



The Way of Love: Waking the Divine in the Human Heart

with A.H. Almaas (Hameed Ali) and Zarina Maiwandi

Divine Love & The Human Heart

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Zarina:

I am getting impossibly excited looking at all of you. My heart is beating. This course has been a long time in the making. We have wanted to bring this particular wisdom of love to the public and have been thinking about when to do it. Hameed most recent book on nondual love seemed like good timing. It introduces some of what we know about the human heart to all of you. So, we could be spending a week on each meeting, but we are not. Instead, we are thinking of the course as planting the seeds of love, of introducing all the varieties of what is possible in the realm of the heart and also showing you experiential ways into these possibilities. So, sort of a tasting menu of the heart if you will and the experiential way into this tasting menu is through our practices.

SENSING PRACTICE

We will begin this morning by practicing together. As I look around, I see all of your lovely faces and those of you for whom I only see lovely names, I invite you to turn your videos on and join us if you are able into the circle of practitioners. We will begin today with a sensing practice that we do in the school as one of our main practices. You can find a comfortable seated position. If you are in a chair, your feet are flat on the ground. If you are on a cushion, you can just sit comfortably. When you are ready, close your eyes. Take a breath just to land in this moment together. Feeling an inhale and an exhale.

We begin the practice by sensing our right foot. You may need to wiggle your toes around or press your foot into the ground a bit just to wake up the sensation in the right foot. You are sensing inside the foot, the sole, the toes, the arch. Whatever pressure you feel on the foot on the ground, whatever temperature it is in your room or inside. Sensing the skin.

Notice if you are visualizing the right foot, almost like picturing it like an x-ray flip in your mind. See if you can sense the foot directly. Sensations, weight, pressure. Maybe nothing. Sense the nothing. As the sensation comes to life in the right foot allow it to move up into the right ankle and sensing whatever you find there. Sensing rises into the lower right leg. Sensing the calf, the shin, whatever clothing is covering, the air if you are bare leg. Notice if there are any tensions, any pain, almost like they are fingers there touching everything inside. Sensing rising to the right knee. The back of the knee, the front, the joint, the bones all coming together in that crux. What does your right knee feel like tight now, this moment. Not the thought of the right knee, not the history of it, but the direct sensation.

Allowing the sensing to move to the upper right leg. Rising slowly from the knee up, sensing the muscles and the fascia, bones. Maybe not much sensation in which case you can sense that. What is it like not to have much sensation? You might feel the pressure on the part of the thigh that is touching the chair. Notice the difference between a part of the leg that is touching the chair and the top which is touching the

air. Allowing the sensation to rise up into the right hip joint. Sensing that ball, the joint, tensions that might be stored there. Maybe the immediacy of the hip joint right in this moment.

Now, allow your sensing to move to the right hand, feeling the pads, fingertips, the sensation filling the fingers up through the knuckles, the joints. Sensing your palm. Maybe there is some kind of fullness, some kind of aliveness, some kind of teaming or tingling, some kind of heat. Sensing the top of the hand into the right wrist. Seeing how it changes when you go from the right hand to the right wrist. Allowing the sensation to rise into the right lower arm, filling the arm with whatever happens to be there in this moment. Fullness emptiness, heat cold, nothing something. Sensation rising into the right elbow. Rising into the right upper arm. Biceps, triceps. Allow the sensing to rise into the right shoulder. See if the nerve endings are coming to life. Not an image of the shoulder, but the direct felt sense. Then to the shoulder blade.

Allow the sensation to move to the left shoulder blade. Sensing the shoulder. Bones and ligaments come together. Allowing the sensation to flow downwards into the upper left arm almost like there is a substance filling the left upper arm as it flows downwards. It flows. It has weight, size, temperature. Sensing the left elbow. Down into the left lower arm. Just touching whatever you find including numbness, emptiness and nothing. You can actually touch nothing. Sensing the left wrist. Allowing the sensation to flow into the left hand. The front, the palm, the top, the fingers. Going all the way to the fingertips, the nail beds. Then sensing to the left hip joint. Sensation flowing into the left upper leg. Like coming to life in whatever way is there at the moment. Feeling the butt cheek, the thigh, back, front, inside, skin all the way to the left knee. Feel the flow of sensation slowly descending down below the knee down into the lower left leg. Sensing the left ankle. Allowing the sensation to pool into the left foot, feeling the heel, arch, the sole all the way to the toes. Really sensing your left foot.

Now, sense both arms and both legs at the same time. Sensing the entire circuit of the body. Your limbs. What do your arms and legs feel like having spent this time sensing? Is there a weight or fullness or livingness? Does it more empty, more subtle, more delicate? Is there sweetness, care, love, softness? Really sense your arms and legs. Without leaving the sensing of your arms and legs, allow yourself to become aware of the sounds in your room, in your house, outside, the sound of my voice. Becoming aware of sensing and listening at the same time. When you are ready, allow your eyes to open gently. Keeping your gaze soft, not focusing too intensely. Let the light come in becoming aware of what you are seeing. The forms, the light, the objects, the screen. Sensing your arms now, listening and looking.

We will take a break now and, as much as you can, I want you to move from where you are right now. As you go to the bathroom and make a cup of tea or stretch, I want you to continue the sensing looking listening practice. Really anchoring yourselves in the felt sense of your arms and legs.

TALK

The way of love on the spiritual path is a series of love affairs. A love affair between you and your heart, between your heart and its nature, between you and your nature, between you and other human beings, between you and the real world. Those series of love affairs have stages like all love affairs do. It often

begins with a certain glimpse of our heart. Seeing a certain possibility and having that spark of attraction. Liking it. Wanting to know more. Our interest can be piqued. It can start an approach toward what it is that we have glimpsed, and we liked. We start to check it out a little bit. What is this heart? What is this thing that I am attracted to? What is this thing I long for and yearn for?

