

# DIAMOND DUST

IN  
THE  
WORLD  
BUT  
NOT  
OF  
IT

SUMMER 2016









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*“In the world but not of it.”*

What does this actually mean? We quote it in our Diamond Approach work, and I remember it from my Christian upbringing—though when I looked it up, it’s not actually a verse of biblical scripture, it’s more of a common saying in our culture, appropriated by many faith and belief groups and ‘Work schools’ such as ours.

In our new column in this issue of *Diamond Dust*, “Students Speak,” students address the theme. And the idea of “in the world but not of it”—particularly the “in the world” phrase—is naturally arising in other submissions to the issue. This seems to reflect a broad movement in the School: as you will read in Sam Barakat’s article, the ‘fourth activity’ of the School is “forming and evolving a community . . . a community that both supports and expresses the Diamond Approach teaching.”

*But what does it mean?*

Hmm, why not ask someone who might know? Hameed has written an article especially for this issue of the *Diamond Dust*, addressing this topic, which follows this Editor’s Letter. He focuses on *community*. So I’ll step out of the way, and let him help us explore what it means to be in the world, but not of it . . .

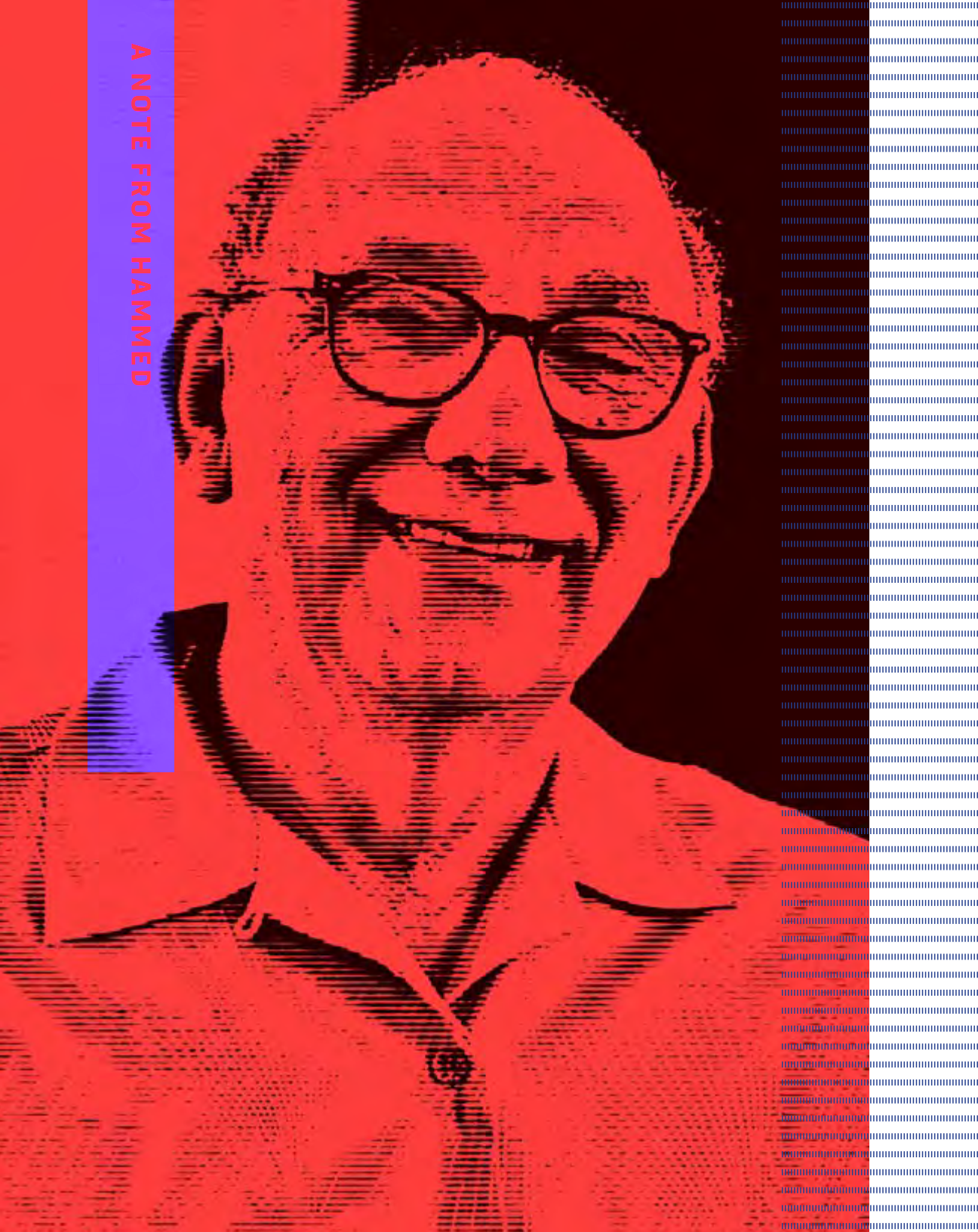
. . . but before I go, I wanted to express my deep gratitude to three of our long-serving *Diamond Dust* editors, who are all moving on after over ten years each of volunteering: Ken Dahlberg, who variously handled Layout and Images while contributing greatly to overall strategic leadership of the *Dust*; Ann DeBaldo, who shepherded our critical “Ask Hameed” column; and Ted Usatynski, who was our Book Review editor. The *Dust* has been shaped by the care and love of these three individuals, and also by the many other student editors who come together to bring you this powerful and creative vehicle for Ridhwan student expression.

Best wishes to those of us fortunate enough to be able to attend Asilomar 2016, and to those who cannot attend but are listening to the audio recordings after the retreat.

DEAN BELLERBY

Managing Editor, *Diamond Dust*





Dear friends, fellow members of the Ridhwan community,

As you have seen, our school has organically grown to be a community. This happened without any prodding or prompting by me. It has been a natural and spontaneous development by the mere fact of congregating together in various groups and retreats to do our work. I appreciate the fact that the community developed by all participating in finding and loving the truth. This makes our community an outgrowth of the way of truth, instead of the various social, cultural, or political needs that usually produce communities.

And you have the *Diamond Dust* as a beautiful expression of your participation in the community. It has developed also to be such an elegant and aesthetically beautiful expression, and at the same time is an expression of our precious work by the members of our community. It is the place where you can post your poems, artistic creativity, your ideas and concerns, and much more. It is also where you find the important announcements about the major happenings in the school, both periodical and new. I regularly read it myself, learning about what you all are thinking and doing.

You also find reports about new developments in the school, and about new committees, such as the committee on diversity and inclusivity, that can discuss matters of race, culture, and gender differences. You are free to write articles about matters of concern in the teaching, or not related directly to the teaching. In other words, we cannot deal with everything in our groups that is of concern in everybody's life; for the groups are focusing on the teaching and development of each person's soul and realization. But here, in the *Diamond Dust*, you find a vehicle to express, inform, and to raise issues and concerns not covered by the teaching.

The participants in this year's Asilomar retreat are the first to be informed of the availability of the new August issue. But it is available to all members of our school worldwide. Read it online or download it. This year, Asilomar is delving into what we all experience as we traverse the path. The emphasis is on the phenomenological features of inner experience in the various stages and realizations, throughout the four turnings of the wheel. What does it feel like in each turning, within our own subjectivity?

As I said, the community has grown by us congregating together in various groups and retreats. Asilomar and Eindhoven are the primary times for the most concentrated

form of the community coming together. We all then have the opportunity not just to meet each other from around the world, but also to practice together, and see how different individuals experience and express things. I use these opportunities to strengthen such ties and to ground them in the truth of the teaching, in addition to giving global teachings that are relevant to all groups. But I do it in a way that stretches some of us, so that we know more about what the Work encompasses. This can have a liberating effect from the engrossment in the teaching we are working with. We get more freedom, which in turn supports us to delve into these teachings in a more effective way because we have a larger view that contains them in a coherent manner.

I encourage you all to read this student-organized and student-run publication, the *Diamond Dust*, and to contribute what you care about, and what your heart finds valuable and beautiful, or of concern. I see the *Diamond Dust* as an important expression of the learning and maturing that is happening in our community. You have the opportunity to put your awakening, insight, realization, and learning out to your fellows in the community in a way that will be either useful or delightful for them.

HAMEED

## STILTE TREKT IIN WENKBRAW

Stilte trekt zijn wenkbrauw op voor mij  
 En steekt plotseling een mes in mijn hart  
 Mijn hart bloedt niet.  
 Het heeft mijn bloed tijds teruggetrokken  
 Naar de haarvaten van mijn liefde voor een ande

Waar is mijn bloed?  
 Waar is het water ?  
 In welke vreemde bedding stroomt mijn rivier?

Ik ga op reis van de wijd open zee  
 van werkelijkheid

Naar de bron van de  
 waarvan ik ook delta ben

Ik ben de reis zoals een reis zelf  
 De weg is over het water stroomopwaarts naar  
 die bron van mijn hart  
 dat niet bloeden kan

Onderweg in zonsopgang en zonsondergang  
 zie ik bloedrode vingers van verlangen

De ene hand gooit een dag tegen lucht aan  
 als een platte bal vol vuur  
 De andere houdt zich tenslotte vast  
 aan een bloedrode kam van gebergte  
 om niet te vallen in het zwart tegen zwart

## SILENCE LIFTS ITS EYEBROW

Silence lifts its eyebrow when meeting me  
 Cuts a knife in my heart with a punch  
 My heart doesn't bleed  
 It has in time withdrawn its blood  
 to the smallest veins of my love for someone else?

Where has my blood gone?  
 Where is the water?  
 In which strange watercourse does my river stream?

