

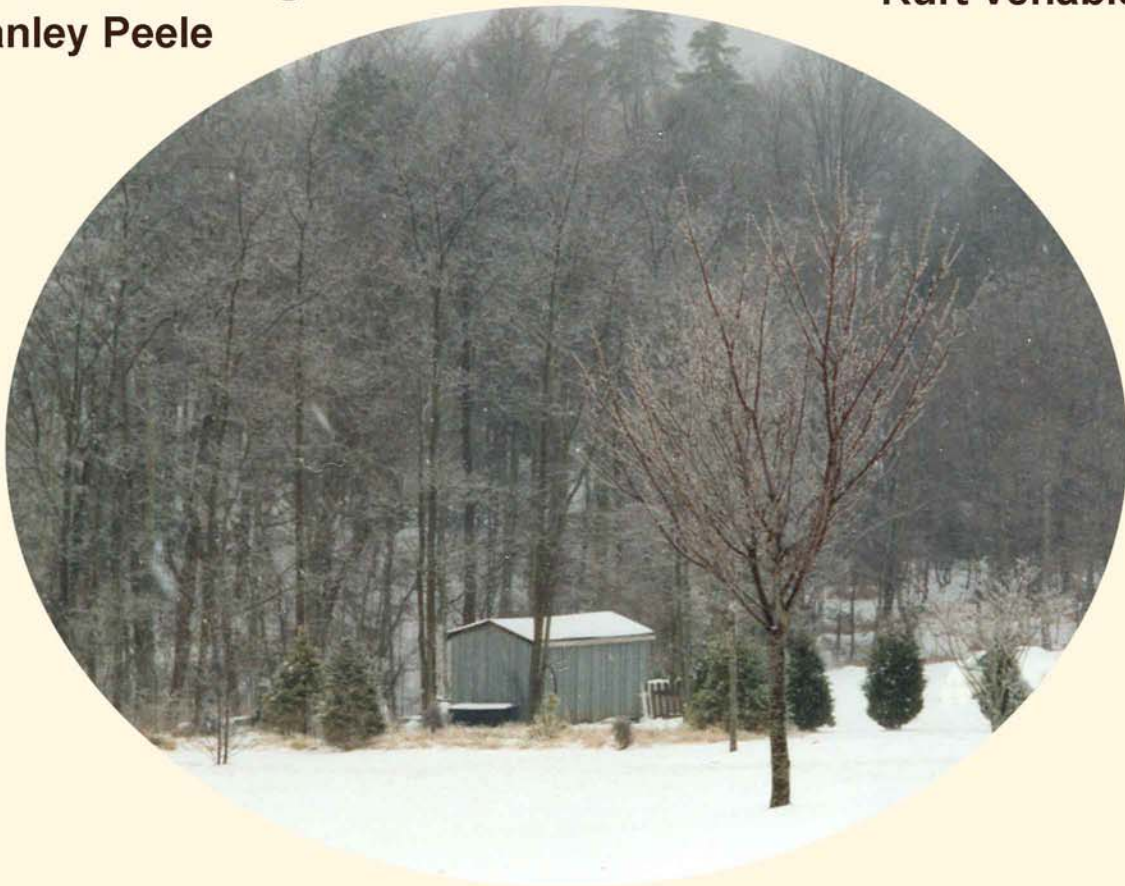
Spirituality & Community

March 2005

www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

**The Secret of
Spiritual Healing**
Stanley Peele

Mirrors
Kurt Venables



Little Gidding
T.S. Eliot

Sonnets 33 - 35
William Shakespeare

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Who We Are

www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

Origins

Spirituality & Community was founded in late 2003 by Kurt Venables to communicate with others who share an interest in spirituality and an appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.

Mission

We are dedicated to the spiritual development of our members and promoting spirituality and appreciation for the rich array of spiritual beliefs the world provides.

Foundations

Spirituality & Community is a magazine and online community for those seeking answers to life's deepest questions. We hold closely these fundamental truths:

•To find true happiness, one must open his or her heart to the pure goodness that lies deep within. We call this pure goodness the Good, the Light, and the Lord within.

•The process of opening one's heart is a lifelong journey, which we call Spirituality.

We distinguish between spirituality and religion. *Our focus is spirituality, which we view as an inner search for happiness and fulfillment.* We are concerned with what lies within the heart. In religion, metaphysical and supernatural concepts are inextricably linked to spirituality, and you will find such religious concepts discussed here to the extent that the writer believes them to be entwined with spiritual topics. However, you will not find material written for the sole purpose of asserting, denying, or debating supernatural religious phenomena, whether they be associated with traditional religions or new age religions. Examples of such phenomena might include the existence of God, reincarnation, or extraterrestrials. It's not that we don't consider these to be worthy subjects; it's just that we believe that spirituality, the inner journey, is important in its own right, and that is our focus here.

