



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

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Pink & Merging Gold Love

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Zarina:

Watching the chat where all you guys come from, watching you with your pets and in your homes. Very sweet. I invite you to turn on your videos. Come into the space as we begin to practice. You can have the view on gallery. Have a look around your fellow explorers this weekend. We will practice as a way to come together. Bring all of our disparate consciousness and lives right here now. We want to turn inward with as little effort as possible meaning we sort of want to let the heart beckon us toward practice rather than muscling through it with effort or will pushing us. Just have a look around. Sense your heart, take in your environment in the room, folks on the screen; and when you feel ready you can begin to turn inward by just gently closing your eyes. Sense the environment with your eyes closed. Really going slow, letting yourself accustomed to the turn inward.

MEDITATION

See that you are seated comfortably, your spine reasonably upright, your butt firmly on a cushion, in a chair. Your feet on the floor. Just take a few breaths. Sensing yourself, feeling your environment. We will do an abbreviated version of our sensing practice before a guided meditation.

We will start by sensing our right foot, feeling the weight in that spot, allowing your consciousness to come to life inside the foot almost like a medium waking up inside the right foot. Slowly allow that sensation to rise to the right ankle, right lower leg into the knee up until the right upper leg, all the way to the right hip joint. Sensing your whole right leg from toes to the hip joint. Gently sense your right fingertips. You can press them a bit, waking up life, touch, sensation. Allow that sensation, that intouchness to rise up the right fingertips, knuckles, thumb, hand and into the right wrist. Slowing sensing up the arm, the right elbow, the right upper arm. It is like a sensing fluid rising, filling, touching. Look to the right shoulder and then to the right shoulder blade. Now sensing the whole right arm from the fingertips to the shoulder blade, noticing if the right side feels different than the left as you sense.

Shifting your sensing practice to the left side now, with the left shoulder blade. You might wiggle your shoulder blade up and down waking up. Allowing the sensation to move to the left shoulder joint, down the left arm. On this side that sensing fluid descends, flows downward. Filling the left arm to the elbow, into the forearm. Sensing the wrist into the left hand. Then flowing from the hand to the palm, slowly through the fingers all the way to the tips. Sense the left arm from the shoulder blade to the fingertips, sensing the entirety. Begin to sense your left hip joint that can press into the seat on that side feeling any pressure, weight, tension, emptiness, fullness. Just whatever is there. It does not need to be anything in particular. Allow that sensation to slowly move downward sensing whatever you find in the left upper leg. Flowing, sensing the left knee, the left lower leg filling with sensation. Left ankle into the left foot



from the heel all the way to the toes. Now, sense the left leg from the hip joint all the way to the toes. The left side, the arm and the leg.

Now sense all of your limbs together, both arms, both legs. Allow your focus to expand, to include the chest. Sensing the breath going in coming out. Feeling the chest fill in all directions with the inhale. Letting the ribcage and the shoulders move once you breathe. On the next inhale, I would like you to breathe all the way to the surface of the body. Taking the breath all the way to the skin. Filling the chest, expanding almost like the whole body is breathing through the skin. As you exhale, release completely that full expansion and exhale into total relaxation. Inhale to the surface, exhale to release. Continue to breathe like this. A few more full breaths. We begin to relax the practice. Sensing the whole body. Sensing where you are in this moment. Let yourself become aware of the sounds around you. Sensing yourself and hearing sound. Open your eyes letting in sight. Sensing yourself, hearing sounds and seeing.

We will take a short break. See how much you can stay collected during the time away from the screen. Meaning, if you do not scatter what has been gathered, you really stay where you are and let where you are be what moves and what stretches rather than flipping into some familiar way of moving. We will take a break in silence.

TALK

Yesterday we began exploring love as a personal presence. A personal love that has a kind of an isness, a kind of beingness, a nowness and a hereness. The chief characteristic of this personal love is a kind of liking and seeing the truth of ourselves and of others and appreciating it. The heart responding to seeing the truth of someone else or a situation or of our own experience. Appreciating it, loving it and being drawn toward it. A kind of natural responsiveness of the heart to truth. A response of adoration and appreciation and sweetness.

Today we are going to look at a different presence of love, another kind of love, another moment of the love affair. So, if yesterday is a kind of meeting of the truth and liking it, today we will focus on the movement of being pulled into the arms of what we love, of drawing even nearer. What is that like when we get nearer to what we love whatever it may be? What happens in your heart as you get closer? If you consider now something that you love, someone that you love, we can start to feel a certain pull toward connecting with that someone or something. The kind of draw to get near, to eliminate the distance between me and what I love.

In the human heart there can arise a presence of love that is the epitome of our longing for connection. This longing for connection, the way most of us know it as humans, is often expressed in our romantic lives. It is a certain feeling of the heart that is a drive to be one with something. The drive to be united in some way. We can also feel it in relationship to groups or ideas or hobbies that we can get absorbed in in that way. We can feel it certainly toward God or the divine. This impulse to be united, to eliminate any distance between me and it, between I and now. We can see that this human longing for connection implies two things. One that we are separate from something. We can fill in the blank with what the



something is. But one implication of feeling this longing to connect is that we are separate from something.

