

In Love With Myself (Finding My Inner Child)

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(When I was six months)

When I embarked on the spiritual quest at the tender age of seven, staring at the sky and the moon and the stars, the question was, 'Who Am I'?

After forty long years I found the answer, at the feet of my gurus Osho and Ramesh Balsekar, 'I Am That'.

My love affair with myself started ever since, and it has been bliss, satchitananda, all the way.

I had gone through almost half my life living through a myriad of relationships, parents, siblings, spouse, friends, extended family, some thicker than blood, some thinner than water. Almost all of them were conditional or expectational in some way or the other. There was

always 'the other' involved; there was always give and take, joy and sadness, disappointments and fulfillments. It was only in the last days of my mother that I truly experienced unconditional love with someone. She and I had become one, there was no 'other'. It brought to life the very teaching and awareness that had awakened in me, 'I Am That'. It was not coincidental that my experience with my mother came about almost immediately after the awakening. It was almost as if God was putting his own seal on the teaching!

We spend our entire life looking for love everywhere, some obvious and some not so obvious. There are as many shades and definitions of love as there are individuals. The mother child love relationship is the most primitive and obvious and spans the entire lifetime of either one of them. The next rung down is the relationship with our father, siblings, children and other blood relatives that come in a whole range of colors. The next obvious love relationship is from the time we attain puberty and our sex hormones start to play the cupid game. It starts with a crush on our teacher or nanny, flirting with the opposite gender, engaging in boyfriend / girlfriend games and finally getting caught in the marriage trap for good or bad. Along the way we have friends whom we swear by, but do we really love them? Marriage is by no means the end game, and the hunt for 'true love' continues right to our death bed. We all want this elusive true love, and each new relationship promises to be that eternal love until it lies shattered on the altar of commitment and monogamy. I have never heard anyone say, 'I love my God' or 'I love my Guru'. One always fears God and always respects the Guru. What does love have to do with religion or spirituality! We have put them on a pedestal and we can only look up to them. Love is looking in the eyes. You do not look your God or your Guru in their eyes. Love is primeval and sublime and intimate and all-encompassing and intoxicating. We may be devoted to them, but we do not associate these feelings of love with them. Meera's feelings for Krishna were totally and purely devotional unlike that of Radha which was unrequited love. But Krishna loved himself, and thereby he loved Rukmini and Radha and Meera and all the gopis and cowherds. He loved the Pandavas as much as he loved the Kauravas. His love knew no bounds.

But we never look at that one person whom we know the best and who is the easiest to fall in love with, because there is no 'other', our own self. We loathe our self, fling scorn, wallow in self-pity and are unduly harsh and critical and negative of our own life. Instead of counting our blessings and being thankful for our life, we complain and beg and plead and pray for ever more. Sometimes we almost wish we had not been born. We feel the entire world and everyone is stacked against us, nobody loves us. But do we love our own self?

When I fell in love with myself, I rose up like a phoenix from the ashes. It was a new beginning, a new life, full of joy and happiness, brightness and clarity. The cobwebs of confusion from years of conditioning had cleared away. The sun was shining bright, and even in the darkness of the new moon night, there was always the knowledge that the sun will rise next morning. I hugged myself as I had never hugged any one, I smiled from ear to ear, and life became a blessing. When I realized that I am connected to every being in this world and we were all connected to that one consciousness, my love for myself radiated in all directions. I would still get angry in the moment, but the anger would drop soon enough. I was no longer the doer, nor was the other. Unconditional love poured out in the form of hugs and healing circles and workshops and tete-a-tetes. The conflicts, the stress, the tension had all melted away. When you fall in love with yourself, I discovered, even God falls in love with you. I was after all his child. Doors started opening up, paths started getting cleared, answers started popping up. It was almost as if I had moved from the drudgery of the day to day life to the bliss of Now. Each moment seemed eternal. My prayers changed from asking to expressions of gratitude. Solitude became my best companion when I and my lover were the only ones together. I did not need anyone else. The change was anything but subtle.

You are in love with yourself. You take better care of your body. You start noticing things about it you never did before. The signals you were always getting from your body now become loud and clear. You start treating it with more respect and love! You are in love after all! Your mental faculties become sharper, your observation more keen. Your spirit has rekindled the long dormant intuitive ability. You can now 'read' yourself better. You can 'read' others better. Your love for

yourself lights the path to reach out to others. You find your own inner child, the innocent self that came out crying from his mother's womb with not a worry.

Once you fall in love with yourself, there is no getting out of it. Why would you? You have finally found your true love, one that is pure, pristine and eternal!

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