We believe that true spiritual development depends upon a genuine appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs. Among our highest values is open-mindedness. We do not require or expect others to accept the particular beliefs of any one of us. We believe that as we develop such an appreciation for diversity, our perspective shifts away from an "all or nothing" concept of spirituality, an approach that supposes that one must either wholly accept or utterly reject a particular set of spiritual beliefs. This perceptual shift allows us to view the beliefs of others from a fresh vantage point, take from each set of beliefs that which rings true, and synthesize a personal spirituality that makes sense for each of us. *We believe that spirituality may best be defined as a personal journey towards true happiness and spiritual fulfillment and that the beliefs of others serve to guide each of us on our own journey.* Our goals are the personal growth of each and every member and the promotion of spiritual values and respect for individuality.

We believe that when we view the spiritual beliefs of others with our hearts, we see truth shine through. Truth shines all around us if we know how to see it. The truth we see in the spiritual beliefs of others guides each of us. It is in this vein that we wish this organization to be viewed. ***Through Spirituality & Community, we reveal our most intimate beliefs. We sincerely hope that some will find some truth within them, and we wish you only the best on your own personal journey!***

What We Do- Opportunities for Exploring Spirituality and Communication

Spirituality & Community produces a magazine and encompasses an online community. Both aspects serve as the basis for bringing together those who share our aspirations and beliefs, to meet each other and exchange ideas. We provide many opportunities for exploring spirituality and communicating with others:

- Spirituality & Community magazine***
- Features on the site***
- Online chats***
- Retreats*** (as interest arises)

The magazine is based on a Reader's Digest® type model. It is comprised primarily of reader submitted material. It is the primary mechanism for a member to both explore spirituality and communicate his or her ideas to others. Features from the past several issues are also posted on the site.

Membership in Spirituality & Community is free and may be withdrawn at any time. The magazine is also free. Level of participation in any aspect of Spirituality & Community is strictly voluntary.

The organization and site were launched only recently. Currently, membership is very small- We are in growth mode right now. ***If you would like to join, please visit our web site and click the Join Us! link.***

Little Gidding

(No. 4 of 'Four Quartets')

T.S. Eliot



I

Midwinter spring is its own season
Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,
Suspended in time, between pole and tropic.
When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,
The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,
In windless cold that is the heart's heat,
Reflecting in a watery mirror
A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon.
And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,
Stirs the dumb spirit: no wind, but pentecostal fire
In the dark time of the year. Between melting and freezing
The soul's sap quivers. There is no earth smell
Or smell of living thing. This is the spring time
But not in time's covenant. Now the hedgerow
Is blanched for an hour with transitory blossom
Of snow, a bloom more sudden
Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,
Not in the scheme of generation.
Where is the summer, the unimaginable
Zero summer?

 If you came this way,
Taking the route you would be likely to take
From the place you would be likely to come from,
If you came this way in may time, you would find the hedges
White again, in May, with voluptuary sweetness.
It would be the same at the end of the journey,
If you came at night like a broken king,
If you came by day not knowing what you came for,
It would be the same, when you leave the rough road
And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull facade
And the tombstone. And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment. There are other places

Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws,
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city—
But this is the nearest, in place and time,
Now and in England.

 If you came this way,
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,
At any time or at any season,
It would always be the same: you would have to put off
Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.
And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.
Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

II

Ash on an old man's sleeve
Is all the ash the burnt roses leave.
Dust in the air suspended
Marks the place where a story ended.
Dust inbreathed was a house—
The walls, the wainscot and the mouse,
The death of hope and despair,
 This is the death of air.
There are flood and drouth
Over the eyes and in the mouth,
Dead water and dead sand
Contending for the upper hand.
The parched eviscerate soil
Gapes at the vanity of toil,
Laughs without mirth.

 This is the death of earth.
Water and fire succeed
The town, the pasture and the weed.
Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied.
Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.

 This is the death of water and fire.

