>

Focusing upon the present moment is not encouraged in this society, and to begin to do so constitutes a major change in one's perceptual structure and priority of thought and catalyst awareness. For one thing, we are not encouraged to be this fastidious about our thoughts and motivations, but only about our actions. For another, we are taught to seek to reduce discomfort, yet major changes constitute, for most people, enhanced levels of discomfort. Choosing to live devotionally will not simplify our lives in the sense of making them more comfortable; more joyful, yes; more peaceful, yes; but more comfortable, not at all. We will find ourselves transforming, if we live in the present moment and the open heart at all frequently, in many ways, on various levels, at accelerated rates. It is a complex phenomenon, and the process engenders continuing feelings of being athwart of the society and, often, of parts of ourselves.

Each will be self-disappointed many times. We encourage each to consider that this, too, is a lovely portion of a process by which change within is achieved. Some things that were priorities will be lost; and as the heart and mind change their habits, that which is old and stale must fall away. This is perceived as painful. Consequently, what we are saying is that along with the flow of living life cooperatively with destiny, there is a continuing discomfort which comes from changing faster than other entities because that is what you wish to do. However, it is a simple choice to make for most who prefer being awake and in the conscious presence of the Infinite to being those who are asleep in a dream within the dream of incarnation itself, and do not ask themselves to do aught except flow along the lines of the society.<sup>8</sup>

For most wanderers, there is no hope of flowing along the lines of society. We have been unsuccessful, at least in part, at doing that. We have sometimes felt ourselves to be outsiders, our thoughts a little different from the

rest of society. Our alienated mindset, whether because of ET origins or because of our awakening to our spiritual identity as Earth natives, takes us to a realm where being an unquestioning and unresisting member of our culture is not an option. I believe that for most of us, the choice to live devotionally, to move into the open heart and its processes, is our one good opportunity to develop an acceptable and bearable life on Earth.

## DEDICATING THE SELF

Deciding to live a devotional life is an immense, life-changing commitment. In 1968, Don Elkins asked me to undertake to set up for him and run a household which was intended to be a spiritually based community of souls whose values and ideals coincided, and whose service seemed to be better offered as a group. At that time, I had a lucid dream in which Don, as captain of a canal boat, took me on board and asked me if I was sure I wished to be with him. "If you remain aboard this boat," he said in the dream, "you shall never see dry land again." I took this advice to heart, which was a good idea, since it was so utterly true. The degree to which we at L/L Research have been able to move actively into physical community has been variable. However, the ability to be a lighthouse and a spiritual community in the metaphysical sense (not implying physical nearness of the members) has moved from strength to strength as more and more people have become aware of and at home in our work. My life has changed completely since that first promise to Don. I regret not one whit of all of it. And it started with a conscious dedication of myself and everything I was to a life of faith and service.

The continuing beyond confusion, beyond distraction, beyond the difficulties, is much likened to the tempering of the metal in a tool that gives it strength, burnishing it that it might shine brightly and continue in its service with a renewed strength because of the difficulty, confusion and so forth. Thus, as you see the difficulty in motivating yourself to complete your meditations, this in itself is likened to a meditation where the focus falters and moves from the one point so that it must again be returned with patience and love to that one point. As you continue to accept the difficult portions of your journey and of your practices, you will find that there is an underlying strength that you build. To persevere and persevere and persevere is perhaps the most common and at times difficult portion of any seeker's journey, yet to be

aware that such is occurring within your own experience is an illustration of your own dedication upon another level.<sup>9</sup>

I do not wish to sugarcoat this element of difficulty in dedicating the self to the “great work,” not either the first time, nor any time thereafter. Whether we are having trouble being faithful with meditations or with any other aspect of our spiritual practice, we will experience negative emotions. The dynamic common to most difficulties in dedicating the self to love is substantial frustration:

Each catalyst, each experience, each event within your illusion has the ability to temper the heart of the seeker, shall we say, the will of the seeker, the faith of the seeker. There is within frustration an inevitable rededication of the self to seeking, for the temptation is to stop, to quit, to rest, to have done with it.<sup>10</sup>

It is going against the grain of cultural thinking to see in frustration and trials the refining fire of a friendly and helpful force. Yet this way of seeing and validating the inevitable movements between the open heart and the defended heart is correct, in my opinion, hard as it may be at first. Those of Q’uo say:

However well or poorly you may proceed at each moment that you experience in a conscious fashion, you try, you give, you offer in every instance of opportunity, and although you shall not fully succeed at all times or even in a majority of your attempts, it is the perseverance, the dedication, the continual reminders that you see about you and that you give to yourself, then, that are the refining qualities of the fire of experience that is yours within your evolution. Seeing but glimpses of the one wishing to know more purely, sharing but partially, becoming weary with effort, pulling together the desire again and again and again, it is this desire that is your most honored ally upon this journey.<sup>11</sup>

The dedication of the self, and the continuing affirmations of this choice of how to live, are indeed honored allies on this journey of love and service. Talking about one of the outer gifts, the Latwii say:

What matters, my friends, is that in whatever service you are attempting to perform, there lies beneath the surface an inner dedication that is not a veneer which washes away with constant use nor is rubbed away with idle chatter and stray thoughts, but instead remains, a kind of inner lodestar.<sup>12</sup>

Following this lodestar of dedication of self, we are brought safely into a way of thinking about our experiences and life that allows us the most generous amount of freedom in working with ourselves, our catalyst and our destiny. To me, it is very absorbing to look into the present moments as they pass, seeing the love within them, seeing the rifts and inconsistencies of thought, seeing the whole spectrum of our spiritual practice. It can make us over-earnest.

We do not wish to unbalance your lives as you ponder the mysteries of service, for indeed very often the greatest service you can offer another is your own smile, your own light word, your own cheerful touch.

Therefore, let your dedication be careful and deep. But do not forget to let the sunshine flow through all your thinking, and lighten it that your service may be pleasant and of good cheer. For it is with those about you that you shall wend your way as pilgrims. It is with those about you that the ever-changing present will come. Therefore, my friends, let your souls be merry and glad together, that in loving the one infinite Creator, you may love each other with the gentleness and forbearance requisite for each unique being in your life.<sup>13</sup>

## FORMING A RULE OF LIFE

When I was a child being taught in Episcopalian Sunday school, I encountered the monastic concept of having a rule of life, and was immediately drawn to it. The concept follows the obsolete meaning of the word, “rule,” as a way of life or behavior. It fired my imagination to think of my whole life as a piece of art, a tapestry that I could create out of myself, my choices, the way I lived my life. The most basic elements on the list for forming a rule were poverty, chastity and obedience. In addition, there were devotional choices: the number of church services attended, prayers said, altar visits kept and so on. The narrowness of these choices did not altogether appeal to me, but the general concept so fired my imagination and nature that I began what has been a lifelong search for and gradual immersion in a rule of life that satisfies me. Along the way, I came to feel that all the elements of my life are equally sacred. Consequently, I have learned to include every chore and duty that I have in this rule of life I keep for myself.

Addressing the poverty issue, my solution was to choose not to work for a paycheck, but from love of the work. So far, this has been possible. I have no idea whether the future holds such pleasant pastures as the “good work” of my choice. If not, I shall work at what I can with joy in doing the job well.

In terms of chastity, I determined, immediately upon being abandoned at the altar by my first love, no longer a virgin, that I would need to be creative with expressing the quality of chastity. My solution is the relative chastity and fidelity of a mated relationship. In my current marriage, my husband and I have been faithful to each other for two decades. It may be the times we live in, but this form of chastity seems to me to be a genuine one, expressing as it does the willingness to allow whatever comes within the relationship to be “enough.”

Obedience is the most thorny issue of the three, I feel, for the question remains: to whom or to what is one to be obedient? For myself, I have chosen to obey my husband when there is a need to act and a settled disagreement lies between us, and to obey my deepest heart's dictates and guidance in all else. Although I often experience a subjective feeling of failure at various portions of my efforts to serve and learn, I sense also that feeling of rest which a willingness to surrender to the highest point of view offers.

