

# AU NATUREL

SCHATZI'S DESIGN GALLERY & DAY SPA, LLC

## PERSONAL AND SALON UPDATES

Honoring the gift of service

Since the last publication of Au Naturel, Ms. Hadiyah Lancaster has had her beautiful baby, Divine Grace. It is a delight to hear her crying when Hadiyah brings her into the salon. Her lungs are not fully developed, so her cries are miniscule. I am anticipating the day when she

cries, and we all feel the depth of her discontent. The day is not too far off. But, Schatzi's

is a home away from home. And new life is always a part of the journey. So, we will embrace her joy and her discontent as she navigates her place in the world of the living. Hadiyah's clients love her so much that they are quite comfortable waiting for a feeding or a diaper change to end before their service can continue. That is the hallmark of a truly gifted stylist.

We are also getting acclimated to our new décor. The more I see it, the more I love it!! It's just what the doctor ordered - renewal, a fresh

outlook. The salon always felt like home away from home. It feels that way even more so, because now, it better reflects who we are philosophically and spiritually. We are grateful for the grant that made it possible.

On the personal front, I was honored to have my 87-year-old

uncle and my 84-year-old mom spend Thanksgiving with us. My uncle is my

late father's brother. They were as close as two peas in a pod. My uncle told me how they would meet up in Okinawa, Japan while my uncle was stationed in South Korea and Dad was in VietNam. Those meetings must have been so bittersweet as they knew that life could end any day. We visited his gravesite in Suffolk, Virginia while my uncle was here. On the morning that my uncle was traveling back to Sacramento, he was teary-eyed as he told me that he felt my Dad's presence so much that he told him to make

ALL YOU CAN TAKE WITH  
YOU IS WHAT YOU HAVE  
GIVEN AWAY.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Beauty salon and barber shop culture is real! It's here that ideas are shared and debated. It's why Alfree Woodard came to Schatzi's back in 2008 to campaign for Barack Obama. Well as I watch the political spectrum over the past few months, I feel compelled to highlight some key videos that I have come across. I have shared them with just about everyone who has sat in my chair over the past few months.

My preface is the African Sankofa bird which represents the Ghanaian proverb "Look to the past to inform the future." The past that I am compelled to highlight is that the [Tulsa Race Massacre](#) and the [Wilmington Insurrection](#) did not occur in a vacuum. The society at that time in history was sitting on a powder keg, and one day, the fire was ignited. With that said, consider the following videos: [Context](#), [The Perceived Problem](#), [The Solution](#) My father's last words to his children on his death bed were "stay vigilant." Need I say more...

himself known if he is here. He said, he woke up and the overhead fan was going. He hadn't turned it on so he asked me if it turns on by itself. I said, "It does not." He smiled and cried some more. Being a bit curious, I went up to his room (my office when visitors are not here) to look for myself. The fan was still. The next day, Wednesday, I moved back into my office and started the day with an early morning Zoom call. I was rushing to get my monitors set up and grab a cup of tea so I was narrowly focused on starting the meeting on time. After everyone was admitted to the Zoom room,

movement to my right was detected. I looked up and saw the fan moving. I knew I hadn't turned it on. I kept looking so long that someone on the call said: "Is there a bird in your room?" No, not quite. The fan was on for the duration of my meeting and into the next hour when I called my Mom to tell her about it. Then, I went downstairs to grab something to eat. When I came back, the fan was off. I have no rational explanation for what I observed. But, observe I did, and I am grateful for having experienced a father's love.

As I reflect on the years since the salon's opening, I am

amazed at how rapidly it has all gone by. My mother told me years ago, "Youth is fleeting. Enjoy it." Well, our salon's youth is gone. We are approaching our 18<sup>th</sup> year. In the world of business, that is a mature entity. We appreciate everyone who has supported us in this venture into a more loving and humane approach to Black hair care. We would not be here today without your support. We give thanks for life and the gift of service. We are hopeful for many more years of faithful service to the Triangle community, by God's grace.

## CAREFREE CURLS

Nubian knots beget impressive curls

Okay, this used to be my go-to hairstyle. I honestly have not worn it for some years. I was introduced to the style by a Jamaican woman with long beautiful locks. Her curls were cascading and very full. I complimented her on the style and asked how she achieved it. It seemed unlikely that she was rolling her hair on long rods, based on the length of her hair. She then asked me if I knew what Chiny bumps are. (*Note: Chiny bumps is the Jamaican name for Nubian knots. I have deduced that it comes from the Buddha's hairstyle. Since this hairstyle is extremely difficult to accomplish*



*with straight hair, it begs the question of the true origin of the Buddha's hairstyle.*

*But, that's another story completely.)* I responded that I did. She said that after shampooing her hair, she rolls her hair into Nubian knots. She wears that style for a few days and then releases the curls. The result is divine perfection. Well, I decided to try to the style without water. My hair was already styled in long, straight twists. I simply rolled my hair into Nubian knots and

went to sleep. The next morning, the full curls were obvious. So, it



became my go-to style. Well as my hair ages, I have stopped wearing this style so much. But back in October, I decided to embrace the curls of me. The style is honestly as simple as I described. Happy styling!

## SPIRITUAL MUSINGS

Notes from Reflection Questions on the Center for Action & Contemplation "Falling Upward" Course

**Context:** I am currently taking a course on Fr. Richard Rohr's book "Falling Upward". I didn't intend to take the course because I felt this topic was not so compelling for me. I felt that I had already lived the falling upward experience. But, a friend expressed an interest in the course, so I decided to join her. I am sharing some of my personal notes on reflection questions. Naturally, there is no "correct" answer. There is food for thought to inspire your own faith, belief and journey. Contemplation is a critical aspect of center's vision. I share it in the spirit of giving. Please keep what makes sense, leave the rest.

