

From Heart Dweller

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WAKING UP

A budding lotus
In a womb of luminous green
Vibrant, happy, and comforting.

The fresh white petals are so delicate
And so fine,
With clear drops of dew
Forming and sliding down.

The gentle petals do not protest the dew
Collecting in shimmering pearls
And sliding around,
Rather they welcome the refreshing presence
And relish the contact.

When the first rays of the golden sun
End their journey at its bosom,
The blossoming lotus
Stretching
Starts to unfold
Shaking off the dew and the long sleep of night.

Embracing the warm messengers of light
The young lotus sways gently
In a whirling dance
In a loving and teasing dialogue
With the gentle morning breeze.

The friendly breeze
Smiles happily
And caresses the petals
With infinite tenderness
And loving care.

The dance of the joyful petals
Titillates my awakening heart
Stirring expanding ripples
In its still and sweet waters.

The small ripples expand
In waves of release
Joy and delight,
Bubbling sweetness
Fresh fragrance
And a delicious tingle throughout.

How lovely to be myself, to be content with what is—wanting nothing more, desiring nothing else. It's like magic, even greater than magic. The moment I say “yes” to my experience, with all my heart, regardless of what it is, the waves start to subside, the clouds begin to dissipate. Calmness, peace, gentleness, an exquisite contentment. There is no more cause for discontent, no more reason for holding or protecting. My body relaxes, tensions let go. My heart is so peaceful, so light, like the surface of a quiet and still lake. My chest feels as if it does not exist, as if the flesh and bones have evaporated. I feel a gentle breeze going through my body, touching the very essence of my heart. There are no more barriers. Oh, it feels so good. So fresh, so new. Joy comes in gentle waves, just as the breeze touches the petals of flowers. It wells up from unseen depths. It involves the entirety of me. How sweet my heart feels; full, overflowing with its own nectar.

I use no analogies, no similes. These are not images. I describe exactly what I experience, or whatever part of the experience I can put into words. The breeze actually and literally blows within the cavity of my chest; the nectar is an actual soothing fluid that wells up, as if out of a spring right at the center of the chest. The experience is not physical, not emotional, not mental. It is all of these together and more. When the heart opens, when the real nectar of divine love flows within the body, all boundaries dissolve, all categories vanish. I am a flowing nectar. I am a budding rose. I am intrinsic joy. There is a body sensation: a delicious tingle that surpasses any orgasm. There is a feeling: a light joy that partakes of the nature of light. There is an image: a fountain of rainbow-colored nectar. Beyond and around these three modes of perception there is the pervading intuitive sense that unites all of them, melting their boundaries and rendering the experience an organic unity. Such a unifying and vivifying experience of life is our rightful inheritance as human beings. And it is only a glimpse, a flavor of the potentiality of human experience.

There is no need to say this is physical, or emotional, or mental, or spiritual. These are categories, concepts that are useful for analysis, but the experience of life is not so. Life is involvement, total presence, immersion in the experience of the now. It is integrative, fresh, light, new. All the time. All the time. This is what it means to be alive. Life is to be turned on, by myself, by my life, by life, by the present, by what is. It is the melting of the door of the heart till I feel there is no barrier between what is inside my ribs and what is outside them, till I don't need to protect myself any longer. What for? There is nothing to defend, nothing to protect, but my greed, my deficiency, my frozenness, my violence. That's what we do most of the time; protect and defend ourselves, and try to get more. Greed and more greed, because we feel poor, impoverished.

Man is upside down. We experience reality in an upside-down fashion. We are rich but we feel ourselves poor. We are full, but we feel ourselves empty. We are abundant, but we feel ourselves deficient. Since we don't know our true nature, our intrinsic fullness, we want to get more: more possessions, more money, more sex, more prestige, more praise, more self-congratulations, more experiences, more excitement, more, more.... And this takes us even further away from the Truth. It estranges us even more. God becomes angry and wrathful and punishes us for going astray, for turning away from Him. But God is not Jehovah; God is not vengeful. It is of the nature of things that when you turn away from the source of life you feel impoverished. And it feels like being punished. In fact, we are being punished, but we are our own punishers. We punish ourselves by our own ignorance, our own heedlessness.

All it takes is to stop the striving, the manipulation of reality. This is not a moral injunction, but a practical statement. Simply stated it is this: when we manipulate reality, wanting it to be different, we are being the devil and forgetting God, our true reality. We need to let go, rest and just be. We need to accept what is, not just mentally, but with the whole of our being. If we feel frustrated and deficient we need to accept those feelings as they are, without thought of reward. We cannot go after openness, love and joy. This would be our usual pattern: seeking, striving, wanting fulfillment. And this kind of energy will never give the peace we need so much, because this energy is an expression of a state of deficiency.

Yes, it is a paradox. You must, and you have to want to see your original face before you were born more than anything else, more than life itself. At the same time you must relax, let go, just be in the present, as if there is no future at all, as if there is nothing to attain. In fact, it is a fact, not an “as if.”

Acceptance of my experience of myself means being here now without manipulation. The more that I accept, the more I am in the present, and the more I will let go of attainment. It's letting go of what I want most, but the more I let go and just be, the more I am now here, accepting what is. The more I am in the future, or wanting to achieve, even wanting acceptance, the less I am accepting myself. There is no difference between total acceptance and the state of fullness. We always want this state of fullness, but we go about it in the wrong way, in fact, the opposite way.

Acceptance feels like taking a risk. It's like jumping off a cliff. I accept more the more I trust in reality, in God. At some point I must jump, leap, totally forget, totally abandon the search, the future, the past, attainment or failure, reward or punishment. I just leap into nothingness, with the trust of the Fool who has the yellow bright sun of the Father behind him. It is a quantum leap, for there are no securities, no guarantees. When this state of abandon is realized I find that I am alive as if for the first time. It is the first time. It is the first time I am alive, awake—Bodhi, as the Buddhists say. Before, I was living a pseudo life, a half-death, a pretense of life, which is the condition of most of humanity.

Death of striving, death of seeking, even for the goal, brings the energy of real life to its fullest bloom. And life is its own reward, and only the person who is alive knows it. How can a person who has not experienced life know what it is? But as we see, we have to die first, before we know what life is. The Sufi says that after fana there is baq'a—after extinction there is existence, in Him.

This happens on many levels, and in many depths. So there is no sense in saying that this is difficult, that it is too far away, or even saying that it is close at hand. It happens whenever I accept myself, let go of preconceptions, and just be. The more I accept the more I die, and the more alive I am. Total acceptance, with the entirety of my being, is complete death, fana. And complete death of the manipulative ego is full rebirth, awakening. This is the natural state of being a human being, our rightful inheritance. You know that with the greatest certainty when you experience yourself so. It's true.