



Fresh Rain

A Quarterly e-Journal of the Open Path / Sufi Way

SPRING 2019

IN THIS ISSUE: Essays by Pir Elias, Andy Bayliss,
Yona Chavanne, Meg Rinaldi and Erica Witt;
Poetry by Jeanne Rana and Carol Barrow



Dear Friends,

The cold in northern California has broken. We've had a couple of sunny, warm days following torrential, flooding rains. Boudewijn planted potatoes, so it must be Spring.

It has taken patience for me to get through this winter! We badly needed the rain; it felt like the downfall would never end. At one point, we had five inches in thirty-two hours.

The theme for the Summer issue is **"Habits."** How do we think about habits? Do they support or detract from our quality of life? How do you establish new ones or let go of old ones that no longer serve? The theme for the Fall issue will be **"Acts of Kindness."**

I look forward to reading your writing. It inspires me.

With love for each one of you,

Amrita

editor, *Fresh Rain*: freshrain@sufiway.org



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Impatience, My Teacher

by Elias Amidon

Sometimes when I'm impatient, I feel that the way things should be is being stolen from me, like when a traffic jam steals my being on time.

If I tell myself *be patient now* I'm already impatient — impatient with my impatience.

Impatience always makes me feel uncomfortable. Patience doesn't feel like anything.

When I am patient I don't notice it—it happens by itself.

I can't claim I know how to be patient, but I do know how to be impatient.

Some kinds of impatience pretend they're patient, like waiting for a nibble when you're fishing.

Patience is quiet, it leaves no trace. Impatience does the opposite—it makes noise and leaves a mess somewhere, at least in me.

Most often when I'm impatient I get irritated. Righteous. Righteousness is a sign I've lost patience.

After expressing my impatience, I always feel a little humiliated.

Patience is an open window. Impatience is a mirror.

Patience is effortless. Impatience is my severe teacher.



A Deeper Patience

by Andy Bayliss

As a child, I spent hundreds of hours in a Sears aluminum rowboat with my dad, patiently waiting for a fish to bite. Fishing is a generational pastime in my family, practiced on trout streams, on salt water piers, farm ponds, and passed from father to son: a process of waiting, trying different lures and bait, hoping to hook something. Often on the water until dark in the boat, the reward for our patience was a handful of bluegill for Mom's fry pan.

Looking back, I see the main reward for my patience was being with Dad, quiet, in a corner of wild space between patches of farmland. Here we sat on the water with thrush songs, and frogs, and often an owl called under the stars as we rowed back to the car. The summer's fecundity oozed out of the mud and dripped from the sedges and cattails, moist and mysterious. I was alive, and I was with Dad.

Now ten days in a cabin in the Cascades, snow on the ground. Just me and my thoughts....

In the decades since my time in Dad's boat, my attention moved from getting fish to getting God. After getting a taste of freedom, a glimpse the Real—God got to me. I have learned the patience of waiting for something in childhood. This patience is not easy, but it's familiar, especially around something quiet like fish in dark water—or even

now with God. I can muster a willful kind of patience, a slightly begrudging patience. I've used this with God, and it isn't really much fun, not as much fun as fishing was. In the cabin tonight, I pray for a different kind of patience.

The patience I'd like is a patience with things as they are, a falling right down into the movement and the quiet. To rest right here, not waiting for something great to happen like a bright bluegill tugging on my line, or a Great Big Experience. I already know this patience and its occasional rewards.

The patience I'm imagining tonight, rather is a love for things right here, a warm or maybe a joyful welcome. That is the patience I pray for. I'd like to bring everything into my heart, to enjoy this always-feast of the fleeting, and becoming, even the not-getting. A love for the changing, and the eternal, the quiet water without an answer.

Lacy-snow oak branches jump right out at me as I ski by.

Surprise!

You're welcome in this patient feast.

I'm welcome too.



Patience, an untold story

by Yona Chavanne

What is it, “patience”? Is it nothing? Or a duration? Is it emptiness allowing us to live?

Patience is surely made out of unexpected love, a presence, a timeless feeling passing by... sometimes... when it happens: we don't always recognize it.

Patience, latin etymology, *patiens*, suffering with—empathy. Silent empathy with the unknown.

Patience may provoke a lament, you're hoping for it/her/him when no thing is present as you wished. It never comes when you ask for it. It makes you wait. Wait for patience ?

Patience: a tiny green stem, in time flowering, showing its color, growing in-between concrete or stone in town, or between rocks, even rocks on the high mountain, a tiny little plant. Imagine!

The little plant just grows. Follows its way to the light, to the sun. Doesn't think. Grows. Becomes.

Patience sometimes brings a lament. It never comes when you ask for it. It makes you wait. So you lament, waiting impatiently for patience or some wisdom ! Expecting it smooths you. Often it does. Or did. So you are attached to its venue. Yet it doesn't come as soon as you expected....



When present, patience doesn't expect you to think of anything. She encompasses all, including thoughts. In her generosity, it waits for you. Are you here, Mrs Jones?

Patience is silence sensate. There is no bad or right in it. It's such. Nothing at all. Wu wei spontaneity. She *does* sever attachments, erodes them, wash them out.

