

Only Here, Only Now...

Good morning and thank you for joining us in celebration this morning. Isn't it good to be alive on this beautiful Fall morning? Life is so good, yes? It is absolutely worth celebrating. As a way of supporting our local organic growers, I have been doing most of my grocery shopping at the Farmer's Market this past spring and summer. Every Saturday I am amazed at the abundance that surrounds me, and yesterday... probably because I have been living with this month's theme in my awareness... I was once again reminded of how many ways we are *Living From the Overflow*. Aren't we blessed to have so much nutritious food readily available?

There are a couple of Holy Days I would like to acknowledge this morning. On September 18, the Jewish community began their celebration of **Rosh Hashanah**, which commemorates the creation of the world and marks the beginning of the *Days of Awe*, a 10-day period of introspection and repentance that culminates in the **Yom Kippur** holiday, also known as the Day of Atonement. **Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur** are the two "High Holy Days" in the Jewish religion.

When I look at these Holy Days through the lens of Metaphysics and Mysticism, what I find is an opportunity to celebrate the create process that is forever at work... to think about it, notice it in nature and in my life. And it is an opportunity to give thanks for the life that supports mine. This is followed by a 10-day period of getting quiet, to look within (introspection), and to discover little pockets of *stinkin' thinkin'* that may be lurking in there, so that we can think again... change our minds, consciously change the focus of our thoughts (repent). And finally, Yom Kippur offers a chance to remember who we really are. It is a day of atonement... at-one-ment... an opportunity to realign ourselves with the highest Truth that we know in this moment. Isn't that awesome?

This is also the time of the harvest. We just celebrated the Fall Equinox on September 22. Do you know that almost all countries and cultures celebrate the harvest? This is one of the oldest and most shared traditions in the world. It is a practice honored by people of diverse religious backgrounds, as well as those practicing no religion. It seems to be something that all people can agree on... which in and of itself is pretty miraculous.

Did you know that the practice of taking Holy Communion grew out of a Pagan ritual? It was originally part of a harvest celebration. Rev. Karyl Huntley, author of *Real Life Rituals*, wrote this:

"For as long as grain has been domesticated, the blessing of the first grain cut and the bread made from it have constituted holy acts. The blessing and eating of the bread in this ritual is reminiscent of the Christian Communion, but this ceremony actually has its roots in a much earlier time."

She goes on to describe a ritual that is done in a circle representing the cycle of the grain, the planting, growing, harvesting, and consumption. It honors those beings who did the work; it acknowledges the bread as a symbol of all earthly sustenance, and as that which transforms to become the body; and it offers both blessing and thanksgiving to Divine Mother. It is a beautiful ritual... maybe we'll give it a try as part of our Thanksgiving ritual in the future.

I love introducing the various holidays and traditions to our celebration services. I think it helps to remind us of who we are, where we've come from, and how we are all connected.

Let's take a moment before we go any further for our own short ritual... to remember and sense our connection as human beings... coming together with a common desire... to be the change we wish to see in our world... to take part in the conscious evolution of humanity... so that we can leave the world better than we found it for our children and their children.

Let's take a couple of deep breaths, and with each breath, allow yourself to settle into a field of Peaceful and Powerful Aliveness, where we are all One, vibrating together... and feel into this moment, into the gathering of this sacred community.

Feel into the gratitude that we feel for having this time to re-center ourselves... to reconnect with what we know to be True...

Visualize with me a global web of consciousness, each of us a point of Light, all connected across the planet, all beings who in this moment, might be sitting in meditation or prayer, might be attending sacred services... acknowledging the Presence of the Divine... consciously connected by our whole-hearted devotion... feeling the collective intention that brought us here... feeling the impulse to grow and evolve that's awakening in all of us.

As we sense this very intimate connection, breathe in the Peace and Power of this moment, and then send it back out on your breath as you exhale, into the Cosmos...

And then breathing in Loving Kindness and letting it radiate out in every direction as you exhale... letting go of all concern and settling into this time of deep connection.

I think it's important to establish our oneness with other beings. It lends power to the work we are doing here together.

This season of harvest, where at least for those of us listening today, there is such abundance available, it seems appropriate to talk about *Living from the Overflow*... our theme for this month.