Devotions or services are an element of many rules of life. My husband and I begin each day with a devotional offering. We have also created a program of meditative physical exercise for our noontide service, and we take the time to do our routine together, stretching, walking and exercising and sharing a bit of silence, every day. We end our days together by gently talking through our issues *du jour* and doing balancing work before closing with The Lord's Prayer at bedtime. Weekly, we open the house to meditation and channeling meetings throughout the school year. And on Sunday mornings, I attend weekly Christian worship services, and sing in the choir while Jim scours the house, following our peculiar rule: cleanliness is next to godliness! These practices are as pillars supporting our lives. We have, through our years together, created many small and carefully thought out patterns of work and play which fill our needs and make time for everything we are interested in doing. I think a rule of life is especially useful and efficient in this latter regard. Without a plan, we are likely to pick one good thing to do and do that. In doing this, however, we are perhaps missing a few other activities we really want to include. I portion out my time carefully, so much for my correspondence, so much for cooking and for reading my junky historical romances. In honor of doing this handbook, gardening has been laid to one side for the most part this year. I look forward to getting my hands back in the earth, but I would not have missed this adventure of writing and sharing during this year for the world.



The planning of this schedule or rule of life is the work of many years for me, especially these last years from 1992 to the present. Certainly, I retained some aspects of my former rule of life after rehab. But many of my former habits were outdated and irrelevant. It was a delightful and freeing release, to be vertical at last, and to be getting stronger, but I found no immediately obvious, clear road ahead for myself. Attempts to work again as a librarian proved to me that I was, though much improved, still in too fragile a state of health to hold a job. This baffled all my worldly wisdom, which had pointed to my resuming some sort of professional work. Finally, it came to me that the heartfelt hopes I had of finishing L/L projects were wonderful and worthy goals to accept as mine to do, at whatever rate of speed I could find to pursue them, along with all the happy chores of living a normal life. I had made the mistake of thinking that we must work at a job out in the world in order to be useful. Freed from this concept, I found my way into a schedule of daily correspondence, miscellaneous duties and writing/editing projects that has filled my heart with satisfaction and my imagination with light and life. Allowing the work that is mine to come to me has been a great experience. For the first forty years of my life, I expected to work for a living and collect a paycheck, and I did that. Now, for a season, I have been able to work without a paycheck, and it has been an immense blessing to be able to pursue the work I have felt called to do.

Most of all, as I work at arranging my way of living, I am looking for the touchstone of maintaining the small life. I want to keep my life as simple as a busy life can get. I want to remain always a woman living a life of relationships and duties, rather than a woman seeing herself as a teacher, a writer or through the lens of any other outer gift. I feel that if I see myself as coming to the world through my gifts, I have left the small life. What this has meant to me is a continuing, daily discipline of attending to my personal correspondence and duties before I think to take up this handbook. Seekers write in to our web site each day, and I answer those e-mails first in my day, finishing with the "snail mail" people send us. This correspondence and the normal requirements of the daily round usually consume a good deal of time. This has made the handbook progress far more slowly than if I sat down in the morning and wrote until stopping time at evening. But it has also meant that when I come to it, I can sit down with a mind utterly free of other concerns. Everything else in my life is secure and quiet, and I am released to focus with my utmost love on the material and ideas at hand. I cannot express what a blessing this wonderful atmosphere of beautiful thoughts and high ideals has been to me throughout the writing of this

work. And yet I remain a person living a life, who is also writing a book, rather than a person writing a book, who is also living a life.

In living the small life, the chief jewels are our relationships and small chores. How can maintaining our family relationships and friendships, keeping ourselves and our things clean and in good order, and fulfilling our small promises to community, church or other organizations be so precious? Their value is in their grounded reality and in the way they keep us real. If we have good relationships, those friends will keep us real to ourselves. If we maintain our normal chores and duties, they will keep us relatively humble and lacking in pride, except the pride in doing things well. These values may seem somewhat paltry when we are not challenged by change, but if we suddenly receive traumatic changes in our lives, whether seemingly bad or good, they will greatly help to stabilize and balance us. Sudden wealth, fame or power can be very disorienting, as well as personal catastrophe and sadness! Good things can make us just as “crazy” as disasters! I encourage us all to preserve the values and priorities of the small life for ourselves.

It is a way of seeing to perceive all things as holy and worthwhile. There is enhanced truth and joy in doing things as those things get smaller. The sacredness of sleeping and rising, eating and washing up, going out and in to do daily chores, lies imbedded within them for us to discover. We can avoid the big life, no matter how big we seem to get. We do not have to take on the bigness of others' views of us, either. Are we famous? Now that is a handicap to a quiet life, but it is not insurmountable. Keep repeating, “I am a bozo,” while finding a way to stay real within yourself. Are you in a huge job? That is very seductive of your self-concept, but you can work with that, reminding yourself of your beauty as a simple fool of eating, drinking and being more or less merry. When the life gets large and puffed up, it is very hard to get a solid connection with our essential selves. So we need some way of moving back into the small life, the rule of life that contains our essential needs.

A great key is the simple belief that our small life is worthwhile. How often we have been taught that it is not, especially if we are women who think of living at home and offering ourselves to the raising of children and the keeping of a home. In order to gain the world's respect, it will often seem that we have to succeed in the world of jobs and finances. Knowing that the small things are sacred and that doing them is honorable helps restore them to a position of respect and honor within ourselves. Let us put our heads down to work, but let us raise them up frequently to see, really see, the holiness of the leaf, the sunset, the cricket's song, the firefly's rise. This is

where the real value of life is, in the passing beauty, the momentary task, the relationship that comes to us in this present moment with a question or a story in its hand.

Don Cushing, Jr., a member at our meditation meetings many times, wrote me in 1994 to ask if I had “any helpful hints regarding the necessity of the wanderers’ relearning a path to adepthood.”<sup>14</sup> I wrote him then, and affirm now, that as far as I know, the central keys to this are realizing that we have adepthood within us, and realizing that the straightest path to it is to work on the awareness of the sacredness encompassing and consuming each present moment. It is truly written that “the place whereon we stand is holy ground.” It does not take Moses’ burning bush to sanctify ourselves or the earth we walk. They are already sacred, for the very nature of life itself is holy.

In a way, a rule of life is an artificial thing, with its options and choices and agendas of things to do and orders of priority. It is our bit of artifice and composition. It does not deliver us to the perception of glory or unity. It is, like so many things, a resource that tends to aid us in accelerating the rate of our spiritual maturation. Like any thought construct, it brings its directions of thought, its suggestions and hints, its disciplines that open before the interested eye. In another way, it is a system of choices that supports and undergirds our choice of polarity, works to help stabilize our developing spirit within and places us within a peaceful and undefended heart. Those of Q’uo say:

We would suggest that each awakened soul choose for the self that rule of life which most nurtures the spiritual child within, that child that dwells in the heart and can become mature only as the outer self makes room and time for it. Time spent in silence, whether formal meditation is offered or whether it is simply sitting, greatly aids the spiritual self within. Further, it helps to align the seeker with her personal destiny, for each has come with gifts to share, lessons to learn and service to offer. Each has planned for the self companions along the way and good work to do, and each has hoped that within the veiled conditions of the physical illusion that constitutes consensus reality upon your planet that the awakening would occur and the choices would begin to be made which would more and more allow the spiritual self within to mature.<sup>15</sup>

It seems helpful to me to muse upon this inner spiritual child that we beget from our worldly selves when we begin to awaken. In a way, each of us is birthing the Christ child or a perfectly loving spiritual being within the manger of his own heart. These spiritual beings are beautiful infants. They

have much to learn, and we will be those who either bring gifts and show encouragement to these fragile heart-children within, or through impatient condemnation, send doubt and rejection to those infant souls. It takes a good deal of patience and restraint to come into loving relationship with this growing child within. That self has all the maturation to experience that the worldly self does. It will individuate and rebel. It will be at odds with the surface personality again and again. Being our own spiritual parents is delicate work, and never easy. But we do have the help of that force roughly called “personal destiny” by the Q’uo. We are people who have placed the plan for our incarnational experience before ourselves quite carefully, and we will repeatedly hear that small voice that suggests how the tides of this destiny are flowing. Perhaps we will achieve an actual schedule of living for periods of time, but often the rule of life must be quite flexible:

It is not necessary for each day to be a carbon copy of each other day in terms of a rule of life. Each seeker will need to adjust its rule of life according to its surface weather, its felt needs at the level of the surface, at the level of time and space and connections within the illusion. It is not only satisfactory but recommended that each alter the rule of life as needs, hungers and desires are felt. Let us attempt to clarify this. Just because one has ceased to feel enthusiasm for a given practice, that does not suffice as a reason to alter the practice. As long as one is not hungering for another specific practice it is well to be persistent in enthusiastic weather and in adverse weather alike. However, as long as the seeker moves into that listening, that silent listening regularly, the seeker can feel fairly confident that it will have the inspiration and the desire to alter its practice when that alteration is appropriate.<sup>16</sup>

Note the continuing suggestions to meditate and spend time in silence. There seems no better friend to a life lived in faith than silence. One issue of those with a rule of life is control. It seems rather cold and controlling in a way to choose a way of living which is so pervasively laid out before us. It may seem as though we have eliminated spontaneous new awarenesses from our plan for spiritual evolution! Those of Q’uo suggest:

One possible technique for the entity wishing to release that which it sees as control that it does not wish to retain within its behavior patterns would be to enter into the meditative state and to look at the patterns that the entity has developed, and to see these patterns of behavior as a web of rituals or habits which have given comfort. Look at this pattern and the barrier that it presents to further experience, in that there is the holding of the thought and action of the entity within the pattern.