**Question:** Fr. Richard said that "the goal given to most of us is to be ever-faithful to our childhood religion. It's a misunderstanding of growth. This leaves us with an infantile understanding of Christianity, Buddhism, or whatever religion. We have to leave home." How does this quote align with your personal experiences?

This quote aligns very well with my personal experience. I was born into a family with strong Christian roots. My parents, however, were not ardent practitioners of religion. But, I never saw my father eat a meal without first saying grace. And my mother reads and quotes scripture incessantly. Likewise, my grandmother was a strong "woman of God" though I never saw her attend church." As a result, I am not a religious person. But, I am an avid believer! In high school, my mother asked my brother and I if we wanted to attend a church that a cousin of the family had founded in Newport News, Virginia. We agreed and began to regularly attend. We were both baptized and we joined the choir. That was my favorite part of church. When I went to college, I sang in "Black Voices"--a UVA gospel choir made up of students who didn't want to move too far from their faith while in college. I LOVED TO VISIT DIFFERENT CHURCHES AND SING PRAISES TO GOD! After leaving college and moving to Jamaica, I saw Black people with many different faiths that I didn't understand - Rastafarians, Seventh Day Adventists, Pocomania. Likewise, my own husband was/is agnostic; yet, his moral compass points DUE NORTH and is unwavering in his assessment of right and wrong. I have found his beliefs to be more Christian than many Christians I know. With all of these factors coupled with the fact that I lived in Iran in the 70s and absolutely REFUSED to believe that all Muslims would be denied a ticket into Heaven because of their beliefs, I began to read to better understand other religions. I NEVER STOPPED BELIEVING IN AND PRAYING TO GOD. I just envisioned a more loving God who embraced all of His creation and therefore accepted their differences. Let me explain my reasoning.

In English, we have a handful of words for frozen water, including snow, ice, hail, sleet and icicles. The Inuit people have over 50 words for frozen water to describe the many manifestations of the phenomenon that they encounter in their day-to-day lives. Yet, frozen water--NO MATTER HOW IT IS NAMED--is H<sub>2</sub>O that has reached 0 degrees Celsius. PERIOD! So, you could argue that God, like frozen water, has many names but one beingness... You could argue that. But, I don't believe that either. Another argument could be that God is more like H<sub>2</sub>O itself! So below zero degrees Celsius, it is solid; between zero and 100 degrees Celsius, it is liquid; and above 100 degrees, it is a gas. Taking that metaphor to the Christian religion, The Father is the solid state; The Son is the living water; and the Holy Spirit is divine essence. All of them are One (H<sub>2</sub>O) which is God. One could argue this. But, I don't believe that either. It's a useful metaphor that is logical, relatable and describable. But, that's precisely why it is not appropriate to explain or define God. God is unknowable and infinitely complex. It would be more appropriate to say that God is the entire Periodic Table, because every organic and inorganic matter on the planet and in the universe is made up of varying compositions of the chemical compounds on that table. So, I believe we get a little bit closer to a more accurate representation of God beingness with the full table. But I don't believe that either. Because, every living thing on the earth has DNA, a genetic code consisting of proteins which narrowly programs and defines what that

organism will and will not be. God is living. But, God is unprogrammable and undefined. God is the code writer and the code breaker--the beginning and the end. So, ultimately, if a Buddhist calls God Buddha, a Muslim calls God Allah, a Jew calls God Yahweh and a Hindu calls God Krishna or a thousand different names based on how divine beingness manifests, who am I to judge their righteousness?

And so while my journey took me away from the most fundamental and foundational views of Christianity as the only true religion, my lived experience (2014 epiphany) took me down a road wherein I needed Buddhist meditation principles (which I learned from Taekwondo), Hindu yoga practices (which were a regular part of my exercise routine at the time) and Christian steadfast prayer and fasting (which I knew about from living my faith) to overcome the dilemma. I did not understand what had happened to me, so I was VERY OPEN to dialogue. Back in 2015 while staying at the Family Health Ministries guesthouse, one of the graduate student researchers came into our dorm room to have prayer. She rolled out her mat and began the ritual. I passively observed but did not want to stare so I continued with reading my book. When she finished, I explained my experience to her to ask if she had ever heard of anything like this happening to anyone in her faith. She responded, "Oh, you had the experience of the Sufis." I asked, "What does that mean?" She said, "The Sufis are a sect of the Islamic faith but no one questions them. They have had a direct experience of God in a way that sets them apart from other Muslims." After digging a bit more, I learned that all religions have a mystical component to them that emerges from the direct lived experience of God. Because my grounding is Christian and I am most familiar with Jesus' teachings, I circled back to Christianity with greater knowledge and experience. Today, I consider myself a Gnostic Christian because I have moved beyond faith and belief. Before, I was a believer. Now, I am a knower. To all who practice religion, whatever the faith, we all fake it 'til we make it. Once we make it, we know God is, and we know that all faiths lead to God if they are grounded in the greatest commandment: "Love thy God with all thy heart and thy soul and your neighbor as yourself." That is the fruit that ultimately bears good fruit. Thich Nhat Hanh, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Rabbi David Basior all had different faiths but all lived and live this truth. I think God is pleased with them all.

Embrace the beauty of you.

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