

“Another illusion is that we are awake. When we realize that we are asleep, we will see that all history is made by people who are asleep. Sleeping people fight, make laws; sleeping people obey or disobey them. The worst of our illusions are the wrong ideas among which we live and which govern our lives.”[1]

Burleigh Heads Esplanade 27-9-2007

In Search of the Present

Yes, I am on a quest of sorts – I am searching for a connection to my soul, right here, right now.

Admittedly, I have an ulterior motive – quite a strong one at that: I am trying to edit some karma out of my energy field by altering its properties.

This, from me, who a year ago thought about my soul as often as the molecular composition of my body, which was never.



What has since happened is the weirdest thing. As luck would have it or, should I say, as karma would have it, some thirteen months ago, totally inexplicably, I happened to connect with a woman, Moriya, who turned out to be a spiritual healer.

It soon became clear that this woman felt that her karmic mission in *this* lifetime was to guide whoever happened to be drawn to her approach to spirituality.



Putting faith in the old saying we find The Teacher we need once we are ready to learn, I assumed I had already found my spiritual teacher a few years prior in the form of the founder of a healing center whose hands-on approach to PsychoBioEnergy Psychotherapy made more sense to me than not.

1. P.D Ouspensky, (1957), *The Fourth Way*, Random House, New york, p.19.

Though each workshop cost \$500 to \$700 a weekend, a considerable drain of my savings, I felt privileged to attend all in the program over a two-year period.



If it is true that enlightenment comes at a price, when scanning the advertising section in any of the top selling spiritual magazines, one would be excused for thinking that the *price* in question has to be of a financial nature. It therefore stands to reason that the proverbial single mother of two is not likely to get much enlightenment in this lifetime. And this is perhaps her karma.



Though real wisdom cannot be bought, placebo *can* be. And a point worth considering is that, in matters of spirituality, we do not truly learn anything new. We merely remember what we already know from anterior lives.

The more the channel to our inner self is open, the easier it is to retrieve this memory.

Any *new* insight comes not from our ability to learn and absorb, but is accessed from our soul. The events that trigger a search for spiritual enlightenment are merely the catalyst that gets us moving.



Moriya's spirituality is such that anyone who knows her initially thinks that this woman should live the protected life of a Rinpoche, a *diamond* in Tibetan terms, or at least that of a spiritual leader in a holy ashram somewhere in remote Galilee where the hills and the forests meet the sea.

There, she would be shielded from the hustle and bustle of modern living by a retinue of adoring disciples who would tend to her earthly needs, however basic, while keeping visitors at a respectful distance.



Moriya is not a woman of great wealth, at least not in terms of money in the bank. She has to earn her living as most of us do and balance her checkbook at the end of every month but, oddly for a modern day spiritualist, she has not yet charged anyone, not even a *shekel* – she lives in Jerusalem – for any of the spiritual guidance she has been dispensing, humbly, quietly, in a selfless way for the past twenty years.



For the truly spiritually evolved one, our blocked and somewhat *charged* energies can be energetically painful in ways I cannot even fathom but Moriya has accepted her mission as handed over to her by her soul - to make accessible and credible, from within an ordinary modern life, all that she knows, without the help of any spiritual-religious trappings whatsoever.



It is Moriya's belief that by living and working unprotected, and in the thick of it all, her inner strengths are best tested which, she says, frees her from the possibility of ever feeling that she is *special*. In addition, Moriya neither feels at risk of burning out by having her spirit energy drained out of her and/or of becoming victim of her own ego, two well-documented conditions that affect many otherwise well-intentioned and genuine spiritual practitioners.



Long story short, never in my wildest dreams had I ever thought the universe would connect me to someone like Moriya.

I was even less prepared to become such a person's spiritual protégée. And yet, it is how the situation has panned out, one enlightening email at a time, over the past thirteen months.

This morning I replied to email #369.