And the second implication of the longing is that whatever it is we are separate from, we want to get closer to it. We are separate from something, and we want to be closer. So, what is it that we are separate from? What is it that we want to connect with? What is connection in this longing? What is that feeling of connection? We could start by saying that it is a kind of closeness. It is an impulse to share. It is an impulse towards a kind of togetherness or joining that we want not to be apart from something. We want to ameliorate some kind of loneliness, some kind of separateness and we do all sorts of things. Once we are in touch of being separate or disconnected in this way, we have all kinds of strategies about getting closer depending on what it is that we feel separate from.

If it is God we pray, we have spiritual practices. If it is groups of people, we get involved in different things. We show up in communities, we volunteer to be a part of something. If it is someone you love, if it is another person, how do you draw closer to them when you feel separate from them? What is it that you do? Some of us are doers. We cook meals and we do nice things for our loved ones. We buy them flowers. We leave reminders of ourselves for them everywhere. We make ourselves indispensable. We run errands. This is the kind of active doer part of us. If I balance their check book for them, they will not leave me. They will stay close. Some of us are more talkers. We write poems, we say sweet nothings. We communicate with our loved ones. We tell them how wonderful they are. We send them emojis and videos, text all day. Thinking of you, sweetheart. Some of us stay close and stay connected by thinking about what we love, a kind of constant track. A few people mentioned this yesterday in the sharings where we try to get closer via thought.

We obsess, we fantasize, we go back and read all the exchanges. We share books and ideas. Oh, have you read this? Did you listen to this podcast? Did you hear the latest thing about this topic that you are really interested in? We try to join and connect through our minds. Or we can do the same sort of thing through a kind of emotional group wanting to unite more through the emotions. Taking care of someone, taking care of their needs, becoming very empathic and attuned. Staring deeply into someone's eyes. All of these ways to bridge distance. We can do it physically of course, That is kind of one of the most obvious ways to bridge distance is you get right next to somebody or something or a group. You put yourself right in physical proximity. You make dates. You sit very close together. It is like the couples where there is a huge sofa and the two people are sitting like on one cushion right next to each other, and the rest of the sofa is empty. It is like I am going to get the connection by being right up against you. And of course, sex, physical closeness, lounging, becoming intertwined physically as a way to connect.

If we feel this impulse to be right up against someone, whether physically or through emotions or through shared ideas, or by doing things for them or talking to them, what we can start to feel is that in this longing to connect there are these reverberations with our first human experiences of connection. Like developmentally as babies being in the arms of our mothers or our early caretakers. That kind of togetherness and union which, if we go back young enough, you know, sort of from birth to six to eight months, there is not even a feeling of separateness. The baby has not yet individuated. The mama and the baby are not even two people. It is so close that it is not even two people. It is sort of one unit of



warmth. One unit of having our needs met, of being held just the right way and nourished. A kind of connection that ideally is totally relaxing where the baby can completely let go into this kind of bonded, loving goodness. A kind of oneness in a bubble.

So, there is mama baby unit, and then a kind of bubble around it, and all the connection and goodness are inside that bubble. It is also true that hardly any of us had enough of that kind of union with our mothers. All sorts of things happen that disrupt that bubble that is sort of two and one relaxed loving goodness. There can be disruptions in the environment, countries we live in, political events, wars, disasters. Or closer in in the environment the relationship between our parents can be tough or there can be not enough money or there can be some other kind of insecurity in the environment. It could be disruptions having more to do with our mothers. Mothers could be sad or angry or anxious, or postpartum, or any number of things. It is like something gets in the bubble that is not serving the feeling of union and goodness whether it is from the environment or the mother. In some cases, the baby there can have sort of physical issues that do not allow the baby to completely relax, to feel that kind of loving release of being held in the baby mama unit.

All of these early disruptions of that kind of first human developmental moment of connection can imprint our souls. For some of us those times were decades and decades ago and yet something of that imprint remains. We carry it forward in the cells of our consciousness, some feeling of not having had enough connection or being disconnected in some way. It comes down to a kind of feeling of not being able to settle with another person in a complete way, something not complete with another, something disconnected. Some kind of gap or distance or separateness. Not feeling connected in this way activates an impulse in us to find connection, and for most of us, the sort of obvious human place to look is outside of ourselves. Our very yearning for that kind of two in one bubble united connection gets co-opted by looking for someone outside of ourselves, looking for the ideal mother, even though we may not say anything like that. Even though our actual mothers might turn us off completely. There is some part of us that is looking for that kind of ideal connection.

We can respond to that yearning for connection in all sorts of ways. We are all very unique. We have two thousand plus different responses to this yearning. For some of us the connection can be all we want. We can consciously be yearning all the time, feeling needy and helpless and reaching and wanting. It can become central to our lives, this wanting someone to unite with, wanting someone to disappear within that way. For others of us, if we do not go completely into that kind of I want it and it is all I want. It is my total focus. We can have a more ambivalent relationship. The yearning can be frustrated in various ways, more a kind of back-and-forth. We can notice in relationships with lovers or friends or organizations, or even on our spiritual path where we yearn, and we are frustrated. We are sort of exiled. We yearn again, kind of back-and-forth yoyoing of connection and disconnection. We get it but then we get really afraid of losing it. Or we get it, and it does not last, or we get it but then we lose interest. No, that is not really what I wanted anyway. We change our minds.