Imagine the experience that would ensue should the pattern be altered. Look to those areas where there is the desire for inspiration, for innovation, for the breaking of the patterns and the introducing of new experience. Feel how this breaking of old patterns and the introducing of new behavior would affect the life, the feelings, the concept of self. Imagine this process mentally. Then, when you feel that you would like to experiment with such innovation, allow yourself a period of time that is unstructured, so that whatever feelings or intuitive inclinations might wish to surface may do so. Move with these feelings as you wish, as feels appropriate. Explore in this safe arena of unstructured activity and thought all the attendant feelings and activities that move into the mind as you are experimenting. Repeat this process a number of times so that you begin to get the feel of releasing comfortable patterns and the feeling of accepting that which is new.<sup>17</sup>

As we become more accustomed to having a rule of life founded on blind faith, we may well find that a new fearlessness has come to us. We will tend far less often to run away from the small difficulties of relationships and responsibilities. In a real way, having a rule of life objectifies the earnestness of our spiritual quest to ourselves, and helps us respect and honor the processes involved in awakening.

The more discipline that you bring to your way of living, your rule of life as this instrument would call it, the more you do rest in faith and do not contract away from the catalyst that constitutes this review, this test of your awareness of your balance.<sup>18</sup>

The process of choosing a rule of life starts with the most basic of choices: to live in faith, to espouse ideals and to decide how to express these choices in daily life. It evolves into a way of seeing ourselves as magical and transcendental persons, coming from skin and bones and birth and death, but moving into eternity, infinity and deathless principles. It takes all the myriad forms of spiritual work and splays them out for us to choose from, like bolts of fair cloth at the draper's when we are looking for curtains for our bowers. It makes us quilt-makers, sewing a gusset of faith, a piece of meditation, a swatch of service and all the rest of the materials of our lives into a counterpane that can clothe and cover us as nascent and developing souls.

## DEALING WITH SUFFERING

There is suffering involved in each door you open in life. Wherever you look, in whatever land, in whatever subject, you find that those who would be true servants have made tremendous sacrifices, even unto giving up the life for others. You find people in each situation whose heart has remained open regardless of the circumstances. And you feel the strength of inspiration from those entities, those people who make the news for a day or two because they have leapt into the water and saved five people before they drowned, or went into a prison and released the prisoners, paying with their lives. And these stories touch deeply within your being and let you know of the depth and profundity of love that you have within you, and resonate and exalt and express the light and joy for knowing the beauty of those spirits and their great gifts. But we say to you that there are many, many millions more whose sacrifices and suffering you never see, for they suffer emotionally, and mentally, and spiritually, bearing witness to love, being givers of light regardless of the circumstances that would fell a lesser being. And each of you has opportunity after opportunity to meet situations without fear, to open to any catalyst whether it seems positive or painful. The faith to remain steady is to be prized, for there is, in steadiness, a vision, clear sight; and in persistence of openness, healing and forgiveness.<sup>19</sup>

We return to the theme of the suffering of ourselves and of the human condition as we look at the nature of the devotional life. One great pillar of such a life is the calm and chilly assumption that we have, in the lives unfolding before each of us, just and excellent opportunities for learning all we have come to learn and sharing all the gifts we have come to share. A good bit of this learning and some of the service will seem to create suffering, sorrow, anger, grief and other negative emotions within us. As the catalyst comes into our lives, we gaze at the change such catalyst seems to require, and we lose our nerve for a while. One way or another, fear contracts within us from time to time, as life happens to us, and we suffer. I have seen arguments that no one really suffers at all, that it is a choice. Those of Q'uo persuasively suggest that:

You may deliver yourself into suffering if you wish, and say that you suffer in order to learn. This is a distortion which is subjectively true to many. You may also say that you maximize your opportunities to learn in order to learn. This is another way of saying precisely the same thing. Thusly, you may have pain greeted like the sister or brother that it truly

is, welcome it with respect into your life, treat it as an honored guest, and be free of any suffering.<sup>20</sup>

This excerpt from the Q'uo is a prime example of their somewhat skewed way of thinking, relative to Earth customs. I do suffer, and it is hard for me to believe I would choose to suffer! Yet perhaps to some extent we do, as we become more and more aware of the benign place of past suffering in our lives, and yet continue to resist present sorrow and other negative sets of mind when they arise within us. The Q'uo say:

We ask you to gaze with a cold eye upon the suffering involved in transformation, for this attitude is a balanced one in our humble opinion. It is to the person who is able to gaze upon the dark night of the soul with an indifferent eye, but a full and willing heart, that this process may begin to come easier. By releasing and yielding to your suffering, by welcoming that which must be suffered as a brother and as a sister, by offering the hospitality of your life, your body, your mind, your strength and your will to this process, the heart is opened as if by magic, and you find that no matter how intensely you hurt, it does not kill but, rather, cleanses, empties, renews and readies that instrument to be an ever clearer, purer and brighter channel for the light that must come through into the world or the love that must come through into the world, not from you but through you.<sup>21</sup>

Becoming a light worker is a matter, at least in part, of altering the way we look at life, until we see ourselves as serving the forces of light and life by how we are, with ourselves, with those around us, with the catalyst coming to us and with the energy coming through us. If we prioritize our goals so that the goals of expressing essence of self and being come before the goals of deed and doing, we begin to shift over into the point of view of one who works with light. Light is coming through our systems at all times from the infinite Creator, but it is as we bless and consciously send these energies on through our systems and out into the world that the energies are enlivened and transduced, and become coherent enough to lighten the planetary vibration. Some of these energies are those which involve the suffering we experience as we meet catalyst and respond, and the whole becomes experience to us.

Why do we let the Earth world continue to offer us suffering? Some of us try to refuse, to remain observers so that we avoid suffering, but I am convinced this is no long-term answer. Suffering continues whether or not we admit its presence, and it distorts us from within more by being repressed than by being dealt with as it arises. Repressed suffering can harden into adhering

karma, as negative feelings are not worked through, relationships sour, and we end our incarnations without resolution or forgiveness in some particular regard. One answer to “why?” is that we let this suffering happen because for the most part we cannot avoid it. The Earth world is designed specifically to give us seasons of great resistance and challenge. It is trying to knock us out of the pride of our mind’s knowledge of form and matter, logic and reason, and beyond outer illusion, into the silent wisdom of the heart. I have seen it said often that the longest distance in the spiritual search is the fourteen inches from head to heart.

You know that which you see is an illusion. Even your scientists speak to you thus. Your poets have always spoken so. Why do you open your eyes and allow yourselves to be pulled into an illusion that you are so aware of as an illusion? The answer is very simple. You are doing what you are supposed to do. Were you able to be blind to this illusion and awake to joy, you would not, nor should you, be here, dwelling in this illusion, learning and suffering and changing and transforming yourself, day by day, step by weary and seemingly plodding step. You have come here and have given up your true sight, and so you do not find your blindness a virtue. This is the forgetting, this is the veil, this is birth into an illusion, and you have plunged yourself into its icy waters, because in your courage you have wished to become better, to become more single-minded, to find more courage, to burn brighter, to have more passion and more single-mindedness in love of the one infinite idea or Thought that is love Itself.<sup>22</sup>

Since we wish to become better, since we hope to advance our own evolution and the planetary evolution, we dive from a pre-incarnative life, from what seems from this perspective a heavenly state indeed, where the truth is known that all is one, and from which all learning can be easily seen to have its just reasons, to plunge into a chaotic Earthly environment where truth, light and cause are most often half-hid in darkness. We come to the archipelago of Earth life with its many islands of organization that do not harmonize, and the confusion in between them that rolls with its tides of circumstance. We are voyaging Argos<sup>23</sup> of experimenters in that sea of living, looking for balance in the tides and a harmonious home on islands which often appear to lack such a feature:

The deepest goal of one who leaves bliss in order to suffer is to find the joy within the suffering, to find the light within the darkness, to accept and thus solve the riddle of opposites. For if the life is a gift, a holy one, one set apart, then to live, to love, to feel, to be, is the true vocation,



and all actions stem then not from the necessities of the employment or the personal situation, but from the inner agenda, which is to experiment continuously with the being, seeking always to polarize more and more towards a conscious inner realization of the wholeness and perfection that lie within the illusion; that make of the life a beauty and a gift. It is difficult sometimes for one who is suffering to see the beauty within the self, to realize that the self, by itself without action, is the true gift to the Creator and the true reason for this experience you call living.<sup>24</sup>

What it seems to come down to is that this Earth was designed to test and try, refine and alter the material of our personality shell, and to an increasing extent as we learn to be more than that shell of self, the deeper soul material we came here to refine as well. There seems no good way to learn without the catalyst and the suffering that is sometimes the honest emotional response to the catalyst. Nothing else works as a chisel to uncovering and shaping our gemstone of self like the winnowing and beating of suffering on our surface natures.