Of course, we can get scared. We can dart away as in all love affairs. Something starts to open, and it can be too much or too fast or not what we thought. And off we go. Hide behind the curtains for a while, sort of peek out. Yearning comes back by some kind of grace, and we approach again. We learned something. We see what it is that scared us. We see why we ran off, what pulled us away. This time, love affairs are little more intense. We are actively wooing and being wooed. There are a lot of sweet nothings. We can start to melt and feel happy and sweet and delighted. We can actually feel like we have won what it is that we love. Now I got it. And there can be setbacks, of course. We find out things that are not so into that bit. Could I have all this and leave that part out?

And with these setbacks, if we are practicing and the love affair is an inner one, all of these to-and-fros, all of these setbacks are opportunities for a kind of deepening, a kind of clarifying, understanding more, purifying the actual love that is there, purifying the magnetism and the attraction that draws us inward. So long as we are separated from our deepest nature, the love affair continues. It is like the love that springs in our hearts is a homing device. The liking and the attraction and the wanting is a homing device to our nature, to the nature of the heart, the source of this love and all feelings in the first place.

Along the way in this love affair, we can discover the spectrum of love that Hameed described yesterday. The spectrum that ranges from the outermost expressions of love all the way to the universal ground of love. That invisible ether that pervades all reality. That infuses all matter. That is the ground of all the varieties of human love. That is the ground of all of our human emotions.

We can experience this universal love if we have glimpsed it and explored it as a kind of light that pervades everything. A light that has a radiance, a sort of otherworldly glow golden almost. And this all pervasive radiant light has a kind of softness to it. It's like you can almost touch the light and it has the most delicate touch of softness unlike any earthly material. We can become soft as we sense the softness of this universal love. We can ourselves feel soft. As we sense this softness in our location, the kind of sweetness of this light can arise and the sweetness can begin to flow throughout our experience. The more suffused we become with this kind of radiant glowing soft sweet light, as we look and listen, we can see that all objects around us are also suffused with this radiant soft sweetness almost like daylight beginning to stream. If you ever woken up early enough to see daylight dawning on Earth. But unlike daylight, it is not a light that sort of washes over things. It actually permeates everything, this universal kind of soft sweet love.

So, it is not only inside but you sense it all around you. In fact, to such a degree, that inside and outside can stop making sense. And what gives this softness and the sweetness, the feeling of love is that it is good. It has a sense of goodness to it and generosity. A kind of ever giving abundance. As that boundary between inside and outside, between self and other or self and objects, subject and object begins to get permeated with this light, we can begin to notice that there is nothing outside. There is nothing that is

left out. That is what universal means. That it permeates everything. That it is vast and infinite. We can experience it as an expanse that has no ending, as a field. It can feel more solid and like a presence more like a ground of goodness. The heart more loving, the mind more like the light, the suffuse light.

So, depending on where we are experiencing this universal love from, it feels differently. It shows up in our experience in these different ways. More as presence or love or light all having this common sense of goodness, sweetness, softness. All of it melting any sense of separateness all the way to the experience of feeling that we are made of this. We are nothing but this. We are indistinguishable from this love. Of course, we can have all kinds of reactions to say the least about this loss of a separate sense of self. It is like some of us can get the sense of this endless shoreless ocean of love in all directions and we feel release and freedom and relaxation and without fail something can clutch. We saw this in the Q & C afterwards that there are these deep openings and then in the next pulse is something tightens intensely. This kind of inhale, exhale of consciousness of the heart.

Some spiritual traditions take this kind of unity or oneness of experience, in this case of universal love, to mean that individuals do not matter. Like given everything is love, our personal lives are insignificant, our hurts and our suffering and our ups and our downs and our abandonments and our wounds, they are all delusions of one sort or another. Somehow it is like these two things become opposed. That everything is love and that we can have experiences that feel somehow different than that, that can include suffering and difficulty and challenge. So, we do not see it that way. We do not think that individual experience is a delusion or insignificant or a distortion. In fact, the only way to experience this universal dimension of love is as and in and through the individual. We do not have any reports of this kind of love being experienced outside of an individual reporting that.

On our path, the way that we open to this realm of universal love is actually that we open to the truth of our personal individual heart. We do not aim for the love. We do not aim for this permeating loving, sweet light that I have been talking about. The fastest way to end up all twisted and contracted is to aim to be loving all the time or to experience everything as love. The way we work on this path is that we actually open to the truth of the heart in every moment, whatever that truth is, wherever it is along the spectrum. So, what is the truth of your human heart? There is an entire range of experience possible. The human heart is wondrous. It is not simply one thing, it is not just one experience even though we only have one word for it, love. That love is so variegated and so particular. Each of us is in a different place in this love affair.

For many of us opening to the truth of the human heart means first learning to experience our emotions directly. It sounds kind of basic, experience your emotions directly but it is actually a very rare thing to experience our emotions in an immediate, direct, alive way. So as Hameed said, part of what we are doing in this course is talking about what is not known about love and heart. Alongside that, a parallel track of talking about what is not known is questioning what we think we already know. Opening to what we do not know and questioning all the things we think we know very firmly and stably and conclusively. So, in our usual way of thinking, we assume if someone is crying, they are actually feeling their sadness. Or if someone is yelling, they are feeling their anger. Or if someone is hugging you, they are feeling some kind of love or affection. But this is not necessarily the case.

In fact, most of the time for most humans on the planet, we can express our emotions without ever feeling them. That is a kind of logical somersault. We can express our emotions without feeling them, without feeling them directly. It is like we can leapfrog, like jump over the whole feeling of the emotion and go simply from the arising to the acting. Or we can avoid feeling our emotions if it is not the sort of leapfrog to immediate action, we can avoid feeling our emotions by attaching to them. We can identify with being an emotional person without actually feeling our emotions. This is what we would call someone who is sentimental, who emotes a lot, who has a lot of emotions come up but it kind of feels empty. And then, of course, there are more direct ways of avoiding our emotions. We just outright reject them. Nope. Thank you. We can become numb or hardened in various ways. People around us can feel our emotions and go, look a little angry. No, I am not angry. Or we can project them. We are really even and balanced and good but man, my partner? They are really emotional.