We can collapse in the face of this kind of yearning. We can just think it is impossible. It is not going to happen for me. On the other end of the spectrum, if we do not feel it and go into the yearning in this way of looking for people, places, and things to fill it, we can avoid yearning altogether. This is more those of



us who get hard, who feel that something is missing that we are separate from something that we want, but what is the point? Not going to go there. Our own actual mothers are mixed in here like, go after mom, are you kidding me? Do you know my mother? No way. Not getting close to anything like that. I am very happy in my separateness. Of course, as much as we can want this kind of connection, we can be afraid of it. One very common fear is of overwhelm. If I am connected in this way in this bubble with another person, it is like they will just take me over.

We get afraid of being overwhelmed, of becoming dependent. We get afraid of being sort of blobby and losing our distinctness, getting vague in some way, or fuzzy. Those of us that are very organized and structured, the idea of being in a bubble with somebody all over you, is like get him off of me. We can be afraid of losing ourself, losing our will, losing our minds. It is like something melts and nope, too scary anything could happen. It is not safe. I need my mind and my will and myself. All of these patterns, all of these ways that we accommodate this disconnect and wanting it, whether we pull for connection, whether we avoid it or whether we are in some kind of ambivalent sort of yoyo feeling about it, all of these veils are actual longing. It is sort of like we get to the business of filing the longing without actually feeling it first.

So, what would it be like to feel the yearning and the longing for connection directly. If you just, for the moment, sense yourself, see if there is an impulse for connection. If there is not, you could get curious about why not? If there is, if you do not sort of follow out to what it is you want to connect with, if you just feel that yearning and longing, what is that like? Often when we first turn inward toward the immediate experience of longing, one of the first layers that comes up is we feel separate or alone in some way. There can be a sense of being all by ourselves in this big, huge, empty space. Or we can feel separate like our boundaries can feel really hard, like we are all alone inside ourselves and there is nothing around us. If we stay with that feeling of separateness some kind of heart response can come up of wanting company, wanting something near us, wanting something close to us. If we allow the wanting it can be like a kind of soft burn in the heart. I can feel vulnerable and tender.

The yearning and the longing can feel unrestrained like we are not holding back wanting. There can be a feeling of surrender in it like I am missing closeness and connection and love and I wanted. And the longing is soft. It is not a demanding kind of longing. It is not 'give it to me or else'. I deserve this. I want this. I will fight you for it. That is a different flavor of longing. This kind of longing that comes with this particular quality of love is more surrendered. It is a kind of whimpering kind of longing. Just notice what happens when I say the word whimpering. Some of us, it is like the last place we want to go to is that kind of vulnerability. It is like that cry you see sometimes with children. Sometimes it is you. The part of the cry where it is kind of breathy where you go (sound). It is that wanting that kind of longing, not the big, scream give it to me. I want it. Not the tantrum, but that kind of soft surrendered. I really want this. I really want to get close to what is missing.

It has a kind of sweetness in it. Like as I talk, I can feel the sweetness in that whimper wanting something close, something loving. If we allow ourselves to yearn with this much openness and vulnerability, we can begin to feel that there is some kind of love inside the yearning. As we get into that kind of soft desire to be close, something in us softens. Our heart melts with the yearning. We can start to feel some kind of

love arising just as a response to that yearning. Just because we are totally in it. Our own hearts go oh. oh. It is one of the secrets of yearning and longing is that we can only long for something we know to some degree in some fashion. Because of that, our longing carries within it what it is that we want. Because we long for something we know, that we are not in touch with, the longing has that knowing of what is missing. If we can allow the longing, the actual what is missing can show up.

It can show up as a very specific quality of love that meets this surrendered, soft, vulnerable, tender yearning of the heart. It is the presence of a kind of melting love. The love that meets our yearning by melting whatever it is that is keeping us separate from what we are longing for. It is not that light, clean, fluffy love of liking. It weighs more. It is sort of syrupy and golden, like liquid sunlight. When it arises in the midst of the longing, it melts separateness. Like I said earlier, one of the implications of longing is that we are separate from something and we want it. What we can find is if we allow the wanting, it actually melts the separateness. That longing has in it the answer we are looking for. The love we are looking for is inside the heart's longing and it melts the longing from the inside. It is a kind of spreading warmth and glow in the heart all the way to our edges, all the way to the skin boundaries melting whatever it is inside that is keeping us separate from what we want.

It is a kind of melting that does not end up like emptiness. We do not disappear. We actually feel fuller. It is a kind of fullness of presence. There is a kind of substantial feeling to the melting. As those kinds of separating boundaries, whatever it is that either kept the heart enclosed or if there is a little young one inside that kept them bound, or if it is the actual boundaries of our skin that separates us, can be very multiple. But whatever it is, this kind of golden love sort of relaxes the separation into a kind of melted pool of love. It is a kind of puddling presence. Blissful, sweet. The melting has in it a very deep kind of letting go. It is like when those boundaries are not there separating us everything just lets go. There is a kind of relief and relaxation. Whatever the tensions were, we can think of what separates us as various kinds of tensions, various kinds of boundaries that hold us in different ways.

