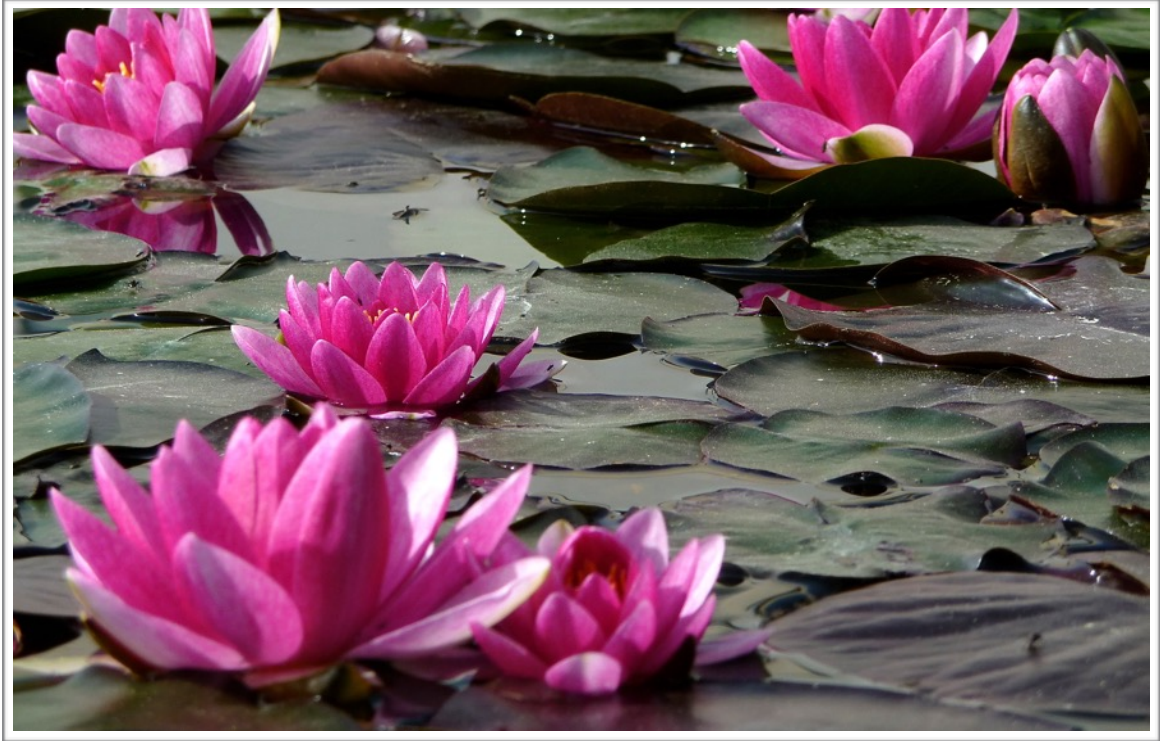


Petals of the Lotus Temple



by moss

come sit inside the lotus
the petals reaching high
like pillars of our temple
holding up the sky

Consciousness



Our journey is from the darkness to the light, from ignorance to sight, from unconsciousness to consciousness. This is not to create a duality inside you of “bad” (unconsciousness) and “good” (consciousness). It is merely stating a fact of life: the journey of the human spirit, whether you realize it or not, is to be self aware, to understand itself and to define itself with its own experience of truth.

The arising and expansion of consciousness in the human being is as natural as the light of the shining sun that rises every morning. The force of consciousness is like the force within a tree that pulls away from gravity and reaches into the infinite sky, higher and higher.

We left the womb where we were warm, safe, taken care of, helpless, blind, unaware, and undifferentiated, and we set off on a journey of discovery. Welcome to the human experience.

Every night we go back to the womb, and every morning we wake up again and head off into the sun a little bit further. We dance between night and day, between unconsciousness and consciousness, and every action, every thought, every decision either takes us in one direction or the other. Or you can look at it with the spiral metaphor. We keep on going in circular motions, but the circles are either expanding or contracting. You started as a little point of consciousness in the centre and slowly slowly the spiral expands from there. It’s natural trajectory is to expand to such an extent that the whole universe is contained within it. It’s natural destination is nothing short of enlightenment.

But for most of us, the spiral stops expanding at a certain point. The spiral becomes a closed circuit circle, and from there it starts contracting again to the point where it started.

We cannot go back to the womb literally of course, but there are countless substitutions until the body reaches the tomb. Anything that encourages us to be unconscious: addictions of every kind, alcohol, shopping, drugs, internet addiction, eating disorders, social circles and so

PETALS OF THE LOTUS TEMPLE

called friends, your job, the list goes on and on. Whatever turns the light of awareness off and puts your organism into auto-pilote serves this purpose perfectly.

