

PHASE IV

or

An Elders Reflection on the Stream of Life

or

The Process of Growing Old

Life increases by leaps and bounds.

You have accumulated knowledge like never before.

Your awareness of what is going on in the world is authenticated with personal visits and involvements.

Your comprehension seems to have grown inversely with the shrinking of the globe.

Your range of beginnings and visions of futures find limits falling before every probe.

Your understanding of the human gift of every person, community, and culture is one of continued discovery and amazement.

Inside you feel like you are a perpetual youth.

Working with 20 year olds seems normal and invigorating.

Your awareness of the human condition and depth of suffering seems to continuously imbue your being in unbounded acceleration.

The heavy burden of life and the future becomes less crushing and more of an intimate working relationship.

You have more spirit energy than ever before.

And yet,

Changes take place that are most surprising and shocking.

Strange things seem to happen to your body,

strange aches and pains appear, glasses become stronger, more minor and major repairs are required, sounds get weaker, more physical threats come as immediate possibilities, distances become longer, parts don't work as well, coordination is askew, strength wanes, people speak more softly, details get misplaced, connecting memories hide, rest seems to demand more attention, excesses don't require as great an experimentation.

Socially, new realms and relationships appear.

There seems to arise, especially in the youth, new modes of being, that like new lands greatly elicit the travel urge, yet no one is quick to grant you a visa.

It seems like all the mass of knowledge you have accumulated needs to be poured into a kaleidoscope hoping that the next picture will be freed from the past in order to deal with the new.

It seems that illusions and hoaxes in yourself and in society become more irritating and demanding of remedial action.

It seems that models, plans, images, structures, and symbols have to be created that transcend all types of economic, political, racial, philosophical, religious, and cultural divisions that separate persons from persons, groups from groups, and societies from societies in order to create the new world community.

It seems that more and more avenues of participation need to be devised for all people so that, from whatever station or position, they may enter into creating the structures of the new world society.

It seems that more and more tenderness and encouragement needs to be given to the dispossessed that are struggling anew to stand, and even more to those that do not know how to struggle.

Life in all dimensions seems to become more holy and inter-related, until you cannot see any part of the environment, the social web, and the extensions into the unknown, as a part separated from the whole.

Life seems to have turned the thinking process around.

Whereas ideas, plans and projections before could be postponed into the future, that now seems like less and less of a viable option.

All the places you wanted to go,
experiences you wanted to have,
things you would like to do,
 seem to become less likely,
and the strange thing is that your desire for such
 seems to have waned,

Living in the now seems to become more of an enticement and demand, more of a spontaneous activity, to be cherished and embodied.

In fact,

Life seems to require more effort:

- to refuse bathing continuously in the great stream of memories;
- to keep from daydreaming into the future and passing by the now;
- to keep open your sensitivity to the deeps of life when physical and mental faculties are deteriorating;
- to stay present to each moment savoring its gift, and
- to learn more from death, as it continuously produces the great detachment, and opens new relationships to the unknown.

And yet,

Life seems to actually require less effort;

- in striving for goals in life, time has run out;
- grasping after your cultural life style, its way of life, traditions, customs and symbols, has been engulfed by the new world;
- even your physical needs now know that the final need cannot be met;
- all of life is given to each person and in watching choicelessly the flow of mind's thoughts, you are released to be totally engaged in the drama of the whole;
- your engagement requires what you have and are, and even that is not your decision;
- the great drama of the universe belongs to each person, and life is no more or no less than your participation in that drama;
- the final engagement lies in and beyond all dramas, in the silence, in the mystery, and there, finally, your life rests. There is nothing to do, nothing to be, nothing to have.

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