

Talk Excerpt – “The Living Teaching”

From a Talk given by Wayne Liquorman in Toronto on May 21, 2011

Wayne: Welcome all of you to the Living Teaching. I call it the Living Teaching because it is concerned with this living energy that is here, and that living energy is experienced through bodies. Each of us has a body a mind that enables us to think and feel, to experience. And this teaching is called in India the path of knowledge, *Jnana*. And often when we talk about knowledge what we talk about is intellect, brainpower. But this path of knowledge is really far, far bigger than that. The knowledge that we are talking about is taking in, not only from the intellect, but our intuitive sense as well. And we can know things as powerfully intuitively as we can logically and intellectually. The Teaching is operating at all of these levels. It is penetrating through both the intellect and the intuitive sense. And whether there is talking or the absence of talking, whether there is thinking or the absence of thinking, makes no difference as far as I am concerned. You get no brownie points for shutting off your mind. It is not the objective of this Teaching. In the Living Teaching the mind is accepted along with everything else.

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This Teaching is one of total inclusion. That to me was what was so attractive when I first encountered it with my guru Ramesh Balsekar, who I met almost 25 years ago in Los Angeles. And as he expressed this teaching, it was revolutionary for me because it was a teaching that was about being alive. And so it wasn't just some esoteric philosophical set of ideas and practices, but it was something that existed powerfully in life. And this man was the retired president of the Bank of India, a man very much of the world. He had a wife and children and grandchildren. He was a golfer, he was a sports enthusiast, he was a man with an interest in all aspects of life. Not just a man sitting in an *ashram* or some cave, some place isolated from the rest of the world. And the spirituality that he was involved with was one that was inclusive of life. And that was what struck me, that was so refreshing and attractive for me, because I wasn't temperamentally suited to go live in cave or celibate in an *ashram*. It just wasn't my idea of life. But I also wanted peace, and I wanted, basically, I wanted it all. This has been a characteristic of mine that led me for part of my life to alcoholism and drug addiction, wanting to get it all. And that same temperament that almost killed me, served me well in this teaching, because I was looking

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beyond the limited – limited ideas of what this enlightenment might be, or limited ideas of what a spiritual life might be – into a much, much broader definition of what that might be.

What Ramesh was proposing was *living totally*, and understanding what it was about life that was true. Everything he talked about were pointers to seeing this, not just intellectually comprehending, but living it, seeing it, having it be a living experience. That is what this Living Teaching is about, understanding that this experience of living is spiritual. This requires an expansion of your definition of spiritual, a radical expansion of your definition of spiritual, because we tend to have a idea of spiritual as good. The things that we think of – nice, good, kind, loving, gentle – those are the spiritual things. And the harsh, constricted, unpleasant things are thought to be material. It is quite ingrained in most of us about what the spiritual life looks like, and what the material life looks.

Hopefully we can get past those limitations to realize that what we all are, what everything is, is spiritual and that includes the bad stuff, the negative stuff. Which is a good thing, because as we look inside ourselves when we are alone, just ourselves and nobody else, and just looking at who we are, inevitably we are going to see things that we consider negative. We all have qualities about ourselves that we don't like, that inhibit us, that make us behave in ways that we would rather not behave, do things we would rather not do. We are unkind to the ones we love, we are impatient and short tempered. So when we realize that these qualities are placed there, they are part of what is, the game changes, life changes, our whole attitude and outlook on life changes. And more peace comes, peace with who we are and with what is happening, regardless of whether we like it or not. That is the peace of acceptance, the acceptance of what is.

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One of the ways I talk about this living energy, the quality that animates us, is the metaphor of the ocean and the wave. It is an important one for my teaching. And I know some of you are here for the first time, so I want to make sure that you are up to speed on what I am talking about. In this metaphor, all there is is ocean. When the ocean goes into movement it is a

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wave. Waves are the things of the world. All the objects that exist are waves. So the ocean is the substance and the waves are the manifestation of that. They are the things that are observable, the things which can be pointed at and named. Each wave is different, so you can say this wave is this wide, this tall, this color, this duration, this shape. You can talk about the qualities of these different waves. And whether the wave is a galaxy or a subatomic particle, everything in the universe can be understood as a wave or a movement of the ocean.