When the spiral becomes a closed circuit we usually become aware of it immediately. It is an existential feeling of stuckness, of being blocked and frustrated. At this point there is an incredible opportunity to confront our limitations, fears and boundaries, which is a blissful experience, but at this point there is also an incredible danger to stay stuck in old patterns. Why so dangerous? Because in fact we know that the old patterns don't work for us, that's why we had the urge to expand out of them in the first place. So we have to be dishonest with ourselves, we tell ourselves stories and lies. In fact, we start becoming our own worst enemy, we stop being the protagonist of our own life¹.

We search for people and situations that support us in our stuckness, we find routines and patterns that keep us safely away from our limitations. We project our heroes outwardly, onto leaders and politicians, celebrities and famous personalities, athletes and sport teams, gurus and teachers.

But deep down inside there is a sense of selling out, of being phoney. There is a feeling inside that somehow I have failed my own Self, failed the challenges of living my own life. And so the lure of unconsciousness becomes stronger. We increase the dosage. The spiral gets smaller. The days get shorter, the life force gets weaker. And then we die.

But there is always the choice, up until the day we die. Every morning I wake up I have the opportunity of rising to the challenge of the light within myself, to spiral out again. To find my limitations, my boundaries, my fears and to work with them.

Deep inside everyone knows from their first hand experience the feeling of overcoming limitations and obstacles, of expanding their horizons. We feel alive, we feel empowered, we feel confident, we feel connected.

Don't look to others to compare, you have it inside you.

Don't be afraid of failing, of falling. Take the jump. You know it's worth it. You need to fall to get back up, and to get up is an achievement in itself.

If you can't do it this time don't be hard on yourself, don't take yourself too seriously, don't define yourself by your limitations. Every moment is another opportunity to expand your consciousness.

¹ The Archetypal Hero is the one who goes through "dark night of the soul" before emerging again victorious. He confronts his dragons, his demons, his fears, his evils, before he can be the hero of his own life. If he doesn't go through the dark night of his own soul he is not the hero of his own life.

Meditation



Meditation means seeing clearly That Which Is.

Meditation also means non-doing. There may be innumerable things happening within you but that's not what I mean. The mind might be working something out, the body might be moving, the stomach might be digesting food, the sense organs might be noticing changes in the environment. The emotions might be jumping off a waterfall. And yet meditation is still possible if the sense of awareness is not identified with doing, when the sense of awareness is watching all the movements happening like actors on a stage while it is resting in Presence. As soon as we identify with something, some thought, idea, emotion or sensation, then meditation comes to an end and a trade off takes place between the clarity of objectivity and the bosom of subjective identifications.

There are countless so-called meditation techniques. In fact meditation has no technique. There are innumerable techniques to prepare you for meditation and you know the technique works when you don't need it anymore.

To prepare for meditation, sit quietly and comfortably, close your eyes, and observe everything that arises in your awareness, objectively, without identifying with what you observe. Observe your senses interacting with the external world, observe any sounds, smells, sensations in your body. Observe your thoughts and your emotions. Observe your respiration, coming in and going out. Don't do anything, just observe.

Meditation is the bridge between Science and God. It leads to clarity, objectivity, understanding, gnosis. But "Isn't objectivity impossible as long as there is a subjective person who is observing?" It appears to be so and yet once you become the subject entirely, when nothing remains except the subject, and nothing stands outside the subject, only then is objectivity possible, only then is science possible. This is where meditation takes you. There comes a point where one realizes, "I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the emotions, I am not the sensations. I am something beyond."

Gnosis



There is knowledge and then there is knowing. Knowledge is an accumulation of past experiences or second hand information. Knowledge is useful but its energetic vibration is inherently dead.

Knowing, or Gnosis, is the living understanding of truth in presence, assimilated into consciousness. It is organic, flexible, fluid and yet completely omnipotent. Nothing can defeat it.

The experience of truth in presence gives your spirit wings to fly.

Gnosis is developed by trusting in your own experience and by experimenting with second-hand knowledge for yourself to see if it is valid or not.

Gnosis is also developed with meditation.

Question all the answers that have already been given to you. Some might be right, but most of them aren't right for you, at least not in this present moment.

Socrates said, "I am the wisest man in Athens, because I know that I know nothing."

