



April 1997 Contemplation Theme

Joy

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

Joy is the substratum of your being and the foundation of all of existence. You experience this every time it bubbles to the surface. You even look for things in your life that will allow it to bubble up. In these moments you say that you are “happy.” I wish for you that your life be filled with many of them. I wish for you that the inner veil of separation between the outside and your essence be very thin, so this inner joy can bubble up for the slightest of reasons.

The world is a physical manifestation of joy. It shows in the exuberance of a flower, especially one that is still on the plant. Look at it and see how it is so alive and so joyful. If you watch puppies or kittens, you naturally begin to smile or laugh. Yesterday at Seal Beach, I saw a baby seal beside its mom. They laid together on the sand and the baby began to nurse. All the people standing nearby were pointing and grinning. This joy seems to be contagious; it is almost like germs. Actually it's not contagious; what happens is that an event makes you able to let go and experience the joy which is always inside you.

The heads of all the people in a restaurant turn to watch the little tyke toddling through. Someone carries a baby into the room and everyone watches. A few people indulge themselves and go over to say “Hi.” They smile and their whole body relaxes. Others hang back because that inner veil of separation is too thick. They cannot let it down for such a small reason. Something really big has to happen before they let themselves be filled with happiness. Consider that you were once the baby or toddler that sparked other people's joy. Now, however, you see other people's faces and you experience something other than joy. You focus on your expectations and desires, or you replay old memories of not-joyful times. You are actually focusing your attention on the inner veil of separation, rather than looking through it to the joy inside.

The practices of yoga thin the inner veil of separation. Yoga offers practices to open the upwelling of joy inside. Then, you can carry that feeling with you wherever you go. The littlest things can then stimulate the familiar surge of joy, because the veil is thinner. In this way your life becomes full of joy, not because the outside is perfect, but because the inside is. It's called yoga.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rama'. Above the signature is a small heart containing the Sanskrit word 'Om'.