

ON PAIN

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"The pearl is the oyster's autobiography," said Federico Fellini, a legendary creator of film magic.



He knew something about the vagaries of good news and bad news.



That's more than the oyster knows. For how does the oyster view the irritation that gives birth to a pearl? Probably with dismay. And what does it think of the pale luminous sphere that is slowly building circumference within its body? Probably as an inconvenience.



Because the oyster is centered on the pain, not the process.



What do we, who remain happily distant from the oyster's experience of irritation, say about the end result? We say it is consummate beauty.



So there you go. There is no way to know, from our limited human point of view, what purpose the most happy and least happy events serve in our walk towards full Sight.



It is only safe to say this: everything is a lesson. .



If we seem to be losing someone we treasure, for example, the lesson may be: stop trying to grasp moving water. Or the lesson may be that our

attention is so focused on tiny fragments of life that we have lost sight of the stunning splendor of the big picture. Or it may simply mean that we are caught in a net of limiting beliefs, and need to free our mindset from that prison.



Everything is a spiritual lesson



And we need lessons, because without them we are sentenced for life to the small mindview of our ego, which thinks it is clever and knows nothing of any consequence. Cleverness is not Awareness.



Cleverness is a set of tricks we learn to elude traffic tickets. Awareness is a silent, listening sensibility so immense, so immediate, so imbued with the perfume of God that it tends to deflect traffic tickets in the first place.



And as you know by now, we tune in and out of Awareness as though it were a floating TV channel. Most of us are not yet living in Awareness, we simply visit it on a random basis. "Wow," we say, "I had this astounding moment just now down at the beach: I was the ocean: the waves, the cold spray, the immense field of water, the moon washing everything with light, all of it. I was not other than that."



An awesome moment. An hour later we stub our toe and are completely caught up in pain and separation. Our world has shrunk itself down to a stab of agony attacking us from our foot.



Back and forth. Back and forth. Here, in this moment, we are staring at a broken job, or a broken cup, or a broken relationship and we see nothing

else. To put it in politically correct terms, we are temporally disadvantaged.



We are a wall-to-wall ouch.



Now, in the next moment we tune into Awareness and the broken job, broken cup, broken relationship take on a whole new light, a wildly different aspect. The appearance before us shifts from a fixed and ominous event into a moving thread in the tapestry of our life. We can repair it or not. Either way, it has lost its threat, because we see it does not impact our Essence.



Out of this broader, deeper, wider, unimprisoned view arises healing. In case you are interested in that.



All of this to say - the next time you stub your toe or hurt your neck or lose out at work or find a cherished friendship in shambles, go ahead and have a good cry. Let your ego tell you its sad tale of loss and separation: what else does it ever talk about? Then, as soon as you can, remind yourself you are enrolled in the University of Life. This is a test.



When you are able to peel your focus away from the trauma itself, go within.



And listen.