

The Journey

After traveling for many months, the traveler had not found anything similar to the light by the lake. He decided to return home, to be with family and friends. He stayed there for years. He shared the stories of his journey with one man, John.

One day a stranger came to town and showed two men, the traveler and John, a picture looking from the top of a mountain. There was radiance in this picture and it reminded the traveler of the light by the lake. The stranger said, "I have been to this place and I can tell you how to get there if you wish." It was a wondrous sight. It was one of the most beautiful things both men had ever seen. The two men decided at that moment that each would find their own way to that mountain view. They asked the stranger for directions. She left verbal instructions on how to get to the base of the mountain where a trail to the top could be found.

John thought about the vision each day, each month, and each year. His life remained unchanged but he never forgot the vision. He would talk about it to all his friends while having drinks. They would laugh together and speak of it as a fantastic tale. John would always say, "Someday I am going to go there." His friends would slap him on the back and agree. In the evening, at his home, he would tell the story to his family who would nod as they went about their own business. In the morning he would go to work thinking of the image and looking forward to seeing his friends when work was done. This was how the journey he pledged to take many years ago became his life.

The traveler changed his life so that he could make the journey to the mountain. It took him years to make the changes and he had to give up many things he thought dear to himself along the way. He made sacrifices of nearly all that a person desires. He trained himself on how to travel, and how to survive in the harsh wilderness. He studied all available maps of the area. Then one day, after many years of preparation, the traveler decided he was ready to start the journey to the mountain. He quit his job, sold everything, let go of the remaining vestiges of his former life, and left to find the mountain.

As the traveler walked he met a farmer. He told the farmer of his journey to find the mountain view. The farmer said, “You foolish man, there is no place. The flat fields of this earth and the bounty they provide are the only things that matter. Without this there would be no life.” The traveler watched as the farmer lowered his sweating head and returned to his struggle working the soil of the dusty plains. The traveler continued his journey.

Leaving the dusty plains the journey took the traveler into the desert. This was a very difficult time. He was lonely, thirsty, and hungry. The distance between each oasis was sometimes so long he wasn’t sure he was going to survive. Nearly on his last breath he crawled to what he thought was his last oasis and collapsed.

When he awoke he found himself in a small town, not by an oasis but at the edge of a large swamp. It seemed to stretch out to the ends of the earth in one direction and merge into the desert in the other. The townspeople were very busy building their homes in this swamp. He was surprised and in awe of the courage of

their effort. Supporting their homes against the ravages of the swamp and learning to survive in such a terrain required hard work. As he moved through the town they asked him where he was going and he told them. They said “Oh yes, we remember something about that. I think it was in a children’s story. Don’t bother us with your fantasy. Can’t you see how busy we are dealing with this mud?”

The traveler offered to help but the people replied, “What could you possibly know about facing the struggle of the mud. You have come from the desert where there is no mud. You come speaking of make believe stories like our children. It is best that you be on your way.” The traveler took out his map, chose which direction to go, and without another word, he left.

There was a thick fog and he could hardly see the map. His progress through the swamp was very difficult and slow. Many times he wanted to stop but there was no dry place to rest. He kept pushing forward, almost to the point of exhaustion. Gradually the land began to change and the swamp was replaced with hills and forest. He found a small hill upon which to sit and rest and brushed the mud off his clothes. There he sat and looked over the land.

Ahead he could see a large cliff that rose high into the clouds. Behind him was the swamp, and before him loomed the cliff, and that was all he could see. The cliff reared up in his path, like a horrible monster surrounded in fiery smoke. The traveler could see no way around this obstacle. He had traveled so long, sacrificed so much, and now this was the end? Was he forsaken to this small hill with a view of

swamp and cliff? Depression began to consume him. He fell to his knees, prayed and wept.

Then the clouds around him blew away and a ray of sunshine lit up a path just beyond the cliff's base. He had not seen this path before and was elated to discover it. He rushed to the path, climbed to the top of the cliff, and from there, in the distance, the traveler saw the mountain. The object of his journey was no longer a vision. It was now a reality. He was filled with a sense of powerful beauty, awe, and accomplishment, which drove him to tears. He felt a deep peace that seemed infinite, like being surrounded by a calm ocean without end. He heard wisdom that would provide fertile land for the farmer, a safer and shorter path across the desert, and a way to relieve the swamp dwellers of their suffering. Then there was a sadness and euphoric enlightenment, because from the top of the cliff he could see a land that was both full of suffering and potential relief.

He knew now that his search for the light by the lake was ended. It was now replaced by a new quest – the quest of teaching others the wisdom that could relieve suffering.