And rather than focus only on the material aspects of our abundance, I have been taking a look at the soul's journey and how it is only when we are allowing ourselves to be guided by our deepest knowing, our soul's longings and promptings, our heart's deepest desires, that we are truly filled to overflowing.

So far this month, we have asked a couple of questions... remember what they were? What if the personal soul is a container for Consciousness as it moves from one lifetime or existence to another? And what if our evolution and growth in this lifetime follows us to our next experience?

We considered the words of Thomas Merton, who said, "Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul." And I think we agreed that *if this is* what is happening, we ought to be very careful what we allow to be planted. This just might be a really long-term commitment!

We have also looked at what it means to *Trust the Journey*, and how we place our faith (either consciously or unconsciously) in different beliefs as we seek to find meaning in this life we are living. And we talked about three possible benefits of placing our faith in the journey of the soul.

And finally, we shared a contemplation about the soul from author Sam Torrode. I'm going to ask Chris to put this one on the screen because it's a little bit long and I want you to be able to drink it in:

"We intuitively discern what is beautiful, good, and true. Our inner compass unfailingly points to that magnetic North. The reason you are drawn to beauty, goodness, and truth – in nature, art, and other people – is because these qualities belong to the soul. They were already present within you before you ever saw them outside yourself. To the extent that you are connected with the soul, you'll naturally pursue these qualities and display them in your life."

Isn't that beautiful? ...and it offers food for thought.

As we bring our month to a close this morning with today's topic – *Only Here, Only Now* - the obvious question arises: *Where, when, and how can I tap into this Overflow?*

Video: Living in the Present Moment Eckhart Tolle & Oprah Winfrey; music by Fearless Soul

"Be true to Life by being true to this moment...there is always only this one step, and so you give it your fullest attention...The step you are taking right now is primary, the destination is secondary. And what you encounter at your destination once you get there, depends on the quality of this one step...You decide what kind of future you will experience by deciding to be totally aligned with the present moment."

Only Here, Only Now. That's all there is.

I want to invite Dalton to sing us a prayer of Invocation, so that we might call ourselves to a higher awareness of Inner Wisdom or Divine Guidance as we move into our final contemplation.

Music: *Invocation* by Dalton Fitzgerald (Written by Rev. Diana Johnson)

With that invitation to move into the silence, I want to ask you a couple more questions in full faith, that the Wisdom within each of you has the answers. The answers may not come right away... you may have to sit with each one individually. Or your Highest Knowing may just be waiting for you to ask...

Here is the first question. *What does it mean for you to consciously live from the overflow?*

Next...*Are you consciously living from the overflow in every area of your life?*

If so, how? If not, when will you begin?

It is in the stopping, the breathing, the listening, that we can hear the whispering of the heart. We can feel the longings of the soul. Somewhere deep inside, we have everything we will ever need to live a meaningful and contented life... a life filled with all kinds of experiences. We will know Love, Joy, Peace, Beauty, Freedom and Kindness... and we will likely experience hard times, sadness, pain, and loss. And all of it is part of the human experience... all of it grows us, moves the soul along its evolutionary path. All of it is holy. And in all of it, there are blessings.

We come to understand how meeting our challenges has made us stronger, and maybe a little wiser. We grow in awareness, and in time we find that we can maintain our equanimity in the presence of challenge...

We begin to recognize the Overflow... the Grace that carries us when we relax... let go... and allow it to. And we are so grateful for all of our blessings... for Life Itself.

Know with me now... that there is one Creative Intelligence, called by many names... that this One is now, has always been, and will forever be the process of Life unfolding. Know with me that this Life has taken form as all of Creation, and so I know that each of us is a perfect and intentional expression of Divine Intelligence in action, exactly as we are, and exactly as we are not. Know with me that everything is always being turned to Good... we know this as surely as evolution continues its process. And know with me that the spark of Divinity is present in all of it, no matter the appearance, moving Creation toward greater and greater harmony and unity.

For all of this, and for my deep faith, I am grateful. I give thanks for every member of our spiritual family, for our time together, for the sharing of our journeys, and for all of the blessings of this day. I release my word, here and now, to the Power and Presence that brings it into form and experience, trusting completely in its power to shift consciousness. I accept the Higher Intelligence, Deeper Wisdom, and Informed Action that is the result of

this prayer... and I accept it not only for myself, but for all of humanity. And so here and now, I call it done. I let it be. And so it is. Amen!