



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

**Sleep and Its Symbolism**

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, Hayward, CA, 26 August 2020, Zoom

**UNISON CHALICE LIGHTING**

**0.5 min**

**May the light from this flame be a beacon of our faith, in the days that grow dark and dreary. May the light from this flame be warmth to our spirits, during nights of restless searching. May the light from this flame be a celebration of the truth, meaning and joy we find within these walls and in our dreams.**

*Rev. Sara Ascher*

**OPENING WORDS**

**1 min**

It's in the morning, for most of us. It's that time, those few seconds when we're coming out of sleep but we're not really awake yet. For those few seconds we're something more primitive than what we are about to become. We have just slept the sleep of our most distant ancestors, and something of them and their world still clings to us. For those few moments we are unformed, uncivilized. We are not the people we know as ourselves, but creatures more in tune with a tree than a keyboard. We are untitled, unnamed, natural, suspended between was and will be, the tadpole before the frog, the worm before the butterfly. We are for a few brief moments, anything and everything we could be. And then...and then--ah--we open our eyes and the day is before us and...we become ourselves.

*Jerry Spinelli*

**SILENT MEDITATION / CENTERING**

**2 min**

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in tonight's session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

**CHECK-IN (2 ROUNDS)**

**40 min**

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met. How are you managing in the face of COVIF-19 PLUS the heat and the fires? Has anything occurred that has caused you to pause and take stock of where you are in relation to where you planned to be?

**INTRODUCTION**

The following material contains excerpts from a Psychology Today article by Mike Brooks, Ph.D., entitled *The Promise and Problems of Being Woke*.

In humanity's checkered past, most people have not been treated fairly, equally, or even humanly. There have always been certain groups of people who claim that they are superior to others by sex, religion, ethnicity, family name, and so on. This perceived superiority by groups in power has frequently justified their maltreatment of other minority and/or disempowered groups. It's easy to treat others as less than equals if you believe they are inferior.

Many people, especially the youth, have a heightened awareness of our troubled past and, understandably, seek to correct our collective wrongs. This is where the term "woke" comes into play. It is defined as, "aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice)." Given that we have a long history of racial and social injustices, it seems like being "woke" to such problems is a very *good thing*. How can we address such problems without first being aware of them? Movements such as Black Lives Matter, at their heart, are about correcting racism and injustices that have long been ignored or swept under the rug. *We need to wake up.*

Perhaps the long-overdue correction of wokism is, sometimes, leading to an over-correction of sorts. This can happen when people who are "woke" call out or cancel those they perceive not to be woke (or woke enough). "Canceling" someone occurs when one person says or does something to which others who are woke object and then that person gets roundly shamed and criticized, usually on social media. That person's reputation is sometimes ruined, and he or she might not ever be able to recover from being canceled.

While it might be tempting to call out, shame, or cancel those who are not woke (or woke enough) to racism and social injustice, doing so can create a number of problems. No one wants wokism to be the road to hell paved with good intentions. We must proceed mindfully so that wokism doesn't have unintended consequences.

If we think of "woke" as having its roots in "awakening," that has a very deep, and even spiritual, meaning. In Buddhism, "Buddha" is a Sanskrit word that means "one who is awake." In a manner of speaking, to be awakened means we have an enlightened state of consciousness. If we feel the need to show and tell everyone how enlightened we are and criticize others we perceive not to be, are we *really* enlightened? In a way, an awakening precludes claiming to be awoken.

If our goal is to decrease racism and increase social justice, what is the best way to do that? What is the conduit for change? How do we help others to see that many corrective actions for societal injustices are in order? Here is a fundamental reality: We are most likely to influence others by having a relationship with them. When we "cancel" those who believe differently than we do, we lose the very conduit through which we are most likely to influence them. *No relationship, no change. Know relationship, know change.*

When someone does or says something hurtful or offensive, avoid assuming they are a "bad" person. Like all of us, they are flawed. Like all of us, they want to be a "good" person and to be liked by others. Remember, they are not their shortcomings. Look for the good in them.

#### **QUOTES ABOUT BEING ASLEEP AND BEING AWAKE**

**10 min**

I had a dream that I was awake and I woke up to find myself asleep.

*Stan Laurel*

I cannot be awake for nothing looks to me as it did before / Or else I am awake for the first time, and all before has been a mean sleep.

*Walt Whitman*

Man is firmly convinced that he is awake; in reality he is caught in a net of sleep and dreams which he has unconsciously woven himself.

*Gustave Meyrink*

In my youth, daydreaming nurtured me, provided a safe haven. I'd sleep for twelve hours and even when awake escape to the safe place in my mind.

*Sandra Cisneros*

Don't go to sleep now, for you have been awakened. Don't shut your eyes, or you will put out the light. Stay awake to the power and force that guides and protects your divine essence.

*Debbie Ford*

In most of our dreams, our inner eye of reflection is shut and we sleep within our sleep. The exception takes place when we seem to awake within our dreams, without disturbing or ending the dream state, and learn to recognize that we are dreaming while the dream is still happening.