There is no desire which is not fulfilled, and when one feels that one has worked for a long period of time and yet the goal has not been accomplished, it is often interesting to go back and reexamine the deep desires of the heart and mind. It may be that there is a far, far deeper desire for the deeper learning which is brought about when one has a longstanding and seeming failure. This consciousness of clay feet and imperfection causes a kind of unhappy tension which is called suffering, and this suffering creates a frame of mind in which the deeper senses become more and more sensitive and begin to make choices. We question each who has an unfilled dream whether in the suffering which has gone into disappointment there has not been a great deal learned which could never have been learned in the face of continued contentment and happiness.<sup>25</sup>

In looking in hindsight at the gifts suffering has brought in its hands, we can often find the trail of breadcrumbs back to the original pattern that brought forward the difficult emotions. We can begin to see into the value of these seasons of suffering, and it becomes easier for us to approach new times of suffering with trusting and peaceful hearts.

The key here is to respect this incarnation, to respect the times of celebration and the times of suffering, however they may be perceived. You came into this illusion because you wished for these complications and distractions, not to look at them and then turn aside and move out

of the world, necessarily, but rather so to orient the self that the limitless and unbounded truth that overflows each moment may, in the present incarnation, be encouraged to express the deeper and deeper nature of the self which transforms all the everyday experiences into those freighted with that precious burden of the immanence of love.<sup>26</sup>

When a tough time comes, we need to allow the catalyst and the responding emotions to flow through us like water seeping through stones. It will leach impurities and cleanse. There may well be pain, but if we do not grab it and hold it to ourselves, it will proceed through our systems and express itself, at its own rate.

If it is a time for your being to experience a negative seeming manifestation, gaze steadily into your brother difficulty. Know and accept that this, too, is a portion of the self, nor does it need to give rise to the negativity of thought form, for peace may be found in sorrow, yet sometimes the sorrow may be long in order that the spirit survive and heal. In those cases the sorrow is well if the spirit have faith in the positivity that surrounds, that which is needed to burnish the tapestry which one incarnation creates, for suffering done in nobility of mind, dignity of spirit and greatness of heart creates a somber, bright beauty that flames amongst the other stitches of the tapestry, giving to it a character and richness it would otherwise not have. Never mistake difficult challenges and others' negativity to you for that which must be put into your tapestry, those stitches made by your heart and your mind. You are a sovereign being, an image of the Father. My friends, we are young gods. Let us search together for the face of our true identity.<sup>27</sup>

To say that we are young gods sounds rather presumptuous. Yet if we follow the logic of a Creator of love and a state of unity of all that is within the creation and its Creator, we are inevitably drawn to the conclusion that in an ultimate sense we are the stuff of deity in an illusory and unfinished form. Seeing this quality within ourselves gives a good contrast to times when we are seeing all too clearly the face of our own pain.

We ask you to look always not only at the frail, brave, suffering and hollowed out human which became a channel to be of service to many, but to spend time gazing upon the face of deity, however you may find it and by whatever names you preserve it. It is a good thing to be what you are, and what you are will grow and change and transform, yet it is likely that one pattern or another is most likely congruent with your vibratory energy pattern. Thusly, not all of you will be Christians, not all of you will be Sufis, and so forth. Yet all these structures yield the

same living water. All are channels through which this water may flow, and it is the discipline and devotion and firm intention to follow the example set before you that will open to you the consciousness which all have come to give, that one consciousness of the one Creator. You have within you that one Creator, and, in fact, in the end you shall be that one Creator.<sup>28</sup>

As we attempt to increase our amount and quality of awareness of this spiritual self that will grow into deity, that is our gem within, we turn once again to the refrain of the Brothers and Sisters of Sorrow: enter the silence within our hearts, and join the one infinite Creator for regular times of communion, however we shape that:

We encourage each to turn from the question of “why” long enough each day to spend a few moments or minutes with the infinite Creator. The answers are within, and there is far more help than each here can imagine which is available to those who call upon loving, positive, discarnate energies. We encourage this leaning upon the invisible company of those who would support you. As you ask within, you will feel that sympathy in the depths of your heart and so will know that truly no one suffering suffers alone. The invisible company of those who love is there just as close as the breathing or the thinking.<sup>29</sup>

I encourage us all to lean into that muscular silence of the Creator, and into the strong and powerful prayers of the many unseen presences that are here to help all beings. Every sweet deed and gentle thought, every longing prayer and affirmation of the light attracts those in the discarnate world whose thoughts and ideals are similar. The more we polarize, the more help we have to encourage and support us in our chosen biases and polarity. And eventually, we will find ourselves clear enough of our own miseries to become aware of the substantial suffering of the whole world, and more and more, our personal work will become more closely connected to our planetary prayers and work, as we see the connections between the suffering of all others and the suffering of ourselves come closer and closer, and finally conjoin. And as we come to love ourselves, we come to love the world and everyone in it.

It is a great privilege, greatly treasured by each before this incarnation, to be offered the opportunity to be able to carry not only a personal suffering, but also a deep, pure, sorrow that is the pain of the planetary sphere which you came to love and to serve.<sup>30</sup>

May we suffer with style, grace and that generous joy that comes from a life lived by faith. And may our seasons of suffering blessedly end with the balm of Gilead.

## TESTS AND TRIALS

Seasons of suffering are called by many names, the most common one being the dark night of the soul. One thing of which we can assure ourselves is that we will experience these times of trial, large and small. It is as though before incarnation began we were so greedy for this wonderful opportunity of a life that we piled far too much on our plate to eat at the banquet of living:

Before you came into this incarnation, you planned for yourself temptations, trials and troubles aplenty. You may have piled your plate very high, or done the equivalent of taking a twenty-one hour semester. It is not advisable, but we permit an ambitious lifetime, for if the ambition turns into fruit, it shall be great fruit. And those who suffer are those who bear fruit. Therefore, each of you has chosen difficulties on purpose, not for your abstraction, disgust, apprehension, fear or worry, but for catalyst, that you may learn the lessons of love that it has been given you to learn to make the choice of service to others.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps knowing that these inevitable patterns of sorrow and other negative emotions bring us to our lessons of love and ever purer service to others can help us better to accept these things:

All paths will contain the difficulties which you have prepared for yourself. Each of you has great trials in the past and in the future. That is the nature of the illusion in which you have chosen to pursue the learning of the lessons of love. If you attempt to choose an easy path, difficulties shall come to you. If you attempt to choose the difficult path, difficulties will come to you. It is impossible to avoid them. So the virtue lies not in choosing difficulty, for difficulty is inevitable. The choice well made is that choice which seeks the most opportunity for service to others. We do not find it necessary to encourage any to wear hair shirts and make themselves uncomfortable thereby, for each will be very uncomfortable and feel as though he were indeed wearing the hair shirt again and again throughout the incarnational experience. It is just as futile to attempt to avoid difficulty. Those who attempt to make their lives easier and choose the easier path will still find the same lessons

learned and every single iota of difficulty experienced whether the attempt to avoid the experience is made or not. You cannot move from your own nature.<sup>32</sup>

The way out of the difficulties of the spiritual path is directly through the thick of the issue or concern. For we truly cannot avoid being ourselves. Those times of sorrow come upon us for love's reasons, but how hard they are to see into, sometimes! It can seem a most exhausting and fruitless endeavor to sustain oneself without resorting to a weary bitterness when under such emotional siege.