So, there are all these ways of not actually directly feeling our emotions as they arise. If it is not these things, if feeling an emotion directly does not mean expressing it, does not mean acting it out, does not mean identifying with being a really emotional, open-hearted person, what does it mean? We saw many examples of it in the sharings yesterday where someone was feeling something, and they were able to really sense the emotion directly. The actual felt sense of sadness which can have a kind of heaviness, a kind of rain cloud feeling, a kind of dampening. Or feeling joy and bubbly and delighted. Sensing expansion as a kind of something getting bigger. So, the direct felt sense of emotions is actually like getting your fingers in there. Like our sensing practice that we introduced. You can actually sense sadness. You can sense its weight and its temperature. You can sense the shape of it. The size of it, the speed or the movement of anger, seething versus rage.

Each of these emotional words have a very distinct felt sense in our consciousness. We can learn through practice, which the sensing looking listening practice develops this, we can really learn to sense our experience directly, including our emotions. Frustration has a kind of neighing burning like horse held back constraint. Our tensions can be soft, or they can be hard like being strapped in. Or even a lack of emotions. If we do not feel emotions at all, numbness. What is numbness like? A wet blanket, a buffer of air, kind of deadness, dead wood. We can touch every inner experience. Blankness, emptiness, hardness. So, actually feeling our emotions means getting in touch with this felt sense level and this extends not only to our emotions depending on where we are in this love affair of heart, we could be in the approach where what we are mainly working with are our emotional experiences. Allowing them, feeling them, bringing them to life, sensing them in this direct and immediate way that I am talking about.

Some of us have some experience of this. We are in touch with this level of our human heart and what we are experiencing is more some kind of openness. What is the feeling of a heart that is open? Just because we say openness, if we do not stop and think, okay, well the word covers it. If we actually get our fingers into the openheartedness, what do we sense? What do we feel? What is openness actually like? We can feel a kind of spaciousness or wideness, kind of expansion. I am just throwing out possibilities to kind of generate your experience to kind of have you see for yourself what openness is like. It is inexhaustible. Nothing I say is going to cover the felt sense of anything I am describing. The only thing that gets it is you doing the practices, finding the felt sense of whatever your experience is in any moment.

Though this openheartedness that is not emotional but simply a kind of relaxed state, a kind of floating in the clouds, gentle lapping of sea water, wide open vista, something where the heart, the door is kind of flung open. Our experience is not primarily emotional. It is more kind of wide open, do not know what is this. This kind of openness can invite a deeper layer of the human heart. This kind of door flung wide open, allowing, relaxed, calm easy heart. We can begin to experience the qualities of heart. Another thing Hameed was mentioning yesterday. Actual presence of love and it is different flavors. Sometimes the truth of the human heart is these candies of love. These sweetnesses that we can take a bite out of. That ground of love that I was talking about, that universal permeating kind of goodness also show up in the human heart as an array of essences of heart, essences of love. Almost like for those of you who cook, who start with a big stock pot with gallons and gallons of stock and in the end, you end up with this one spoonful really concentrated flavor, the essence of whatever that stock is because it is had heat and time and simmering and ingredients.

So, the truth of our human heart might be that what we experience are these qualities of love. These qualities each have their felt sense also like the liking appreciative love feels very different than the kind of passionate devouring love. Our consciousness has a different shape and weight and color and form when we are loving our best friend versus our lover. The loving kindness that begins to ooze and arise when we are in the presence of hurt and pain is very different from a delighted happy shiny love. The kind of melting and puddling that we can feel in the heart when we are really connected to someone so much so that our boundaries of me and you are starting to melt, and it has its own specific felt sense. The sweetnesses are different. It is like a bowl of candies. Licorice candy, cotton candy I need choose. Ginger bits, spicy loves, tangy loves. We can actually taste these qualities of heart.

Now I am kind of spreading out the feast of heart. I am sort of giving you all the possibilities of the dimensions and the qualities and the emotions and expressions and the spaciousness of love. We are going to spend time as we go on looking individually at these flavors of the heart seeing what it is that gets in the way of our direct experience of them. The human heart has this extraordinary range from expression to emotional experience to wide open spaces of heart to sort of concentrated sweet morsels of love and satisfaction, nectars all the way to that universal ground of love.

What is important, what I really want to get across is that the only way we can experience any of this feast of heart is in our direct experience. I mean each one of you, your exact immediate direct experience. Everything else, including what I am saying is secondary, is borrowed, is a rumor, is a fantasy, is hearsay. This capacity of inner touch that we develop and practice through the sensing practice is the way in to experiencing this entire array of human heart, this entire expanse of love. When we are able to sense our experience in this direct felt sense touch way, it brings the experience to life. It brings it down from concepts and ideas and memories to an actual lived experience. A lived sadness, a lived anger, a lived love, the lived expanse. Whether we are sensing our right foot or our emotional hurts or the very nectars of a loving heart, what we are actually sensing is consciousness itself. This inner touch allows us to touch consciousness itself. I am feeling, as I say that, how revolutionary this is.

All of the sciences are chasing consciousness. What is it? Where does it come from? How do we measure it? All the fights back and forth between the disciplines and within the disciplines. What I am suggesting and what you can find out for yourself is that this capacity for inner touch actually allows you to experience and touch human consciousness directly and immediately in your experience, no matter what your experience is anywhere along that spectrum. You can actually sense the consciousness of heart on any of those levels. We saw this yesterday in one of the sharings that someone was starting to feel expanded, have a sensation of being bigger than the body. We were all looking at the video, the body was not actually growing but experientially there was a sense of expansion. What is it that expands? If it is not the physical body, what is that? We can find that when we are in direct touch with felt sense which are all the things, I was sort of prompting during the sensing exercise, all the ways I described these various levels of heart experience. Temperature and texture, weight and size and movement and intensity, and shape and mass. All of these tactual kinds of ways to experience what is happening that all of those when we are in touch with them what we are touching is consciousness.