Besides Moriya's fluid decoding and seamless interpretations of the anodyne, but symbolic *messages* that come my way via any of my daily moments, each

email contains an eclectic mix of teaching points, spiritual parables, and pointed analyses distilled from the hundreds of books of which she has an intimate knowledge and which cover all strands of religious and spiritual disciplines, from the most ancient expressions of the human spirit to what is now considered classic and esoteric thinking in metaphysics. Moriya has made it her business, over the past twenty-years to read and accept - or reject - all that the major thinkers and theosophists have written on karma, the energy field, matters of the soul and reincarnation.



Since Moriya has generously gifted me many of her books, a fair chunk of her private collection is now sitting on my bookshelf. Every time I run my hand across their spines, I am aware of the challenge each book yet unread is posing me. My time is as elastic as old putty. It is not expandable.

I bump along like a little pinball from one deadline to another, from one situation I feel I could have handled better to another I could have handled differently.

Even when I manage to not blot my notebook, the ghosts of moments – past and future - invade my thoughts like so many phantom-limbs.

Was I ever an octopus in a previous life? If so, why can't I reconnect with the octopus's ability to *just be* - one simple propulsion at a time?



Moriya's approach to spirituality is the only one I have come across that requires no ritual, no picture, no mantra, no paraphernalia, no god worship, no expense of any sort, no workshops, no merchandising.

Put simply, we do not need anything beyond establishing a connection to our soul - this element of the divine, that is already within us, is all we need to tap into.



As Moriya, herself, is a massive anthology of all of that is esoteric writings, when receiving her teachings first-hand, even books are optional, if not for the intellectual stimulation of reading source material.



Life, even a mostly pleasant life such as mine, has never stopped presenting me with challenges of varying emotional charge which, I have come to believe, probably stems from not having been anywhere near unconditional love, certainly not as a child and a young adult. Yet I know that if I could stop fretting for a moment - right here, right now, if I could stop sifting through a miasmatic past while blinking apprehensively at the future, I do believe my days would flow better. Much better.



My life, you see, is unfolding right in front of my nose, under each of my fingertips, in the present, as I press each of the keys that make up these words. If I could just *be* in the present and *not* keep loading up **now** with the stale emotional clutter of yesterday, of **the last time**, of whenever, if I could refrain from playing forward ethereal scenarios released by an insecure mind, I believe the quality of my energy field would shift.

I believe it would allow me to be more like a little mountain spring - fresh, clean and transparent.

I believe I would not only be better at all that I do, as being a woman, someone's partner, a high school teacher, a daughter, a friend, a writer, but I would also have time to become a serious reader of inspiring thoughts with a lot of extra time on my hands in which to contemplate the meaning of my soul's current life, this life - my life.

"And WHO are you?" you might ask.

A few months ago I would have answered by rattling off personal specs: gender, age, profession, sexuality, social status, personal achievements, hobbies, likes/dislikes and so on.

Over the past few months, however, I have come to realize that I, C.C., am but an ego, a persona - the physical and physiological incarnation of my soul – and

this is a concept I am still struggling with although intellectually I do understand it.

Roughly, as V, one of the main characters in *V for Vendetta* explained, “What was done to me created me.”



Until recently, I believed that the ME whom I tidy up every morning in front of the mirror was ME from the inside out - *my* choice of me, as I crafted myself minute by minute over the past fifty years - matured to perfection.

Now, I accept that all of what makes Me, this *individual* who needs to be seen, not necessarily heard, is not the end product of any creative free choice, as my Leo star sign would like to suggest.



Who is this Me, strong and independent that feels all droopy on Day 2 of a miserable cold.

Who is this Me, normally so calm and collected, who *loses it* when my partner, my mother, my boss, the person in the queue ahead of me *pushes one of my buttons*?

Can I really look in the mirror and say that I know *who I am*?

Or can I accept that whatever I see in the mirror and what others perceive of me is all there is to me?



[2]

2. Masks by Jonathan Becker, <http://www.theater-masks.com/commedia-masks.html>



Technically I am both Jewish and Catholic - the former because any child borne to a Jewish mother is Jewish by default. The latter because my paternal grandparents had me baptized when I was just a few months old – possibly in the hope of counter-acting any inherited Jewish tendencies.

Then, for reasons definitely beyond my control, I endured three years in a school run by nuns where the First Communion followed by Confirmation were compulsory for all Catholic students.