Patience: I bow to you, feel so grateful you exist! You are great helper. Maybe “patience” isn't your real name? Your icon shines through the divine faces of others, known or unknown.



Reflections on Patience

by Meg Rinaldi

When Carol Barrow approached me to write an article on “patience,” I laughed. Truly, of all the people to write on such a topic, it could not be me!

I looked up the etymology of the word and found it rooted in horrible sounding things like “forbearance” and “suffering.” I got curious that the more I talked about this word “patience” the more irritated I became. For me it conjured up transcendent holy men (usually white) speaking from on high and determining for others what patience should be or shouldn’t be. I began to realize the idea of patience has been weaponized—it is often used to silence and marginalize people. I also realized that the role models of patience are dependent upon who is writing the history.

It is an externalized ideal to which we “should” all aspire. I could say what I think of that, but then this wouldn’t be published.

Then there’s that Taoist quote about “Do you have the patience to wait until right action arises by itself?” Now, something in me relaxes: that to me is more about

emergence rather than an imposition. When I rest into that as a felt sense, I find the freedom to recognize within myself what patience means to me. I also find that patience can dwell within impatience—that it can all be of one piece. It becomes more of an ebb and flow: if I push too hard, I get feedback, if I lean back too far, I get feedback. It is then for me, a dynamic way of being, not a permanent state of affairs. Some days, especially these days, I am less patient than others.

It’s hard to be patient when the world is on fire. And yet, if I stay close to the inquiry of “what wants to happen?” I can be more courageous, I can trust myself more and the unfolding of things. Heat and intensity remain. Truly if there is a time and a season to everything under heaven, then there’s time for patience too.



Patience

by Erica Witt

When I go to an art gallery, especially the open exhibitions crowded with new works, I often marvel at the amount of time and patience displayed on the walls. Hours and hours in each piece, plus the hours and hours spent learning and improving. A lifetime in paint or stone or ceramic.

Who makes us do it? I suppose nothing would get finished if we weren't all a bit obsessive, bolshy or determined, or needing to get paid.

Patience. The pleasure of going slowly and getting things just right.
All that bursting seething swearing polished off over the hours and years.
Boredom harnessed, instructed, matured.
Time filled, cross words solved, jigsaws finished,
Civilizations completed, destroyed, replaced.
Rage exhausted.

Time and patience to figure out what went wrong,
What did we miss?
What could be improved?
Back to the drawing board.

Patience: Kindness, tolerance, teaching, reaching out firmly, gently, time and again.
Making the effort, outlasting exhaustion, mothering pain,
Facing the furies.

Excitement, delirium, a flash of inspiration, bliss.
A long gestation in the dark unknown.
Don't hold your breath!
Patience paints, carves, polishes our lives, our minds, our hearts
To birth a moment's glory, a glimpse, a Michelangelo.

The sun gets out of bed in the morning, the moon goes round and round and round again in her monthly cycles, the seasons do their thing whatever the weather.
Just like us. Why should we be any different?
Waiting for the conjunction of the stars!



More Quest Dekaaz

(Dekaaz: poetry form of three lines and ten syllables)

I am
animal
sometimes I write poems

pine and
juniper
sentries of these lands

patience
of trees. May
I learn this patience

sometimes
we have to
stay mad a long time

who knew
afternoons
went on forever?

—Jeanne Rana

*Quest solo day 3
Sept 25, 2014*



Patience

is standing in line
for thirty minutes and
noticing the restlessness and
fidgeting all around me, even
my own, and finding joy in
the fact that we are
all here together,
still breathing.

Surely,
we are
all patient people,
we who are here,
for we keep working
and loving,
while at the same time
not knowing how
long
we
must
wait
to find out
the ending
of our stories.

—Carol Barrow
February, 2019



Upcoming Programs 2019



Sufism and the Eros of Nonduality

A Series of Five Sunday Afternoon Gatherings
with Pir Elias Amidon
Boulder, Colorado

**January 27 • February 24 • March 24
April 28 • May 26**



Wilderness Vision Quest

A Nine-Day Experience
with Murshid Elmer Koole and Chris Covey
Canyonlands, Utah, USA

September 20 – 28, 2019



THE OPEN PATH: Recognizing Nondual Awareness

Six-Month Training in Nondual Realization with Pir Elias
Still Meadow Retreat Center
Damascus, Oregon, USA

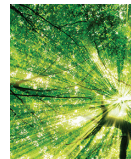
Seminar I: **March 14 – 17, 2019**
Seminar II: **September 27 – 30, 2019**



Love and Nonduality

Practices of the Awakened Heart
Advanced Open Path Retreat with Pir Elias
Buckland Hall, Brecon, Wales, UK

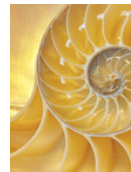
October 13 – 18, 2019



Love and Nonduality

Practices of the Awakened Heart
Advanced Open Path Retreat with Pir Elias
Himmelreich Retreat Center, Lindau, Germany

May 8 – 14, 2019



The Nondual Heart of Sufism

An experiential weekend workshop
with Pir Elias

Soefi-Huis, Haarlem, Netherlands
October 19 – 20, 2019