Why is this important? Why am I making such a big deal about if you feel heat and fire and this kind of force when you are angry, what you are actually in touch with if you really stay with that felt sense is consciousness taking the shape of anger. Why is this important? Why am I sort of going on and on about this? Why is it important for this exploration of love that you sense consciousness directly? There are many reasons why it is important. I am not going to talk for the rest of the week. What I want to say today about this particular topic of why it is important that is consciousness that we are experiencing is that consciousness also has another property other than this kind of capacity for in touch experience, which is that consciousness does not have compartments or divisions. Meaning you cannot sort of close doors and section off consciousness in different ways. Inherently, it is undividable. Things of course structure it but its nature is that it is undividable, that it is whole.

This is important for our particular exploration of love because getting in touch with the felt sense of the heart wherever we may be along that range of possibility can actually wake up consciousness in our experience in a way that it begins to live. It begins to move. It begins to show more. It is almost like following and allowing the felt sense is like a cascade, like a slippery slope into the deepest realms and understandings of heart. It is like stepping into a current. Felt sense is like stepping into the current of consciousness in your location, in your exact particular unique way. When you step in to that current like drops, the current can take you all the way to the ocean. So, we do not need to aim for the ocean. We do not need to scrunch ourselves up thinking really hard about this universal love, we can just let ourselves feel angry. We can just step into the current of the immediacy through felt sense and see what happens.

I feel like a mechanic of the heart at the moment. Not quite a poet, but a mechanic. So, this is a kind of mechanics. If we really take seriously the wisdom of universal love, of divine love that all manifestation, inner and outer is made of love, that it is all one loving field, how can that not include our sadness and our hurt and our frustration? If we are to believe all the great sages throughout history, if it is all interconnected in this case, in the realm of heart as this divine love, then starting where we are wherever that is, is the easiest and most direct entry into the all. It is like the smallest step we can take, the most immediate, the most direct, the most relevant to us personally.

We could say that this first weekend of our time together, we are beginning to tune our human hearts to the love song of the universe. Our hearts, each of our hearts, have gotten out of tune in very specific individual ways having to do with our histories and our environments and our relationships. We will spend some time really exploring what these circumstances were in the coming months. We have gone off key in some way. So, I want to introduce today is one way that we can get in tune. One way that we tune our hearts by landing in our immediate direct experience of heart wherever that may be. There are 250 different places here in the gathering. We tune our hearts by actually valuing and respecting and allowing our immediate experience to be just what it is no matter where we are in the love affair. Whether it is the approach, and we are not sure. It is suspicious. Or whether the door has flung open, and we do not know to what yet. Whether we are swimming in various pools of love all the way to no pool at, all the way to the ocean that has no opposite.

So, the best way that we can learn what it is that I am talking about, this capacity for inner touch and felt sense of the heart, is through practice. You can sort of approximate it. You might be able to catch a whiff of my experience but really the way you learn is through your practice. So, we will do some exercises where you get to explore this for yourself.

EXERCISE

It will be a different format than the experiential explorations we did yesterday in groups of three. This one we will do in groups of two. Many of you are here for the first time, so I will describe the practice. You will get into groups of two, and you will ask each other a series of repeating questions. One person will ask the question for ten minutes and the other person answers the question for ten minutes and then you switch roles. This person asks and that person answers. The person asking the question, you are really sensing yourself like we did in the practice. You are there, you are sensing your arms, you are asking the question the same way again and again. You are not adding any words. You are not sort of intoning differently. You want to be as present and neutral as possible. You do not have to be a robot, but it is good not to sort of laugh and respond and nod. It is like we want a place where we can practice without any of the usual social pulls.

So, part of that means the person asking the questions is really present and neutral. You ask the question, your partner answers it. You say thank you and then you ask again. That will go on for ten minutes. The person who is answering, you want to be immediate. You want to say what is coming up. You want to be as present in the answer as you can. You also want to keep your responses succinct. You do not want to talk for like a minute. You want to say a few words, a sentence, two sentences. So really it is a kind of an excavating process these repeating questions. You go through it and things become more and more immediate and the more the practice works itself.

Now I will give you the questions. The first question is: Tell me a way you avoid feeling your heart. I gave some possibilities, and you can see what fits. Do you distract yourself? Do you immediately express either your emotions or your love or your spiritual state without actually feeling it? Do you avoid feeling

anything on all of the levels? Do you identify with being a loving person? Are there behaviors that you use to avoid feeling?

Do you start to feel something and reach for the phone to call your friend? There is something start to arise, and you get scared and go, okay, going for a hike to change my mindset. Like how do you avoid feeling your heart. So, tell me a way you avoid feeling your heart. Outer behaviors, inner moves, defenses, resistances, whatever you find.

The second question is also ten minutes each. Tell me the way you experience your heart. Here you can begin with your life. What are the places in your life where you experience your heart? Then draw closer and closer and closer to your immediate experience. Tell me a way you experience your heart, whether it is more in the emotional level of heart. Is it more the kind of flavors and nectars of love? Do you experience your heart in the universal nondual realm. Wherever you are, just let what is true arise in the moment as an answer.

And the last question: Tell me the sensation of your heart right now. Again, be brief and direct and to the point with your sensation. Really get it. Really say it and see what happens when you say it. You will have another chance because they will ask you again. As you keep getting closer and closer to the bone of your direct sensation, just let that happen. Let the practice, practice you.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

I know not everyone likes to raise their hand and speak in front of a large group, but I actually want to know how the exercise was for as many of you who want to share. So, if you would like you can put a few words in the chat about where you are now, how you are affected having done these repeating questions, what the state of your heart at the moment. Expansive, loving, soft and open, curious, caramel. Large, meaningful, close, jubilant. Grateful, loving, little yearning, so fast, confused. Rooted, buoyant, relaxed and grounded, meeting hurt, beyond words. Alive, neutral, more caramel. Peaceful, joyful, permeable. Weary and not trusting, fearless, resistant to facing myself. Touched, grateful melody, anxiety. Accepting, help me.