Having said that, as far as I am concerned, there is no god, great or small - only a huge cosmic force, yes, a creator of absolute order and precision, and an arbiter that keeps checks and balances through karma, personal and global – the same force that keeps the planets spinning however they need to spin to maintain life on earth.

However, what chaos there is in our lives, in our world, on our planet is 100% *man* made.



Me, my, myself and **I** – all four of us are one thinking, loving, eating, spending, working, drinking, ego-driven [...] *entity* – I almost said *zombie-like*, because mostly asleep, but I pulled back thinking it might sound a little too hardcore at such an early stage of my ramblings.



I accept that I am a divided entity: I have an intellectual self, an instinctive self, a moving self and, not least of all, an emotional self.



Though I consider myself a rather mature, introverted and quiet sort of person, I accept that my four selves, as ego-centric as juveniles, are running *my* show as, as for now, they have a will of their own.



I accept that I am the main source of my own misery. Well, not me, C.C. but, me, as my ego-persona, which is really me, C.C.. Arrghh!



I accept that my moods, my anxiety, have a twin corollary imprinted in my energy field.



Reality check #1: I am made up of approximately 70% to 80% liquids and though my brain is the single heaviest part of me and the most documented, sliced, diced and quartered on innumerable science programs, I can only access a fraction of its power and, basically I don't *really* understand what makes it tick.



Reality check #2: My personality has been molded by an imprecise series of events; two or three massive ones, but mostly what has shaped ME is the repetitive imprint left on my psyche by a series of relentless, but seemingly innocuous happenings – *life, as interpreted by me.*



Reality check #3

All I have described above is, after all, not the real me. I have simply described my ego-persona – my soul's vehicle in *this* lifetime.

The real ME is my soul.

My ego-persona, me, as C.C., is not having much fun at the moment because I am not whom I thought I was - yet I am not in need of a straightjacket.

I am not delusional.

In fact, I have probably never been more aware of my constructed self as I am at the moment.



I used to think I was my own person and that, since I had always lived in **free countries**, all that I did was act out free will.

In reality, all that I *do* and *feel* and *say* has been pre-determined by the miasma of previous actions and reactions that go so far back my human mind cannot deconstruct it.

Put bluntly, I react freely to an endless range of stimuli, yes. But I do not act out of free will. I do not believe anyone does.



There is a story about a man who came to visit a spiritual teacher and the teacher inquired: "Why did you come in with all this crowd of people?" The man whirled around in astonishment to see who had snuck up behind him.

"Of course," Moriya explained, "there was no one. The 'crowd of people' that he came with is his clutter of old ideas; the conventional, but arbitrary, concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, and about love, life and death. He lugged all this around with him wherever he went, as people do.

"In order to be free of our ourselves," she added, "to flow spontaneously like water, and have faith in the course of things - knowing that our soul, our true mother, will never fail us - we need to discard all this baggage of conventional values."



Clearly, objective thinking seriously kills the fun factor. It's a real dampener. In fact, the only way I can begin to understand *who* I am is by keeping my ego-persona very still.

By not saying anything.

By not wanting anything.

By not making anything happen.

By not *touching* anything energetically – by not reacting to the programmed knee-jerk reactions that make our personality.



We all agree that we cannot drag any of our possessions to wherever souls migrate to, once six feet under ground.

Possessions, in this text, refers to any baggage – emotional or physical - that weighs us down; any clutter that turns us, inside and out, into the familiar cartoon image of a turtle with its house stacked so high it totters on its back.

I am sure you have seen it - the expression on that turtle's face is always one of incomprehension and weariness.

This cartoon turtle never smiles because this turtle does not understand how her possessions have become so heavy.

She does not know how her clutter has become so unmanageable.



[Oops, sorry! This is not quite the turtle I had in mind but, at short notice, this one will do]



Does this mean spontaneity has to go and I have to develop the personality of a cucumber? Not if I find a way to be in the moment, as I do *spontaneity*.



On the train to Brindavan, a Swami sits beside a common man who asks him if, indeed, he has attained the self-mastery that the title "Swami" implies.

"I have," says the Swami.

"And have you mastered anger?"

"I have."