Starting from the wide open sea of reality

to the well of the river  
 whose delta territory I am also

I am the journey as well as the travel itself  
 road passing on water streams upwards  
 to that spring of my heart  
 unable to bleed

Journeying in sundawn to sundown  
 I see fingers of bloodred desire

The one hand pitches a day at sky  
 as a flat ball full of fire  
 The other finally holds tight on  
 a bloodred crest of mountain tops  
 to avoid falling in the black on black

In kreten van doodsnood zie ik het bloed  
van kinderen met de kleur van dieppaarse inkt  
een geronnen woede die oeverloze pijn aangeeft  
als van een etsnaald in het vlees van de zuigeling

In zacht kermen van een hond  
Zie ik het dierlijk bloedspoor in maagdelijk  
witte sneeuw  
vers van onschuld  
een te vroeg getemd dier

Er hangt stilte als vochtige mist  
Een damp tussen de bomen daar is de bron  
Het ruist er en klopt er zacht en teder  
Tegen de membramen aan van mijn borst  
Van binnenuit  
De handwerksman van woorden dept zacht  
het vocht van zien rondom

Het is de nooit gebroken stilte  
Geen wachten op iets  
Geen tak breekt geen mens heeft verstoord  
of verraden

Er was al eerder mild licht  
Deze stilte is de vriend van oudsher  
Van deze stilte viel het mes in de bron  
En ik sloot verzoenend vriendschap  
Met mijn herinnering  
Aan liefde voor mijzelf

In screams of mortal fear I see the children's blood  
with the color of deep purple ink  
a clotted anger that indicates borderless pains  
as if it were a dry needle pointing in the flesh of a baby

In soft groaning of a dog  
I imagine the animal bloodtrace  
in virgin white snow  
fresh with innocence  
a prematurely tamed animal

Silence damps foggy  
Between trees there is the source  
It murmurs and palpitates tenderly  
against the membranes  
from inside out  
The craftsman of words dabs  
damp of seeing around

It shows up as the never broken silence  
Not a waiting for anything  
No branch breaks no man has disturbed  
or betrayed

Earlier on there was mild light  
This silence is the archetypical friend  
From this silence the knife dropped in the well  
and I befriended my memory  
in conciliation  
with love to myself



Walking through the forest of my mind  
 Colliding with shadows  
 Hiding from light  
 Hoping for a landing  
 on which to rest

Alone with 99 others  
 who help me see myself  
 As I compare, complain, project  
 protest, i'm angry and I can't forget  
 the past  
 My body knows, it shows  
 I'm scared that everyone will know

I get to talk to you, a pearl  
 We sit, you stare  
 I'm scared to share  
 I'm young enough  
 yet my face is showing signs  
 And I know that I too will die

One day I boldly say  
 I don't know how to live this way  
 As my outside crumbles  
 It reminds me everyday  
 I won't be here for long  
 It just won't go away

You take your time  
 your loving gaze  
 stays  
 As you prepare to share the way  
 you've come to understand  
 this phase

Yes, you say, it's true  
 The body crumbles but that's not all  
 The alchemy of truth and love  
 is like a clarion call  
 So while these forces all collide  
 And youth departs  
 Enjoy the ride—and know  
 You're becoming shinier on the inside

## SHINIER ON THE INSIDE

**A SPOKEN-WORD POEM** "You become shinier on the inside." These words were spoken to me during a three-month silent Vipassana retreat back in the fall of 2003. My teacher at the time assured me that, although aging is inevitable, one's inner world becomes 'shinier' with loving practice. The simple beauty of life becomes more deeply accessible at the same time as the 'outer beauty' of the body declines. Her words came back to me during my DH7 group meeting in January this year when I felt the truth of her words in my being, and the fruition of so much deep work. When we were invited during life practice to bring projects from home, I decided to work on a poem (maybe someday to become a song) and this is what popped out!

Click on the icon below to hear "Shinier on the Inside"...



or  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6K3PqIQae3iVWRrTkNQUEFXams>

# living school voices living

Our Ridhwan School is an ever-changing, living organism, of which we students and teachers are vital and valuable cells. There are possibly more than 3,500 Ridhwan students around the world, and it seems this number could increase, especially in this innovative and exciting time of growth and outreach. We are witnessing the birth of new modalities for sharing the teachings with a greater number of students, present and potential; New teachers are being ordained; and we can now meet together electronically in larger groups and small pods. Because of this technology, there are far greater possibilities for new groups to form worldwide. It is indeed a brave new world.

Another phenomenon seems to be arising in the school. We are curious, truth-loving students, concerned about the school's structure, as well as its involvement with external social concerns. Challenging inquiries about these issues now circulate with increased vitality among the student body. I hold an increasing awareness of the many vibrant voices arising from my fellow students of all ages, many socially and politically engaged, and many having a desire for our school to inquire more deeply into internal and external issues of social justice.

This issue of the *Diamond Dust* presents some of these voices. Debra Bronstein's well informed article outlines some of the conversations currently opening up in various groups, as well as actions students and teachers have been taking. Sam Barakat's thoughtful piece addresses the question of community within and outside of the school, and provides inquiries for exploration. Like Sanjen Miedjkowski's Earth Action Network, new groups are forming to explore and discover more deeply.

Such conversations inspire my own curiosity about how our school might expand and open itself up to a much larger demographic.

- How will the Ridhwan School emerge from its previous entity of little-known mystery school, and expand outward into the world?
- How might we be seen by the greater world of spiritual practitioners and schools, and by potential students?
- Will the school choose to respond to certain vital social issues? Some students seem to be calling for this.
- What might inspire a potential student to investigate our school; attend a Quasar or introductory weekend; and how might that person continue on to become a committed student, given challenges of time and economics?

My own experience with Hameed and Karen, at the US RISNG retreat this spring, revealed that our founders are vitally engaged in and open to exploring issues about the school, as presented by its students. They acknowledge that the school is an evolving entity, a “young Pearl” in the world. They seem to feel that a primary purpose of the school at this time is to bring the teachings forward and made more available to a larger number of people. As I listened, I recognized the tremendous and loving responsibility that both Hameed and Karen have toward us and the school. From this perspective it could be said that not-knowing itself is shaping our trajectory.

Writing this piece, I'm no longer the activist I once was; no longer attending demonstrations (though I feel the “great grief” about the state of our planet and do my own small part for its cause). I don't share the beliefs of every challenging word I've heard recently, either within the school or in the media. What's significant to me here is not that our school be strongly engaged with every social concern. It's more that our teachers listen closely to those who do feel strongly and who may be conflicted in their relationship to the school—with ways it does or does not engage—in order to provide a response that supports the evolving entity our school is. Indeed, some of these souls may be the future of our school, and I do believe they should be heard.

I am amazed to have found this profoundly transformative path; gratitude and respect for Hameed and Karen clearly supersede my occasional polarity with the school. If you have a response to the concerns voiced in this and consequent issues of the *Diamond Dust*, or if you would like to write an article sharing your views of these topics, please contact me: [dd@snowcreative.com](mailto:dd@snowcreative.com). ♦





# vision of diversity and inclusivity

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The following Vision was approved by the Synod and endorsed by Hameed on November 15, 2015.

In its view of the realization of True Nature, the Diamond Approach provides a path for the realization of the individual soul as a unique expression of this primordial nature. The Diamond Approach's view of totality embraces both the particular expressions of True Nature and the undifferentiated, boundless depth of all manifestation. While the essential templates for this expression are universal, the particular shapes they find are unique to each soul. Souls are influenced not only by personal history but also by culture, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, age, physical ability, and various other differences between human beings. The Diamond Approach appreciates these differences and is open to understanding them more deeply, including examining our blind spots in these areas.

As part of this vision, we recognize the effects on power and privilege arising from these differences, and that these effects may be both individual and systemic as well as visible and invisible. We seek to reduce these effects in individual sessions, group teachings, and the training and development of Diamond Approach Teacher-Ministers. We also seek to express this vision in the organizational structures, policies, procedures, and functioning throughout the Ridhwan Foundation. We recognize that ongoing action is necessary

to make this path available to all who might genuinely benefit from it. At a minimum, we do not discriminate against students based on culture, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, age, physical ability, or other categories of difference. In addition, our vision actively promotes a teaching, an organization, and a world in which all expressions of True Nature are recognized, valued, and integrated into the rich expression of the totality of being. As with the Diamond Approach itself, this vision is growing and evolving, and we understand the need for an active and ongoing engagement with it. ♦



VEIL BY DORIS WALDMANN EU4

**RICHARD WEHRMAN**

Ridhwan student working  
with Jane Bronson

## ALL OF IT

All of it gathers,  
a cohesion of the  
old memories, people  
and places, everything  
known and woven  
into the intricate mesh  
of life, the one and only  
your own, the history  
of you, not dead  
but alive, still living  
in this instant,  
the childhood, the  
coming awake, the loving  
and living, the ignorance  
and the pain, the  
pleasures and the  
joys—yours—wrapping  
it all in, one unity  
of you, gathered in  
gold, silver and  
jewels, this one  
precious life,  
incomprehensibly  
yours.



# actualizing the Ridhwan diversity & inclusivity vision

Have you ever wondered why the demographic of our school is largely so homogeneous? This question may not have been pressing for those of us who are white, able-bodied, straight, middle-aged, and middle class, but for students who belong to one of the nondominant categories of identification, it has been paramount. Imagine coming into your first Diamond Heart meeting as a black or brown person, a gay or transgendered person, as disabled, young, or working class. Would you feel that you belonged in this school, or that your personal experience would be recognized and appreciated?

The stirrings in our Ridhwan community have mirrored the stirrings that have been happening in our different countries. There is a burgeoning awareness that those of us who are part of the dominant culture have been asleep to the realities of otherness, and that we need to wake up. By examining our own position in a world where inequities and injustices abound, we begin the process through which a richer, more diverse community will be possible.

# what's happening now within our school

Please note:  
The following is a brief discussion of (primarily) US diversity projects that are now underway. Any exclusion is unintentional and due only to our ignorance about what is happening elsewhere!

Please educate us by writing to one or more of the contacts listed below, and/or by writing your own article for the *Dust*!

## Sexuality and Gender

After a 2012 retreat on the sexual instincts and sexuality, Karen and Hameed asked Jill Davey and Jose Feito to do some research within the school regarding perceptions of sexuality and gender, specifically regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Jill and Jose first contacted teachers who either are LGBT or who have done work around LGBT issues within their groups. These individuals formed the Sexuality and Gender Committee. In 2013, Sexuality and Gender gatherings were held at the European summer retreat, the combined US/EU seminary retreat, the EU RISNG retreat, and Asilomar. In 2014, another event was held for teachers at Asilomar.

At each of these gatherings, questions about gender and sexuality were discussed in groups of five, after which participants wrote about their experiences. These written comments—as well as other information gleaned from the groups—were compiled into a preliminary report that was circulated within the teacher body. Earlier this year, Jill held an online discussion with some New Zealand students, and additional online meetings have been requested by other groups. A more complete report on this work will be made available to the full student body in the future.

Jill Davey, [jill@jpdcom.com](mailto:jill@jpdcom.com)

## Race and Ridhwan

In 2013, Diane Woods, a black woman in DA San Francisco (DASF), spoke with a white fellow student during a lunch break and stated that she could no longer remain in the school without the development of a dialog about racism and privilege. At that time, DASF had been meeting for nine years, and Diane's experience as a black woman in the culture of the school had not been addressed in any way that felt meaningful to her. What ensued was the formation of a small group of students from DASF who started meeting regularly to begin the dialog about race amongst themselves. In 2015, this committee brought their dialog into the field of the school at Asilomar and in a daylong inquiry at the Berkeley Center in November. Plans are underway this year for another evening of inquiry at Asilomar on August 1, and another daylong at the Berkeley Center on September 10.