Notice how you are affected as group members share. Everywhere defiance. I like defiance. Touched, vulnerable. Clenched tummy, closed, fierce. That gives us some more. You guys can fill in everything I did not say, all the other possibilities that can arise when we begin to explore the heart, pain, vivid imagery. So, let us see what kind of questions you have.

Q&C 1

STUDENT:

I find it very interesting and very opening up to new sights. I got very curious. There came also like a softness and a little shyness. But the most interesting was, when suddenly I was like in a cave, and it was white light. When I talked it was like I was in a room. So, it is like the sights like holding my voice. I was not too worried, or something. It was just a new place to be.

Zarina: How is it when you share it now?

STUDENT:

I mean, I am so curious about it, and I am happy. There is an eagerness, and it is like I understood some of what you have been talking about. Also, when you were talking, I was like slowly understanding. It was like a room that is expanding.

Zarina: Do you feel that room now?

STUDENT: I still feel the eagerness and the expansion. It is like there are no borders.

Zarina: Got it. So, the walls feel less there now like there are no borders.

STUDENT: There are no walls but when I was in that white room it was not like it was vulnerable.

Zarina: Yes, just an experience. And at the moment there are no borders.

STUDENT: No.

Zarina: So, what happens when you sense this ether?

STUDENT: What ether?

Zarina: You said there was a kind of ether without borders. Did I hear the word wrong?

STUDENT: No, no ether. I do not understand. No.

Zarina: What did you say has no borders? What was the word you used?

STUDENT: I do not remember now.

Zarina: Okay, never mind.

STUDENT: Yes. But in that place with the white, it is just a new place to be.

Zarina: Yes, and it sounds like you are excited about it, and you want to know more about it. Is the white here now?

STUDENT:

No, I remember it and it was also the way my voice was suddenly in a room. I do not have that now, but I remember it. It is very clear for me.

Zarina:

So, one way we practice is when it is immediate. So, I am excited and interested in this white cave. It seems at the moment something else is what is happening. It is not exactly coming up when you speak about it.

STUDENT: No.

Zarina: Let it come up. Sense your chest. I can see you taking these big breaths. You are breathing big. What do you sense in the chest?

STUDENT:

I sense openness and I think, actually, that is also what I was feeling. I was feeling it physically. I was explaining it like I mean sexuality. How my vagina is opening. I was feeling my heart opening in that way.

Zarina: Very interesting and we know that is not physical. It is not a physical sensation of opening, but you felt this openness beyond the body. It had walls that were fine.

STUDENT: But that was in a special time. That was not always. It was only a specific moment.

Zarina: And now, when you sense it, what you sense is the openness.

STUDENT: It is openness and now it is very huge.

Zarina: How huge?

STUDENT: Very huge. I cannot even see the borders.

Zarina: So huge that you cannot even see the edges.

STUDENT: Yes.

Zarina: So, what happens when you sense this huge openness. Let yourself breathe as you sense.

STUDENT: It is a new place to be. It is an openness that is like endless. How you said consciousness. It is like another consciousness.

Zarina: So, this seems like it is new.

STUDENT: Yes.

Zarina: You are interested in it.

STUDENT: Yes.



Zarina:

So, you can keep exploring it. Keep following the touch of it like what does the openness actually feel like? Is it open air? Is it open light? What is the actual texture of the openness. I am going to leave you with that inquiry.

STUDENT: I just got the word sparkling.

Zarina:

Sparkling openness. So, it has a kind of bright sparkle in it. Now, sense the sparkle. So, each step can follow the next. Now the openness is sparkly. So, keep going this way. Let's see what you find out.

STUDENT: Thank you.

Zarina: Good to meet you.

Q&C 2

STUDENT:

This is my first time asking a question. I get very nervous about these types of things. I had such an interesting experience in the exercise with all of the questions. The first is just seeing some of the ways that I closed down my heart that I was not aware of. Then the ways I experienced my heart, it was like being within the heart of love itself, like in this warm, golden heart that was so much bigger than this self. There was no separation. And then I got to the piece where I felt this sort of excitement about going out into my day-to-day life and what would it be like to experience life from that space? Or having had this experience, how could that get expressed through me and instantly fear closed it down. There was a sensation of fear in the belly, and I completely lost access to that. So, I was so curious and like what was that. And then how can I work with that?

Zarina: What is the fear? What do you see about it like when you think about walking around the world with this golden heart. What is scary about that?

STUDENT: That I will be rejected, or I will be too much for others. It seems tied to the social peace. How others will perceive it or receive it or not.

Zarina: Have you had that kind of experience of rejection?

STUDENT: It makes sense with my history for sure.

Zarina: What happens when we just talk about it makes sense. You are afraid. Does the fear show up?

STUDENT: It is right there like a ball in my belly, like my heart is beating down there.

Zarina: Sense the ball. Is it a kind of tight closed ball in the belly?

STUDENT: Well, it is interesting because it is kind of hard to tell if it is excited or nervous or both.

Zarina: Let all of that be possible. If we do not try to pin it down too quickly. There is the sense of golden heart, and then a ball shows up. What is the ball made of?

STUDENT: It is like my heart is beating inside my stomach. At the same time, it is here.

Zarina: It has a kind of feeling of heart in the belly.

STUDENT: I suppose so. It is a little hard to keep clear on that.

Zarina: So, sense the beat.

STUDENT: Okay.

Zarina: What kind of beat is it?

STUDENT: Well, it feels more like excitement, like, oh, wow, like an inner sort of wow. I can feel the belly open a bit with that actually.