"Do you mean to say that you have mastered anger?"

"I have."

"You mean you can control your anger?"

"I can."

"And you do not feel anger?"

"I do not."

"Is this the truth, Swami?"

"It is."

After a silence the man asks again: "Do you really feel that you have controlled your anger?"

"I have, as I told you," the Swami answers.

"Then, do you mean to say, you never feel anger, even --"

"You are going on and on -- what do you want?" the Swami shouts. "Are you a fool of a man? I have already given you an answer--"

"Oh, Swami, this is anger. So, I was right. You have not master--"

"Ah, but I have," the Swami interrupts. "Have you not heard about the tormented snake that lived near a temple? Let me tell you the story.

On a path that went by a village in Bengal, there lived a cobra that used to bite people on their way to worship at the local temple. As such incidents increased,

everyone became fearful, and many refused to go to the temple. The Swami who was the master at the temple was aware of the problem and took it upon himself to put an end to the problem. Taking himself to where the snake dwelt, he used a mantra to call the snake to him and bring it into submission.

The Swami then said to the snake how wrong it was to bite the people who walked along the path to worship. He made the snake promise sincerely that it would never do that again.

Soon afterwards, the snake was spotted upon the path by a passer-by but it made no move to bite. Once it became known that the snake had somehow been made passive, people grew unafraid.

It was not long before the village boys were dragging the poor snake along by the tail, as they ran laughing here and there.

When the temple Swami passed that way again, he called the snake to see if he had kept his promise.

The snake humbly and miserably approached the Swami, who exclaimed, "You are bleeding! Tell me how this has come to be".

The snake was near tears and blurted out that he had been tormented ever since he had begun keeping the promise made to the Swami.

The Swami shook his head. "I told you not to bite", he said, "but I never told you not to hiss!"[3]



The best way I can connect with the real me is by *being* in the moment.

Not by interpreting and analyzing the moment to keep the sweet bits and spit out the rest.

And being in the moment is what I can *not* yet do with any measurable success.

But then again, I know I should not even be measuring and comparing anything.

So, it is back to Square One and the practice of *just being* - and observing.



I have accepted the challenge of interacting with the REAL me.

3. D. Boyd, (1974), Rolling Thunder, Dell Publishing, New York, p.104.

It is what my quest, the search for the present- moment, under Moriya's guidance, is all about.



In his preface to **Understanding the New Religions**, Jacob Needleman recalls the first class he attended as a student of philosophy. When the instructor asked the class what they expected from the course, Needleman responded enthusiastically, 'I want to know the meaning of life'.

"I will never forget the silence that followed. At first, I simply did not understand it; I assumed the teacher was waiting for me to say more, and so I went on talking while vaguely beginning to suspect that something was not quite right.

I don't remember anything of what I said, only that it all centered around the question, 'Why are we here?'

Suddenly, I noticed that the teacher was smiling. I almost said 'sneering' but that would probably be an exaggeration. At the same time, I noticed my classmates shaking their heads and I heard some sniggering as well.

I stopped cold. 'Go on, go on', I was told.

Bewildered and frightened, I did try to go on and speak about all the questions that had been troubling me, but my voice was hollow and I soon had to stop.

After another terrible pause, the teacher said (and this I remember precisely):

'Yes -- well, that is exactly what philosophy is not about. You are not going to get psychiatric help here (great laughter), or religious guidance (more laughter). No, you are going to be taught what it means to think clearly and well, to examine your presuppositions, to criticize and argue. That is philosophy.'" [4]

4. A. Keightley (1986), *Into Every Life a Little Zen Must Fall*, Wisdom publications, London p.19.

Personally, it is the exploration of this type of thinking, which is also Moriya's, that is keeping me interested in the fathomless and all encompassing topic we are discussing here.



Over the past thirteen months, I have come to trust Moriya as implicitly as I do my life-partner – certainly much more than any doctor, specialist, healer, therapist, I have ever had to consult. Even more than the highly respected, and genial psychiatrist-healer who, some five years ago, decided that all I needed to get over my childhood issues was to take up chakra meditation. It is under her guidance that, on a weekly basis, I began the healing of my energy field and a couple of years later, met my first spiritual healer, the woman I was talking about earlier.

