

THE FLOW OF LIFE

PULSE OF SPIRIT
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There are two great bodies of water in Israel that share a common source. The Jordan River feeds both the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The difference is that the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee from the north and exits from the south, while the Dead Sea has no river or stream that exits from it. Water flows through the Sea of Galilee. It doesn't flow through the Dead Sea.

As a result of the flow of water, the Sea of Galilee is home to various flora and fauna and it has supported a significant commercial fishery for more than two millennia.

Swimming in the Dead Sea is amusing. It is one of the world's saltiest bodies of water, and you bob up on top of the water in a way that I haven't experienced anywhere else. It has been a source of salt and other products down through history. But the Dead Sea does not sustain life; hence its name.

These two seas are a metaphor for the human

experience. The Dead Sea is the human experience when the energizing flow of life that enters it does not flow out. The inspiration of life circulates for a time through thought and emotion, and through the physical experience. But when thinking and feeling become circular and repetitive, they lead nowhere.

This is a picture of spiritual lethargy and stagnation—an experience of ever-diminishing life. The individual is receiving the gift of life from the Great Mystery. But they are not paying it forward. They are not giving the gift they have been given to the world. So the flow coming in has no place to go, blocked by the stagnant consciousness and stagnant energy.

The Sea of Galilee is the human experience when the energizing flow of life enters the human capacity, does its magic in body, mind and heart, and flows out to the world. This flow activates the person through whom it is

moving. The outflow creates room for more to flow in. Even though there may be a temporary emptiness when a person has given their gift, nature abhors a vacuum. So the emptiness is soon filled from the flow that emerges from within.

Did you ever catch yourself in circular thinking and feeling, in which there is nothing fresh, and you keep revisiting the same old stuff? That state of existence is a state of separateness that occurs when the flow that connects us with our own inner reality and with the world around us has dwindled. For spiritual or religious people with a blocked creative flow, there can be a kind of self-righteous piety that lacks the courage to truly allow the gift of one's own creative flow to be given to the world. That leads to stagnation.

With that kind of piety often comes a pattern of self-righteousness and judgment of self and others. The person experiences a lack of flow within themselves and in their world that, like the Dead Sea, doesn't sustain life. They keep trying to correct the situation. If you are in the world, they may try to correct you. But "correcting" stagnation does not bring life.

In that experience, a person may keep trying to heal, physically, mentally and emotionally. But without the natural flow-through in the person's experience, those attempts are futile, perhaps providing some temporary belief but no real change. They may keep

trying to get their life balanced according to their own ideas as to how that should happen. But the minute some kind of seeming balance is achieved, it comes undone, because there is no balance in the human experience without flow.

What I'm saying is that we have an inclination as human beings to try to do something that shouldn't be done, doesn't need to be done, and can't be done—trying to gain a state of comfort and goodness as an island unto ourselves. What I notice is that we who participate in spiritual programs are highly prone to this. We are highly prone to try to get it all right at Sunrise Ranch or in Emissaries of Divine Light or in ourselves as individuals. We are going to get our spirituality to be just as it should be, and it never happens. It doesn't happen for us as an individual. And then we can blame it on everyone else who isn't acting like they should.

Sometimes there seems to be a golden moment where it seems to all come together. But it doesn't last and it can't, because without the strong flow of life current through us and given generously to the world, we are trying to do something that's impossible. Attaining a state of perfection without the flow-through of spiritual energy and awareness through oneself is not spiritual, even though there is a great temptation in the human psyche to believe that it is.

The spiritual is in the flow. And *being in the flow* means that there is something profound that we are letting in. It is changing us and invigorating us. And then we are passing it on. We are not trying to become perfect in the community where I live at Sunrise Ranch. We're here to be of service, which means we are here to take something in and give it to the world.

We are not resting on our laurels or trying to become perfect according to some human concept. We are here to let it in and let it out like the Sea of Galilee. That takes a fundamental generosity and faith that there is a returning cycle that supports all that is in its flow.

We're not here to be the Dead Sea.

I am hoping that I have drawn a vivid distinction, and that the difference between being the Sea of Galilee and being the Dead Sea is easily discernible. It is clear to me

because I've seen and been in both, and the circular experience—particularly the spiritual version—is stultifying. The solution is true reciprocity—gratitude for the unique gift of life and inspiration that we have each been given, and the willingness to pass it on. It is the courage to give our gift to the world. For real.

I embrace this shift on behalf of all humanity, all spiritual paths, and all religions. How about you? Embracing this shift, we live. In stagnation, we die.

Here's our golden opportunity to open up the flow of life; to let it in and to let it out; to blow the doors off spiritual lethargy and become spiritually activated people in the world.

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