Gradually, the path winds as it will, difficulties and tests mount as the capacity to learn increases. This love created; this love destroys. All that is within that which we must, for lack of other words, call love. This awesome and terrible love shall test and stretch each of you. That it does so with sure purpose is very hard to see. When you are emptied and the filling of your cup has begun, rest in the hollowness within, and allow the open heart to feel the peace of this one moment without fear. May you be sustained.<sup>33</sup>

One bright aspect about times of trial is the opportunities they give us to penetrate that personality shell of ours and dig through into richer, deeper fields of being:

Each of you has this sterling opportunity to break through the defenses, the shells, the masks that each has gathered about itself to defend itself from those pains which it fears. And the answer to these pains and difficulties is simply to accept them, to embrace them, to walk through them by faith, working in each case to see the love that is in the moment and to be a part of that which is good for all those whom you meet. You see, the confusions, the difficulties, the suffering are symptoms, shall we say, of the process of change or transformation when you have incomplete information. Each of you has wœfully incomplete information in the conscious mind.<sup>34</sup>

In a way, we are as Isis going after the hidden parts of Osiris, trying to complete the puzzle of our whole selves:

By throwing the self into the experiences of confusion, frustration, difficulty, disharmony and disease, the seeker of truth might test its ability to find the perfect reflection of self within each moment, in order that it might, piece by piece, experience by experience, construct the complete picture of the self, the creation and the Creator as one being.<sup>35</sup>

Together with the meditative and contemplative practices that aid the searching soul in assembling a better whole picture of the development of the self, when going through a tough experience it may be handy also to look at the issue of our desires. In this situation, what expectations or attachments to some outcome do we have?

If at any time a difficulty arises, upon its examination there will always be found an expectation of some sort that is not being met. This is not to suggest that one should have no expectations. It is merely an analysis of how things work, shall we say, and that, therefore, to be aware of the expectations one has in a given situation is the first step in dealing with whatever difficulties may arise. Once one is aware of one's expectations, these may be worked with, and, perhaps, adjusted if found to be unsatisfactory.<sup>36</sup>

Sometimes we can see right away that some settled preference of ours has bound us to an unhappy circumstance, and rather skillfully adjust our preferences to ease our sorrow, but sometimes we cannot. Sometimes, we seem to stumble and fall, and have no immediate help or hope. Our preferences go to the bone, and we find no way to alter them. These are times when the veil of unknowing is heavy upon us, and faith is hard to hold.

We are aware of the difficulties in traversing the path in darkness and of the strong desire many of you have for the illumination of the sun, so that obstacles may be seen, dealt with appropriately or avoided altogether. The illumination of the sun on the path occurs, however, only when the veil does not exist. You are aware of the necessity of the veil for work done within the illusion. As a result of this, there is rarely perceived any clear direction upon the path. It must be taken one stumbling step at the time, and that which is encountered will be encountered and dealt with according to the current state of being of the seeker. It is the continuation on the path that is the important thing.<sup>37</sup>

May we continue on the path of seeking together with a merry heart, made lighter by the company of each other!

## WALKING BY FAITH

Those of Quo say:

It is often assumed by those who are not on a spiritual pilgrimage that the greatest boon of living a spiritually oriented life is the peace of having made such a deep choice, and, indeed, there is that peace of commitment to a life in faith. However, what those not on the path often forget or do not know is that the pilgrimage towards eternity, while greatly speeding up the pace of spiritual evolution, is terribly uncomfortable and inconvenient.<sup>38</sup>

This caveat to forget comfort is deeply true at times of the devotional life, and those souls who are expressing that all is sublime within their approaches to life are, in my opinion, largely those souls happening to enjoy good times, for although we may remain peaceful within our hearts while entertaining sorrow, grief or anger, we can be said usually to have become to a degree uncomfortable. And although we always hope to learn enough so that we will be able to control our environment, we cannot do so in the metaphysical sense:

The greatest wisdom that you shall ever learn in your density at this time is that you cannot know anything; in other words, that your incarnation is based completely upon faith. You are on a journey in uncharted waters and your intellect will not be able to be so wise as to steer your spiritual journey. Many mistakenly attempt to live a spiritual life coming from the intellect and from wisdom. However, this energy does not make use of the open heart, and it will not take you far. And those seas into which it pitches you will be as confusing as the seas you left behind to seek for wisdom. It is our understanding, rather, that your density is a starkly simple stage set for making one choice again and again and that is the choice to love and to be loved.<sup>39</sup>

The devotional life has enormous room in it for wisdom. The measured philosophy, the inspirational discourse, the exalted poetry of wise men and women can lift us up, educate us and illumine us. But attempting to reduce the threads of suffering and circumstance we are weaving into the tapestry of our lives to things known and solutions found will likely prove only partially successful, for the quality of catalyst and experience is not linear, and connections are made in nonrational ways. It can be very bewildering to look at the strange landscapes we arrive at and move through in our evolving walk with spirit, and it is very easy to wish for an outer authority. 131 says:

When I first found your website and started perusing the newsletters, the one I found and latched onto first was Number 40, on the power of faith and will. I think this is a weak area for me and one in which I lack a proper understanding. It accounts for why I sometimes look to sources outside myself for guidance, instead of looking inward to my own higher guidance. It is something I would like to strengthen in myself.<sup>40</sup>

Faith and will have a lot to do with guidance. Guidance is all around us; of this I am perfectly convinced. The more we look to any outside authority for knowledge of what is going on in our experience, the less we give our own self-guiding system a chance to perform normally. I have had a lot of people write in with the desire to meet their own personal guides or guidance system, and while people can work to achieve this, I think it is a straighter path to the guidance within our deeper selves simply to have faith that the guidance system is in place and that we are receiving hints and suggestions from it in our everyday lives. The skill then becomes to pay attention to the present moments as they pass. When we rest back into faith, we become ready to pay heightened attention to the present moment, and to our hearts' meeting that moment with open love.

Be or practice to be unafraid of trouble. Find ways to be serene while you are not understanding, for this lack of understanding will continue and is irrelevant to the process of spiritual evolution. When the heart is opening a tremendous strength fills the spirit. Whenever this is not felt and you become aware that the heart is closed we ask that you touch in to your own faith, to the guidance that surrounds you, to the love that overshadows you, the Mystery that made you and claims you for Its own, and rise refreshed and peaceful.<sup>41</sup>

Circumstances may upset us, relationships may founder our spirits temporarily, but if we live by faith from moment to moment, we may always refresh ourselves in the waters of our own being. We may be awash with the catalyst, but we can breathe the water. And the voyage cannot fail.

The exercise of faith is simply that willingness to believe and to act upon the belief that there is a plan that is in effect and that cannot fail, and that that plan will constitute a destiny that is a safe passage regardless of the many twists and turns that always occur.<sup>42</sup>

We cannot in any way prove that a life in faith is a good choice. It often looks positively silly. But we can act as if our reliance on faith were completely deserved, for that is the essence of faith: it begins with "act as if."



Invoke faith without knowing that it is reasonable to do so. Live as though you had perfect faith, that your destiny will come to you and all that is for you will simply be attracted to you as it is time for it to appear. Live as though it were true and notice those subjectively interesting hints and suspicions and suggestions and synchronicities that say to you, "Yes, you are on the right track." Each of you will have various experiences that, for you, grow to be the signal for, "Yes, you have got it right; yes, this is what you should be doing."<sup>43</sup>

Eventually, we all do get moments of the most radiant apprehension and perception of the perfection of the plan. Mountaintop experiences will come to us but faith walks the valleys. Our life is spent largely in the vales and along the rills of living. Those grand scenic panoramas of peak experience come as gifts only, not to inform or sustain. What sustains us may be in part the bare memory of such peak experiences, and I certainly have my share of mystical states to recall with awe and humility. But my observation has been that they are not sturdy company back in the dales of daily living. I cannot trot them out, either for myself or for others, as bijoux to enhance faith. What continues to enhance faith is time spent in eternity and infinity, daily time spent with the Creator, time out of time and space. We may think of the silence that brings us to these things as a rainbow bridge:

When you have determined that which creates the bridge to eternity for you, we urge you to cross that bridge as often as possible. The ideal which was shown by many entities is to live in such a way that the entire life experience becomes a parable of the journey to infinity, of the ridding of oneself of the dross of perishability and the winning through of the understanding that your consciousness, more and more refined, polarized and uplifted, is indeed imperishable and is your true self. The more time one spends having crossed the rainbow bridge into eternity while in the physical body, the more one is able to offer in consolation, in forgiveness, in peace-making. For to one who has faith, there is no problem too great to solve, and that which is unsolvable is acceptable. Each day and night is its own entity, appreciated for itself, experienced for itself and action done for love out of faith. This is the life in faith.<sup>44</sup>

What sparks my own faith? Devotions do. I love moments and minutes of prayer, affirmation and meditation. I love the silence. I love inspirational messages that stir up my soul and lift my spirits. I love the world of natural things. And I love helping people. As each of us finds what makes us respond and quicken in spirit, let us make these practices our own, for coming into a fully functioning life in faith is like coming home in a

profound way, a way I would like very much to share. We seek to build, within this mortal shell of life that is our body, an imperishable consciousness.