So, it is like the tensions are melted. We can see the state. I was trying to think of sort of instances in ordinary life where we can feel the state more near the surface of experience. One is in babies. This kind of golden melting love is most visible when a baby had like a perfect feeding moment, when the baby's needs have been met. They have been nourished. They have been held. They have been nursed by their mother or caretaker and you can feel it. If you have ever held a baby or even a sort of young child, maybe up to a year or so, it is like there is a specific moment where they fill up and it is like they are out. They fall asleep in a kind of whole way. They do not sort of drift. They just let go completely. They are just gone. It is like they hit a threshold, and they are gone. There is this complete puddle of relaxation in your hands. It is that kind of loving melted release of being one being, kind of united in themselves, having the environment meet them in a way that all that sense of separateness and tension dissolves.

For adults, this state can sometimes be very palpable after orgasm. The kind of love that is there when you are surrendered, and you actually love the person you are with. It is sort of snugly and cuddly and cozy. Arms and legs are all kind of twisted together. Your edges are soft and open. Inside there is kind of deep relaxation and release and the kind of oneness in union is such that if you close your eyes, you do not know where the partner begins and you end. You cannot tell when you sense the skin where it stops.



That sense of separateness is relaxed. That holding oneself apart and being tense in some way is melted. Just notice what is happening in you as I am talking about this possibility that this kind of love exists not just the liking and the appreciating and wanting to draw nearer but the actual total surrender into a kind of union, an essence of connection, a kind of oneness that feels like love.

And yet it is not the universal oneness of the divine but actually individual, actually you. And just as this liquid kind of golden love can melt the boundaries that separate us from connecting with others, it also melts what separates us from ourselves. This kind of melted, merging, golden love begins to work on what separates us from our own experience. We start to feel how we are separate from ourselves. Never mind others. Never mind God.

Never mind groups or colleagues or organizations we belong to. We are actually separate from ourselves. We are disconnected from our own hearts. We can see it on many different levels of inner experience. We can be disconnected from our emotions. That is one kind of separateness. We can feel separateness in the way that there is a distance between me and my experience, almost a kind of duality where we can talk about what is happening. Maybe we are not disconnected from our emotional hearts. We can talk about it, but it does not quite touch us. We are somehow apart. We are sort of witnessing our experience, but we are separate from it. We hold ourselves apart at arm's distance or a football field distance depending.

Once we start to feel this presence of love inside, we can realize that the longing that shows up as a longing for connection with another also has in it at its sort of deepest impulse, a longing to connect with ourselves and our own nature. This kind of melting love, this relaxing love, this sort of surrendering love is what can begin to close that gap. It can actually draw us into our experience in a way that we are not separate from it. It melts boundaries, boundaries either around our hearts or around certain ways we take ourselves to be. All the little ones running around inside us. Boundaries. Yesterday we could feel right between someone was talking about grief here and light here, and something separating the grief and the light.

This is the kind of love that melts that separation, that allows all of our experience to be together and be where we are and be what we are. This inner function of melting what separates us from our nature is the function of this particular kind of love on the spiritual path. In life, the function is it allows us to have real connection and bonding and relationships that are not based on separate objects colliding into each other. On the inner path, it is what allows us to be one with whatever we are experiencing, to be in close touch with it, to be in the arms of our immediate experience, to not separate from it. When we sense this kind of golden love, we can feel that it not only melts what separates us from our own experience, but it also melts the deeply ingrained idea we have that union requires two people, two objects, two animals, two whatever. That is such a deep imprint of that early relationship with mother is this two in one feeling. But the way to have union is there needs to be something outside of me.

So, this quality of love shows us what union really is, that it actually has nothing to do with two things. That it is actually our oneness, our wholeness with our nature, with our hearts. So, oneness that there is not a me and my nature. So, one that it is simply single. As each one of the kinds of separatenesses melt,



we become more and more fully one, united without the united having an opposite. It is like all the inner divisions are melted and we simply are ourselves in a full way. All the inner tensions, the back and forth, the inner arguments, the divisions, the separatenesses melted. What is left is simply where we are. We could say that that appreciative love that we were exploring yesterday allows us to like and be drawn to the truth of our experience, to see the magic of every moment no matter what the experience is. Then this golden melting love is what allows us to unite with that truth to actually be our experience, to not be separate from it.

Connection does not even do it. Like the word connection is still too separate for this kind of love. Even union because the word union so often has the sense of two things coming into union. It is closer than even that. It is a kind of love that is simply we ourselves here as one completely undivided, fully ourselves. No inner distance between what I am, what I am experiencing, how I feel, what I am thinking. Completely filled to our edges and the edges are not boundaries. They are soft edges completely filled all the way to the soft edges of our being relaxed. No tensions holding us or separating us.

You can start to see like this is a very different flavor of heart from what we were talking about yesterday. You might wonder like why? Why do we need to get so precise about the thirty-one flavors of love? We hear that often because our teaching is quite vast. It has a lot of precise knowledge about the heart, about the mind, about being human. But what I can say is that each one of these flavors of love that we looked at yesterday and today and will continue next time are answers to a very specific call of the heart. They are sort of precise responses to something that we need for our human lives and also something that we need to actually connect with where we come from. It is not just one thing. Like if we go to a doctor because we are not feeling well, and he says oh, you know something is wrong with one of your organs. That is not good enough. We go what organ is it? It is my heart? Is it my lungs? Like what is going on. Oh, it is my heart. Well, what is going on with my heart? Is it beating too fast or too slow? It is like we want to know specifically. But somehow, in our spiritual lives we just want it to be this kind of blanket something and it is not like that.