The important thing to remember about a wave is, when you stand on the shore and watch a wave move towards you, the water is not actually moving toward you. What is moving towards you is energy. It is the energy that makes a wave. You can watch a particular wave, and let's say you give it the name Sandra. Sandra is out there half mile, and Sandra is coming towards you. But that Sandra which was half a mile away, is not the same collection of water molecules that crashes on the shore in front of you. All that is moving is energy, and yet that energy has a form which is observable and nameable, but what it is is energy.

Each of us with a name and form are waves. And a wave is simply an energetic movement of ocean. If you can get that, then everything is clear. You see what you truly are. But that is a big if, a very very big if, because as human beings we have a peculiar thing happen to us at the age of two years old. Every single human being at the age of two, suddenly and without warning or cause begins to feel himself or herself to be, not a wave, but a separate independent entity, separate from the ocean, independent from the ocean, separate from the other waves, not as a wave but as a separate, independent droplet. Once you feel yourself to be separate, then all that you observe is assumed to be separate also. All these other things that you see, are also assumed not to be waves, but assumed to be separate and independent things, and that is where all the trouble starts. And by trouble I mean that is where our suffering begins, because we are no longer living the truth, we are living a lie. The fact that it is a lie shared by your parents, your teachers and your religious leaders, makes it no less a lie. Everybody agrees that we are separate independent entities capable of making things happen from our own independent power. The question is, is it true? And that is the question of this Teaching: is it true? Yes everyone agrees, yes we feel it strongly, but the question remains: is it true? And the Living Teaching is a collection of pointers that encourage you to look for yourself.

Be warned that it is not easy, and you will not be supported by the ones around you or by the society at large, all of whom are invested heavily in

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the lie. Chances are reasonably good that if you are here, you are here because a crack has formed in the solid wall of certainty about how things are. Through whatever life experiences you have had, a moment came when the questioning started. You began to look at what is really going on. I can't tell you how rare of an occurrence that is. I have been involved in this teaching now for almost 25 years. I traveled extensively with my guru Ramesh. I was his roadie for his tours in the States for a number of years, and arranged his retreats and things. One day, quite unexpectedly, he suggested that I start talking about his stuff myself, and so I have been doing that for the last twelve, thirteen years. I have gone all over the world and spoken with people everywhere. And what I can tell you is that it is exceedingly, exceedingly rare that there is any point of entry for the idea that, “Maybe just maybe, I am not the master of my destiny. Maybe just maybe, I am not a separate independent authoring entity.”. But it does happen. As I talk, or don't talk as the case may be, I would like to make an open invitation that if something arises in you, a question or a comment, a desire to share something related to what we are talking about, please don't hesitate, because this is very much a Living Teaching. I am not here to lecture, I assure you.

You mentioned that this is extremely rare. I wonder why it is so rare. Some people are intellectual, some are devotional. Do you think most people are devotional?

Wayne: When I talk about this crack - whether it is explored through Bhakti devotion, or knowledge through Jnana, or through service through karma, or through the body, Hatha yoga - what I am saying is, the crack itself is rare, extremely rare. And all of these paths, the path of devotion, the path of knowledge, the path of service, the path of the body, these paths are not separate or compartmentalized. They are part of a continuum and they run one into another, and everyone has all those components in them. It is just that some people have a stronger tendency towards one aspect over another, based on their personality. But everyone has all of them.

You were talking about living a lie. How can there be a lie, because that implies that there is something else, and in nonduality there supposedly is nothing else? That is where I get stuck.

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Wayne: This is where we often get stuck in the teaching, because we have the relative, the dualistic in which there are polaric opposites, truth and falsehood, sickness and health, good and bad. These are the polaric opposites that make up life, and yet what we are pointing at is Oneness beyond the dualistic. Oneness is the whole that is the container for the dualistic. So when we take it from a non-dual perspective you say, “How can there be relative? It is all one?” And yet there is certainly the appearance of the many. And this is the incredible, beautiful paradox that is implicit in being alive. Within dualistic experience there is the appearance of separation, an appearance of this and that, even though inherently it is all One. That is why I like the image of the ocean and the waves so much, because with this image you can have both, you can have billions of waves each one different, each unique, each one with different qualities and characteristics and yet what are they? All a wave is, is ocean, that is all it is, an energetic movement of ocean. And I said before, a wave isn’t even a pocket of water moving, what we call a wave is simply a movement of energy through the ocean. It doesn’t even have any identifiable substance except in the moment of its observation.