Within the third-density illusion, each seeker of what you call the truth places itself in a position of receptivity to that truth by the intensity of the seeking [and] the strength of faith and will, so that at some point within the cycle of incarnations, it is possible for such a seeker not only to discover that which it seeks, but to become that which it seeks. This is the meaning of the resurrection within third density. The seeker builds with mortal hands a manifested life that may be constructed in such a fashion in metaphysical terms that that known as love may move through the being in such a pure fashion as to shine as that which it is, the pure and virgin consciousness of the one Creator, moving to gain the experience of the creation which it has made of Itself, and doing this within the life pattern of incarnate third-density beings who have prepared this place within their life patterns and, thus, not only receive that which was sought, but become that which was sought.<sup>45</sup>

As we bring our work more and more within ourselves, not working with the outer picture but with our own minds, hearts and biases, we begin not to resist outer catalyst so much. This, too, is a help in simplifying our experience:

For those willing to live by faith and the feeling of rightness, the life may feel that it is being lived more and more without effort, more and more like the well-oiled rifle which accepts the bullet and powers it most swiftly and straightly to the target through all the air in between. The spirit within has the capacity to live as the bullet does: swiftly, straightly, accurately and with substantial force. Even those who are without any sense of personal destiny may well find events quickening and becoming more simple because there has been, for whatever reason, a willingness to move forward without resistance when change of some kind is seemingly necessary.<sup>46</sup>

All these aspects of walking by faith may help to ease the difficulties of hard emotional times. Above all, let us find sympathy and love for ourselves when we are weary.

We encourage you to comfort yourself when your journey is arduous and you need a place to rest. You have that within you and need only construct it in your mind. You may also with your mind and your will construct within your dwelling the tools for healing and for rebuilding

the intensity of your faith that there is a path, that truth does exist, and that there is such a thing as love and the will to seek that which your faith tells you is there.<sup>47</sup>

## COOPERATING WITH DESTINY

How precious to us is the rest we gain when we trust that the challenges and trials we have in our daily lives are justly given us in order that we may learn as much as possible, but never too much! I can attest that once in a while we feel that we come right to the edge of its all being too much. But whatever breakage we experience, we then eventually experience those times of healing that restore us. Meanwhile, we encourage our hearts to remain soft and vulnerable to the experience of difficulty:

Yours is the last density with truly adverse conditions for the positive, or service-to-others oriented person. Only in this density, the density of choice, does this occur. Know then, that this which is in front of you is not more than you can work with, is not that which defeats; you would not program that for yourself. But you are stretching yourself, because you wish to change, you wish to become even more polarized in love and service to the Creator and others than you are now.<sup>48</sup>

So the idea is not to resist this suffering, but to become accepting of and transparent to it.

The goal of the suffering seeker is not an end to suffering but, rather, an increased or enhanced sense of the sanctity, the hallowed nature of these processes of learning, of changing, of evolving through experience. Each seeker chooses the degree to which it shall suffer as it resists or does not resist the beckoning call of its own destiny. Each is co-creator of that destiny. Each has chosen the classes it has in this school of incarnation. Therefore, all is well, metaphysically speaking, whatever the suffering looks like, for it is simply a portion of experience allowed to be suffering through the resistance and fear of the changing that the learning creates.<sup>49</sup>

When the resistance to suffering is felt, there is a fear as if we are falling and must land well. However, our selves are actually in a free fall, in the fool's leap of faith, and this is where the rhythms of destiny flow. In surrendering to the presence of the suffering, we are surrendering to the destiny that is flowing through us.

When at last you do not mind free-falling, you shall have arrived at a reasonably comfortable metaphysical stance from which to gain a somewhat more accurate view of the rhythmic beating of destiny. Blown by the winds of free will, that destiny has a surety, a sure-footedness that cannot be moved by decisions that turn you from one direction to another. You cannot go away from the right path, for those lessons that you came to explore, those lessons of how to love and how to allow being loved, are fluid and living and they can move with you wherever you go. So in the sense of making tragic errors we ask you to be fearless. You cannot make a mistake, metaphysically speaking, for your lesson and your destiny shall follow you wherever you are moved to go. Yet to cooperate with that defined destiny is often to allow the little world to die away that the greater self and the greater will might be presented more clearly.<sup>50</sup>

Since we cannot make a mistake in the metaphysical sense, we are free to consult and surrender to the will of the Creator for us, as we come to know it.

Each person wishes for personal power, power to control, the power to shape the destiny, and this is your right, my friends, this is your obligation. Yet know that the first and greatest power is given to you in the act of surrender, for the heart that has surrendered can hear the song which will lead you. Those who close and stop their ears and demand that things be thus and so, thus and so, will indeed hear a siren's song. And the manifestation of sorrow in the life of one who controls shall be more and more. These are the ones who are wayward and lost, for they cannot go home, yet they are not able to go forward. Surrender, then, and purify your ears to the song of life, that life which is beyond life and death.<sup>51</sup>

How easy it is to drift into the making of plans! I do that often, the more fool, I! It is so tempting. It fills the pockets of the mind to make plans. But metaphysically speaking, we are doing better to surrender fully to paying attention to the present moment:

In the sense of accelerating the process of learning it is well to work within the self to realize that there is a drift or tendency that can loosely be called destiny, and it is safe, we feel, to say that this destiny is a benign and helpful one, worthy of faith and trust and, to some extent, able to be made visible by the seeker who is willing to listen and feel and intuit and truly, in each way that you can, simply pay attention. For as the way with the Creator is overwhelming, there are signs on every side,

synchronicities and coincidences that mount up rapidly when one is paying attention.<sup>52</sup>

Not that it is ever easy to have the patience to surrender to paying attention: that is the price that seems often too dear!

If you can trust destiny enough to release the attempts to control it, the natural waves of energy moving out from the center of that kindly destiny which is each seeker's will gradually take that seeker upon the path and in the direction which is deeply desired. We do not need to tell you how difficult a practice it is to maintain the silent and listening receptivity to destiny in a world in which intangibles and invisible things are often given no worth or value at all. Yet, this practice is most productive of peace of mind and is very efficient in its own way at keeping the seeker upon the path chosen before the incarnative experience. It is not that your life was predestined, but, rather, that certain things were chosen by you. Certain patterns were chosen by you in order to focus on certain lessons concerning love. The energy that has moved you through various stages of life has been an energy which feels natural impulses towards some lessons and complete indifference towards others. No one else has your path. No one else has your lessons. You need no one else's lessons, so each pilgrim that is walking upon this highway is walking alone in a very deep sense.<sup>53</sup>

We are alone in the sense that our learning is unique to each of us, not in having learning to do. The Creator is very patient with the patterns of our lessons. If one relationship that teaches a certain lesson is ended before the pattern is complete, we will receive another such relationship so we can continue our observation on this point. There is no sense in ducking a perceived lesson. Try to follow these challenges through to the end, to honor them as well as exhaust the catalyst. And always consult the heart first, not the intellectual mind, when working with catalyst:

The more you can remember who you are, the more easily shall you be able to find that center, that place of knowing that is the holy of holies within, that place where the Creator waits for you patiently, hoping that you may stop. Open that door and tabernacle with the most high. Feel that heart within you open as you think of love and know that the most important thing you will ever do is find that place and live there. It matters not whether you follow your head or your heart; there are no mistakes. But if you wish to cooperate with destiny you will consult your heart first.<sup>54</sup>

Resting in the open heart, we face the day, and the catalyst of the day:

The choices you work on making skillfully are choices in substance and quality of beingness. This beingness informs whatever choices are made. We are not in any way saying that it does not matter whether one makes choices; it truly does greatly matter. We simply wish you to grasp the thought that these choices are those which have to do with one's stance or attitude towards that which is facing it rather than having to do with one situation chosen over another. There is a saying in this instrument's mind, "You can run, but you cannot hide." The destiny which you skillfully offered your future incarnational self before this experience holds sway in the amphitheater of your brief existence in this one incarnational opportunity. You need not attempt to monkey overmuch with the tendencies or basic givens of your incarnation. What you are here to do is refined and refined again and again, the choice of focus, of attitude with which it faces the present moment which is destined to be just so.<sup>55</sup>

When we see old catalyst coming around again, it is tempting to tell the Creator that we have already learned this lesson, please leave us alone! However, this answer will not satisfy that force of the Creator which brings us catalyst. If the winds have blown us this catalyst, then a review has been considered in order by a force which is following the preferences of our higher self for us. We need to trust that there is time enough to work with all catalyst until its rhythms are complete.