The heart is vast and deep. Universes. It has universes of subtlety that physical life, with all its variations, is only a fraction of what is possible in our inner life. Why would it be different. So, we get into these specifics of love and the sort of issues it brings up in the human soul because each quality of love unlocks a different facet of experience, a different dimension of possibility for how to be human in our lives and how to know actually who and what we are. We do not explore in broad strokes in this teaching. We really respect and honor the variety and the uniqueness of human experience.

EXERCISE

So, we will do some exercises now so you can explore this particular quality of melting love. It will be repeating questions which, if you were here for the last weekend, you have a sense of how they go. You will be divided into groups of two. One person will ask the question for ten minutes while the second person is answering it. Then you will switch roles. The person who has been answering will ask and the other person will answer. You are basically asking the same question the entire time with the same intonation for ten minutes. The person who is answering answers immediately, spontaneously. If you do

not have an answer, say you do not know. You do not want to sort of get bogged down and coming up with something. You just want to keep the sort of movement of question and answer going.

We will have three questions. The first question is: Tell me something in the way of your heart's yearning for union. I mentioned all sorts of possibilities like I am not going to get it so what is the point of yearning? Or I hate my mother and when my heart yearns, she shows up and that is the last thing I want. Or it is very frustrating to yearn, or I am scared because I feel like I am going to lose myself. So just whatever your personal story is around yearning. Tell me something in the way of your heart's yearning for union. You will answer. Your partner says thank you and asks you the question again. Then you switch roles for the first question.

After both of you have asked and answered the first question, then we will go to the second question which is: Tell me a way you experience the sweetness of longing. You will answer that. If you do not experience the sweetness of longing, say that. If you feel softness or openness or vulnerability, say that. Just whatever is coming up. You just want to be honest and present and immediate.

And then the last question: Tell me a way you experience melting love. It can be occasions when I am in bed with my cat, when my baby is falling asleep in my arms, when I play music, when I go for a walk and the light is just so, when I taste really good food. Wherever it is that you experience melting love. If it starts to happen as you are talking about how you experience melting love, it may be that your experience actually starts showing up that way, that something in you begins to melt. Then you can answer more immediately, like in your moment experience. Tell me the way you experience melting love. Wow! I am really kind of feeling sweetly towards you when you ask me. So, talking about different ways that you experience it can actually invite the presence. If that happens, that answer from the presence directly.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

This is the time when we get to share what you found out, lodge any complaints or comments. Before we do that, I would like to hear from more of you. We have a kind of limited time to interact so I thought one way I could know more of what is happening across the broader group of you, is if you guys could put a few words in the chat about how the exercise was, where you are, how you were affected by contemplating these qualities of love. Then, I will hear more directly from those of you who want to share with the group.

Softening grief – tenderness – grateful - sadness, melting, grateful - relaxed, quiet – pain -warm and nostalgic - softening, touched, confused - silent, vast, bittersweet – spacious - no sweetness and belonging at all - cup runneth over - joy - lovely heavy, warm honey - intent, holiness - longing to feel everything at once - here I am again - questions.

Just notice how you are affected by the variety of responses, each of these. The grief, the friendliness, the sweetness, the confusion. There are all flavors of our heart, the variety of human experience that is

gathered here together. Thank you for coming forward. We will start with anything you want to share or ask.

Q&C 1

STUDENT:

I would like to share something from yesterday's exercise and today's exercise kind of like how distinct the experience was. Both are confusing in different ways. Yesterday I noticed very clearly that I was afraid of the sensations in my body. I could experience the fear and the sensations, not fear as the sensations. It was very clear. Today, as I was sensing the yearning in the heart or the sweetness of the yearning, like a lot of the time I could feel like a layer of numbness around my heart which is unusual for me because I would usually either feel a tightness, discomfort or like a melting and sweetness. Actually, this very clear numbness was confusing. I continue to feel into it now when I raised my hand and noticing that I usually associate emotions with sensation. But now it is more like the emotions are one realm that feels more like air or something. Then I feel anger about the sensation, for example. I feel like something like air in my back. That is the anger and the sensation of tightness is still there. So, I feel like it is new territory. I am very intrigued by this, especially by this fear of the sensations because I feel it might allow me to land in my body more if I understand it.

Zarina: Sounds like good discoveries. Like you are finding out more about yourself. So, do you feel the fear now, the fear of sensation in the body?

STUDENT: A little bit, yes. It is like a layer around the sensation.

Zarina: And does the fear seem to have content? What is scary about sensing something in the body? Use your breath. Let yourself breathe a little.

STUDENT:

What came to me at first was that the fear is trying to protect me from everything being crunched together. It is as if everything is going to come to the front, you know, like curl up and touch everything else and kind of be squished together in a sense.

Zarina: Got it. So, the fear is somehow keeping you from curling up into a tight kind of ball.

STUDENT:

It is specific, yes, but it is specifically keeping the sensations, the parts of my body where the sensations are happening basically going down from the diaphragm into my stomach, for example, in the middle, it is trying to protect specifically this part from curling.

Zarina: Got it. So, the fear around the sensation is keeping the sensation from kind of taking over in a way. They are kind of containing it or restricting whatever is happening inside that ring of fear.

STUDENT: It is in a way, as if what you are describing is like a mechanism that would happen physically and even, maybe potentially, lead to a sort of annihilation where everything is there anymore.

