

Swami Khecaranatha



Find the Perfection in Life

As we grow spiritually, we have to be willing to let go of the past. We may periodically find that the old ways we have defined ourselves, based on past experiences and traumas, no longer have a grip on us. **When that happens, it's very important to not immediately redefine the emerging openness we now feel.** In fact, the true gift in such a transition is coming to a place where we can surrender and *not* have to define it. **We no longer need to say, "I thought it was this, but it's this."** It's not really important what it was. The only thing that limited us was *holding on* to what it was, what we think it was, or what it might have been. **So don't buy into the idea that you now have to redefine anything.** Defining itself has obscured the truth and has limited the joy in life.

When we let go of the grip of the past, we have a clean slate, the opportunity to say, "I don't have to define any of it. The only thing I want to do is to live in that state of simple awareness, understanding that this huge lead shield has been lifted off of my heart." Stay in that place of openness and let it reveal itself. From there, go forward with a lot of simplicity and gratitude. **And when you find your mind wanting to define it, or to put the experience that's opening to you in context of previous experience, just don't. Let it go.**

Our experiences to date bind us, because we're perpetually trying fit the next experience into the framework and mindset of what happened before. It takes a tremendous simplicity to let go of all of our previous experiences and just open up and let the experience of this present moment be **what we're looking at, and what we're looking for.** Everybody goes through difficult situations. **They're all a challenge and they all define us if we stay focused on them. But if we let go of them,** what is revealed is not the particular experience but the misunderstanding we had in living through that experience. **That's a wonderful thing because what is happening for us is not grounded in any experience, but in an awareness of our deepest Self. This is what's trying to show itself.** Every experience we have is either revealing to us a deeper truth or obscuring it, and if we try to define it through our limited capacity to understand, we will misdiagnose it.

February 21 was the anniversary of my teacher's samadhi. Swami Rudrananda (Rudi) passed away in a plane crash 1973, and nothing in my life has been as traumatic for me. I only knew Rudi for about eighteen months, but that experience and the grace I received from him was extremely **precious to me. The thought of that being taken away was devastating, but I'm profoundly grateful** that it took me just minutes to shift and to understand what was really going on. I realized that his dying had nothing to do with me—this was his freedom—and, **just as importantly, he wasn't not there! Rudi's energy, grace, and presence never dissipated except for those few minutes when I lost contact with it.**

Rudi lived his life with a fierce intensity that was driven by and saturated in one thing: loving God. The wish to be free of his own limitations was the energy that propelled him through every kind of **difficulty. So much of the lesson for us in Rudi's life is that it is truly our wish to know the highest** within ourselves that not only propels us through every experience, but transforms them into the possibility for freedom, into the possibility for growth.

One of the simplest and most important things Rudi ever said was, “You can’t want it one day and not want it the next.” You can’t want to know God one day and not want to know God the next. This particularly means, “You can’t want to know God only when it’s easy.” All experience happens within God, even when it doesn’t feel that way to us. Everything happens within God’s freedom and therefore every experience we have is an expression of that perfection, because God dwells within us as ourselves.

It’s such a profoundly simple decision to move through an experience looking for the freedom in it instead of perpetually binding ourselves. The power of any experience, including those that are challenging, is that they are trying to free us from the trap of trying to understand from a place that fundamentally can’t understand. When we talk about surrendering in difficult moments, what we are really letting go of is our limited capacity to understand, which is the source of all bondage. Remember that Frank Zappa song? “What’s the ugliest part of your body? Some say your nose, some say your toes, I think it’s your mind, your mind.” The biggest, and perhaps the only real challenge in every spiritual person’s life is to stop believing their mind, because the mind has limited capacity for consciousness.

It’s so important to hold on to that place in us that’s celebrating our love for God and for this life that we’ve been given. Only there will we fully live in the experience that life is perfect. However, this does not mean that the condition in life will ever be what we think of as perfect. I’m not talking about the form or the different dynamics of it. I’m talking about the experience in ourselves of recognizing the incredible miracle of our own existence, and how effulgent it is in every moment if we don’t diminish it. And then, if it’s full and complete, how could it not be perfect?

Rudi was intense about telling us to get to work and to get over our “bad selves.” And he was intense about his own unwillingness to accept in us, our willingness to believe that there was something wrong with us, or that our own traumatic history was special, or that our life was harder than the next person’s. Rudi was uncompromising in this regard because for many, many years his own life was anything but easy. He once said to us, “If a person as defective as me can find this [freedom], the rest of you schmucks got it easy.” This is the power and the grace of the teacher: that they won’t accept in their students, what the student is willing to accept in themselves. That’s called unconditional love.

Let’s live in the possibility of having a different experience rather than living in regret about the past. If we are willing to simply walk through our lives with simplicity and grace, what’s revealed is treasure beyond imagination. Why would we look for anything else besides the profound joy and freedom that’s available to us every moment of our lives if we will simply let go of everything that gets in the way of that experience? I say, “Choose wisely.”

—Swami Khecaranatha