If it had not been for these two women's approach to matters of the soul, I would never had been able to recognize Moriya as a true spiritual guide - my spiritual guide.

Neither would I have been open to accept trustingly the regular sessions of distant healing she directs at my energy field. Meeting these three women, in the sequence just described, amounts to synchronicity at its best.



So “what's a good woman to do” when, like myself, she gets so frustrated by her struggles with the practical application of basic spiritual tenets?

If this woman is ME, she sorts out what her head and heart have come to *accept* from what she *understands* but has not yet integrated - the stuff that tests her mettle as she is finally awake and on The Path.



I am so totally convinced that you, and many readers, will value a shortcut of the teachings I have been receiving from Moriya that I propose to commit what I can to paper – *with her explicit support and encouragement*.



Once I had begun sorting through the notes derived from my correspondence with Moriya, with a view to embarking on this project, I came to the page in Andrew Harvey's, **Journey to Ladakh**, where Thuksey Rinpoche tells him, a writer and a poet in search of self, *"You do not need to stop working, but you need to strive for a new relationship with your work. You do not need to stop writing, you need to explore another way to write, to build another awareness to write from. You will probably not find this quickly. You will need patience.*

Many people will tell you that you are misguided, ridiculous. You must listen to what they have to say, learn from their criticisms, but not be swayed by them."[5]

That brought a great grin to my lips.



As I expose the sky-high citadel of my struggles with the lessons that are forcing me well beyond my comfort zones to expand my mind and my heart to finally grapple with concepts never previously considered, I will at the same time share Moriya's interpretation of all that I find relevant to the topics discussed in any one section.



I will keep this as free as possible of both mumbo-jumbo hype and the highfalutin language of academia, hopefully as clear as the waters of that little mountain spring. Hopefully, I will be able to give it back to you as fresh and clean as distilled by Moriya herself – for you to find as refreshingly fresh and full of light, as I do.



And so today, though I still only stand a little further up The Path, both my feet are firmly planted on it, as I experiment with the elusive but corner-stone concept of the absence of the *moment* in our wakeful hours, as discussed by Alan Watts in **The Way of Liberation**:

"We are living in a culture entirely hypnotized by the illusion of time in which the

5. A. Harvey (1983), *A Journey In Ladakh*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Massachusetts, p.174.

so-called present moment is felt as nothing but an infinitesimal causative past and an absorbingly important future. We have no present. Our consciousness is almost completely preoccupied with memory and expectation. We do not realize that there never was, is, or will be any other experience than present experience. We are therefore out of touch with reality. We confuse the world as talked about, described, and measured with the world which actually is.” [6]



One word of warning, even about the greatest philosophers and theosophists: all we can accept from them is their ideas.

Like most sport coaches who train high-profile athletes without themselves living the daily rigor they impose, most great thinkers have not, themselves, excelled in the spiritual actualization of their own beliefs. Alan Watts, considered by many as one of the greatest minds of the twentieth century, was no exception.

In fact, the old *do as I say and not as I do* motto is best kept in mind when reading what the world’s greatest philosophers say on matters most of us have neither time nor inclination to think about. That way, we do not risk being either hypnotized by the brilliance of such great minds or tempted to disregard them for being as flawed and damaged as the rest of us.

Having said that, I am totally convinced that Moriya *walks the talk* of her teachings.

Lesson 1 – Be Here, Now!

Though her life is hectic, Moriya tends to the connection to her soul daily, moment by moment, as she bounces email and faxes in cyber space for most of the same work-reasons we do. She tends to this connection while she edits manuscripts and theses for a select few professors in Jerusalem. She tends to this connection while neighbors drop in unexpectedly and through the incessant ring of the phone.

“Typing,” she says, “as a mechanical task equalizes the spiritual side in me.”

6. A. Watts (1995), *The Way of Liberation*, Weatherhill, NY, p. 91.

With peace and acceptance in her heart, Moriya deals with the rub of every day life in Jerusalem – a healer of this the world, but no longer quite in it.