Zarina: So, when you sense yourself around these questions, a kind of fear of annihilation comes up. What happens when you just recognize that what is going on in the head is making you scrunch?

STUDENT: It is like touching the truth and trying to get rid of it.

Zarina: I see. So, the scrunch is trying to shut it out.

STUDENT: Yes, shake it off in a sense. So, my body is kind of shivered and my head is shaking it.

Zarina:

Good. We can see two things in what you are saying. One, that something is coming to life be it a sensation or this particular truth or insight and that at the same time that some sensation sort of comes to life or some truth is recognized there is a big counterforce against it whether it is to not see what you are seeing or cannot sense what you are sensing. So, what happens if you just see that there is openness and a force that really wants to shut down whatever is open? What does your heart say about it?

STUDENT:

The thing that immediately came to me is that it is fear of the fear. My whole body is ready to defend me against a fear. It has very hard constrictions. I almost feel like I am sensing something that has two opposing facets at the same time. On the one hand, it feels like that fear is the obstacle and fear is the door at the same time.

Zarina: Yes. That is totally true.

STUDENT: It is protecting me from sensing fear because it is a door. It is also telling me it is protecting me from feeling fear as constrictions and restrictions.

Zarina:

If you believe the fear and let it push you off, it becomes an obstacle. If you sense the fear, really use your heart and your body and your intelligence and clarity to sense it, it is a doorway. So, having a sense of what your mind is doing and your belly around sensation and insight. What is happening in your heart as we are speaking? What is your heart saying about this force? This counterforce?

STUDENT: When I touch the heart, I start to sense a truth. When I sense the truth that shakes my body it happens again just to disrupt reset thing. So, I am trying to do it again.

Zarina:

Here is what I suggest as you go on your own. Really feel the heart response to what you are seeing about fear. Notice that your mind wants to swerve. Notice that the sensation wants to curl over it, and the heart feels it. It is like how do you feel about the situation that you find yourself in? What does the heart



respond with? Is it soft? Is it loving? Is it kind? Does it feel open and interested? Or what? So, follow that line of inquiry.

STUDENT: And what would you suggest I do with it. Like right now, it threw upwards a big wave of grief. What do you suggest I do if it comes back?

Zarina:

So not go with the content, sense your heart. You have a sense of where you are now and that there is something opening and something shutting down. If you allow the truth of it, see how the heart responds to that truth. Let your heart be impacted by the challenge and see what the responses are. The heart could respond in loads of different ways. When it sees your situation, what is the response of your heart and follow that response. Let that affect both the mind and the tightness in the lower body. Follow the heart, sort of welcome the heart into the experience. See what she has to say about it.

STUDENT: Thank you so much.

Zarina: Thank you.

Q&C 2

STUDENT:

Thanks for your teachings. I just wanted to share. No, that is the thing. I wish I did want to share something now. I am so present in the moment to moment that I struggle to talk about it. Like, for example, in the exercise I did not feel any yearning because I felt union. So, I did not have anything to yearn about, to yearn for.

Zarina: Tell me about this union.

STUDENT:

The first question I would have answered just I do not feel yearning. I am just united with everything I need to be united with. And then the second question the same, I would have said the same answer. As for the last question, I cannot tell. I cannot explain merging love with words. I do not know. So, I kind of had to - I said other things, but I also wanted to remember when I was still feeling the yearning.

Zarina: So, you do not remember.

STUDENT: Exactly.

Zarina: When you are feeling union, you do not feel the yearning. And not only do you feel union, but there are not a lot of words. You do not want to say anything about it.

STUDENT: Yes, it felt like my mind was like why do I have to decide this thing. I am just feeling I do not know why.

Zarina: Sounds good. So, you feel some state of union and there is no impulse to talk about it. There is no impulse for any of that. What makes you raise your hand? What is it you would like to share?

STUDENT: Because I felt like it is connected with an experience I had before. The only thing that I just sense in this inquiry is the melting love. What melted for me to feel this way that I feel now?

Zarina: So, you could see what to melt for the union to happen.

STUDENT: Exactly.

Zarina: Do you want to say anything about the union? So, like at this moment?

STUDENT: So, basically the union is the absence of boundaries within moment to moment of my experience.

Zarina: Stay with that. I got the content. There are no boundaries moment to moment.

STUDENT: It is like a flow, and I feel it is like I am doing this because I feel something here.

Zarina: See what the something is. Breathe where your hands are. Sense yourself from the inside.

STUDENT: It is just like being in instant by an instant of unfolding, but the experience is always changing. I kind of really cannot talk about it because it has already changed.

Zarina: So, it feels like spontaneous unfolding in the moment without any separation between one moment and the next.

STUDENT: Yes exactly. And it is like fresh. It is being this (sound) although it is not a state, it is like what I can do with my physical.

Zarina: And as it does that, what is being created?

STUDENT: It makes me smile. I do not know. It is because I feel like I wanted to say, like what is created is my sense of myself.

Zarina: Yes, what is created as me. It makes sense my sense of myself.

STUDENT: Yes. It is like every moment is new.

Zarina: Yes, what is created is me.

STUDENT: Yes, it is beautiful.

Zarina: Say that sentence again. What is created is me.

STUDENT: Yes, what is created is me. I was not before the same me.

