

An excerpt from “Kamikaze Yogi: Christ, Yoga and the Courage to Emerge”

REMEMBERING TO THRIVE

Gehenna. A place in Jerusalem. In the Hebrew bible, it was where some kings of Judah sacrificed their children. After, it was said to be cursed. In rabbinic literature, it is said to be a destination of the wicked.

We have no idea what we are carrying, nor do we know what to grieve. Many versions of our old Self pile up like bodies in Gehenna, trapped, unreleased.

That frozen-in-timeness can be unearthed and dug up from under the weight of anxiety and fear. It must be brought into the light of day, this crucial sense and experience of one's own begotten-ness (properly Fathered, not an accident, not a bastard, nor a mistake). What is asleep inside is hidden from our view.

The layers grow, thicken, form tension, take on armor, and add weight, physical and emotional. This is why, when you look at the cross, its arresting image is meant to impact your psyche; you allow the anguish for the innocent one to draw forth. With dedication, patience, and compassion, our bodies will eventually reveal and transform the blocked energy. Keep looking into the face of Christ until you see your own face.

The solution to healing and embodying the soul is not to engage the pain body (death of Christ in us) directly, and not to dig at it. Any attempt at confrontation only causes the pain energy to expand. Instead, we can heal by focusing on actions in and of the light. Things like: the arts, nature, our pets, creating beauty, journaling, music. One study even found that time in nature for PTSD suffering veterans (formerly, only given pharmaceuticals) created an almost 30% decline in their symptoms .

These and other similar pursuits draw our inner attention to peace, not to struggle. In this way, the life-force gently squeezes out the pain-body so it does not feel threatened or confronted. Our ego and our body each have many inherent protective defense mechanisms. Yoga comes in subtly with alternatives to our addictive behaviors. It replaces the good that became poison with the better. Our original needs were innocent, but our misdirected focus grew the weed instead of the good fruit.

Any version of the kingdom of heaven must include the entire path of Jesus. It must include the Good Friday suffering and death. It must include the Holy Saturday journey into hell and waiting. And yes, finally we get to experience resurrection. Suffering is our starting point. Suffering: during a global pandemic, witnessing continued violence against Black bodies, unemployment, medical diagnoses.

We first exhaust our attempts to cheer ourselves, then we suffer, and finally we emerge to a real and lasting hope.

I followed Him into every hell till there was no one left to battle...
or blame

All of the devilish parts of me were integrated and belonged at home in my body. One day I woke, and the Knower assured me that I would no longer be needing to fight, that now I was free to dance with the divine. I thought- hmmm, I feel married in my soul.

We have been lied to, and believed that our yes to follow Christ, to believe some creeds, would keep us safe from suffering, would protect us from dying, and would make us happy. The idea of the human Jesus now being in our own heart's heaven, in His resurrected state, comes as a shock to many people, including many Christians. Where else would we find Him?

I cannot tell you how many times I was saddened to hear my fellow Christians say, "Jesus is coming back for us." When I know He is back and I've had the pleasure of learning how to rearrange the furniture of my interior house so that, He might find in me a comfortable space.

We are missing two-thirds of His journey. The kingdom of God includes all of life and, when we can get fierce with reality and begin showing up for what sucks, then we will find our way to Sunday. We wander and wonder why life feels so dissatisfying, ordinary, and repetitive. Where is the newness? Where is this evergreen life blossoming up from the soul's winter?

We will learn much as we begin to observe, then embrace, our own weakness, inflexibility, discomfort, imbalance, even our cellulite and aging. Love is there. A personal aspect of God has not abandoned us in our crazy making.

We thought we were being protected from the world's pain with our armoring, looking the other way. But no, our bodies were open and interacting all along, a cell within the whole of humanity's body.

It is our lonely mind which could not tolerate the grief, the fear, the jealousy, or the lusts (simply our human demands— I must have this NOW).

These desires of the first three chakras are primal; what makes us truly a rare breed of human is our ability to ASPIRE. These 'first three' point to what is ours to do. (We will discover each chakra, in depth, soon.)

Four hundred years of 'I think therefore I am' has led our rugged individualism into lonely silos of thinking we could keep gaining without ever having to lose or let go.

We thought, in stuffing it down or numbing with alcohol, food, and Netflix, that we'd avoid pain and live in survival mode. But we know exactly from what we are hiding - a sexless marriage, a burgeoning credit card bill, gambling. But there is only one way,

and that is through the pain. We are stronger than we know. Let us remember, we are here to thrive. Are you with me? Together we will secrete our secrets and seek optimal health and wellness. This is God's promise: the balm of Gilead is Jesus, your medicine in the form of cleansing and anointing.