She, herself, is convinced that her soul will keep her shielded from discomfort and unhappiness until the time of her death which, last time we talked about it, was expected to occur in her eighty-sixth year, twenty-two years from now.



Understanding the concept of being in the present, in the moment, in the present-moment, simply means being aware of ourselves within the endless string of random and boring little moments that connect our all major ones - the happy ones and the devastating ones - like the many small breaths that connect each of the *big ones*.



On the one hand, our *big-breath moments* are the sharp-edged moments we live for while, on the other, they are the gate-crashing moments against which we have absolutely no protection and no way of keeping out; the bad news, the dark moments, the metaphoric blows to the head, in their myriad of forms.

To put it another way, being aware *in the present* is what fits neatly within the space caught between two words: alert [...] passivity.



I Need To Wake UP

Have I been sleeping?
I've been so still
Afraid of crumbling
Have I been careless?
Dismissing all the distant rumblings
Take me where I am supposed to be
To comprehend the things that I can't see
Cause I need to move
I need to wake up
I need to change

I need to shake up
I need to speak out
Something's got to break up
I've been asleep
And I need to wake up
Now [7]

Brisbane 25-10-2007

Being in the present moment simply means observing ourselves in the tiny little present that in truth is the ephemeral present. We are aware of it, but let's not give it a name. Let's not qualify it or our response to it.

The present moment that links breath-to-heart only needs to be made tangible and quantified – acknowledged, but not judged.

It does not need to be labelled in any way, for the minute we slap a label on that tiny, bubble-thin moment, the minute we give it a rating, *that* moment is already of the past and we have missed *being* in it.



I have read it in enough books to accept that being in the present simply means shutting out the monkey-chatter, the relentless flow of random thoughts that are not part of any problem solving process – it is about shutting down thoughts that invade our brain the minute we stop talking.



Actually, I will even go as far as to suggest that most of our talking – en masse, as a society – has evolved as sabotage against being present in the moment and in favor of robotic responses to our buttons being pushed.

7. Melissa Etheridge, "I Need TO Wake Up", *The Road Less Traveled*, 2007.

“We always think our negative emotions are produced by the fault of other people or by the fault of circumstances. We *always* think that. Our negative emotions are in ourselves and are produced by ourselves. There is absolutely not a single unavoidable reason why somebody else’s action or circumstance should produce a negative reaction in *me*. It is only *my weakness*.^[sic] No negative emotion can be produced by external causes if we do not want it. We have negative emotions because we permit them, justify them, explain them by external causes, and in this way, we do not struggle with them. “ [8]



*“Here is a little story that could have been found in the back pages in **The Jerusalem Post**,” said Moriya in her usual light-hearted manner. “There had been an accident on the highway during peak hour traffic and a lot of cars were stopped bumper-to-bumper. People left their vehicles to have a look along with others who came out of nowhere to get closer to the action, as people like to do.*

The scene of the accident was very crowded. A journalist who happened to be there tried to get closer himself, but couldn't because of all the people rubbernecking. So, he thought about it for a while, and finally he came up with a brilliant idea. He started to push his way through the crowd shouting, "Let me get through! Let me pass! I am the son of the victim! It is my father out there!" Immediately the people parted to let him through. Once the journalist, camera held above his head, reached the scene of the accident, he saw that the victim of the collision was a donkey!"



Films are popular mostly because however improbable the plot, the characters supposedly react as we would.

The next time you are settled in front of your screen, observe the characters as they go about their business, supposedly *our* daily business, and decide how much thought goes into any of their decisions.

Have their buttons been pushed and they react on impulse, even if embarked on a course of action after a quick *tete-a-tete* with their brain?

8. P.D Ouspensky, (1957), *The Fourth Way*, Random House, New York, p.71.

All things equal, how would your actions/reactions be any different?



Are these characters doing a knee-jerk tit-for-tit or tit-for-tat or are they present in the moment, energetically contained, operating from a balanced view of themselves?



Being in the moment simply means that once we have quietened our mind, we only need to focus on whatever it is we are doing at any specific moment – the moment under our feet.