Debra Bronstein, [debrabronstein@gmail.com](mailto:debrabronstein@gmail.com)

## The Gulf Coast Diversity Project

In February 2016, Ann Gleig, Brianna Bassler, and Marissa Miller, students in the Gulf Coast (GCDA) Group, began a weekly inquiry into the related topics of racial identity, racism, and white privilege. At their big group retreat this past April, they invited their fellow students to join them in this dialog. As a result, twenty-five members of the GCDA group committed to doing their own four-week triadic inquiries into this topic. A second large group discussion and inquiry is planned for the next GCDA retreat later this year. Under consideration for future work in this area is the possibility of sponsoring a race awareness training, and the formation of a reading group to explore some of the seminal writings on racism and white privilege.

Ann Gleig, [cocteau45@hotmail.com](mailto:cocteau45@hotmail.com)



Please know that all of the committees mentioned in this article are happy to share resources and ideas with anyone interested.

## The Youth Council

In an effort to understand how best to reach, invite, and serve students under forty, the Outreach Steering Committee, which was set up by the Synod, decided to establish two youth councils, both composed of a core group of ten or twelve students, who entered the Work in their twenties and thirties. One group will be composed of students from North America (Canada and the US) and Australia, the other of students drawn from EU groups.

Willem Overwijk, a member of Gulf Regions DA4, agreed to head up the North American/ Australian council. He has completed an initial round of interviews with about twenty younger students, which has revealed the challenges younger people face, both in finding their way to the Diamond Approach and in thriving within it. The EU group is just coming together under the leadership of Karin Tibben, a member of DANS2. It is a goal of the Youth Council groups to support younger students to feel that their particular experience, perspectives, and contributions are valued and considered.

Jorge Arango, [jorge@jsarango.com](mailto:jorge@jsarango.com)

## The Diversity and Inclusivity Committee

Jeanne Rosenblum, a member of the Synod, started this committee at Asilomar 2015, where interested students and teachers met to begin a conversation about diversity. Afterwards, a steering committee of both students and teachers was formed for the purpose of developing strategies for increasing consciousness within our school about the experience of difference. Jeanne saw this committee as being an “umbrella” group to support all areas of diversity work within the school.

It seemed clear to the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) committee that if our school is to include all who seek to discover and know themselves essentially, the teachings must be presented in such a way as to encourage the exploration of our personal blind spots within the inquiries. As a step in this direction, the Vision Statement (page 10) was sent to all teachers in February of this year. Included with the statement was a set of inquiry questions developed by the steering committee and recommended as a departure point for the exploration of their relationship to otherness. These questions are as follows:

- 1 How comfortable are you considering that you have blind spots around culture, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, age, and physical ability?
- 2 How has the development of your soul been defined by, or constrained by, ideas or beliefs of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, age, and physical ability?
- 3 What was your conditioning around any of these topics?
- 4 Do you feel comfortable working with these issues with your students or do you tend to stay away from it? If it is difficult, what makes it difficult?

It is the hope of the D&I Committee that these questions will be used by students and teachers alike for inquiries within different groups and circles. Also currently being proposed and under consideration by the Synod is the formation of a scholarship fund for new students.

Debra Bronstein, [debrabronstein@gmail.com](mailto:debrabronstein@gmail.com)

# what is the “diamond heart” community?

Inspired by the “Being in the World” theme of this issue of the *Diamond Dust*, I would like to share some developing personal views and questions about the community aspect of the Ridhwan School. What does it mean to be part of the “Diamond Heart Community”? How is community experienced or recognized? Do we act in the world in a particular way as this community?

The views expressed here are my own, enriched by informal discussions with fellow students and in meetings of the School's strategic planning and finance committees. If other students' interests are sparked, I am interested in hearing from them to broaden the circle of inquiry.

## FORMING AND EVOLVING A COMMUNITY

The Visioning Document of the Ridhwan School states the School's purpose as *“fundamentally a vehicle for Reality to express itself in the world in the most refined, evolved and mature manner possible.”*

The School fulfills this purpose by undertaking four activities:

- 1 Making the teaching available
- 2 Training teachers
- 3 Disseminating the Diamond Approach teaching
- 4 Forming and evolving a community**

The fourth activity states in full: *“Forming and evolving a community of individuals who feel a deep connection and affinity with this teaching, and who are inclined to express their spiritual maturity in the world as a contribution to the world and human life.”*

It seems to me that the four activities above reflect an evolutionary process. Reality expressed itself through Hameed, Karen, and other initial teachers and students; and a structure of the School emerged over time as more students appeared, curious and hungry for the Work. A formal training program for teachers was developed to meet the needs of the growing number of students, and to ensure the ongoing availability and integrity of the Diamond Approach logos. Dissemination of the teaching manifested through published books and through ongoing groups which have continued to form with the support of a growing number of ordained teachers. While each of these activity areas continues to evolve, the fourth area, the potential for the development of a community of what is now an international body of thousands of students, seems to warrant some particular attention.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines community as a “unified body of individuals.” Other definitions include “society at large” and “joint ownership and participation.” The teachers and students are a community unified by the teaching. And there is a lot of “community” that happens on many levels within the School.



In addition to the School community and its teachings, of course, many individuals and groups within the Diamond Heart Community are also contributing to the world and human life in other ways. There are myriad service providers who actively support healing in people; through meditation retreats, in-depth personal exploration, yoga, energy and body work, trauma therapy, etc. Others are involved in hospice work or assisting the disadvantaged or addressing environmental issues. There are also group efforts of service that have developed organically, such as the Life Death Transition Service Group (LDTSG) and the *Diamond Dust*. And, of course, there is the broader reality, that many individuals deeply connected to the teaching are functioning in whatever “doing” capacity in the world with presence, which itself creates ripple effects.

And yet, I get the sense from my conversations with fellow students that there is a wish for a deeper sense of belonging to a community that both supports and expresses the Diamond Approach teaching. Some students say there isn't enough “heart” in the School. Some report that while they experience a deeply impactful field of love and support when on retreat, they lose connection with this when off retreat; they feel that connecting during retreats does not necessarily support daily action or expression in the world. Other students have expressed a desire to participate in a service project as part of the Diamond Heart Community, but feel unsupported; or that the primary path of service is to become a teacher. Still others have come to find the cost of continuing in the teaching to be burdensome, and I can't help but wonder if this might be related to feeling that the teaching or the group is not tangibly related to their daily lives. For me personally, I feel that the School community has significantly more potential and that we, both individually and collectively, are limiting our vision as to what could unfold.

## WHAT IS THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN FORMING COMMUNITY?

I get the sense there is an emerging impetus for more community, whether this means community within the School or functioning collectively in some type of service to benefit the larger world. If the School supports the development of *“individuals who feel a deep connection and affinity with this teaching, and who are inclined to express their spiritual maturity in the world as a contribution to the world and human life,”* how does this *form and evolve into a community*?

Is there currently some unmet potential or aspects of community that we are looking for as students in the School? If so, is there a role for “the School” to proactively support those in some way? Is it through more frequent shared activities that one comes to experience community e.g., organized activities such as weekly meditations, drop-in inquiry nights, book groups, potluck dinners, or volunteer days? How would this community express spiritual maturity to contribute to the world and human life? Are there, perhaps, particular expressions or acts of service in the world unique to the Diamond Approach teaching that emerge and can be supported?

These are open and broad questions that the School has not yet organized around to answer. If there is an emerging further movement in this direction, how does the School align itself with it?

## WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE?

If indeed there is interest in exploring what the “Diamond Heart Community” is and how it might act in the world, I would like to suggest some possible initial steps to support inquiry into this question. Here are a few starter ideas:

- The School, especially the Synod and teacher body, could open the inquiry into what it means to “form and evolve a community,” and support the process with a senior teacher “Sponsor” who takes responsibility for facilitating the unfolding of this dynamism.

- The senior teacher Sponsor would involve other individuals deeply connected to the teaching in the inquiry and unfoldment. This process could include activities such as:
  - A vehicle could be offered to see what, if anything, is emerging around the question of community within the School. This could take the form of group meetings where teachers and students inquire into the meaning of community and how it might be experienced and expressed in relation to the School, and/or through the teachings, the ongoing groups and the individual work. Surveys of the student body could also be conducted.
  - Teachers and perhaps others (qualified students or outside experts) could facilitate the group meetings as well as participate in various “research” projects to garner ideas around:
    - The activities or experiences that support a feeling of belonging to a community;
      - How these activities or experiences could be organized and facilitated by the School (especially given the geographic diversity of the students and the potential and challenges posed by the Internet);
      - The values and ethics the community would reflect;
      - The types of expression or service that the community would contribute to the world and human life; and
      - The organization, resources and finances required.
  - This initial research work would then be compiled and synthesized to form any emerging recommendations. These could be shared with the students, the teachers and the administration of the School to help identify any next steps.
  - There could also be a process for experimentation with early “good ideas” that are easy to implement without significant additional resources. I can personally imagine a future time when there is a more vibrant community with increased interaction within the Diamond Heart community and with the world. As the community manifests in

service and the impact of the community expands, the sustainability and continuity of the School and the teachings are reinforced. There is a more potent, “unified body” within the School, community participation becomes another way the Diamond Approach teaching is disseminated, and more people are exposed to the Diamond Approach. This could result in an expansion of resources, support, and funding from within **and from outside the School.**

#### PLEASE JOIN THE INQUIRY

Do you agree that the fourth activity, “forming and evolving a community”, is the least supported in the School? Do you feel that Reality is manifesting in the direction of more community and that the School needs to align with that dynamism?

I am very curious to find out how much interest there is in increasing the interaction both *among the individuals* within the Diamond Heart community as well as *between the community and the world*. While there would be many organizational questions for the School, opening an inquiry seems like a good place to start. Is there a need for more support of community? What does that mean and what might it look like? Would community express more of the “heart” in Diamond Heart?

I welcome your input and can be reached at [SamB02@earthlink.net](mailto:SamB02@earthlink.net). ♦

I would like to thank Scott Vachon, Jon Rubenstein, Jill Davey, Laura Wells, Laurie Chestnut, Chris Krueger, Dana Harrison, and my wife, Claudia Marseille, for their support and input. I would also like to thank Friends of Diamond Heart board members, and the members of the Ridhwan Foundation strategic planning and finance committees with whom I’ve interacted over the years. Finally, a special thanks goes to the School and my private teacher, Lauren Armstrong.



# co-housing living our realization in community



Anne's first article on this topic appeared in the April 2016 issue of *Diamond Dust*. —Ed.

Would you like to practice living your realization on a regular basis with a group of like-minded people?

As you may have read in the last *Diamond Dust*, a few Diamond Approach students and other spiritually oriented people in the San Francisco Bay Area are planning to create a residential community for adults in semirural northern California. Planning for and living in the community will give us an opportunity to practice in an ongoing way, formally and informally, what we have learned over the years from the Ridhwan teachings.