Start there. Realize that you know nothing, all that you thought you knew was second hand nonsense. The less you think you know the better. Once your mind is empty of knowledge then you become available to something beyond that is infinitely wiser, an intelligence that is beyond your mind. You develop presence, you develop confidence in your own experience, you develop your ability to listen and to see clearly yourself and the world you interact with, you develop the wisdom of foolishness through experimentation. You become intuitive to subtle vibrations of energy within you and around you. You trust a deeper order of things, a higher consciousness flowing in and around you. You see you're not in control and you release the false sense of control because you know it was based on ignorance and fear. And you see that with this release a new kind of self mastery becomes available.

Expression



It's not easy to express yourself really, fully, naturally. In fact it is nearly impossible because most people have no idea who they are. And not only that, most people try to be someone they are not. We normally express the roles we've been assigned to.

From an early age, our natural expressions has been blocked, our roots and branches cut and shaped into strange patterns. We have been trained to fit into models, into the family, into the society, into the culture, into the religion, into the gender roles, into the power roles, etc. We have been so well trained to fit in that we are not free to express ourselves without these filters even if we wanted to. And it gets complicated because the different moulds we are forced into are often not even compatible with each other. These complications create complexes.

Moreover we are afraid of being different, of being ostracized, of being outcasted from our social circles. Certainly there's a high price for being different. And society usually punishes those who make their own rules because they often threaten the social norms.

But isn't the price even higher to forsake your unique, original soul? Indeed it is my greatest joy in life to discover myself and to live according to my own discoveries and to express those discoveries.

The fact is Self Expression is sacred. Creativity and Originality are Divine qualities as is the journey to encounter ones self.

Start connecting with your truth and sharing that truth with the world. Celebrate the diversity of expression you see all around you. Give permission to yourself to express your own uniqueness. This can be difficult because we are so indoctrinated and afraid we don't know where to begin. It can be difficult to turn off the mental noise and social programming. It can be helpful to break free from your daily routine, encounter new people, new situations that throw you out of your comfort zones. Try art therapy, ecstatic dance, pick up a paintbrush, turn off your brain and get drunk on the colours and movements that arise.

Liberation



We throw around the word “freedom” like it’s something cheap and easy.

Are you free to choose your thoughts, your emotions? Are you free to consciously create your own life? Are you free to be your self?

The master is one who is completely present. Held within the master’s consciousness is the mind and the body, the past and the future, all desires and fears. From there we can start talking about freedom and liberation.

A character in a play is completely and unconsciously conditioned by his role. He doesn’t see from the perspectives of the audience and he isn’t empowered by their observations. Is the audience free? Of course not, the spectators are being subjected to a director’s interpretation of a writer’s story. Is the director free? Is the writer free?

But don’t worry, freedom *is* the cheapest and easiest thing in the world. It’s *free*.

Freedom means that you are free from all conditions, and there are no conditions on being. One day you popped into this world, this manifested experience, and here you are, now in this moment. If you can return to the simplicity of being, to the simplicity of presence, you can taste freedom. Before you started clinging to your own survival, before your desires and fears started programming a never-ending sequence of unconscious impulses. Understand that birth proceeds death, and you can transcend both.

Enlightenment means complete freedom from all dualities, the freedom to simply be one with truth, consciousness, bliss.

One need only to drop the shackles. Of course we like our shackles. We get trapped by countless reasons not to be free. And then we forget the way out.

Love



Love is God. Love is Oneness. When you make the journey from duality to oneness you are in love.

The ego is against love, he says “I’m Special”, “I’m Different”, “I’m Better”. This is moving away from love and into isolation. From here descends fear, hatred, depression, loneliness.

Hugging is a beautiful metaphor for the act of love, where two seemingly separate entities come together and embrace each other.

It’s like a celebration of that special something that is shared and that is beyond each one alone.

When you look into someone’s eyes try to find that point of connection rather than separation. If all you find is separation and difference then look within yourself and you will certainly find your own ego lingering there. Once you see your own ego, and once you see that ego means suffering then you will be filled with gratitude to the person who pointed it out to you and love will be possible again.

love is the union of the known with the unknown, the expansion of being, the opening between self and otherness. the union of body, breath and mind is love expressed as yoga. the union of masculine and feminine is love expressed as tantra. the union of noise and silence is love expressed as meditation. the union of mind and soul is love expressed as therapy. the union of man and god is love expressed as religion. Of course the Dalai Lama says “love is my religion”. Love is also my meditation, love is my yoga, love is my tantra, love is my therapy, love is my journey, my music, my politics, my breathing. whenever i get lost i come back to this insight. whenever i get scared i come back to this light. Because i know that in every challenge there is an opportunity to break through the wall and find the union again. To find the love, the expansion of being, beyond all fears and limitations.

Bliss



Bliss is the inherent background of your life. In fact you ARE bliss. It is yours to have, to experience, to enjoy if you want it. You may feel suffering, unhappiness, pain, sorrow. But Bliss is the background, always, it is often covered up by clouds, but the sun is always shining there constantly.