In the uncertain hour before the morning
Near the ending of interminable night
At the recurrent end of the unending
After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
Had passed below the horizon of his homing
While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin
Over the asphalt where no other sound was
Between three districts whence the smoke arose
I met one walking, loitering and hurried
As if blown towards me like the metal leaves
Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.
And as I fixed upon the down-turned face
That pointed scrutiny with which we challenge
The first-met stranger in the waning dusk
I caught the sudden look of some dead master
Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled
Both one and many; in the brown baked features
The eyes of a familiar compound ghost
Both intimate and unidentifiable.
So I assumed a double part, and cried
And heard another's voice cry: 'What! are *you* here?'
Although we were not. I was still the same,
Knowing myself yet being someone other—
And he a face still forming; yet the words sufficed
To compel the recognition they preceded.
And so, compliant to the common wind,
Too strange to each other for misunderstanding,
In concord at this intersection time
Of meeting nowhere, no before and after,
We trod the pavement in a dead patrol.
I said: 'The wonder that I feel is easy,
Yet ease is cause of wonder. Therefore speak:
I may not comprehend, may not remember.'
And he: 'I am not eager to rehearse
My thoughts and theory which you have forgotten.
These things have served their purpose: let them be.
So with your own, and pray they be forgiven
By others, as I pray you to forgive
Both bad and good. Last season's fruit is eaten
And the fullfed beast shall kick the empty pail.
For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
But, as the passage now presents no hindrance
To the spirit unappeased and peregrine
Between two worlds become much like each other,
So I find words I never thought to speak

In streets I never thought I should revisit
When I left my body on a distant shore.
Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
To purify the dialect of the tribe
And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight,
Let me disclose the gifts reserved for age
To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort.
First, the cold friction of expiring sense
Without enchantment, offering no promise
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit
As body and soul begin to fall asunder.
Second, the conscious impotence of rage
At human folly, and the laceration
Of laughter at what ceases to amuse.
And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
Of motives late revealed, and the awareness
Of things ill done and done to others' harm
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.
Then fools' approval stings, and honour stains.
From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.'
The day was breaking. In the disfigured street
He left me, with a kind of valediction,
And faded on the blowing of the horn.

III

There are three conditions which often look alike
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between them,
indifference
Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
Being between two lives—unflowering, between
The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:
For liberation—not less of love but expanding
Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a country
Begins as attachment to our own field of action
And comes to find that action of little importance
Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,
History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,
The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.

Sin is Behovely, but
All shall be well, and
All manner of thing shall be well.
If I think, again, of this place,
And of people, not wholly commendable,
Of no immediate kin or kindness,
But of some peculiar genius,
All touched by a common genius,
United in the strife which divided them;
If I think of a king at nightfall,
Of three men, and more, on the scaffold
And a few who died forgotten
In other places, here and abroad,
And of one who died blind and quiet
Why should we celebrate
These dead men more than the dying?
It is not to ring the bell backward
Nor is it an incantation
To summon the spectre of a Rose.
We cannot revive old factions
We cannot restore old policies
Or follow an antique drum.
These men, and those who opposed them
And those whom they opposed
Accept the constitution of silence
And are folded in a single party.
Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
We have taken from the defeated
What they had to leave us—a symbol:
A symbol perfected in death.
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching.

IV

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre of pyre—
To be redeemed from fire by fire.
Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.

V

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph. And any action
Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat
Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.
We die with the dying:
See, they depart, and we go with them.
We are born with the dead:
See, they return, and bring us with them.
The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree
Are of equal duration. A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.
With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this
Calling

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always—
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

Spiritual Soup

Kurt Venables

Mirrors



I was down at the Y working out the other day. It's the first week of the new year, and there's always a wave of newly resolute faces plugging away on the treadmills, bikes, and machines. Unfortunately, the new faces seem to dwindle as the weeks progress. The free weight room, where I spend most of my time working out, doesn't seem to get as many new faces. The weight room seems reserved for diehards who actually enjoy laboring under crushing weights. The sensation of chalk dust, real dust, and a peculiar musty smell is accompanied by grunts and faces distorted with grimaces. Heaven or hell? A little of both perhaps.

My face was distorted for another reason on that workout day. The walls are covered in mirrors, one was cracked, and near it hung a sign, "Warning: Mirror Cracked." As I looked at it, with the cracks running across the reflection of my face, I saw a disjointed view of myself and reality. I thought this was an apt metaphor for some important spiritual concepts.

The mind is a mirror of reality. The aim of the rational mind is to infer generalizations that accurately describe reality, to grasp truth about the world around us. A mind that is whole and clear resembles a like mirror, reflecting reality in exquisite detail. Unfortunately, many of us construct sometimes elaborate edifices of self deception- we lie to ourselves. Why? Many reasons, perhaps the most important being a misguided effort to preserve self esteem. Instead of addressing problems with ourselves and working through them,

sometimes we simply pretend the problems don't exist, ignore them, and hope they will go away. They don't, of course.