Well it seems that intellectually I can grasp that duality is part of Wholeness but intellectual understanding is not enough. I think that the understanding has to be more intuitive, intellectual understanding is not enough.

Wayne: But it is a start, a good start.

It would be good to talk about intuitive understanding. It seems that it is a gut feeling, and a gut feeling happens or doesn’t happen...

Wayne: The gut feeling is equivalent to the intellectual understanding. Equivalent in that it comes and goes. It is relative, it isn’t the Final Understanding either. It is a pointer or stepping stone, even this intuitive insight. Now the thing about these intuitive insights is that they seem expansive. They are not constricted or limited like the intellectual understanding. Part of the appeal for people with such minds is that the intellectual understanding is finite, it has boundaries, you can play with it and you can absorb it, you can internalize it and say, “I got it.” Intuitive understandings are much more expansive but they are also dualistic in nature. If they are experienced then they are dualistic in nature. And as such they can only be pointers, in the same way as the intellectual understanding can be a pointer to this broader all-inclusive thing we call Ultimate Understanding or Truth.

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So you can't define ultimate understanding, it is not intellectual, it is not intuitive.

Wayne: Yes, you can't. It isn't anything and yet it is everything. So you start sounding like either a sage or an idiot, which are two people often difficult to distinguish.

So when we don't follow our gut feeling, does that cause suffering when we were two years old, not following our gut feeling?

Wayne: I see a lot of two year olds whose gut feeling is to bash some other kid over the head and take his toy. Part of the socialization process is resist that gut feeling because there are social implications and this is part of human development.

Are emotions and gut feelings two different things?

Wayne: I think there is no question that our intuitive natures are not developed with the same emphasis, socially and societally, as our intellectual development is. And there may well be ways, various therapies and practices that you can use to bolster your intuitive sense in the same way there are various practices that sharpen your intellectual capacity. But what the teaching is concerned with is that at the age of two we develop a sense that is overriding both our intuitive sense and intellectual sense and this is what I call the false sense of authorship. And the false sense of authorship claims what arises. Whether it is an intuitive sense or an intellectual arising the FSA claims it and says, “I am responsible for that. I am doing that. I am controlling that.” It is a subtle sense and it is particularly difficult to identify because it has been with you since you were two years old and it is integrated into yourself, into your identify of who you are. So that claim of being a separate independent authoring identity, capable of intuitively knowing things, capable of intellectually knowing things is what arises at the age of two and what brings about human suffering. That is why the emphasis of the Teaching is on that aspect.

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As the false sense of authorship diminished did you notice your attachment to your family, relationships, did that change substantially as the false sense of authorship diminished?

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Wayne: The reactions to the FSA being called into question and its validity diminishing, those reactions were all over the map, because in my case there was some very strong resistance to that happening, flipping and flopping as Ramesh called it. And so part of that experience was a distancing, a dis-identification, a graying out, a kind of *blah-ing* of things. What happens is the FSA says, “If I am not in charge, then nothing really has any value or any meaning, it is all just happening, it all just is. If I am not in there doing it and controlling it then I am simply a puppet, and nothing has any particular value or meaning because all of the value or meaning is tied to me.”

That happened to me in initially reading your books, that was my first response.

Wayne: You are not in alone in that. Many, many people report that. It is a very, very common response and then as the FSA begins to weaken, it has another ploy. It says, “Bad things are going to happen to you because I am not here to protect you and make sure that your interests are paramount. You are just going to be flotsam in the river of life and whatever comes along is going to happen to you, and I am not going to be here to make things right.” Which is so bogus, because if the FSA was such a great protector then how come all this crap has happened to me for the past 50 years? If you are there, protecting me from the miseries of life, how come bad stuff keeps going on? So it really doesn't bear up under scrutiny. But the fact is, it is a loud and powerful claim!