*Stephen LaBerge*

We must realise that man's nature will remain the same so long as he remains man; that civilisation is but a slight coverlet beneath which the dominant beast sleeps lightly and ever ready to awake. To preserve civilisation, we must deal scientifically with the brute element, using only genuine biological principles.

*H. P. Lovecraft*

Our heart oft times wakes when we sleep, and God can speak to that, either by words, by proverbs, by signs and similitudes, as well as if one was awake.

*John Bunyan*

I am accustomed to sleep and in my dreams to imagine the same things that lunatics imagine when awake.

*Rene Descartes*

Often, psychological laziness will have you switch your life over to autopilot and fall asleep at the wheel rather than stay awake to what will fulfill your heart's deepest desires and your soul's purpose.

*Debbie Ford*

My mom had not worked a day in her life, and then she woke up when I was 15 and found herself with four children, no job, no money. But she set out and made it all OK for us, and from that, I saw that there's no problem that can't be solved.

*Ginni Rometty*

That first morning that I woke up self-employed, terror quickly consumed me. I found myself sitting with my laptop and realized, for the first time, that I was entirely responsible for all of my own decisions, as well as the consequences of those decisions.

*Mark Manson*

What would an ocean be without a monster lurking in the dark? It would be like sleep without dreams.

*Werner Herzog*

I've crossed some kind of invisible line. I feel as if I've come to a place I never thought I'd have to come to. And I don't know how I got here. It's a strange place. It's a place where a little harmless dreaming and then some sleepy, early-morning talk has led me into considerations of death and annihilation."

*Raymond Carver*

Insomnia is a variant of Tourette's--the waking brain races, sampling the world after the world has turned away, touching it everywhere, refusing to settle, to join the collective nod. The insomniac brain is a sort of conspiracy theorist as well, believing too much in its own paranoiac importance--as though if it were to blink, then doze, the world might be overrun by some encroaching calamity, which its obsessive musings are somehow fending off.

*Jonathan Lethem*

I woke up full of hate and fear the day before the most recent peace march in San Francisco. This was disappointing: I'd hoped to wake up feeling somewhere between Virginia Woolf and Wavy Gravy.

*Anne Lamott*

I had a dream about you. We installed Dr. Robert Jarvik's artificial heart in a mannequin and brought it to life, only to later kill it because a creature that's all fake heart and no brain is what's commonly called a "politician," and must be destroyed.

*Dark Jar Tin Zoo*

### **QUOTES ABOUT BEING "WOKE" AND "WOKISM"**

**10 min**

One day I woke up and realized no amount of love, care, pain, hurt, anger, or retribution could ever transform those who are evil into good or kind people. That day I let go; I stopped caring for them, gave up any hope for their souls, and knew they were never worthy of me or my time.

*Ken Poirot*

I fell asleep dreaming and woke up alive.

*RW Erskine*

I'm actually not a fan of the word 'woke.' I think the connotation of that means being socially aware, which is a beautiful thing to be. But it does not take into account being self-aware.

*India Arie*

Black Lives Matter started from a post that I put on Facebook after the acquittal of George Zimmerman. I woke up in the middle of the night sobbing, just trying to process what had happened and wanting to find community around being in a lot of grief and having a lot of rage.

*Alicia Garza*

Never overlook the "now" for an anticipation of the "morrow", which may never arrive.

*Reginald L. Russell*

At any given moment, we each face a barrage of obligations, often disparate and distinct from what we thought would happen when we woke up. From the tragic to the common to the extraordinary, life refuses to be divvied up into careful slices of time. No technology can manage to overcome the realities of reality.

*Stacey Abrams*

Don't count on cheerleaders once you start living a life more reflective of your truth. They may not want to do somersaults and backflips for your awakening, not when they're still asleep. Don't let that stop you. Most of us have only been trained to cheer for conformity, to commend those who are just like us. But aren't you bored of being congratulated for fitting in? Aren't you tired of ignoring your heart's requests?

Don't wait for cheerleaders. Be grateful if they show up, but you show up regardless, with or without them.

You will never be defined by the reception you get from others, only by the truth with which you receive yourself. Be your biggest cheerleader. Love yourself. And applaud every single step you take toward truth.

*Scott Stabile*

Still your mind and become a witness to your thoughts through meditation. The more you do this, you open gaps of "no mind" which puts you in a very open, present state of consciousness whereby YOU become more awakened, more aware & more powerful!

*Sanjo Jendayi*

By "woke" I mean brainwashed by extremist liberal propaganda.

*Lil Fangs*

***QUOTES FROM ROBERT BLACK (a Scottish serial killer and pedophile)***

The left don't attack racism, they attack the race, which of course is the definition of racism. They have this idea that no matter what is done or said to white people, it is not racism. That is their mentality.

In Western democracies, not only do elected governments, who were elected to represent the people, not favour their own citizens, society, fueled by left-wing mainstream media, has made it racist and bigoted to suggest they should.

The problem with the woke people, the social justice warriors, or the left, is that they consider Islam to be a race, and therefore to criticize Islam is racist. In fact, Islam is a religion, which anyone can join, or be indoctrinated into, men, women, and children, unless you are gay of course, because then you would be murdered.