Each of you falls headlong into a blazing white light, the white light of an infinite Creator whose very nature is love. You are falling unbelievably quickly, and you shall fuse and become one in your perception as you already are in reality with love itself. This is your destiny. And yet speed is such a relative thing. None of you knows how quickly spiritual gravity pulls you toward that great center, that great unity. Each of you feels you cannot possibly be moving quickly enough, you need to know more. And so you draw yourself along. Yet in reality, you could not hold yourself back if you tried.<sup>56</sup>

We need to realize, as part of the devotional life, that the right use of will with regards to approaching our learning in this density is not to use it to reach for our upcoming lessons but to surrender it to the will of the guidance within, the forces of destiny and the Creator itself, in trust that we will receive all we need for our evolution of soul.

It is the fundamental nature of third-density entities to reach. Thousands of incarnations go by as each entity refines that for which it reaches, until finally in one way or another the entity begins to realize that much of reaching cannot be done in any environment except the environment of the silent, seeking heart. You are creatures who have a memory which is buried deeply within you, and is a portion of that which makes you alive, that you are a creature of a Creator, and that you have a destiny, an appointment towards which you move, quickly or slowly, to the Father and to you. It has no meaning to be concerned about the length of your time that it may take to refine this instinctual sense of something more into a practice that ultimately makes immediate contact with the mystery which lies beyond all information.<sup>57</sup>

We need to be sure that we are not rushing ourselves metaphysically, that we are giving full respect to that which the moment has for us, regardless of how small or large that yield of the moment seems. Much opens to the more penetrating gaze, at unpredictable moments, out of nowhere.

There are the strong trade winds of destiny, those that blow from forever, and there are the delightful, seasonal, unpredictable whims of spirit that offer the chance and change that marks the unique experience of being a conscious individual given the gift of free will. Metaphysically speaking, the dance between destiny and free will provides a way of thinking about those whims which affect the spontaneous, expressive self, that meaningful, substantive self to which that question about “hurrying up” has reference, for the blurring of experience through rushing too much is not simply a physical phenomenon, but also a spiritual one.<sup>58</sup>

What we ask for before incarnation is not to be happy or sad, idle or busy. Although we hope to fulfill our dreams of service and learning, we really ask of ourselves only one thing: to experience as fully as possible the Earth plane and our incarnations.

To focus upon change is skillful for the one who works to accelerate the rate of spiritual evolution, but we greatly encourage each to couch this focus upon change within the larger picture in which you may see that there is a strong and substantial reason to trust and have perfect faith in destiny. You have put yourself on this train. This trip is planned by you. You did not ask yourself to be happy or sad, to do well or to do poorly, not at all. You asked yourself to experience this exact incarnation. This is your responsibility: to experience as fully as possible each moment.<sup>59</sup>

If our responsibility is to experience life, then we are freed to rest in the plenty of the heart. The devotional life is built on this trust and this rest, as we cooperate with destiny and live for the day and the moment with knowledge that we will learn, and we will serve, and both opportunities will reliably come to us when we are ready.

If an entity wishes to hear the voice of the Creator, to hear aloud the appropriate service described, it must wait for the rhythms of destiny to unfold in their spontaneous way. Nothing, including a surety of service, is intended for those within your plane of existence to hear and mark. Rather, the opportunity is instantaneous, and it is the entity who has surrendered all private desires to respond to the situation, not questioning whether it be one's service, but moving from a position of spiritual abundance and rest to trust in the spontaneous opportunity for service at the level of instinct. The appropriate meditation, then, upon the will of the one infinite Creator, is the trustful relaxation into apparent ignorance.<sup>60</sup>

## BEING PART OF A SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

As far back as history records, we can read of groups of people gathering to share community and worship. As our current traditional religious systems have faded in their magnetic pull for awakening spiritual seekers, seekers have tended to look for alternative forms of spiritual community. The internet offers millions the chance to talk with those who have common interests, and some of these groups can constitute spiritual communities or lighthouses. Those of Quo attest to the enhanced power that is a group's resource. Talking to our meditation and study group, they said in 1999:

You have become an infinite power for love and light, and this is a resource that we are glad that you are taking part in, not only because we feel close to each of you as we meditate with you, but also because we have heard the sorrow of the brothers and sisters upon your planet, and we know that the light energy that you gather in groups such as this will have a great healing effect upon the suffering of the world as a whole.<sup>61</sup>

All sorts of people, such as this holistic light center manager, are trying to form light groups:

My work of service is right now bringing more and more lightworkers together in this area. It is quite an experience to meditate together.<sup>62</sup>



We at L/L Research have also found it to be quite an experience to meditate together! When people decide to come visit us, their basic question to us is, "What do you do?" Romi Borel's request is very thorough:

In meditation last night the suggestion came that I should come visit you. What do you do there? Can you help me in my efforts to become "on purpose"? Do you "teach" there? Have classes of some sort?<sup>63</sup>

To answer that question: We do welcome guests. They may come any Sunday from Labor Day to Memorial Day, for a public group meditation and study meeting. We have silent meditations on second and fourth Sundays, and channeling meditations on first and third Sundays. Fifth Sundays, we take off! People may come, if they are among the registrants, for our annual Homecoming. And if there is a special need, they may come and check us out at any time they are able to make the trip. We live in Kentucky, which from either coast and most other places is the back of beyond. We keep that in mind and open our home to those who feel they need to make contact physically.

What we do at L/L Research, though, is live a devotional life. That is, we attempt to live devotionally. We consider at this point that our main service is being, both as individuals and as a light group. We keep our prayers and services daily, keep the light shining insofar as we are able in our hearts, intents and actions, and look for the love in the moment. It has been a long time since we have felt we have anything specific to teach. What we see, over and over again, is that any place which has become a spiritual lighthouse or center, such as ours and many others are for people around the globe, becomes a magical entity. Seekers come with transformation and realization on their minds to L/L Research's physical doors, and they may well feel that wonderful things happen to them during their visits here. But from our standpoint we are able to see that they bring the transformations with them, and allow them to happen here, because they perceive that the gardens of L/L are a safe place to do that work. I hope and pray they are indeed safe, for all who come. We do offer classes of a sort, at the annual Homecomings, according to the wishes of our group for each particular meeting, and at the weekly study and meditation groups, also strictly according to the requests of the members present. We are most delighted to talk with people either at the meetings or on visits, or through correspondence. I spend most mornings working on correspondence, and find it most illuminating to work with the various people I meet. Jim also corresponds with a wide variety of wanderers. Between us, we attempt to respond to everyone who writes to us.