Zarina: Okay, so let that open. There is some excitement with the beat.

STUDENT: And I feel a tenderness and a vulnerability open up in my heart. I am feeling kind of touched by it and a bit of sadness.

Zarina: Yes, I see. What do you feel sad about when you feel the belly relaxed and the heart opens a little?

STUDENT: It feels like being able to turn towards the preciousness of my soul. And it brings up the ways that love has not been there?

Zarina: Yes, it sounds like the opposite of rejection.

STUDENT: Yes.

Zarina: Like you are turning towards yourself in a loving way just even in that gesture you make.

STUDENT: It feels more like a fullness of heart, like being with that part of it. I am not sensing as much of the fear in the belly.

Zarina: Sounds like something relaxed in the belly, and you actually allow the beat. What felt like fear, felt like excitement. Then something opened.

STUDENT: Because my knee jerk reaction was, oh, no, this is taking me out of this experience of love. I have to do something about it.

Zarina: Very good. We think we know where it will go or what fear is. And when you actually stay with it, something completely surprising.

STUDENT: It was totally surprising.

Zarina: Yes, me too.

STUDENT: Thank you.

Zarina: Thank you. I think this is really useful for everyone in that sense of something comes up, and we stay with it in this kind of not knowing way. And who knows where it goes.

Q&C 3

STUDENT: It is changing.

Zarina: It does seem to do that, doesn't it?

STUDENT:

There is more of a vulnerable open, sensitive - now it is coming back this intensity of the infusion of all this activity in the belly, the dynamism moving up, and it really infusing this knowing of this courageous heart that knows my experience directly and how it impacts me and who I am sharing with. It is shaking me up even though -

Zarina: Breath as you say I know my experience. I know what is coming up. I know how it affects others I am with. What is the feeling like? Keep feeling that.

STUDENT: Woof.

Zarina: Okay, keep feeling the woof. Where do you sense that? Where is that woof movement happening?

STUDENT: The whole body, my arms and my legs and my torso, my head. All one unified woof.

Zarina:

Good, so feel that one unified woof. I am going to give it room. I am going to see if my woof comes up too. Give your body some room. Just feel that one unified head to toe woof. What happens?

STUDENT: So, this tender, loving - (laughter)

Zarina: How interesting.

STUDENT: Change to this again.

Zarina: Yes. So, the courage comes in and this storm woof.

STUDENT:

The belly comes in as you are speaking. It is like oh, I am here. That is what I am experiencing, and I know this. This is infusing my experience now, like essential separation it feels like. I know my experience, I hear yours. I feel our experiences are very similar.

Zarina: Good. Let yourself be like mine. My knowing, my woof, my gentleness and vulnerability.

STUDENT: Yes. I feel the effects of your words or these words, the direct impact on my soul of these words directly, intimately. So precious and unique.

Zarina: And your knowing of yourself. Your deep, immediate knowing of your courageous heart that when you allow it, it becomes vulnerable.

STUDENT: Yes, thank you.

Zarina: Yes. Thank you for sharing. It is a great sort of pointer to all of us when he started and said that has changed. When we are sensing in this immediate way, it does change. It is like chasing an alive tail. We always got just like the end of it.

Q&C 4

STUDENT:

In that sense practicing. I have a question, actually, multiple questions. It kind of comes in a package. I sense all these things like simultaneous. I am just curious about finding out the rule of no regular social reactions, because I felt in the beginning, it felt a bit harder to kind of not nod and then not smile. It felt just very unnatural, and I had to consciously regulate that.

Zarina:

What happened when you did? When you did stop the natural expression which was smiling or nodding during the exercise, what happened inside? What was your experience?

STUDENT: Oh, I did not pay attention. That is a good question. I felt uncomfortable a little, I guess, unnatural like that. I was almost like stop it.

Zarina: So, you were kind of doing it by tensing yourself in some way.

STUDENT: Right, yes.

Zarina: So, kind of nodding and smiling is a kind of natural something and it takes attention to be neutral and present during the exercise.

STUDENT: I guess when you asked that question, how I was feeling, I guess my attention was the curiosity like why you asked us to do that.

Zarina:

Very good. So, something new happens. One thing I hear you saying is something new is happening and part of you goes up to the mind to work it out. What I am suggesting is in that moment where you feel strained, what is happening in that moment? Like what is the body and the heart doing? That would be one way to explore it. You know we do not think of it as a rule so much as an orientation of practice. I could tell you all sorts of things about why we do it and how part of when we gather here is to interrupt all the ordinary habits of being human. So, many of us are so sensitive to smiling and nodding and laughing in interactions that actually we can get pulled out. We can sort of start to conform in different ways. If we kind of take that away, the sense of it is the person who is inquiring, who is answering the question is just free to say anything without having to pay much attention to its impact on another. Those are all words. What is interesting is for you that orientation of not responding with laughter or nodding, crying or smiling makes you go tight. So, you could feel that tightness. The next time you sense it like the next time we meet and you have to be a neutral something, follow that sensation of what happens.

STUDENT:

I guess you answered the question that I have not asked. At that moment I just focused on sensing instead of figuring out why, the thinking. So, move my attention from that curiosity from here to just going back down here.

Zarina:

Very good. I would not say move your attention from curiosity because the mind can be curious, but so can the heart and the body and the belly. So be curious, just lower. Just be really interested but a little more down. Try that. You were asking a question?

STUDENT:

I do not know if I can finish the other part of the question.

Zarina: Sure.

STUDENT:

When I was listening, that was the listening part - when I was answering the question for the first two, I felt I kept checking the time because I was like, wow ten minutes. How can I spend these ten minutes? It felt like too long for me. I was like I run out of answers, and what to do, that kind of feeling.



Zarina: So, then you can answer with that, “I do not know what to say.”

STUDENT: So, what do I do with that time?

Zarina: You say that. Someone says, “Tell me a way you avoid feeling your heart”. “I do not know.”

