



May 1998 Contemplation Theme

Joyfulness

By Rama Berch, C.S.Y.T., E-RYT 500

Joy is your true nature, rather than merely an emotion or feeling. It is your divine inheritance, to which you are entitled as a birthright. There is nothing that you need do to earn the experience of joy, for it is already there inside. It is not merely that joy is within you, but that joy IS you! If you do not experience it all the time, then you are suffering from a case of mistaken identity, just like the lion cub that got separated from its mother.

Adopted by a sheep, the cub was raised by the flock in the wild, and learned to eat grass and to “baa.” One day, drinking from a still pond, the now grown cub saw the reflection of another face staring back at him. The visitor’s face was surprisingly familiar, with a golden mane like his own. The visitor asked him why he was eating grass and making such a disgraceful wimpy sound. “Why, because I am a sheep!” replied the cub. It took the visitor quite some time to convince the cub, “No, you are a lion. See, you look just like me.” Eventually the cub realized his true nature and joyfully returned to the forest with his new friend.

This story has been handed down through the ages to remind you that you are not whom you think you are, and that you can easily recognize your true nature. Please take this reminder personally — your true nature is joy! This means you don’t have to wait for everything in your life to be perfect in order to feel this joy. It is just beneath the part of yourself that you usually look at. It is there even when you do not have everything you want or when you’re stuck with something you do not want. The joy of your own being is there even

if your body is imperfect or your life needs some remodeling. To find it you merely need to stop trying so hard, because all the trying makes you think you can experience joy by adding something from the outside. When you succeed at adding some joy to your life, you have a temporary experience of “dependent joy.” The problem with this is that it can only be created again by a lot of effort. Thus your life becomes constant hurrying from one temporary moment of dependent joy to another. This is not joy-fullness.

Yoga offers “independent joy.” It arises from the core of your own being, like a geyser sprays a rising column of water into the air. You experience great joy when you watch jets of water shooting higher and higher, because you recognize that the experience of joy arises from within in this same way. Without depending on any specific external circumstances, you can (and must) find the inner wellspring of joy, which then fills you brimming to the top and overflows into your life. Instead of looking for joy to come from the events of your life, you can draw from your “joy-fullness” to express this joy in every action, in every relationship, in every thought and in every moment of every day.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rama'. Above the signature is a small heart symbol containing the number '31'.