Zarina:

So, here is my suggestion. Enjoy it. You do not have to put words to it. You do not have to make it fit the teaching I was talking about. You do not have to think about yearning. What is happening is there is a certain flow happening in the chest moment to moment. Nothing separate. And what is being created is you.

STUDENT: It is also the love that I need is in here. It is like I am in contact with it.

Zarina: What does the love feel like when in this moment-to-moment creation? What is this love?

STUDENT:

For me it is like the medium in which this unfolding occurs. It is kind of a - I wrote down something before and it still feels like it is that infinite instance of presence. And I imagine, like a pink field kind of thing. And basically, the space where this can happen.

Zarina: So, love is the space where you can be created moment to moment. Yes, it puts it together in a sentence.

STUDENT: In a sense you have me like verbalize something that I could not.

Zarina: So, stay with that love being a space where you are created moment to moment. Let us see what else you find out.

STUDENT: Yes. Thank you.

Zarina: It is good to see you again.

STUDENT: You too. Thank you very much.

Q&C 3

STUDENT:

I was thinking. Gosh! I wish someone else would be given the first opportunity before me. I was with him yesterday. I did not figure out what to say, but I just knew I needed to raise my hand and say something. What comes to me is such a deep gratitude towards how you have broken down longing in these components that I have never heard before. I have heard other teachers talk about longing. I have been in and out of my longing since I was probably a very, very young child, I remember. But the way you have broken it down has given me more access to my experience inside of myself. In my heart area, my chest

area, my body and it has created not a separation but a discernment of going into my head. So that discernment is very useful for me because I tend to want to go up there to avoid what I am feeling inside which completely always amazes me how many hours, decades, whatever I have been in the longing. Yet I still at sometimes go Oh, my God, it is so fucking big I cannot handle it, you know. It is just my mind, you know. It is just like let us just go here and slow it down and stop. And what is it?

My communication, first of all, is just such appreciation for how you are describing it. Second is that tool, that awareness of how I want to go up a little bit and pull myself away. And the third thing is I wanted to ask you to say more about - no, that is not it, either. There is something about longing for something outside of myself. Specifically, I have this thing. I have to be amazing to be in relationship with someone who gets this and to share and to give to each other and support each other. And then there is this longing, of course, for full on union, like full union inside here. I guess until one or the other it does not matter. I have just answered my own question. I can contain all of it. There is capacity here for all of it. Thank you. Just thank you so much.

Zarina:

You are welcome and it makes me very happy to hear your report that something has landed and makes sense, and has sparked your own inquiry in a way, your own knowing yourself.

STUDENT:

So much. And since doing this work last month, I have turned a corner on grief into more longing and love, and the playfulness and lightness has really come back strong.

Zarina:

Yes. And that longing for other is vital and important. We grab longing by the tail wherever it shows up. So that wanting the other, and wanting to be one, and wanting to be all wrapped up, sense that. Truly and fully. It sounds like you are noticing when you let out the steam a little bit by going up and you just keep coming back. It really does not matter what the object of longing is. The magic is in the longing.

STUDENT:

Thank you. Because sometimes that longing is so intense, I just have to take time and fucking scream and scream and scream and scream. And then I turn inward and go, okay, what else do you want me to know about this? What else? And it is just, oh, yes, it is more. It is quite a ride being a human. Thank you everyone. Thank you so much for what you are sharing. I have been moved, been touched.

Zarina: Thanks for coming forward.

Q&C 4

STUDENT:

I wound up getting kind of caught up in semantics about longing. I think where I got tripped up, too, was being with a partner who did not have English as their first language. I was thinking well, you do not either, and neither does Hameed. Why did you use the word longing? And what came up was so many

years ago I was working deeply with the Sufis where they talk - I mean, that is a whole basis of the longing. One friend said to a Sufi teacher friend well, I do not want to say longing because it is like that does not keep me in the present. And my friend said, but the longing is the opening, the heart opening. So then, I was like, I really want to do this right to get a feel of what these exercises are doing and yet they were worded in a way that I felt like I was interpreting the sweetness of longing kind of in the same way that I was interpreting melting love. And then you just said, the magic is in the longing.

Zarina:

So, what is that that takes over my semantics. What is that? And what is it doing? The language intentionally allows lots of different kinds of coming in. So, when the mind sort of goes, what is it doing? What is the purpose of it?

STUDENT: It is trying to take over. I have noticed how I do not always have easy access to sensing and feeling.

Zarina:

What happens when you see that? We are really focusing these weekends both on felt sense, both the emotional sensation but also just the touch, being able to touch the soul. What happens is your mind gets kicked up. If you just notice that that is true.

STUDENT:

I have been noticing that in my life. I think in the first question it came up that it is like my traumas, that I have not looked at my traumas like from such a young age. I went into transcendence and now I am unwinding the felt sense because I did not want to feel the level of grief and pain. It is still a little like far away to fully feel in an embodied way.

Zarina: How do you feel when you say that? See it and say it.

STUDENT: It brings up some sadness, but it also brings up like total freedom, like I am finally being authentic and admitting these things.

Zarina:

Yes. I feel the sadness, but also kindness there when you say I have not been able to. My life has been such that I have had to stay up here because there is too much fear. When you say it, I can feel something softening kindly towards yourself.

STUDENT: That is spot on. So, I am just experiencing grief, feeling it in the tightness in my neck and my mental capacity was like oh, well, that is the vagus nerve.