There is no opposite to bliss. Bliss is not joy, not happiness, it is qualitatively different altogether.

When all the thoughts and emotions roll away, when the desires and fears disappear as they do in rare moments, one gets a glimpse of the emptiness that is bliss. That is precisely what bliss is, it is the freedom of emptiness, of nothingness, of pure spaciousness. It is infinite, and it is omnipresent.

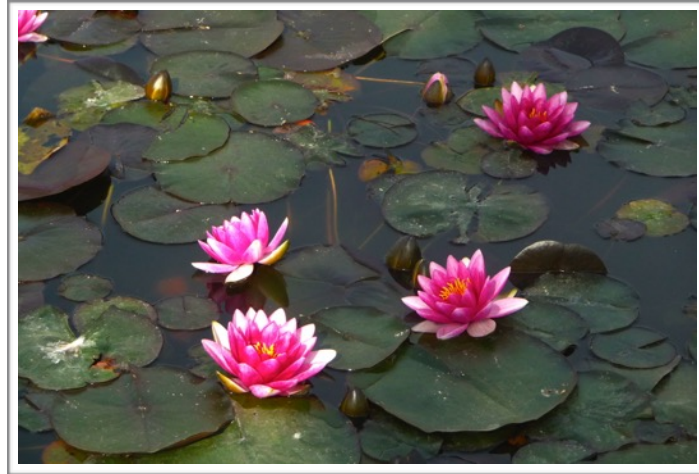
So how does one attain bliss? How does one live in constant bliss?

First of all, you don't attain bliss. You don't achieve bliss. On the contrary, when all attainment is gone, when all achievement is dropped and all your desires for something different disappear, then bliss is what remains. First you lose all your hope then you lose all fear, then only bliss remains to be seen. Most people find it unbearable to lose hope, and so bliss will remain hidden.

Drop the illusion of doership and you become bliss, which is your inherent nature. Of course the world continues, the body continues, the mind and emotions continue.

The Buddha said that your attachments to the world cause dukkha, suffering. Indeed, bliss is what remains when your attachments lose their hold and magnetism on you.

Yoga



Yoga means union or the process of unification. Yoga is the act of yoking, of uniting the fragmented parts of the personality and understandings.

It is the opposite of schizophrenia. The mind, the emotions, the body, the breath, the spirit, can be brought into alignment, into formation, like instruments in a symphony. This is the work of yoga, to bring unity, to attain Oneness.

There are different paths of yoga. There are asanas to unite body, breath, mind and spirit. There is meditation to see clearly the illusion of separation. There is discrimination to separate the real from the false. There is concentration to focus the senses upon a single object, the Self. There is devotion to the Oneness known as God. The list goes on.

The science of attaining oneness is as ancient as the consciousness of mankind and there are innumerable ways, paths, techniques of yoga.

In fact there are as many paths of yoga as there are people, because it is precisely the journey from the small 's' self to the big 'S' Self that is the process of yoking, i.e. yoga. Everyone starts somewhere different, although the destination is the same.

Satsang



Satsang means ‘sitting with the truth’ or ‘gathering of the truth’. It occurs when seekers of truthful living gather and share from their hearts and from their presence and experience.

Our quest is to know ourselves, to be authentic, and to find ways to navigate through our daily lives in ways that serve our spiritual unfoldment as best as possible.

This can be very difficult, especially since it is ultimately the journey of the individual and it is easy to feel lost. Besides, society offers countless temptations and distractions that keep us from knowing ourselves. That is why Satsang is so important. So is the Sangha, which is the spiritual family (or friends along the path).

Satsang and the Sangha create an important support system, where people share what’s going on in their lives as honestly as they can where people encourage each other and try to relate authentically together.

Satsang can take many shapes and forms. There can be a sacred circle of sharing, each person expressing from their heart “what’s up” with them currently. Satsang can also take the shape of singing or meditating or praying together. It can involve sharing divine inspiration with the group, from one’s experience or revelation or from the teachings of the masters. Satsang can involve a guru, a teacher or life master coming to share their experience of the Truth with seekers of the Truth.

Satsang is the sacred gathering of the friends of God. Our friends in the world are our mirrors and they reflect aspects of ourselves and they reflect our desires and directions in life as well. It is important to choose our friends wisely. If you want to know yourself authentically, if you want to be empowered by your own awakened understandings, if you want to be the master of your own life, then find friends who are on that path as well. Be open, be receptive, listen, share and learn.

Coming Next...

Therapy

Breath

Tantra

Relaxation

Duality

Shaktipat

Dance

Play