STUDENT: I said that.

Zarina:

“Tell me a way you avoid feeling your heart.” “I am starting to run out of things.” “Thank you. Tell me a way you avoid feeling your heart.” “I am getting nervous.” “Tell me a way you avoid feeling your heart.” “I think I have to fill up the whole ten minutes.” Just say whatever is happening.

STUDENT: But that you emphasize that immediacy and I am curious about that immediacy. So, you want less gap, but the thinking fills that gap?

Zarina: When you say I am curious, where are you curious from? Where is this question coming from?

STUDENT: I am curious why you emphasize that immediacy.

Zarina: It is here the curiosity? Remember how before the curiosity.

STUDENT: It is still here.

Zarina: Okay, tell me what you feel here? Tell me where you feel it?

STUDENT: There is something here. I feel like energy here. Wanting to know.

Zarina: Tell me what the wanting to know energy is like.

STUDENT: Happy. I feel good. Trying. It is different from that book, Love Unveiled.

Zarina: Just tell us what happened. You were here and then something darted to a book that you read. I want you to stay here. I am not going to answer any more questions.

STUDENT: I went to my mind I guess, really.

Zarina:

Something in your mind showed up. There was something here that was a curious energy, I want to know, and it was happy. So, stay with that. I am going to leave you with that and just notice every time something comes in to pull you away from what is happening.

STUDENT: So not trying to find the answer but trying to figure the moment. Right?

Zarina: Feel the moment. That is a good way to stay it.

STUDENT: Thank you.

Zarina: Thank you. I am sure you are asking questions for the whole group.

Q&C 5

STUDENT:

I appreciated that towards the end you would use the phrase, tuning the heart. And then, when you were working with a previous student, you encouraged him to explore woof. I mean part of what we are learning, I think, is capacities of inner perception. But the problem I have with that is that inner perception gets a lot of focus on the haptic sense, the felt sense. But I am not oriented that way. I am more oriented to sounds so I am interested, or I often experience things acoustically.

Zarina:

So, tell me what your acoustic senses are at the moment. Sounds, taste, touch, sight, smell, all of them. It is a kind of synesthetic blend, and we can be more in one end than the other but all, of course, are possible. So, what is your soundscape at the moment?

STUDENT: Well, there is a little static sense because there is nervousness about talking, even though I am usually very comfortable talking in public. But zoom difficult. So, there is that static sense.

Zarina: What do you hear in the sound of your voice if you just say a few words and listen to that sound?

STUDENT: Well, there is some excitement, enthusiasm about talking about something that I care about.

Zarina: What is the sound of excitement?

STUDENT:

Well, there is a quickness to it, pace. I guess I lose the sense of that a little bit. There is a bright sound, so it is more like brass than cello. It is rapid. There is rhythmic sense to it, a rapid pace.

Zarina: Let yourself listen to that brassy, rapid excitement. Does it feel located in some part of the body or sort of throughout?

STUDENT: Well, some of it is in the head, some of it is intellectual. I feel it in my heart as a kind of brightness.

Zarina: Tell me what it means that the sound is intellectual.

STUDENT: Well, I suppose that is more a matter of discriminating. So it is a kind of a discernment sense.

Zarina: I see. You mean, you are discerning. That is what you mean by intellectual.

STUDENT: Making fine distinctions.

Zarina: Okay, I understand what you mean now. What is the sense of that sound then, in the heart, that brassy, rapid excitement?

STUDENT: There is a light heartedness to it. It is kind of more playful, playfulness.

Zarina: And as you feel and hear that sound, do you feel playful?

STUDENT: Now, I kind of feel more on the spot.

Zarina:

So, that kind of dissipates the playfulness. It is interesting, right? Because, as you describe the sound and that playfulness of it in the chest, it is almost like there is something between the sound and it touching you. So, when you say I do not have the haptic. The sound is there and the part where the playfulness would start is kind of the haptic, let us say if I follow that.

STUDENT: No. I am saying I do not experience it as a touch. I experience it more as a sound.

Zarina:

Yes. The sound once the playfulness, when I go do you feel playful, it is a certain move from sound to sense. A sound can be playful, and you can also feel playful right? You and I could start to play in some way.

STUDENT: I guess I am not understanding the way you are using the felt sense.

Zarina: What is happening now, what happened when I asked you that question that did not make sense?

STUDENT: I mean, if I put it auditory, there is a sense of dissonance. I kind of feel I am not making sense. So, we are not on the same wavelength. There is this experience of dissonance.

Zarina: Does that affect you emotionally the dissonance between us?

STUDENT: Yes. It awakens a sense of frustration.

Zarina: Does the frustration come with the felt sense or more a sound.

STUDENT:

I mean it comes in both ways. I mean the inner senses are synesthetic so there is a crossover, so I can feel a prickliness in the frustration which is a haptic sense. But I can also feel a kind of rhythm that is out of sync. I do not know what the word for 'out of sync rhythm' is. There is another word for that.

Zarina:

Some kind of cacophony or something, maybe. So, what I am hearing is you have one of the inner senses quite developed and foreground and that the felt touch with what you are calling the haptic is not exactly primary, but you can have it. So, frustration shows up with that felt sense of prickliness, but it is not the main way your experience shows up.

STUDENT:

Yes. I have to remind myself that, okay, how does this sound? You know, we were doing tell me the sensations of your heart right now. Well, I could I say, well, there is a lament there. There is the sound of lament that is kind of an undertone life because of the sense of dissonance in our culture and discord.

Zarina:

It sounds very rich when you say the sound of my heart is a lament. There is a lot of richness in that sound and sound, as you have said and I said, the inner senses are really synesthetic. I would get curious about when it spills over into touch. You hear beautifully your inner experience. Where is the spillover? What is that? What is it about sound becoming touch? What can you find out? So, it sounds interesting to really explore that edge of sound spilling into touch and see what happens right at that lip, right at that edge between the inner senses. I think it is a very good inquiry.