Why are we embarking on this project? There are many reasons, but a major one is to end the physical and emotional isolation of living alone, or with just one other person, and to learn from the experience. As Persephone puts it, we hope "to create a built-in community of friends so that [we] can remain socially connected as [we] age." Regula looks forward to "connecting with mature individuals who are deeply committed to a spiritual introspective path." Nani, who already lives in a cohousing community, says she appreciates "the ease of connecting with people."

Yes, connection will be readily available—actually, unavoidable!—and it will give us a chance to interact mindfully and contactfully. We want to be connected not only socially, but also on a deeper, more personal level, as we have learned to be in the Work. As Persephone expresses it, "relationship within the community, especially the mutual support and friendship, will highlight personal issues and provide the opportunity to grow psychologically and spiritually." And Regula, who is now learning NVC (Nonviolent Communication), as others of us have done in the past, looks forward to engaging in "conscious compassionate communication."



Contact  
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gmail.com  
(510) 845 -0365  
for more details

The interpersonal give-and-take will definitely be an integral part of planning and living in the community.

In addition to sharing on a personal level, we envision sharing our "green" values, thereby contributing to the greater good of the planet. We will share resources, save water in every possible way, pollute minimally, and use only nontoxic products in our gardens and buildings. Like Regula, we all want to "share [our] values of environmental awareness and sustainability (green organic living) and to help make the world a better place." And of course we will share in the worldly tasks of finding and buying land and building our physical community, not a simple task, but more doable as more people participate in it. As the saying goes, "Many hands make light work." We know we have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are not daunted by it and we anticipate learning a lot about ourselves and the world in the process. Once we are living there, we will offer each other all kinds of practical support. Nani comments that residents of her community "help each other out in simple ways, such as rides to . . . the airport or picking up a needed food item." We all resonate with Regula's desire "to live in a safe, nurturing place where I can offer my gifts and receive the gifts of my neighbors."

Clearly we are aware of the challenges as well as the advantages. Personally, we will each have to find a balance between remaining an autonomous



to live  
in a safe  
nurturing  
place

individual and being part of a group. We will have to assess the importance of our individual preferences as opposed to the needs of the group when they are not in accord. Living in community, we will have less control over our environment than we do when we live alone or with a partner; we will have to learn to let go of some of that control. Both in relation to the group and in one-one interactions, we will be called upon to "maintain presence, compassion, and curiosity in the face of difficult interpersonal issues . . . to clear and sort things out with the [people] concerned," as Persephone anticipates. Yes, there will be plenty of opportunities to know ourselves and others, and to hone our communication skills. These are opportunities that we welcome on our journey, although they are not always easy or fun.

We think of our community as a way of living in the world but not of it. Excited about manifesting our hopes and dreams, we also know that it will be challenging.

If you feel inspired and (positively) challenged by our project, please let us know. We are looking for more members—mature people with no small children, who have done a lot of work on themselves psychologically and spiritually, and who welcome the joys and challenges of forming a community and living in it.

We hope to meet with all interested people at the Asilomar retreat this summer. ♦





**RICHARD WEHRMAN**

Ridhwan student working  
with Jane Bronson

## THE FREEDOM

The freedom  
was like a large blank book,  
each page waiting  
on the wooden table top,  
by the open window  
where the wind blew and  
the pages turned,  
crisp sound like dry water—  
and the wind blew,  
and the pages turned,  
slowly one way,  
and then the other.



The December Dust's topic for Students Speak is: "Experiences of Freedom in daily life". See submissions guidelines at the end of this issue, on page 46.

**IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT** I long to be "in"—as in *intimate* with and experientially inseparable from—the world that is Reality in all its indivisible dimensions: the physical universe, spirit, and consciousness.

I want really to *see* that the consciousness I experience as "I" is just one thread in the tapestry of Reality, not something separate from and superior to the consciousness of other beings with which we share the planet.

With such an indigenous view, I would be able to commune with the intelligent consciousness

of other beings, learning from them how to live harmoniously in this beautiful world. I long not to be part of that world which views other beings—human and nonhuman—as "others" that need to be dominated and exploited to serve my self-centered interests.

For example, although I minimize harm to other beings by not eating them, I still *feel* I am being antagonistic when I protect my food plants in the garden by expelling and/or repelling wildlife. I want to cultivate a collaborative relationship with these beings so all of our needs can be met.

The only thing that separates the Real world from the delusional world of separation and human supremacy is the egoic conditioned mind. The purpose of spiritual work is to free oneself from this mind and the world it creates, so that one can live fully in the world of no separation, thereby creating a world of peace and cooperation amongst all beings.

KELLE KERSTEN PHIL

**LIFE PRACTICE SUPPORTS BEING IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT** This is a special time when we come together with the intention to practise being present, living as presence, while engaging in everyday tasks. As a differentiated, unified field of presence, the whole is greater than the sum of all the individuals practising. The collective

attractive force of essence, evoking itself to itself, condenses, so that we may remember and know, our birthright by direct experience, our birthright, more of the depth of who we truly are. In these moments the teaching is alive, becoming a living teaching in each one of us.

DIANA GRIFFITH BOS3

**HIDDEN CREAM IN THE SOUL OF MILK —RUMI** My Midwest group studied The Nameless dimension. I wrote a question on a post it note: Is life a series of experiences, an accumulation of objects, situations and ever growing accomplishments that become more evolved and sublime, or is life an energetic flowing dynamism? I'm leaning toward the second hunch that the world is a felt sense of dynamism, the logos, change, realizations, witnessing. My world is less defined by concrete images of what is happening or what things are, who you and me are.

I am inspired to do, to reach out to the needs of the world, which are more and more seen as my own needs: to express its true self, to love, to be blessed by justice, fairness, and compassion, to forgive and be free. To find this space of being in the world, for me grace is essential. The inner flame, grace, inquiry, practice, and one might be able to see the world, the caravan, and the "hidden cream in the soul of milk."

I believe being this way comes from clarifying our souls through inquiry and practice so that we can fully express what we are drawn to express in the world. The clarifying creates the "not of this world" atmosphere within. When I practice during the retreats and at home, I cultivate the ability to live and express without the ego driving me around. (A meditation and inquiry into what it means to be "in the world but not of it.")

MARILYN KLINKNER MW1





## TRYING TO SAY

Trying to say  
the words that can't  
be said, not by  
prohibition, but a kind  
of inarticulation,  
vibrations of the simple  
way that all things are,  
just present in the  
silence of themselves,  
a crystal flower to  
wrap loose words around,  
whose inner strength  
is so immense  
there is no way to lift  
such weight and  
carry it away:  
its root the world entire  
and us within it,  
singing out our bits  
of birdsong in  
the morning air,  
and by our being mixed  
with all that is,  
the richness grows and grows  
until the gods themselves  
bend down to gaze  
upon this world  
in wonder.

**RICHARD WEHRMAN**

Ridhwan student  
working with  
Jane Bronson

*The Friends of Diamond Heart board is glad to have the opportunity to share news and opportunities related to charitable support of the Diamond Approach in the world.*

## 2015 FALL APPEAL

We want to express gratitude to the many donors to the 2015 Fall Appeal and throughout 2015. This year, the year-end appeal raised \$74,069 in November and December, including unrestricted donations, restricted gifts and gifts in support of the Ridhwan Endowment Fund for the Future. The total amount contributed represents a 4% increase over the 2014 appeal and a 109% increase over 2013. The number of donors has also increased in each of the past two years.

Overall giving through FDH and the Ridhwan Foundation in 2015 (our transition year to FDH) was \$304,342, including many donations made outside the Fall Appeal. This figure includes \$105,828 in donations to scholarship funds for California, Colorado, retreat and seminary groups; it does not include student-to-student support made directly in other groups.

## WHY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIAMOND APPROACH?

It is a question that sometimes arises, especially among Ridwan School members, who pay for every session and retreat they attend. To help answer this question, we have posted on [friendsofdiamondheart.org](http://friendsofdiamondheart.org) “Charitable Support and the Diamond Approach,” a document that outlines the real difference giving to Friends of Diamond Heart makes now and can make in the future. Our two primary goals are to (1) support new projects and initiatives as interest in the Diamond Approach continues to grow worldwide, and (2) secure the future of the Diamond Approach by building the Ridhwan Endowment Fund for the Future.

## PLANNED GIVING OPPORTUNITIES — FUTURE ENDOWMENT FUND

During our 2015 Fall Appeal, a number of students contacted FDH, asking about how they could make planned gifts to support the Diamond Approach. Most were interested in naming Friends of Diamond Heart in their wills or as a beneficiary of retirement fund accounts (IRAs, 401(k)s, etc.). In the “Ways to Contribute” section, at [friendsofdiamondheart.org](http://friendsofdiamondheart.org), we have posted documents to help students and others do just this. The documents include an informational flyer, sheets with the information donors need to name FDH as a bequest or fund beneficiary, and a Planned Giving Intention Form for donors to let FDH know what their intentions are.

Planned giving is a way many people give to support causes dear to their hearts. It can also be a way to reduce tax obligations. Because of the future orientation of planned giving, many donors decide to direct their gifts to a fund like the Ridhwan Endowment Fund for the Future, which allows Ridhwan to determine the best use of such generosity in the future, and in a ways that can provide support for generations.

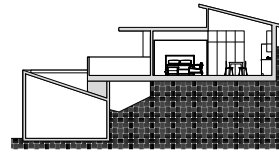
## THE FDH BOARD

Sam Barakat, Angelika Boehme, Guus Brackel, Laurie Chestnut, Dana Harrison, Scott Vachon, Richard Wallstein

*Feel free to contact us at*  
[contact@friendsofdiamondheart.org](mailto:contact@friendsofdiamondheart.org)



A NOTE FROM KAREN

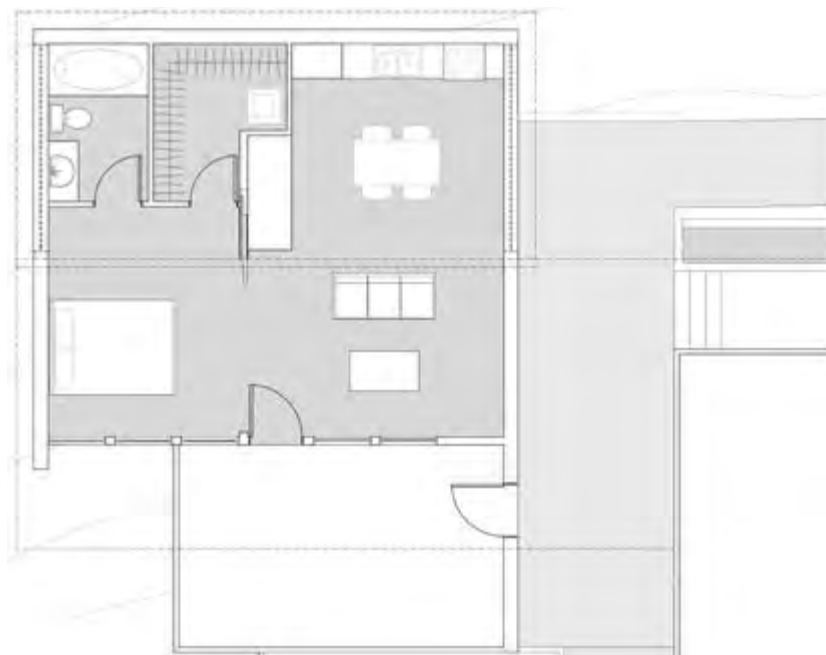
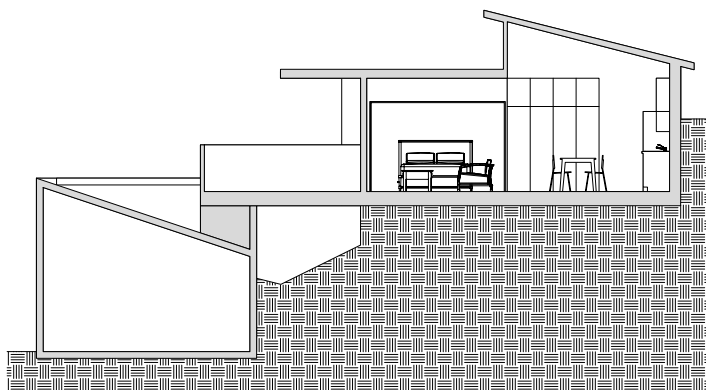


Dear Students,

I would like to share with you a new development in the School and the teaching. A parsonage will be built at the Ridhwan Center in 2017. It will bring into manifestation a long-held vision of having a teacher living on the premises.