When I first learnt to rollerblade, I can guarantee that from the moment I would get up on my blades to the moment I unlaced them, I was totally *in the present*. Ninety-nine percent of the time. No other way but. The second I would take my mind off the stride, I would invariably end up on my bum.

Whoever remembers the absolute focus that seized our brain while on our first driving lessons *knows* what it means to be present in the moment.

Oppose the novice's alert awareness to the zoning out that usually overpowers experienced drivers when we cruise on the highway, or even in our back streets. Compare it to the blanking out that takes over as we scan supermarket aisles – which may well be the same zoning out that overpowers us as we lift food to mouth over breakfast. It may well be the same as the blanks we bring home, even after a sedate get-together with friends when we only remember some snippets of the conversations and the general look, perhaps taste, of the food we ate, but we can't remember what the person facing us was wearing or what else was going on around us – provided no one created a scene.



Being in the moment can even be made fun as we look at EVERYTHING the way a tracking ranger would observe every branch, twig, scrape in the dirt and inspect every animal dropping to get meaning out of the scene in front of her. Except that, ideally, being in the present moment means that the looking and the analyzing are done through our soul's eyes, not our 21st century brain. In

this lies the challenge that karma presents to each one of us – the line in the sand that not many wish to cross.



Being present, in the moment, simply means understanding that whatever we are doing - want to do, or feel we ought to do - might have to be put on hold or even postponed indefinitely.

Such is the cosmic wisdom in which we need to trust since we, little blind mice that we are, have no idea of the fine mesh that settles invisibly around us until it holds us in its snare of spiritual lethargy.



Below an abstract drawing of what can only be that of a bloated frog, bearing a slight resemblance to Jabba the Hutt, is a thought left dangling by Alan Watts: “If you think by sitting you can become a buddha ...” [9]



OK, so I understand the theory, but I find the practical application, the day-to-day application of the theory very, very frustrating. Shouldn't being aware of ourselves within our present be as natural as breathing?

For me, it is as easy as breathing under water.



If I attempt a rating of the inner contentment I feel, I can only rate it a puny 5 out of 10. And that is because the amorphous lump of anxiety that sits heavily in the area of my

solar plexus acts like a lead apron that smothers even my relatively carefree moments.

It is the price I pay, very much unwillingly, for *not* recognizing the unique newness and freshness of each moment as it presents itself.

The more I think of this, the more I understand that each one is, in fact, as *fresh* as the proverbial morning dew.

However, I can categorically say that some moments have an imprint that

9. A. Watts, op.cit., cover page

seems very familiar. They look and feel and just about taste like ones that have already been played – over and over.

These moment bring on an “uh-uh! Here we go again” gut reaction.



Like the ocean, our ego-persona appears to be smooth enough on the surface. It absorbs. It hides what churns below. It deals - up to a certain point. But our ego-persona has great limitations. Unlike the ocean, it is never renewed. It only relies on past memories. The past is static and memory is fallible.



Reality check#1: no such string of seconds, strung one after the other, has ever presented itself to me in the past.

Not as it presents itself to me now.

Not as it will present itself tomorrow.

The irony of it is that I respond to most *new* moments within each *new* day through the jumbled and sticky mesh of past experiences.

Put simply, I deal with today-moments as I dealt with yesterday-moments.

I taint them with the same energy spikes.

How comforting is it to me knowing that I am not alone in doing this?



Resolution: *“Let’s not drink Today out of yesterday’s mug,”* dixit C.C. 😊



Being present in the moment means that I cannot let writing absorb all of my time and all of my thoughts.

As I type this text, there is a workman on our patio. He is adjusting the slant of our gutters. I am standing by to hear his call through the screen door, as he will want to explain this and that about the state of the rusted guttering and how he proposes to repair it.

Should his call catch me in mid-sentence at the keyboard, I will hit ‘save’ and I will get up.

It will be my cue to practice stilling my mind long enough to listen to what this workman wants to tell me and be in the fresh moment that has just presented itself to me.

If Moriya were here, she would know how to decode this man's *chitchat* about my gutters to give me a string of messages of symbolic spiritual relevance - such is another of her gifts.

"Hello?" A man's voice calls out from the patio. "Are you there?"

Oops, quickly hit 'save'. Prac time!

