

Daniel's Reflection for week beginning 19th September

Imperfect Fragments of Love

Love is all that we spend our lives seeking, but we forget along the way that love is present the moment we surrender to it. And the moment we surrender, we are no longer afraid of dying, or whether or not there is eternal life, because we have already found it, in love. Just one glimpse of true love, within and around us, shows us heaven. Love is eternal life. Because love sings forever, and when we give ourselves to love, like a stream to the ocean, we become a part of that forever-ness; beyond individuality, and all the isolated struggles of being a separate, egocentric, encasement of a captive soul. We return to the source of energy from whence we came - the energy which created us, and burns passionately through the veins of our hearts.

I now truly believe that love can transform us. In the miracle of its wake we become artists, thinkers, philosophers, sages, teachers, dreamers, believers. But all of us also become students. There is nothing in the journey of love that doesn't ultimately set us free, release us into the wilderness of passion, and inspire us to yield ourselves more and more intimately to the limitless heart of the universe. We are not in love until we have fallen all the way into the beautiful void; never again to find balance or direction as we had heretofore taken for granted. From that moment on, there can only be surrender to the way that love has chosen for us, and trust in the uncharted regions of her horizons. There is nothing more or less than love when she is actually present in our lives. Love is nothing and everything, all at the same time. Substance and formlessness. Completion and emptiness. Embracing every moment, deeply known, yet immeasurable, beyond concept. Love just is.

Love at the Centre

Every new day is a miracle. Simply the realisation of that elevates our souls. Who approaches a miracle looking for its faults? A new day is flawless in the very essence of its newness. My gift at this moment is to be alive and able to embrace the wonder of such newness. And to make it my own simply by being present with it; not forming any attachments, expectations, or conditions, to or because of it. I watch it unfurl with the same reverence I would experience watching an artist at work, or tenderness expressed between a couple who know one another by heart. I centre myself, become one with it. I fall deeply and irretrievably in love. With the magic of the mystery, in this moment, of a fresh morning.

Love is the be all and end all of everything relevant in life. Love is what flickers through our thoughts at the end of life; not achievement, or success, or material wealth. It is in moments of love that we measure the ultimate fulfilment of our lives as a whole. Love is the one essence we keep for eternity, because it is the only experience in our lives which shows us the way to letting go. If we have known the presence of true love, and recognised it for what it is, letting go of life will be as natural as releasing a leaf to the wind, knowing that its brown hues are earned, through its own letting go of green vitality, and finding the deepest voice of love in its twilight.

Everyone becomes a part of our lives for a reason. And perhaps that reason is to give us lessons in love. Even the people who seem to take us furthest from love, are bringing us closer than we realise to its true form. And those who most obviously bring us closest to love, will also by necessity bring out everything within our hearts that is farthest from it. We can't fully understand the depth of something in its full maturity until we have been taken into the very depths of its opposite.

I am learning to tie love in with the rest of existence, while remembering that it is also the whole of existence, the entirety; that love really is the fuelling embrace of everything. And yet if we let love take over consciously, we are somehow divided from it, as though trying to pin down, specify, commercialise and romanticise love only results in preserving some glimmering replica of it, a lifeless butterfly. Love is organic, always flowing, growing, expanding, renewing; the moment we cling to it, take it for granted, overload it with expectations,

demands, requests, in essence we rip away its natural force, and it becomes an ego-based calamity with no anchor. To love, to truly love, the only thing we can do is to 'let go, let God', or, alternatively worded 'let go, and let Love', because love can never be tamed by our futile definitions, aspirations and plans for its guarantees without losing purity, and because in its vulnerability it is far greater than each of us. We are a part of love, but love is the whole of us.

Growing into the spiritual self is like learning to fly, without visually obvious wings. One day, we realise there is no ground beneath us, only sky above us, into which it becomes possible to infinitely soar. The next stage of the quest is learning to trust the ground again; surrendering to the acceptance that we cannot always be in the sky, but that the sky is always there for us, when we seek it, and even when we forget the way to it. Once we have soared into the endlessness of our spiritual identities, there will always be a path for us to follow; only the seasons and the way we follow it may change.

Love and Heart

Yesterday, I found a metal outline of a heart, rusted but complete, on the pavement. I see this as a gift of synchronicity, chance and destiny combined. The heart is my spiritual journey's 'symbol', a signpost to embrace and follow. Because my journey took flight with the awakening of my heart centre - the sense of unconditional love, and the heart-shaped clouds which appeared continuously and abundantly last August - I return to the heart again and again, to reclaim the personal essence of this process - Love. Love is my anchor, and heart my wise guide.

In his *Chakra Meditation* Swami Saradananda writes, 'In Tibetan tradition, a metal object known as a *vajra*, or thunderbolt, is held in the hand during meditation to represent the grounding properties of a lightning rod.'

The spiritual quest can only thrive in organic conditions. It cannot become static without losing its vibrant sense of expansion. Prayers, rituals, meditations, nurture it, until it grows out of them, and seeks a new path to follow, taking with it everything that has so far enabled it to blossom, as its core, its ever unfurling centre. What fulfils it so utterly for a while, suddenly becomes stale and purposeless, an addiction to familiarity or depthless comfort. It is time then to take a leap of faith, and move further into the risks and mysteries of the divine unknown.

The journey of love is the map of all miracles. It has no beginning and no end. It has no source and no destination. It has no midway path, no route; no direction, but is never lost. It travels vertically, horizontally, all at the same time. It spirals, in winding curves through our souls. Love has no aim, but it is never without a purpose. It belongs wherever it is accepted, but can never be possessed; it whispers while singing. It listens intently at the same time it proclaims passionately. Love. The divine energy - of giving, receiving and being.