Our chief gift is sheer presence and being. We are here. We delight in being here! It is our privilege, and we hope to walk this watchtower as long as we are incarnate. As Jim and I age, we are as aware as ever of the possibility of increasing our little community physically. We have attempted physical community once since Don Elkins' death, with Kim Harris, in 1990 through 1991. Kim greatly helped us at L/L, but moved on. We recently had another candidate for inclusion in L/L Research, a man who has spent eight years attending our weekly meetings and studying the material we have to offer, a man who runs our computers and administrates our web site, a man we love very deeply and appreciate. He thoughtfully turned us down. We were rather expecting this for we know how daunting that prospect is, since we have both made that momentous and life-changing decision to join a non-Earthly family. Sacrifice is always involved in a move to physical community. We are quite aware there is no clear advantage to someone's joining us, in any worldly sense. Going from independence of living to community participation and duties involves a shakedown cruise for the new family members. The new member's work load would increase, as his life style would change from eating when he wished to having regular community mealtimes, and doing for one to living in a home with fast-growing weeds and community needs that exceed his own personal requirements. Without inspiration, without deep commitment and a solid sense of rightness to the life path, it is not logically or emotionally feasible. The only advantages for such a new member would be the boons of spiritual community, support and encouragement in daily devotional practices, and the strengthening of each group member's offering of self to the Creator:

It is the nature of a functional community to find ever more ways to foster and nourish, nurture and support each other. And as one finds such a community and enters into communion with those in that community there is a strengthening and a stability which becomes possible only as entities group together and offer themselves for that which is greater than they are.<sup>64</sup>

Group meditation is a wonderful part of that communion within community:

As you sit together physically in the silence of this shared imaging, there is set up betwixt the group lines of communication that will not stop humming when the conscious minds leave that tabernacle of asking, for after the choice is made and destiny is being followed, yet still, there are choices every moment that work towards harmonizing energies or do not. And every shared moment in this holy silence together is

productive of deepening and ever clearer channels of communication which are blessed with a more informed viewpoint, that of your higher selves, and aids in information, and that higher self that is you as a group.<sup>65</sup>

Group meditations always seem to me to be very much more powerful than individual meditations, although certainly some times of solitary silence are tremendously enspiriting. The group's blending lifts all members, as it helps each to rest in faithful surrender. And for the many thousands of seekers who have appreciated our books and our presence through the years, our existence gives to them a place to belong, and even a time to join in a group meditation if they like, for we always begin to meditate at 5:00 in the evening on Sundays, Eastern Standard or Daylight time, depending on the season. Many people around the world join us in those meditations, and some join Jim's and my daily offering each morning at 9:00. These, too, are ways that a community of light can serve a world increasingly aware of its need for fuller light. It has been our experience that anyone can become a light center, simply by opening her home to some sort of study or meditation meeting on a regular basis. Think about what you may have to offer, if you are drawn to this aspect of a devotional life, for many are the people who are searching for an honest and sincere group with which to link.

The desire to serve is greatly enhanced by those who have banded together in order to support each other in service. So the community feeds entities and at the same time entities feed into community by their participation in the activities seen and unseen, by their sharing with others that which they have thought and talked about in community. It is as though there were a net being made of golden thread, and each time one awakened wanderer links up with another and establishes a spiritual community another piece of the net is woven, and eventually that net will cover your orb like a golden seine and the Earth shall be completely surrounded in unified love. We see this occurring at this time. It is moving towards fuller manifestation rather quickly as more and more entities awaken and establish connections and share with others their own focal points or spiritual communities so that more and more entities may feel secure and stable and part of something that is higher and bigger than the everyday concerns of living, for truly these concerns are constant throughout third-density experience. It is completely up to each seeker as to how she wishes to express the self and the love of the infinite One in each person of the daily round.<sup>66</sup>

It matters not in the slightest to the Creator, I think, whether we are offering ourselves as individuals or as a group, as Christians or as Buddhists or as nothing in particular. What matters is that we wish to live our lives in faith, devotionally, seeing all things as sacred aspects of one experience that resounds with echoes of the Creator. If we can trust that echoing, resonant chamber of awareness into which we have poured ourselves for this experience, we shall find our lives fill up with beauty and deep rhythm, and the feeling of peace that lies beneath dependency and trust in the outer picture, and rests with the heart at peace in flowing and unconditional love. May we find our hearts opening, and our lives becoming sacred to our own eyes.

- <sup>1</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated November 27, 1994, p. 4.
- <sup>2</sup> *idem*, transcript dated November 13, 1994, p. 4.
- <sup>3</sup> *idem*, transcript dated July 14, 1994, p. 4.
- <sup>4</sup> *idem*, transcript dated September 28, 1991, p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup> *idem*, transcript dated May 22, 1994, pp. 2-3.
- <sup>6</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 1, 1998, p. 5.
- <sup>7</sup> *idem*, transcript dated January 16, 1994, p. 3.
- <sup>8</sup> *idem*, transcript dated September 5, 1993, p. 7.
- <sup>9</sup> *idem*, transcript dated January 14, 1996, p. 6.
- <sup>10</sup> *idem*, transcript dated September 9, 1999, p. 5.
- <sup>11</sup> *idem*, transcript dated July 21, 1991, p. 12.
- <sup>12</sup> Latwii, transcript dated August 12, 1982, p. 2.
- <sup>13</sup> Hatonn, transcript dated August 12, 1982, p. 3.
- <sup>14</sup> Don Cushing, letter dated August 7, 1994.
- <sup>15</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated February 7, 1999, p. 2.
- <sup>16</sup> *idem*, transcript dated April 21, 1996, pp. 2-3.
- <sup>17</sup> *idem*, transcript dated June 8, 1992, p. 6.
- <sup>18</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 21, 1999, p. 4.
- <sup>19</sup> *idem*, transcript dated January 19, 1997, p. 4.
- <sup>20</sup> *idem*, transcript dated January 6, 1991, p. 8.
- <sup>21</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 15, 1998, p. 5.
- <sup>22</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 29, 1990, p. 2.
- <sup>23</sup> The Argo was a ship that the mythological Jason and the Argonauts sailed in to seek the golden fleece.
- <sup>24</sup> Latwii, transcript dated February 13, 1988, p. 4.
- <sup>25</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated May 10, 1987, p. 3.
- <sup>26</sup> *idem*, transcript dated September 19, 1993, p. 5.
- <sup>27</sup> *idem*, transcript dated February 28, 1988, p. 6.
- <sup>28</sup> L/Leema, transcript dated May 4, 1986, p. 6.
- <sup>29</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated October 14, 1992, pp. 2-3.
- <sup>30</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 20, 1991, p. 3.
- <sup>31</sup> *idem*, transcript dated May 14, 1989, p. 2.
- <sup>32</sup> *idem*, transcript dated June 20, 1993, p. 5.
- <sup>33</sup> *idem*, transcript dated September 27, 1992, p. 3.
- <sup>34</sup> *idem*, transcript dated November 3, 1996, p. 3.

- <sup>35</sup> Hatonn, transcript dated April 19, 1987, pp. 4-5.
- <sup>36</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated January 31, 1991, p. 3.
- <sup>37</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 29, 1991, p. 1.
- <sup>38</sup> *idem*, transcript dated October 14, 1992, p. 2.
- <sup>39</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 21, 1999, p. 6.
- <sup>40</sup> 131, letter dated May 14, 1997.
- <sup>41</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated October 22, 1995, p. 5.
- <sup>42</sup> *idem*, transcript dated September 8, 1996, p. 2.
- <sup>43</sup> *idem*, transcript dated September 15, 1996, pp. 4-5.
- <sup>44</sup> *idem*, transcript dated April 30, 1989, p. 5.
- <sup>45</sup> *idem*, transcript dated December 14, 1986, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>46</sup> *idem*, transcript dated August 29, 1993, p. 3.
- <sup>47</sup> Hatonn, transcript dated January 5, 1986, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>48</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated September 23, 1990, p. 9.
- <sup>49</sup> *idem*, transcript dated February 12, 1995, p. 4.
- <sup>50</sup> *idem*, transcript dated May 18, 1997, p. 5.
- <sup>51</sup> Hatonn, transcript dated March 3, 1985, pp. 7-8.
- <sup>52</sup> *idem*, transcript dated March 30, 1997, p. 3.
- <sup>53</sup> *idem*, transcript dated April 21, 1995, p. 2.
- <sup>54</sup> *idem*, transcript dated August 26, 1996, p. 4.
- <sup>55</sup> *idem*, transcript dated November 1, 1992, p. 3.
- <sup>56</sup> *idem*, transcript dated November 9, 1986, p. 2.
- <sup>57</sup> *idem*, transcript dated May 6, 1990, pp. 5-6.
- <sup>58</sup> *idem*, transcript dated April 12, 1992, p. 2.
- <sup>59</sup> *idem*, transcript dated January 16, 1994, p. 2.
- <sup>60</sup> *idem*, transcript dated June 2, 1991, p. 4.
- <sup>61</sup> *idem*, transcript dated April 18, 1999, p. 3.
- <sup>62</sup> 169, letter dated March 23, 1998.
- <sup>63</sup> Romi Borel, letter dated October 30, 1998.
- <sup>64</sup> Q'uo, transcript dated April 13, 1997, p. 3.
- <sup>65</sup> *idem*, transcript dated May 10, 1992, pp. 2-3.
- <sup>66</sup> *idem*, transcript dated April 13, 1997, p. 4.