Zarina: Feel that softness that came up, your eyes welled up, your voice got softer. This is where you find yourself making your way into this realm that has so far been inaccessible.



STUDENT: It is almost like scary. Oh, if I really listen to myself, I will not want to live here anymore. I will want everything different. It feels a little scary to learn to really listen in.

Zarina:

Definitely. And it is one way that we get totally pulled away, all those kinds of messages your life will blow up. You will leave your partner. Everything will change. It is like our consciousness, those voices that want to keep everything just the way it is familiar and safe bring out all the armaments, all the weaponry. Do not look there. Do not go there. You will want to move. You will want to explode your life.

STUDENT: I have wanted to move. I just do not know how to do that until I am all on board. But yes, it is kind of a mixed bag.

Zarina:

So, this is a certain scale of longing you could say. All the voices that say, no, do not. Danger. Danger. Something that goes but I want to. I want to know my feelings and my sensations. I have spent enough time in my mind. I want to know. I want my life expanded. So, it is like the longing can start to weigh more than the forces of the familiar. Slowly, gently.

STUDENT: Yes. Gently is the key word like being able to listen with compassion.

Zarina: Yes. The last thing we can do is push ourselves into the heart. The heart cannot be pushed into. It has a whole other mind. Pushiness makes the heart go into hiding. So, we just go relaxed, loving, kind.

STUDENT: But it brings up longing of I want more of the good.

Zarina:

But that you can really feel I want more. See what it is you want more of. The fact that you want more of it means you have tasted it. You have had a taste. We do not crave something we have not tasted. The longing has that taste in it. So let yourself go along with abandon.

STUDENT: The longing for those times of absolute melting love. And now wanting to fit that in on this I guess plane of existence.

Zarina: I would say forget the second part of fitting it in and just go with the abandon. See what happens.

STUDENT: Good.

Zarina: Good to meet you.

STUDENT: Thank you. Great to connect with you.

Q&C 5

STUDENT:

Can you hear me okay? I have to whisper. I lost my voice years ago. Actually, something you said was – I realize that there are things I am still yearning for at my age. I am still sweetie pie for union with a woman. To sit on the coach. You were talking about all these ways. I felt I was a teenager again. I am seventy-eight. It is sweet yet I do not – The second question, I do not realize how much sweetness feels like. The other point I want to bring is to feel my heart and love the way other people describe their physical bodily experience of love. I do not feel that. I did not feel it. I somehow know it is there. I cannot tell you how I know it is there.

Zarina: Yes, that is a good question. How can you yearn for it if you do not know it at all?

STUDENT: Yes. Five years ago, I said in an inquiry to people, I do not feel my heart. I have not felt it for over sixty years. I even said that so that I could hear it.

Zarina: What is happening right now if you just sense where your fingers are?

STUDENT: Sadness – for life. Deep sadness.

Zarina: That sadness is your heart.

STUDENT: I feel the longing to be loved.

Zarina: Yes.

STUDENT: I have not said those words before.

Zarina: Just let it be here. Let yourself feel it.

STUDENT: I feel my body relaxed in some way, dropped out in the belly.

Zarina: I have news for you.

STUDENT: I do not know why I am laughing.

Zarina: I was going to tell you. What is happening? What happens?

STUDENT: The child.

Zarina: What do you feel here now when it shifts?



STUDENT: I feel more present here. I want to say where it is, is this moment in time. There is no place to get to.

Zarina: You keep demonstrating the opposite of what your dilemma is. All that laughter. It is something from the heart.

STUDENT: It is somehow shifting from believing all of it to just being here now.

Zarina:

Definitely. There is a whole thing that probably for a very good reason you have identified with about not having a heart in sixty years and being numb or dead or whatever. And it just is not true. I am sorry but you could see how that goes. See what happens with that until we meet again.

STUDENT: I got it. Thank you for that.

CLOSING

I am going to give you guys a few prompts should you want to practice between now and when we meet again in December. First, to continue your sensing exercise. So, we have done an abbreviated version of it this weekend, but I introduce the full, longer kind of fifteen-minute sensing practice which goes from the right foot to the left last weekend, and you could use that recording if you need or, if the practice is established, you can continue doing that daily. Really landing in yourself, using that practice to wake up consciousness in your physical location. And then the prompt, a daily reflection for you if you are so inclined, take a few minutes at the end of every day to reflect and write about the experience of your heart. So, you will reflect and write what happened. Did you feel emotions that day? What were the emotions? Happy, sad, hurt, whatever might come up. Did you sense presence of any kind? Any kind of love, either the ones we have been talking about appreciation, melting, union, liking, or some other kind of love. These are not the only two ways that the heart shows up as love. There are many others.

So, really just see what are your heart's experiences. As you write about the day, see how your heart responds just to your taking the time to write about your experience and really engage your inner touch as you are doing this. It does not have to be long, five minutes at the end of the day reflecting on the state of your heart, what kind of adventures and debacles you had that day as you lift your heart. So, that is an ongoing practice for you.

Taking a moment to feel our time together. I am touched by your sharings both live and also in the chat. It sort of makes sense of why I do anything I do when I hear about how it impacts you guys. So may the impacts abound. That is my wish for you in this month that your heart is open and impacted in all directions. Until we meet again, be well.