

Eco-exercise for the Soul - Environmental Clean Up

One of the quests of space travel is to discover where else in the universe there might be traces of water, because without it there can be no life. Just so, the human form has no life without a soul. The soul is the living water and the experience of life in form provides the soul with an infinite number of choices and possibilities in creating an individual identity. Individual identity is the sum total of these choices - some are made in an unaware state and some in a deliberate and aware state. As small children we unwittingly accept the attitudes, beliefs, values and opinions of others about ourselves, others and the world around us. Later on, we have more conscious choices about what to accept and what not to accept.

At birth consciousness is free, pure and open, crystal clear, like the bubbling, gushing spring water at the top of a mountain. Close to the source of the spring, the water is unpolluted, sweet and clean supporting all kinds of life, both within and outside of itself. The further down the mountain the water rushes the more it is filled with foreign matter of all kinds; the tangled lines and hooks of fishermen, the thoughtless littering of aluminum and rubber, paper and styrofoam, effluent from factories, fertilizer from the farmers fields, sewage ... until it can hardly move, has little oxygen and becomes slow, sluggish and unable sustain life.

Just like the spring, the further we travel from our source, the further down the mountain we go, the more we pick up all kinds of detritus. Thoughts of worthlessness and failure, self blame, self criticism, judgments of all kinds, controlling attitudes for perfection for ourselves and driven and compulsive demands we place on ourselves, to name just a few. Or, these attitudes and beliefs are projected out angrily on to others with attitudes of self entitlement and justification ... all this pollution makes us slow, sluggish, depressed, agitated and anxious... and we contribute to others feeling the same way. Our attitude to ourselves in form (we are part of the environment and the earth - your body is of the earth) is also projected out in our attitude to the planet resulting in endless rape, torture and exploitation to the land and the creatures and habitats of the earth.

The more polluted our minds are with these attitudes of judgment the more we become blocked up and unable to move, feeling as if we are stuck and our lives going nowhere. The more there is in us, the less we feel alive and the less life we bring to others.

However, just like the water, nothing has changed about your essential being. H2O is still H2O.

So, this leaves us with a big environmental clean-up to do. How do we clean up the river? All the pollutants of our mind must be seen and removed. This is not a short term project. It takes time and dedication, commitment and the ability to not lose sight of the long term goal.

Not only must everything be removed but effective strategies and negotiations have to occur so that no-one is allowed to dump more junk into our stream of consciousness. We have to search for the rubbish, see the effect it is having on the flow of water, and throw it out for recycling. Furthermore, it is helpful to do this with a sense of excitement and adventure; with love of the water and the potential of the river to sustain and create life. The more we grumble or blame ourselves for all the mess in our psyches, the less likely we will be motivated to carry on finding the junk and tossing it out. The more relaxed, gracious and accepting we are, the quicker the process. The more we have companions along the way that are willing to help, the quicker it goes. The more we are able to discern what is helpful to the stream of consciousness

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and what is not, the quicker it goes. Some of what is in our stream of consciousness is helpful and good and creates a healthy identity and brings you closer to a realization of your true soul self. Some takes you further from the knowledge of your true self and keeps you stuck in illusion and darkness.

Using this metaphor, ask yourself:

What thoughts, attitudes, patterns, perceptions, feelings block my stream of consciousness?

What results in the water swirling round and round in endless eddies?

What thoughts and feelings result in damned up pools of stagnation?

What is so pervasive that it clouds and darkens the water but is hard to identify? Go to the cause on the banks - do a life line of the stream ... at what stage in the stream's life did pollutants get added?

Where is the water clear and clean sustaining life?

What additions (eg. gratitude) result in flow? What additions (eg. hatred) result in backwater swamps?

What is making the water foul and stinky?

What needs to go? What needs to stay?

What do you do to your body that results in the living water of your soul to not be able to flow?

If someone else drinks your water, will it poison them or refresh them?

Does your water look clear and yet is filled with invisible toxins?

How do we know?

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A Garden Beyond Paradise

Everything you see has its roots
in the unseen world.
The forms may change,
yet the essence remains the same.

Every wondrous sight will vanish,
every sweet word will fade.
But do not be disheartened,
The Source they come from is eternal—
growing, branching out,
giving new life and new joy.

Why do you weep?—
That Source is within you,
and this whole world
is springing up from it.

The Source is full,
its waters are ever-flowing;
Do not grieve,
drink your fill!
Don't think it will ever run dry—
This is the endless Ocean!

From earth, you became plant,
from plant you became animal.
Afterwards you became a human being,
endowed with knowledge, intellect and faith.

Behold the body, born of dust -
how perfect it has become!
Why should you fear its end?
When were you ever made less by dying?

When you pass beyond this human form,
no doubt you will become an angel
and soar through the heavens!

But don't stop there.
Even heavenly bodies grow old,
Pass again from the heavenly realm
and plunge into the ocean of Consciousness.

Let the drop of water that is you

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From the moment you came into this world,
a ladder was placed in front of you
that you might transcend it.

become a hundred mighty seas.

But do not think that the drop alone
becomes the Ocean -
the Ocean too, becomes the drop!

Jelaluddin Rumi, "A Garden Beyond Paradise"