The police in the UK are too scared to act in case they are labelled racists. This is what uncontrolled immigration does to societies. It's the same in Europe. The best way to destroy a culture is to make it multi-cultural.

**SONG: Enter Sandman (by Metallica [James Alan Hetfield, Kirk L. Hammett, Lars Ulrich]); bluegrass cover by Iron Horse) 4.5 min**

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3c7bISLhVl8>>

**PREPARATION FOR GROUP REFLECTION**

**1 min**

Read the questions for reflection, one by one.

**BREAK**

**10 min**

**GROUP REFLECTION / FEEDBACK**

**40 min**

Two rounds. Take a moment of silence and consider your response to one or more of the following questions.

**REFLECTIONS ON BEING AWAKE, BEING ASLEEP, AND BEING “WOKE”**

- In your life, have you ever experienced a moment when you decidedly became aware of being “awake”?
- Since becoming a UU, how have you been personally affected by group efforts to learn about and address issues of the “isms”--racism, sexism, ableism, etc.?
- As you go about the business of living your life, have you recently been more aware of the inherent racism in the language used by the groups you affiliate with and the media? How do you react when you come across examples of this?
- When you are following your various spiritual practices, do you feel more or less connected with nature, your friends and family, and the rest of humanity? How so, and do you intentionally follow up on those feelings?
- Did you react viscerally to the quotes from Robert Black? Are his ideas different from those you hear every day, and how do you react (mentally or behaviorally) when you hear them?
- Did any of the other quotes or thoughts expressed in the Introduction particularly resonate with you? Explain.

**SONG (Sung together, *a capella*, harmonize as the spirit moves you): “How Can I Keep From Singing?”--Lyrics and a parody are on the last page of this document**

**5 min**

**SESSION FEEDBACK AND FUTURE PLANS**

**5 min**

How did the session go for you? Speak especially with regard to doing the session via Zoom.

Do we need to make any format changes to make it more useful to you?

How do you feel about meeting monthly vs. semimonthly? Helping with session plans?

Should we revisit /modify our covenant?

**EXTINGUISH CHALICE / CLOSING WORDS**

**1 min**

After sleeping through a hundred million centuries we have finally opened our eyes on a sumptuous planet, sparkling with color, bountiful with life. Within decades we must close our eyes again. Isn't it a noble, an enlightened way of spending our brief time in the sun, to work at understanding the universe and how we have come to wake up in it? This is how I answer when I am asked—as I am surprisingly often—why I bother to get up in the mornings.

*Richard Dawkins*



**LYRICS FOR WEDNESDAY EVENING SGM SESSION 67**

**ENTER SANDMAN (James Alan Hetfield, Kirk L. Hammett, Lars Ulrich )**

Say your prayers little one  
 Don't forget, my son  
 To include everyone  
 Tuck you in, warm within  
 Keep you free from sin  
 Till the sandman he comes  
 Sleep with one eye open  
 Gripping your pillow tight

Sleep with one eye open  
 Gripping your pillow tight  
 Exit, light  
 Enter, night  
 Take my hand  
 Off to never-never land

Somethings wrong, shut the light  
 Heavy thoughts tonight  
 And they aren't of Snow White  
 Dreams of war, dreams of liars  
 Dreams of dragon's fire  
 And of things that will bite  
 Sleep with one eye open  
 Gripping your pillow tight

Sleep with one eye open  
 Gripping your pillow tight  
 Exit, light  
 Enter, night

Take my hand  
 Off to never-never land

Now I lay me down to sleep  
 Now I lay me down to sleep  
 I pray the Lord my soul to keep  
 I pray the Lord my soul to keep  
 If I die before I wake  
 If I die before I wake  
 I pray the lord my soul to take  
 I pray the lord my soul to take

Hush little baby, don't say a word  
 Never mind that noise you heard  
 It's just the beasts under your bed  
 In your closet, in your head

Sleep with one eye open  
 Gripping your pillow tight  
 Exit, light  
 Enter, night  
 Take my hand  
 Off to never-never land

Sleep with one eye open  
 Gripping your pillow tight  
 Exit, light  
 Enter, night  
 Take my hand  
 Off to never-never land

## **How Can I Keep From Singing? (Original)**

My life goes on in endless song  
Above earth's lamentations,  
I hear the real, though far-off hymn  
That hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife  
I hear its music ringing,  
It sounds an echo in my soul.  
How can I keep from singing?

While though the tempest loudly roars,  
I hear the truth, it liveth.  
And though the darkness 'round me close,  
Songs in the night it giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,

While to that rock I'm clinging.  
Since love is lord of heaven and earth  
How can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble in their fear  
And hear their death knell ringing,  
When friends rejoice both far and near  
How can I keep from singing?

In prison cell and dungeon vile  
Our thoughts to them are winging,  
When friends by shame are undefiled  
How can I keep from singing?

### **Parody by Stephen Finner [Towson (MD) UU Church]**

My life is spent on zoom all day.  
My eyes are tired of looking.  
But look I must, and not away,  
So I can know what's cooking.

I've always been the nosy sort,  
A curious UU forsaken  
But now I know what's up and all,  
From the moment I awaken.