I separated from my husband of twenty-four years and left my home in Walnut Creek on December 28th 2015. The first thing I did was go to the Ridhwan Center, where I meditated for a long while in the upstairs sanctuary. I was home.

I knew then my householding days were over. Personal life, as I had known it, sloughed off like old skin. Now something new is burgeoning. The last years of my life, however long they may be, will be lived in full dedication to the teaching. I want to give my life over, to give what I can, in whatever way it summons me. I wanted to live as close to the Center of the teaching as possible. Hameed came up with the idea to build a small bungalow on the property at the Ridhwan Center in Berkeley. It touches me deeply to think that I might have this opportunity. It is where I want to be.



Initial plans for the building remodel included a third phase which the architect, Ari Hope, thought of as a small rectory for Hameed and me, to be built behind the sanctuary. This ended up being put aside due to a shortage of funds. It was left as a possibility for sometime in the future. It appears that the time has come. The Synod and the Board have approved this plan. It is the right next step to inform you as students in the school whom this will impact in various ways. The construction itself will be an inconvenience for a while, but I will try to keep it to a minimum. When I live at the Center I intend to be a presence on site that will provide another anchor for the teaching in addition to all the beautiful work that transpires there. My living in the parsonage will be a precedent for a teacher living at the Center as part of the support for the teaching and the School.

The area directly behind the office Hameed and I share will be the site. It is an unused space and will not take away from the hillside landscaping planned for the pleasure of students. The architect, Dan Smith, has come up with beautiful plans that I would be pleased to show you. A meeting to that end will be set up and you will be notified. This meeting will be mainly be for the California community because of the location, but anyone interested is welcome to speak with me or Skype in to the meeting. I can also send you plans so that you get a feel for it.

I have taken on the task of raising funds from friends within and outside of the school who want to support this vision. Hameed and I are contributing a significant amount to the project. The Ridhwan Foundation will contribute something as well, since it is an asset for the Foundation. We are about three quarters of the way to the goal of \$600,000.

There will be no formal fundraising, but if this project touches you and you feel moved to contribute, you may do so by contacting Rob Newmarch at [rob@ridwan.org](mailto:rob@ridwan.org). Your donations can remain anonymous if you like.

I want this to be the best thing—not only for me, but also for the School, and most importantly, the precious Work we do.

With love for the inimitable truth that we all serve,

**KAREN JOHNSON**



My article *Trauma and the Work* appeared in the last issue of the *Diamond Dust*. It focused on trauma and its effect on the ego. Encouraging dialogue between teachers and students is a stated goal of the *Diamond Dust*, and so my intention was to encourage inquiry and discussion between teachers and students on trauma. At the same time, as a trauma therapist and seminarian, I am aware of the complexities of initiating this dialogue.

From the perspective of our work, trauma raises questions about the soul for the student and the teacher. However, there is so much researched, written, and experienced about the ego that it is easier to address trauma from this perspective and in its quirky ways. The ego adores language, explaining, mapping, and a sense of understanding.

How trauma impacts the soul is much more unique—as unique as each soul. Therein lies the challenge: to inquire, to use language, to try to explain, to impart understanding, and yet be respectful of the special dialectic of each combination of student and teacher.

Furthermore, there is also the reality that the ego is not separate from the soul. The ego is the more rigid and fixed expression of the soul. A Diamond Approach teacher sits in Presence. Diamond Guidance prevails in the field. Dialectic is established. We are invited to feel the impact of Presence in the session. From this experience, a student's desire for an outcome—for a resolution to pain—can arise.

While the *Trauma and the Work* article addressed trauma from the ego's perspective, what I am inviting now is the input of teachers.

The trauma article produced some questions from our students. A teacher or several teachers addressing the questions would enliven the inquiry for all of us.

Responses and more questions can be sent to [virginiamcdonough1@gmail.com](mailto:virginiamcdonough1@gmail.com)

#### HERE ARE SEVERAL QUESTIONS

- ⊙ How do I know if something is a “trauma,” to be worked with in a specialized manner, or just a strong object relation, with an intense somatic component?
- ⊙ I have sometimes experienced periods of generally aroused states, with some trauma lurking in the background, ready to surface with little provocation. I find inquiry more challenging then; harder to keep inquiring when I'm feeling like I might “go off” at any moment (into the overwhelm, shut-down, etc., that trauma can trigger). Then, those states pass, and the inquiry becomes more flowing again. During those aroused, more trauma-sensitive states, should I move from a focus on inquiry to a focus on trauma? Is there any point pushing myself to continue with inquiry, when it's so easily derailed, (at least for the time being)?
- ⊙ I have done a good amount of trauma work, and feel that I still have the residue of it, but it's not so overwhelming as before. How do I work with this second stage trauma that is not overwhelming but still feels different from the strong reactions to an object relation?
- ⊙ In an article on trauma in the *Diamond Dust* a while ago, the author opined that trauma often comes with a particularly vicious superego. This agrees with my experience. Thoughts on this, please?
- ⊙ How do trauma and basic trust relate? My sense is that there is a severe disruption of basic trust when trauma overtakes us. “All is right with the world” is certainly not the case when trauma is activated. It is more like a global sense of danger . . . almost like the opposite.

These questions remind me that the purpose of our work is neither to fix trauma nor even directly to address it. Teachers, please consider this a request for your input! Your insights and experience are being solicited. There are several creative ways to inquire: one-on-one interview, a discussion between a student, a teacher, and an interviewer, or even written responses to questions. We are in the early stages of this inquiry—much richness is in store! ♦



# SURRENDER INTO HELPLESSNESS

## A "REPEATING QUESTION" JOURNEY

1. *Tell me a way you avoid feeling helpless about being yourself*
  2. *Tell me a way you feel helpless about being yourself*
- Fifteen minutes each for both repeating questions.*

This is a recent repeating question exercise given to DANZ by our teacher, Christine Dveirin. Here's something I wrote just after I finished the exercise with another Diamond journeyer.

My superego does not want me to be vulnerable, for when I am, his existence is threatened (yup, mine is definitely a he). Vulnerability, by definition, is when I am being real. I cannot be vulnerable without venturing into the field of real, and I cannot be real without being vulnerable (even to myself). The domain of reality is one in which the superego holds no power.

On to helplessness.

When I allow myself to feel into my helplessness, I'm aware of the difficulty in just allowing myself to feel like and be an ordinary human. I think back to the beginning of my life, when I was utterly helpless. Sometimes my needs were met beautifully, and sometimes they were not. My parents, like me, were ordinary humans too. I mirror these early infant experiences through my own attempts to show up for myself. Sometimes I can do this with great presence. Other times I abandon myself, and my superego takes over. I then find myself catapulted into a place where I feel the negative side of helplessness—the fear and the panic, the real replaced by the false. In these times I feel my true vulnerability will pull towards a false capacity (efforting) as it desperately defends against my helplessness.

The question is asked again, and I have a new insight: I get a glimmer of my own helplessness not as a fearful, dangerous state, but as a surrender. I have a vision of myself falling to my knees, looking up at a version of self bathed in light. And again the question comes. My mind moves between clarity and confusion. There is frustration, sometimes anger,

HILARY JACKSON DANZ

blankness, wishing the time would end. I also notice feelings of attachment to those moments of precise insight.

Even in those blank moments of being unable to even understand the question, I am graciously thanked by my questioner. Even my helplessness and surrender into not knowing is valued. With her mirroring, I feel greater courage to stay with what is real, to speak to what is—even when it feels like a void. Other times, my superego appears, usually because I'm trying to be clever, to be "right." I have thoughts like "*bet my partner thinks I'm pretty onto it*" or "*gee I wish my teacher could have heard that one.*" Or I may notice my superego giving me that all-too-familiar barbed compliment.

Beyond this place is a place of flow. Here, I can allow my responses to be spoken without censoring. Here, I can see that surrendering into the helplessness of being myself is in fact what lies at the heart of the repeating question exercise. The inquiry "fall line" starts to appear and the insights begin to flow. It's a deeper truth around helplessness. I am opening up to the spaciousness and power of it; helplessness "just is." I "just am." Again I find myself kneeling before the wonder of self. I am helpless to resist and I fall backwards into a dark still ocean of being.

The repeating question journey is really just like life. Much of it is repetitive and can even feel boring. Sometimes I reject the question; other times I am open to the question. I move in and out of my understanding. And like life, there are moments of deep presence and connection to myself, to my partner, to the teaching. We begin life effortlessly surrendered into the helplessness of our being. Our work together helps us to remember this state.

It helps us develop the capacity to fall backwards into the magnificence of our true nature where we are helpless indeed to be anything other than who we truly are. ♦





## HOW CAN THIS GO TOGETHER?

nowhere

now here

nothing — full of  
everything

dark enlightening  
one pointed vastness


pure potentiality —  
nobody there to experience it

UNTITLED BY ALISON HINE GLDA

URSULA SHAKTI ALTGASSEN EU4



# EARTH CONSCIOUSNESS



As this piece of work unfolds in my mind, I am driving through the Western Isles of Scotland. Earth appears to me in a soft, gentle wetness. Drizzle is wetting bushes, ferns, and old, moss-covered trees. There is no wind. The surface of the lochs and the inlets of the sea are velvety smooth, mirroring a variety of greys and whites. ■ The only way to get access to this piece of land is through a single track road with many bends. There is hardly any traffic, even in the middle of summer. Actually it seems that, here, there is neither summer nor winter, nor any changes. Utter stillness brings deep

peace, and eternity opens up. ■ I am on my way to Iona, a Holy island off the coast of Mull. But I doubt if something like this exists and if I will ever arrive there. ■ This tranquillity does not remain. Rain and wind are beating on each other, wanting to win the battle. Especially during the weeks when I am travelling through these remote places. The weather conditions take up at least half of my attention. There is much reactivity and frustration, even feelings of depression.





