**EARTH-CROÍ-STEP SIX – AISLING**

Aisling means **DREAM OR VISION.**

I dream a lot – and dreams have changed my life. Dreams are ‘hollowings’, which means they open up connections and portals to the Otherworld of Spirit.

Many ancient indigenous spiritual traditions have placed great value on the power of dreams. Examples are the Australian aboriginal ‘Dreamtime’ and the Vision-Quest of the Native Americans.

In Ireland our ancient ancestors were powerful dreamers. Their dreams were gateways to the Otherworld of ancestral Spirit where time passed slowly – if there was time at all – and anything seemed possible. A wonderful old mythological story called ‘*The Man Who Had No Story’* is a good example. The main character, Brian, is a man seemingly without much self-worth or creative imagination. But one day, on a wild, rushy mountainside, Brian falls asleep and in his dreaming enters through the thin veil into the world of Spirit where his unexpected adventures enable him to ‘come to himself’ and recognise and embrace his giftedness – his life was forever transformed! This is a very short resumé – read the full colourful and humorous tale for yourself online.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In the twentieth century the power of the unconscious was brought to the forefront of scientific perspective through the work and writings of Carl Jung.[[2]](#footnote-2) Jung spoke about the ‘Archetypes’ of the human unconscious which, he said, were images which come down to us from our earliest ancestors – all contained in the ‘universal pool’ of the collective unconscious. So, when we dream – like Brian in the Irish myth – we enter through the thin veil into the world of Spirit and our dreams are full of this ancient archetypal imagery. In other words, our dreams are full of symbols or images – which are generated from a source deep within our psyche and DNA. This is the deepest and most ancient wisdom – which we could call Soul Wisdom.

This Soul wisdom is not just about each of us as individuals – it is also a well of collective wisdom. For example, our ancestors (who understood the relationships between all living things) had rituals which were about acknowledging the power of the **World Soul** and the dreaming of all life, including the dreaming of the Earth Herself. The symbol of Axis Mundi (the World Tree) is the World Soul of ancient tradition and our ancestors recognised this deep wisdom through storytelling, symbolic drawings, song and dance and through ritual practices, often interconnected with the cycle of the seasons. For example, one practice, which remains in Ireland to this very day, is the tying of prayer-rags or ‘clooties’ to native trees – especially at wells and ancient shrines. The clootie is tied to the tree accompanied by a prayer to Spirit. The tree has its roots into the Earth, its trunk is the Middle world and its branches reach to the sky taking the prayer on its upward journey.

The practice of ‘journeying’ in contemporary ‘Core’ Shamanism is also a type of dreaming, taking its inspiration from ancient Shamanic customs of indigenous tribal peoples in many parts of the world, including Celtic Druidic practices. Journeying is a dynamic type of prayer which involves setting a journey intention, listening, meditation, imagination and invocation as the ‘dreamer’ seeks for healing wisdom from the world of Spirit.

In my own life I very often have powerful dreams – and especially when I’m seeking guidance through difficult problems and circumstances. At each significant period of my life my dreams have laid bare what is really going on deep down in my soul and unconscious. My dreams often give me colourful images that enable me to access the deeper soul-wisdom and as I keep a dream journal, I can read over these dreams and continue to gain wisdom from them over months and years.

This is one example of a life-changing dream I had many years ago. In the dream I was walking down wide steps into a large structure, like a pyramid. At the bottom of the steps dust and sand covered the floor and I took up a broom and began to sweep. As I gradually swept away the layers of sand and dust, to my complete joy a beautiful, mosaic–tiled floor began to be uncovered. Its symmetry and glorious, shining colour were breath-taking. The experience of the dream was one of sheer joy, healing and bliss. When I awoke that feeling remained with me for some time and in the days that followed I wondered about the meaning of such a powerful dream. I began to realise that the mosaic floor represented the beauty of the soul – everyone’s soul if beautiful. But that beauty gets covered over with the dust and dirt of living. **But this is the thing** – the beauty of the soul remains intact – no matter what life throws at us – it can never be defaced or erased (even if the traumas you have been through have required you to encase your soul in concrete!), and it’s as we begin to acknowledge our own sacredness and to value ourselves that we – symbolically – sweep away all that dust and dirt (or drill through the concrete!) – to unveil the beauty of our authentic souls! It’s all there, waiting for us…

And I do believe that all the wisdom we need for this life is **already within us**. Our ancestors believed in the power of Aisling – because Dreaming and journeying are ways of connecting us to Spirit through our own inner resources of Sacred Wisdom.

**WAYS TO PRACTICE AISLING**

1. Learn to meditate – enabling stillness of the mind.
2. Keep a Dream Journal – before you sleep prepare for dreaming by focusing on the issue you need wisdom for. Write your dream down as soon as possible after you dream it. You may think you’ll remember in the morning. You won’t – or at least many of the details will be gone. Notice everything - colours, people, places, weather etc. everything has symbolic meaning for you in your life.
3. Make prayer – in whatever form you are drawn to – a central practice in your daily life.

1. See [www.spellbinders.org](http://www.spellbinders.org) online website. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See C.J. Jung *Dreams*, First published in 1074 by Princeton University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)