STUDENT: Okay. Thank you.

Zarina:

Thank you. You are bringing up a good point about the inner senses. We focus in the teaching quite a lot on inner touch. and to some extent on inner sight and the other senses. But we are all quite different this way, and each of the senses lights up different capacities of being and presence. So, we begin where we are, and we can get interested. If we tend to be all touch and no sound or all taste and no sight, we can get interested in that. If your inquiry takes you there, follow it. See what you find out. There are not any hard and true answers, only what is true for you in the moment.

Q&C 6

STUDENT: I am trying to feel my heart which is sort of suddenly clenched up

Zarina: Sense the clench.

STUDENT:

There is something very vulnerable, it feels super vulnerable and delicate and really unsure about being seen. It was part of my heart. That is what I am going to talk about.

Zarina: Unsure about being seen, meaning you want to be, or you do not want to be seen.

STUDENT:

The part of my heart that I am talking about is yesterday the impulse was to bring it forward for healing, and it feels sort of like that today, too. That is what I am doing. So, what happened in the third question, when the sensation in my heart right now was, I felt this density of pain around my heart. There has been a history of a lot of pain around love and the absence of it. I have been in the work for quite a number of years, and many things have shifted in me but very little like with this. I keep coming back to this cool wound. I guess when we were dealing with structures yesterday, Hameed said you realize this child is just a memory. It is not a real child. It is some kind of like energy ball mental identification. I do not really understand the psychology of it, but it can be overwhelming. Overwhelming in the sense that completely identify with it and become it, and I do not want to.

Zarina: Are you able to sense your arms and legs when that wound and absence comes up?

STUDENT: I think I often lack the presence to do that. I am not too sure but sometimes I do, and I am able to hold the unbelievable depth of it.

Zarina: Are you doing the sensing practice daily in the meditation since you are a student in the school, do you have a regular practice?

STUDENT:

I have tried many times to have a regular practice. I am just starting to find it a little bit easier right now. When your nervous system is really, really heightened and dysregulated, it gets very difficult to have a practice. So, I try, it becomes very difficult, and I let it go. And then I try again, because I know it is important.

Zarina:

Yes, it is one of the main bulwarks I know and when this level of overwhelm and pain is happening is to have some anchor and presence. Arms and legs, just feet on the ground. Just anything that gives you some base for whatever it is that is happening here to have some support, some holding. I understand if the practices are difficult, it is going to feel very overwhelming.

STUDENT: Yes. It can just be difficult to stay for sure.

Zarina:

Something like the kath practice develops over years our capacity to stay. That is kind of the main fruits of that practice and the sensing to sort of have us in our location. So, I can see how if those supports are not there the emotional overwhelm can be really intense. What is happening? Do you want a moment, but I want to know what is happening for you?

STUDENT:

The quickest thing I could ask is that I am not sure. I was feeling something in my heart I thought. It is very difficult to discriminate if it flies away into something imaginary. So, I felt this pain and I felt like - something says, well, yes, I feel it, but I do not want to identify with it. The feeling is, do not go away, do

not leave me, do not abandon me. My thought was the feeling of the heart, and I took the risk of letting the heart speak, and I do not know if it was the heart or if I have slid away. But what it said to my partner was, you look like a kind lady, will you be my mummy right now. I guess the question I would ask is, you know, we are dealing with a structure here. We are dealing with a memory and yet I say that what is going on. I just do not understand the psychology, and I do not know whether to believe it or not. But what I will tell you is that after I said it and saw the empathy with my partner and felt the freedom of expressing it, my heart quietened down, my nervous system quietened down which was, you know.

Zarina:

So, there is your experiential answer. What could I possibly know more than what you just said? Like your heart quieted down, something relaxed. You know where that question was coming from? You know the effect of saying it. You know what happened with your partner. So, what if you just let what you know land. You know.

STUDENT:

It seems unreal, you know, like the mind can create it. It creates something in the body, and then the body can create something in the mind, and it just all seems a creation, and I sort of do not know what is real, you know. Do I believe it?

Zarina:

Doubt creeps in right. You can see how one piece of the inquiry something opened like we were talking about. Something comes to close it down. Doubt comes in. Your heart is relaxed and deep and open, and something comes in. This is the kind of inquiry you want to follow with your teacher in your small group. But something happened when you said it. It is not like there is a right or wrong. I can feel something that wants to make asking the question right or not asking it right. It is really inner experience. You play. You see what happens. You do it this way and see how it goes. You do it that way and you see how it goes. You do it a third way. It is like you can really learn to follow the inquiry in many different ways. There is not a right or wrong way. It is what I feel moved to tell you. I will leave with that.

STUDENT: Thank you.

CLOSING

We are drawing close to the end. I would suggest a practice for all of you between now and the next time we meet at the beginning of November. Should you be so inclined, I would like you to do the sensing looking listening, practice daily. You will have a recording of it from our practice earlier in this meeting. So, those of you who are brand new to the practice can use the recording as a prompt. Then once you have a sense of it in your presence, in your being, then you can do it on your own without the recording, whichever you prefer. So, you would do that daily. It can take anywhere from ten to twenty, thirty minutes if you go very slow. Go at your pace. See what feels doable. Every day between now and the next time we meet do that sensing practice and also whenever it occurs to you.



So, the second part of the take home practice is at your discretion when you remember, when some bell sounds and you hear the instruction, I want you anytime you feel an emotion or a quality of heart or dimension of heart in your experience, to see if you can sense it in this direct touch way that we been talking about, the haptics. See if you can actually touch it, and maybe you hear it or you taste it, or you see something. Whatever is happening, allow it. Then just get curious about the felt sense of it, the touch capacity in the experience. Then you can just see what happens when you do that.

So, the sensing practice daily and also tuning in to the emotions and qualities of heart with this kind of inner touch that we have been exploring today.