Two of the most important self deceptions are arrogance and what I call the delusion of omniscience. With arrogance, people attempt to artificially inflate their self esteem by thinking they are "better" than others. People extend the logic, thinking that this entitles them to be selfish and that they deserve more "things" than others. With the delusion of omniscience, people convince themselves that they basically already know everything. Rather than putting forth the effort to think and continually learn new things, it is easier to just believe you already know everything. This also engenders an artificial sense of security (nothing bad can happen if you know everything about the world around you) and self esteem.

Self deceptions, of course, are extremely harmful. They mask problems and make spiritual progress nearly impossible. Without an open and clear mind, significant learning is unlikely. In addition, self esteem is built far more effectively by facing problems and working through them. The mind of one who harbors substantial self deceptions is like a cracked mirror, reflecting a distorted view of oneself and reality.

There is another mirror of note, the mirror of the soul, and the mirror of the mind is connected to the mirror of the soul. In fact, they are two sides of the same mirror. The heart, or soul, reflects the Light within. The Light is the pure love that burns within each of us. If the mirror of the soul is whole and pure, it reflects the Light truly. If it is cloudy or cracked, the Light's reflection is dim or distorted. The mind's beliefs affect one's ability to open one's heart to the Light, and the pureness of one's heart affects the mind's ability to grasp truth. The two are interconnected. They are two sides of the same mirror. If the mirror of the mind is cloudy and cracked, so too will be the mirror of the soul.

So we must clear our minds of self deceptions. No thought can be "off limits". We must face our problems and work through them. With an open mind, committed to truth, we can begin to make spiritual progress and allow the Light to fill

our hearts. It has been said that the eyes are the windows or mirrors of the soul. Lines in Matthew discuss the eye and the light:

¹⁹Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

²⁰But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

²¹For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

²²The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

²³But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Matthew, Chapter 6 (King James)

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The Secret Of Spiritual Healing

Stanley Peele

"In order to heal another person, place your hands on the other person with love. God will do the rest."

These remarkable words are true. And the key that unlocks the process is the meaning of the word "love."

My book, *A Simple Guide To Spiritual Healing*, is designed to help the reader enter into "a state of love." This is not only difficult, it is much more difficult than most people understand. Maryanne Williamson describes this struggle in her book, *A Return To Love*. We reach a point in our lives when we believe we can exist in a state of love, only to find our old habits creep back; and we repeat the same old mistakes, again and again. The physical body is not used to the state of love. The world does not welcome a state of love.

So, when we get into a state of love, all the elements, both inside and outside us exert continuous pressure on us to return to the old pathways.

Therefore, in order to enter into a state of love, there must be a radical transformation. It cannot be done by soft music and pious platitudes. It requires us to do something which takes great courage. It is this: we must look at ourselves fearlessly, confront the dark side, and then to take the extraordinary step of banishing the darkness.

Eva Pierrakos and Donovan Thesenga explain this in the book, *Fear No Evil*. The title explains the process. We must look at ourselves without fear.

For most people, entering into a state of love is an on-again, off-again process. We read an inspiring book, or listen to a gifted talk, and for a while, we feel we are in a state of love. But then we stub our toe, or get angry and, lo and behold, the state of love is gone!

In fact, true enlightenment is that state of mind in which we are in a never-ending state of love. Those that cannot reach this state of bliss can work toward entering into this state as often and as long as possible. That is, we can train ourselves to enter into a state of love when we intend to do spiritual healing.

And we can do it in a variety of situations. For instance, we can seek that state when we walk on the beach, stand on a mountaintop, hear beautiful music, or hear a baby laugh.

We can also strive to do it in difficult situations, such as, when we stub our toe, when a friend disrespects us, in the dentist's chair, or at a funeral.

There is another part of the meaning of the word "love." It is letting go of ego. Some of us want to be healers so that we can be respected and admired by others. We want to do healing for the drama.

"The Impersonal Life" is a book that explains how we can rid ourselves of the ego when we seek to heal others. Those who want to heal others usually put their heart and soul into the process; and that is desirable; yet the best healers are the ones who can do it in an impersonal way, that is, desiring no reward whatsoever, no accolades, no fame, no appreciation, no riches. The healer simply does the work, and leaves the rest to God.

Once we do this, then the healing process becomes natural, relaxed and joyful. We reach a place where we connect with universal force. Then we do not "push" the healing energy into the patient. We allow the energy to go into the patient.

And when the healer goes into a state of love, she puts her hand on the patient. The healer's hand merges with the patient. Healer and patient become one. There is no healer. There is no patient. All there is, is love.

Sonnets 33 – 35

William Shakespeare

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine,
With all triumphant splendour on my brow;
But out, alack, he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace:
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.

35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done:
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud:
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are;
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,
Thy adverse party is thy advocate,
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:
Such civil war is in my love and hate,
That I an accessory needs must be,
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.