In those moments I look around for ways in which I can just be. I sense the emptiness of this remote reality where wind, water, and boggy land with rocky outcrops are the dominant scene. I sense the utter beauty. I calm down. Earth shows Herself to me. We are not here for nothing. We are not here to get frustrated or angry or to try to overcome this planet. We are here to be. Space opens up. Awareness enters my consciousness. Birds fly through the dense sky, raindrops glisten on scrub. Contemplation comes back.

Over the last couple of years Earth often enters my inquiry, revealing her spirit in different qualities. I have been wondering about the place of Earth on the Diamond Approach map. It feels as if Earth is pushing through. As if She wants a place on the map.

So, can Earth be a vehicle? Or a boundless dimension? How do we experience Earth? How much are we aware of Her, and of the sheer miracle of the specific, complex, coherent, and resonating way life unfolds here? It feels we are missing something really important walking this planet.

My thoughts drift off to Asilomar. The retreat there will start soon. My fellow travelers on the Diamond Approach and Nature path are meeting. Recently I have shared some of my musings in our portal and their answers are interesting. People experience Earth as a womb, a deep expanse that wants to suck you in. She is a boundless presence, the Absolute and a Portal. A beautiful manifestation of the Logos and the very Ground.

I close my laptop, fetch my coat, leave the camper-van on an empty parking lot somewhere at the coast and put my feet on the ground. Rain has stopped, blue appears in the sky, the beach is close by.

Naked feet touching the sand leaving footprints. Wet softness underneath the soles of my feet. Boundless depth everywhere. The walk takes me to where black rocks jut out of white sand. I sit and sense Her, the primal Goddess, black and still. She bears the suffering that is happening on her planet, knows about violence and how She has been forgotten. She is benevolence, endless love and clear knowing. She is space, She is wisdom, She is All. My walk back is filled with peace and depth.

She continues talking to me when I am home again. It seems that She has assigned me a task. A new writing project has revealed itself during my days in Scotland. I dive into my bookshelves, refresh my knowledge, study history, investigate the development of mind and thought, analyze our dissociation from Earth Herself and become involved in the discoveries of the new sciences.

On a subatomic level, solid matter as we know it appears as particles or waves, moving at random in and out of existence. When two or more of them have been connected, they stay related forever, and continue taking on each others' states. They are 'nonlocal'. And the 'something' only appears when we are there observing. Observer and observed become one.



Does that mean that reality does not exist the way we see it? That we live in an illusion? Some spiritual teachings believe that to be true. Luckily, Hameed has given us a whole new perspective through the teachings of the freedom vehicle. A view where all and everything has its own place in reality.

So what about the manifested world? The world on the deepest level is a moving reality where 'things' come into existence and disappear the next moment. Is it not a wonder, then, that we can see objects and can discriminate between them? Is it not a miracle that we are living in a manifested body, being able directly to communicate with this manifested planet? And that somehow the intelligent universe brought this about?

Is it not unique that here, in our galaxy, we have this place where life has developed, that works in such an exquisite, coherent, and resonant manner? Look at the marvel of our bodies, how all is coordinated. Look at

the wonder of Earth that brings us the facility to grow food that can be transformed into nutrients in order for us to live this life. We take it for granted, and complain about many things. And here we are, living in the middle of wonder! Is this not something to inquire into?

An inner image lives in me. I see two triangles mirroring each other. One triangle, pointing up, holds the journey of ascent and descent. We climb Jacob's ladder into the sky, reach the Absolute, and descend, learning to live in the world and not be of it. Through this journey we might encounter the freedom of knowing that everything has its place.

The other triangle, pointing down, goes deep into the manifested world. Here we descend into the centre of Earth. For thousands of years people have travelled this ground, into Her depth. They entered the womb and entered Her mystery to discover Her teachings. In our evolution we left those people behind and hardly know about them.

How would it be if we would use our spacecruisers to dive deep down into this magnificent planet—She, who so miraculously organizes Herself that we can live a human life? How would it be to extend our walking meditation and enter the depths of our beloved planet?

In the Diamond Approach we integrate aspects of several spiritual teachings that are useful for our path. All these teachings were developed after the emergence of thought and reflection. How would it be to integrate the older mysteries, to connect with Earth herself? Will we meet Red Essence as a slightly different quality? And what about Power or Divine Love?

Can we descend into Her womb, as so many people have done before us? We would probably not only meet Her but also meet ourselves again, finding out more about our own nature. What kind of people might we become if we go on this journey?

When writing these final sentences, at the closing of a practice retreat with Bob and Jeanine, I sense sparkles going all through my body and soul, and tears coming to my eyes. To me it feels I could finally, really, deeply land. To me it feels like completion. ■

## A NEW EUROPEAN RETREAT, MAY 2016

Jeanine Mamary and Bob Ball presented a new European Summer retreat in the Netherlands, last May 2016. This would be a “practice retreat,” a new format, offered to all the European groups as a fundraiser for EU-RISNG (the latest European teacher training). The location was Mennorode, a conference center in the middle of the Dutch woods (yes, we still have woods!) where the DANS groups also meet and the EU-RISNG takes place.

When I first heard the announcement, images of the DANS1 life practice came up: endlessly sweeping the tiles at Mennorode, cleaning the windows, looking for pine needles in the woods—OK for an afternoon, but four days? That idea was not very attractive to me. But as the time approached, other ideas of a practice retreat came up, and curiosity arose. Seeing Hameed smiling in my mind’s eye, I decided to open up and experience what Bob and Jeanine were going to offer.

**MINI-SESSIONS BY NEW EUROPEAN TEACHERS** Around ninety students gathered in Mennorode for this retreat from many different European groups. Ten new European teachers were offering mini-sessions of twenty minutes, also for the fundraiser, which was a nice addition to the retreat.

The teachings were in the morning and in the afternoon, nine teachings in all. Before the morning of each teaching, walking meditation and the Five Movements were offered outside on the field. Luckily the weather was really nice.

In the introductory teaching, “What is practice?” Jeanine and Bob pointed out that practice brings out grace, which is always here. It never occurred to me to connect practice to grace, to see that it is the truth of how practice works for us. They also talked about the relationship between practice, realization, and living. The next teaching was about sensing, looking, and listening, and the importance and implicitness of our body in practices of presence and awareness. Kath meditation was next, followed by Being meditation. We meditated a lot, and the field of the group was light and in a good flow.

**OPEN-ENDED INQUIRY** The fifth and sixth teachings were about the main practice of the Diamond Approach: open-ended inquiry. After all these years of inquiry, it was very interesting to hear full teachings about it again. How amazing and magical this practice is! And how helpful in daily life! Besides regular inquiry with friends and the postal code group (home work group without a teacher), always when something arises, I phone or Skype a friend to inquire. Inquiry supports being with situations, problems, illnesses, or big questions. And after some time, inquiry shifts everything.

Doing inquiry also became a favourite pastime when having friends over for dinner.

**DISENGAGING THE SUPEREGO** The practice of disengaging the superego was the seventh teaching.

As the group was so diverse, with long-term students, new students, and students with their partners, it amazed me how simply Bob and Jeanine explained working with the superego and how to disengage from it. Everybody got it and was inspired by this practice exercise. This was followed by the practice of allowing feelings while not acting them out. The final teaching ended with the integration of all the practices in daily life. Personally I could see how the practices weave together to bring more presence into daily life, opening up to a deeper level of inquiry with more beingness in daily being.

Every student profited from the Grace of Practice retreat. Hopefully Jeanine and Bob are willing to give this retreat again! As a bonus, it was very nice to meet people from other groups. ■



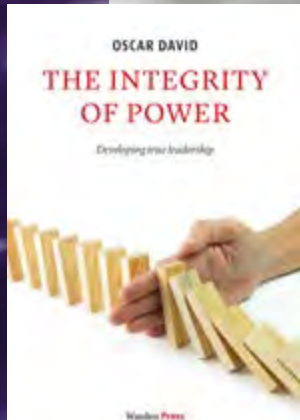
## STARVING

'First your carrots, honey, than you get your sweet dish'  
I hear my daughter saying to her three-year-old.  
I take the spoon that's now a boat bringing her a carrot  
then a truck with another one  
and with the plane landing in her mouth  
we deserve our license  
for the strawberries with whipped cream.

Sometimes meditation is like that:  
'First your meditation, honey, then you will experience  
the sweet treasures of your heart.'

Maybe more than anything else  
my life is about starving.  
Starving for the sprayed cream  
that is little more than air;  
some love and praise from others,  
wanting to be seen;  
secret wishes that need to be put  
on water and bread. No cream, no strawberries.  
Not before you finish your meal, dear,  
that might have been waiting for decades:  
the swallowing of your cravings.

The sun comes in, I close my eyes  
and let her nourish me.  
Water? Bread? Sweet dish?  
Who cares.



## THE INTEGRITY OF POWER; DEVELOPING TRUE LEADERSHIP

BY OSCAR DAVID, AMSTERDAM, 2016

It is September 2014 and I am at a book presentation. Oscar, one of my Ridhwan friends, has been working on his book for quite some time. Now, it is not only finished but also published. We are celebrating together with an intimate group of friends and family.

Oscar talks about the writing process, and how spirit was present in that process in the form of an eagle feather. When he did not know how to proceed, he asked the feather. Eagles do not only have a bird's-eye view, they also have very keen sight. Both are palpable throughout his book. His talk is touching, sensitive, and beautiful.

It took me more than a year to begin reading it. While working on a writing project of my own, I came upon the question, "What is so attractive about power? Why is it here in the world, and why do we want it?" So I remembered his book on my shelf, and I started reading and I didn't stop until I was finished, three days later. How, I wonder, is it possible to write about power in such a gentle and smooth way? To write about such a terrific power-thing as the holocaust and at the same time hold it with such a soft and gentle touch? Reading it is like following the flow of a river through a varying countryside, the water lapping softly at its green borders or rushing through high caverns, never losing touch of itself. It travels from personal to theoretical, from talking to colleagues and clients to interviewing Ridhwan teachers. It is a deep investigation and a personal journey. And it makes sense.

Oscar's background is that of an organisational psychologist, executive coach, and consultant. He writes from the knowledge he has gathered more than twenty-five years of work with leaders and professionals in top positions. He also writes from being in the Ridhwan School for almost twenty years, and from his background as a Jew.

Power has goodies in it. It feels good to be powerful. It gives a feeling of

belonging, of being on the right side of society. The people around you also see you in that way, which adds to the feeling. And it impacts the brain. Power releases both adrenalin and dopamine. Dopamine gives us a feeling of happiness and delight. It is addictive, and it is not easy to hold back. So, power is pleasurable, attractive, and dangerous.

Oscar distinguishes three forms of power: power for its own sake, power that is controlled by checks and balances, and power that comes with integrity.

Power for its own sake is power that is simply put into play for the goodies, for the powerful feelings that come with it. It is determined by our instincts only. We all know how brutal this power can be. "Checks and balances" is a term from American politics. Here, power from one group is matched by power from other groups, so there is balance between them, and their power is further checked by rules and regulations.

The third form of power is when it is used with integrity. Here, the heart is involved. This power is pure, and it serves a higher purpose. Power is being of service. It is a wonderful perspective.

During one of our retreats in Seefeld, I ask Oscar how this works out in different organizations. He tells me that it happens sometimes, but it is only possible among people who have some kind of psychological and spiritual maturity. Managers don't have the time and the space to send people on "all-day sessions" for that development to happen. It just takes too much time, too much money.

Well, we all know how much work it takes. It will take long-term work before we live in a world where power will be used with integrity. But this book is definitely a contribution to it. ■



## VESSEL

It is told they came  
wielding axes  
and split the vessels.

It is told the vessels  
cracked to powder and spilled  
their song in dust.

It is told they named  
the round ones lesser  
and the broken dumb.

It is told  
the bearers of the vessels  
went mute.

It is told  
their cracked tongues  
made fearsome sound.

It is told  
the vessels  
were hollow.

It was not told  
that the vessels  
were eyes.

It was not told  
that the vessels  
had beaks.

It was not told  
that the vessels  
bore forth rain.

It is true  
the vessels  
were coiled snakes.

It is true  
the vessels  
scattered.

It is true  
their numinous bodies  
still live.



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ESSENCE, BEING & TRUE NATURE?

## new ALMAAS book search web page

The Ridhwan School has developed a web page that works like Google for Hameed's books. It is now available in private beta for members of the school. We are testing out this idea and would appreciate hearing your suggestions.

John Harper asked me, a while back, to develop the book search site with funding from the Ridhwan Foundation. After developing the book text database, we started by choosing a paragraph from one of the books to post on Facebook each day. If you're on Facebook and haven't discovered the Diamond Approach page yet, give it a try! (<https://www.facebook.com/DiamondApproach/>)

To try the Almaas Book Search, go to [almaasbooks.org](https://almaasbooks.org) (<https://almaasbooks.org/>). Since this is a private site for now, you need to enter a username and password. The user name is "space" and the password is "void" (both without the quotes).

To learn where "soul child" or "diamond guidance" appears in the books, just enter it in the search box and click the Search button. You will see each paragraph where those words appear.

If you're looking for a specific phrase, surround it with double quotes "like this." Single words without spaces don't need the quotes.

One of the interesting things we learned from searching the books is that Hameed has written about most topics in multiple places. The chapter number is given for each paragraph, so you can read more about your topic in context.

Here's an interesting search to try. What is the difference between essence, being, and True Nature? Go to Almaas Book Search and enter this:

essence being "true nature"

This will find paragraphs that have these three terms in them. Notice how "true nature" is surrounded by quotes, since it's a phrase.

If you find a problem or want to make a suggestion, please email Todd at [todd@toddfincannon.com](mailto:todd@toddfincannon.com). There is lots of room for improvement, and your ideas will help make this work better for everybody. ♦

I CAME BACK TO TEXAS FROM SAN FRANCISCO for my once a year visit to see my parents, now in a nursing home, my father there somewhat against his will. He still felt he was self-sufficient, even after my mother's stroke and her leg amputation made it necessary for her to live there. However, the time had come the year before for him to choose that as well. Over the course of that year, he had forgotten where he parked his truck several times while grocery shopping, fired his shotgun at my former brother-in-law, who was his primary caretaker, when he didn't recognize him one afternoon, and then had a serious auto accident running a red light because he was disoriented and lost. Fortunately, he shot over Ernie's head, a warning shot, and my brother, Ernie, and I made the nursing home decision for him.

On my first Sunday afternoon back, I decided to take my father to see the old farm, his farm which he had worked for fifty years.

Let that sink in for a moment. Fifty years. He worked that land for fifty years. Droughts. Floods. Tornadoes. Cows dying. Calves and sons birthing. Terraces breaking and soil washing away. Planting seed year after year. It was his place on this earth for most of his life.

We turned off the paved road onto the final tenth of a mile of gravel road down to the red brick ranch style farmhouse where I still stayed on my visits. He sat beside me in the passenger seat, quiet, looking around at everything. We stopped, and without hesitation, he got out of the car and headed past the rusting combine to a nearby field, walking with determined purpose.

The field was dotted with wild sunflowers the height of a man, weeds to him, their limbs outstretched with numerous flowers turned toward the sun. He reached the first one, bent over, grabbed its thick, sticky stalk in both hands and yanked it out of the ground. Then, he yanked one after another out of the ground until he came to a taller plant with a thicker stalk. He yanked hard, but this one didn't budge. He yanked in a different direction, still nothing. Again and again he yanked with all his might, and finally, it slowly and grudgingly heaved up and out of the ground. Breathing heavily but looking satisfied, he came back to the car, sat down, and said he was ready to go. As we drove away down the gravel road and onto the paved road that ran next to the farm, he never once looked back, but his whole mood shifted into one of his familiar deep, dark moods, his face angry and foul. He didn't say a word for the forty miles back to the nursing home.

Looking back at this moment with my father, I have always seen his deep connection to the earth through the porthole of the farm, how he was nourished in his contact with the land, and how being cut off from this could make him mad as hell, and I mean this in the fuller sense of the word. His madness was not only anger but a kind of craziness; unpredictable, explosive, volatile, destructive, and I spent my childhood and youth on vigilant red and orange alert, especially in these dark moods. However, I used to view him in this scene as a man obsessed with having to work, as I recalled innumerable times in my youth in which he made my brother and me work at totally unnecessary tasks in order to keep us busy. He simply could not tolerate himself or anyone else in the family not to be working. But now I also see how much I struggle with "getting things done" in order to feel that I have value or just to be able to feel useful, to feel I have a right to exist in the world, how I obsessively yank up the sunflowers in my fields. It is a deep struggle.





# SPITTING AT THE WALL

**SOME TIME AFTER MY MOTHER DIED**, my father began staying in his bed in the nursing home. On my visits he seemed not to recognize me. For a number of years before this, he was unable to string more than five or six words together before he would struggle to find the next word, sometimes just filling it in with the phrase, “whatchama-call-it,” before his voice would trail off into a long pause. If I went to the bathroom in his room, when I came out, he would stand up, introduce himself to me, and shake my hand. Every time.

A time came, though, when he no longer got out of bed. He almost always lay on his side in bed, facing the wall, the dome of his head bald with a semi-circle of gray hair around it like a clean plowed field with foot-high grass around the edges, his eyes open but staring, his mouth working, incessantly chewing. His bed was in a corner of the room near a window. I half-noticed that the staff had fastened a big sheet of clear plastic on the wall beside the bed, and after a little while, I realized why it was there. Every minute or two or five my father would stop chewing and spit at the wall. Sometimes it was a little particle of food, a tiny bit of ground meat from the ubiquitous meal of ground meat mixed with mashed potatoes, sometimes not, sometimes just spit.

So for a couple of years before my father’s death, he spent much of his waking time spitting at the wall.

My father’s was not an easy life. Asked by his father to leave home to make room for his much older brother and his new wife to move into the little farmhouse, he went to town at age fourteen to work at odd jobs at a cotton gin and a filling station and lived at a boarding house. He survived and succeeded in making a living for himself. By age twenty-two or twenty-three, he had married three times, the marriages lasting a combined total of about three years. As a young man he drank a lot, and the story he told was that one night he was driving and couldn’t tell which of three bridges to take and crashed. He said he quit drinking after that, and in my life with him he rarely drank, but he often alternated between bouts of rage and depression, each lasting sometimes for days at a time. In rage, the air in our home was thick with tension and fear; in depression, it was heavy, as he would sometimes stay in bed for days. His face reflected bitterness—his mouth tight, lips thin, his eyes hard—a darkness from within.

In the present situation, of course, he didn’t want to be in a nursing home. I would like to think, though, that he was spitting out some of his bitterness against that wall, bit by bit, moment by moment, for a couple of years until he could leave. Of course, perhaps he just didn’t like the food, and like an infant, he spit out what he didn’t like, but he had a whole lot about his life he didn’t like. Spitting it out may have been the best he could do. ♦

## WHEN WE GLIMPSE

when we glimpse  
our true selves

we have a momentary  
falling in love  
a relief  
like finding a lost friend  
like coming home

and then  
we are pulled away  
as though through some vortex  
back to our known selves  
and we forget

the love  
the friend  
the peace  
and freedom

we forget home

until the next happy accident  
provides another glimpse  
and we remember that glimmer  
even in the throes of ordinariness  
and difficulty

we remember  
that we long for home  
and have tasted it





# ASK HAMEED

**ASK HAMEED** is an opportunity for all students in our school to ask their burning questions, and get them answered by Hameed. The purpose of this column is to offer a venue for all kinds of questions, and especially for those questions that are not part of your curriculum, or are subtle or difficult to know. The intent of the column is best captured by Hameed himself:

*Respect your issues, grapple with them, struggle with them. Struggle with an issue, involve yourself in it, observe, pay attention, be present, understand it as best you can, using all the capacities you've got—and then, if the issue is hard for you to see through, hard for you to understand and you can't get through it and the fire is burning inside you, then come and ask a teacher. It is the right use of the teacher. That is where the value of the teacher lies. (Diamond Heart, Book 1, The Value of Struggling).*

Do you have anything you've wondered about, that hasn't come up in your big group? Something perhaps that couldn't be easily answered by your teacher? Something subtle or difficult to know? Let us know! Email your question to: [tarikpehlivan@gmail.com](mailto:tarikpehlivan@gmail.com)

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**Q1** Hi Hameed. You describe the Absolute as “the unmanifest” and “the ultimate nature of reality,” and say that it can be experienced with second-turning consciousness. It seems counterintuitive that the “the ultimate nature of reality” can be experienced with only second-turning consciousness. Does anything at all lie beyond the Absolute? Are there different levels within the Absolute? Or is the same Absolute experienced differently from second-, third-, and fourth-turning consciousness? If so, how?

*Good question. First, it is true that the Absolute is experienced differently from second-, third-, and fourth-turning perspectives. Also, the fact that there are other realizations after the Absolute does not mean they are deeper, higher, or more advanced. They are just different. You are thinking hierarchically, while in the fourth turning there is no hierarchy. Furthermore, the Absolute reveals itself as the ultimate nature of reality in the second turning. But the third and fourth turning show that the ultimate can be experienced in different ways. It is like there are more than one ultimate, or many ways the ultimate appears to consciousness. It is difficult to explain how the Absolute appears in the third and fourth turning. But one difference is that in the second turning the Absolute appears as a vastness of a boundless dimension or ground. In the fourth turning, boundless or unbounded mean different things; we discover that boundlessness is still a subtle concept.*

**Q2** Was there a sacred impulse or quality that figured strongly in your decision to start a school? (I'm always astonished by the tremendous generosity of this impulse, I treasure Hameed for it, and would love to know more about its inspiration.)

*The starting of the school was out of necessity. As does the teaching, the school develops organically as we respond to need. At the beginning it was a small group. But then we needed civil protection when we got bigger, so we established the Ridhwan Foundation. Then there was more than one group that I was doing, which was the beginning of the school, in addition to the establishment of the Ridhwan Foundation as a legal umbrella. Then I trained teachers, who started teaching and developing groups. So the school developed this way, organically, and not by design. It is still basically the same way. The school develops as we respond to the needs of the students, the demand for our teaching, and also the situations of teachers. The organization developed gradually in complexity and efficiency, to address the various needs of the community that was developing naturally.*

**Q3** Asilomar seems like a very special time for the whole school, and your enthusiasm for the teaching there is always contagious. How do you decide what to teach there?

*How I decide depends largely on two things. One is where the majority of students are, where the school is at in terms of development and need. The second is what is happening in the teaching, what is useful that I had not taught, or what is arising new in the teaching. It is an interaction between these two factors that determine what is to be taught, but guided usually by the Diamond Guidance. I just discover what is to be taught. So, it is not really a decision, but more of a guidance for the whole school.*

**Q4** Regarding first personal givenness: What mechanism creates perspective, and for what purpose does it exist? How am I so here, when I'm everywhere?

*It will be best to listen to the recordings of the first retreat on the phenomenology of experience. That is where I taught about first personal givenness, and that is where it comes from. The point of that retreat is to answer the questions you have. Regardless of what our nature is—boundless or nondual or unilocal—it is always experienced through the individual consciousness, what we call the soul. It is the soul that makes it possible for there to be first personal givenness, for it makes experience to be the experience of somebody, not just a floating experience. The retreat should have more details about this. I also wrote more about it in the paper that appeared in the Consciousness Studies Journal, which is also online. The purpose of first personal givenness is the same as the purpose of individual consciousness. It is needed for True Nature, or reality as a whole to experience and know itself and potentialities.*



**Q5** In the previous issue of *Diamond Dust* you wrote the following about questions during inquiry: "Our experience and life circumstances will dictate what question is relevant. Our experience, if we are practicing presence and awareness, will reveal on its own what is coming up, what is important for us to explore."

What happens for me is that sometimes there is an awareness of a question—or is it doubt in the cloak of a question?—whether there is a manipulating of the inquiry. I am wondering how we can recognize whether our inquiry is unfolding naturally and reaches a natural ending, as opposed to forcing either continuing or stopping an inquiry.

*You learn this from experience. It is an art. First, you learn it from your teacher, for it is the function of private sessions and small groups for you to learn the inquiry and its principles. In other words, there is no simple answer to your question. It involves many things, which can be seen and understood and worked with in private sessions.*

**Q6** I use my imagination a lot, in my profession as an educator and during the Work. Whether during meditation or inquiry, I am seeing streams of images which also have a felt sense about them. There are times that using my imagination really seems to support the practice of presence and leads to insights into my experience, while at other times I have a sense that it creates a distance to my direct experience. This leaves me confused, not only about the meaning of the images I see, but foremost about the usefulness of imagination in the Work. What are helpful ways for engaging the imagination in the Work?

*Imagination is a mental product, similar to thinking. Some are more creative with their imagination, some with their thinking. So, in meditation, you should regard the images that arise similarly to the way you regard the thoughts that arise. Treat them the same. Do not stop them, but neither follow them. If imagination is going to be useful it will develop on its own to reveal something novel.*

*You still need at some point to inquire into the content of your imagination, to see how much of it is imagination of the mind, and how much of it is the soul manifesting insights and experiences in the form of images. The more we can discern the difference, the more imagination can be a source of inspiration and a channel for our consciousness to express its new insights and experiences. At some point it is not imagination at all. It is simply seeing our experience. This means inner seeing has developed and we can see the states of our being. These can be neutral and natural visual forms, or elaborated by the imagination to reveal more graphically what the meaning and significance is.*

## TRAVELS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Of late it is to Auschwitz that travelers go the Polish town of Oswiecim revitalized by visitors. Groups travel on pilgrimage from America, from Netherlands, from Germany. Some find their way in couples some alone, some curious only having heard that it might be of interest to experience *the new Auschwitz phenomenon*. Some come in groups with Bernie Glassman from the Hudson Valley, Jew turned Buddhist priest, who built a bakery where prisoners released into the world deliver daily bread to neighbors. Many travel with personal need to consecrate, some seek relief because a father was an SS guard, or because their family was murdered here, or grandparents had sheltered hidden Jews, or because they themselves were hidden in the cellar. Children come with school groups learning history. Roma do not visit Auschwitz.

Most enter the place of smoke and ash, sit in silence at this particular stretch of railroad track. Names are chanted through days and nights, endless lists of many millions, remembering others whose names will not be known. Some weep. Some do not weep. Some are transformed. Some are not transformed. Some go home with souvenirs, small wooden Chasidim with painted black hats and long black coats, cradling wooden Torah scrolls. A cottage industry has sprung up producing carved klezmorim that fiddle and dance in shop windows, bought for family and friends as gifts to bring prosperity now that the Jews are gone. There is clarity in photographs of Auschwitz even a kind of beauty when the light is right — And it is clarity we seek. Even the darkest clarity.





**OPEN POSITION AT THE *DUST***  
Production Manager

Looking for a rewarding Life Practice? Good with order, organization and detail? Like communicating with and encouraging people?

As Production Manager, your role would be to shepherd each *Diamond Dust* issue through our production process. You would interact with the various *Dust* editors to keep our process flowing and fun: issue a simple production schedule to all editors, distribute articles among individual editors according to their availability, check in with them and see how they're doing and if they're tracking along with the schedule, check what support they might need.

This does not require any technical skills beyond common computer literacy; it's more about diligence and people-ishness.

Please contact Dean Bellerby, the Managing Editor of the *Dust*, if you'd like to chat about the role.  
dean\_bellerby@yahoo.com

**OPEN POSITION AT THE *DUST***  
Online Publisher Consultant

Can you help us bring the *Dust* from PDF to an online platform? Create a more collaborative/social web-based experience for Ridhwan students?

Are you familiar with online publishing platforms (such as a blog site, digital publishing tool, or web app) and willing to explore various solutions that fit our needs? We're looking for someone to gather requirements, explore options, present ideas, and help us implement them. The School is coming out with a new website soon, so you would interact with those efforts.

Please contact Dean Bellerby, the Managing Editor of the *Dust*, if you'd like to chat about the role.  
dean\_bellerby@yahoo.com

**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The *Diamond Dust* is a student publication of the Ridhwan School. The views expressed are those of students, unless clearly stated otherwise. The newsletter presents interviews, poetry, haiku, essays, book reviews, letters to the editor, and visual art to enlighten, inform, and inspire students of the Diamond Approach.

**WINTER ISSUE**

Submit content by October 1.  
Publication in December.

**SPRING ISSUE**

Submit content by February 1.  
Publication in April.

**HOW TO SUBMIT**

Please include in your email your full name, group, and group location. All writing is open for review, and editors may ask for revisions. We respond to all submissions: if you don't hear from us within two weeks after the 'Submit content by' date listed on this page, please contact us again. Send your submissions to the following departments:

**ESSAYS AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES** Jacques Schlumberger  
1,000 word maximum (MS word, not PDF): jacquesps@aol.com

**POETRY** Neshama Waller. Three poems maximum, or five if they are very short. MS Word format (no PDFs), one poem per document. Include poem title, your name and group affiliation with each document: diamonddustpoems@gmail.com

**INTERVIEW REQUESTS** Virginia McDonough: virginiamcdonough@yahoo.com

**ASK HAMEED** Send questions to Mustafa Pehlivan: tarikpehlivan@gmail.com

**BOOK REVIEWS** Linda Perry, 500 words max: juniperry@comcast.net

**STUDENTS SPEAK** Jacques Schlumberger at jacquesps@aol.com. Students Speak invites students to address specific topics that the Dust editors have voted on, as being of interest to the student body. Around 250–300 words please. Writing style and "quality" is not important – we can help you edit. Feel free to submit your writing under "Name Withheld" if it allows you to be more frank. Upcoming topic, December 2016: *Experiences of Freedom in Daily Life* (deadline October 1).

**IMAGES AND SOUND** (art, photography) to Linda Perry, pixel dimensions of at least 600 x 900. This is often a file size of 1MB or more. If you like, let us know any media used (for nonphoto images). If you would like the image to have a title, please make the file name the title. Multiple images should be uploaded to a Dropbox/Google Drive folder or similar, and 'shared' with: diamonddustimages@gmail.com. To submit multiple images, please upload to a Dropbox or Google Drive folder and share with diamonddustimages@gmail.com.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** and general feedback on the *Diamond Dust*  
Dean Bellerby: dean\_bellerby@yahoo.com.

DIAMOND  
DUST

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## THE REALIZATION OF HUMPTY-DUMPTY

It was grand on that wall, the attention it brought,  
For there he was king, at least so he thought.  
But now, on the ground for all people to see,  
Those eyes felt like fruit from a poisonous tree.

And now he was flooded, with guilt, dread and shame,  
And a dozen other feelings, too hazy to name.  
Afraid of a fall, and the loss of attention,  
The shell, it kept all those feelings in suspension.

His life it was over, at least it so seemed,  
So he cried and he moaned and he kicked and he screamed!  
And then he felt empty, just scooped out inside,  
And then came the question, what more's there to hide?

Why, the shell had a purpose — protect precious yolk!  
But now it all seemed like a terrible joke!  
He believed in the shell, kept it polished and gleaming  
And plotted to preserve it with conniving and scheming.

But the yolk was alive — this truth he had missed,  
While an ossified shell of carbon could resist,  
The fact that its services were now quite dispensable,  
But to hide such life — it was just reprehensible!

The yolk still survives, his true living kernel,  
It's always been there, its flame is eternal.  
Then a feeling arose, he began to relax,  
In his heart he felt warm, like the melting of wax,

He was filled with a sense, that was flowing and clean.  
His head now felt spacious, his heart had a gleam,  
Now minus the shell, and its false guarantee,  
In awe he dared whisper — And so, I am free!