The wise see the truth and are made small by it
Fools see this and are made great
Don't follow great men

Spirituality

God knows no doctrine, no temple, and no church
God penetrates the heart of man
Fools live dogma

On fertile soil man's fruit reaches fullness
Leave the rocky barren land to God
Attend to your calling

The clouds have patterns and yet each is unique
One man's man is not for all men
Yet the Way exists

On every street corner stand the blind prophet
Mesmerized by desire and dogma
Speaking not teaching

Revitalize the soul through self-discovery
Step over the roots of emotion
Feel the connection

A complex swirling mass dark, blowing, feared
Lost yet knowing there is a Way
Seeking the sunshine

Put on the uniform, march to the calling crowds
Polish the buttons brightly and pray
That no one notices

A man shines and his words awaken others
Sleepwalkers live empty words
Awakened is being

Material progress, not bound to moral growth
Will wreak havoc untold
On every man's soul

The Shelter

On his journey the traveler had found enlightenment on the mountaintop. Now he stopped to rest, spending many months on the mountain top. Throughout his journey he had heard the sufferings of hundreds. His personal journey had been exhausting. Even the majestic mountain view was painful because he saw the beauty and salvation of a land not yet visited by those suffering souls he had met in his journey. It became overwhelming. He could not move from the mountain top. He had to stay longer. The traveler made a shelter with his own hands and inside he rested. He sat. What else could he do? How was he to help others with their suffering? The only answers he heard were the echoes of his own voice throughout the shelter's walls.

There was no answer, just emptiness. He felt so cold and alone. All those he had met along his journey had rejected him. How could he be given such a great vision for mankind and then have no one to hear it? His loneliness began to consume him. The forest, which once was filled with light, was now dark and frightening. The mountain that had offered such a majestic view now offered fear of falling, and worry about great storms. The traveler feared that at any moment something terrible was going to happen. He went over a dozen possibilities of dangerous events and made preparations for each. After these preparations he continued to ask, "What if this or that happened?" Then it started to rain.

The rain came down lightly at first and then in torrents. He had prepared for some rain, but he was not ready for such a deluge. Part of the roof gave way and he was drenched. Now cold, wet, lonely and discouraged about the failure of his shelter he sat in the cold curled in a ball with his head between his legs. Slowly he inched his way back into the farthest corner of his shelter. He no longer heard the cries of the people below. He forgot about the beauty of what he had seen, forgot about the mountain view, forgot about the light by the lake. For a while he found some comfort in the sound of the rain. But, soon that faded as he became lost within the struggle of his own discomfort. Here he stayed knowing nothing but the pain and darkness of his suffering.

Day after day, every moment was filled with his suffering and he did not move from the corner of his shelter. Each day was just like the previous with no hope that the next would be different. He could see no reason for leaving the darkness of his shelter. He did not even move to fix the roof. The tight, dark, cold corner and the smells of his own discomfort were his only company. Each day he was engulfed in the stench of his self-created prison. Time marched as constant as the drips of the rain on the broken shelter.

Then the rain stopped. For a moment his fear subsided and he listened. The rain turned to a mist and the smell of pine filled his nostrils. He could hear the random drops from tree limbs as it played out a chaotic melody on the roof of the shelter. The birds began to sing and a small beam of light touched the floor in front

of him. He struggled to accept the beauty of it and at the same time yelled at the light wanting it to go away. Then he heard a voice calling out, “Traveler”.

At first he thought this was a dream or the wind. No one else could possibly find him here in the corner of his darkness. Then he heard it again, “Traveler”. This time he was sure that he heard it. The calling of his name continued and it was getting louder. Facing the pain of moving from the darkness, he struggled from his corner, uncurling his body, standing and looking out into the mist. Just as he stood to discover who was calling his name, a ray of light burst through the fog and lit up his muddy robe. The traveler could feel the light and the warmth comforting him. He looked up to see a bright rainbow and was awestruck. He didn’t notice the young lad walking up to him.

The lad noticed the glow about the traveler and the lad broke the silence with, “You are as I pictured you. My name is Paul. I have traveled a long time and conquered many challenges and I am so pleased to finally be with you. I have come to learn. Will you teach me?”

The traveler fell to his knees at the feet of the lad and offered thanks. The lad was shocked and the traveler could see his confusion. The traveler rose and put his arm around the lad saying, “I have also had a difficult journey. It is my pleasure to share with you where I have been and for you to share your journey with me. In this sharing we will come to know more about life and have more to offer others.”

You don't teach a drowning man, you throw him a life vest
It is meaningless to tell him he's drowning
Get his feet on dry land

Oneness

Smell the rose, hear the songbird, and caress the breast
Look into the eyes of a friend
Become now

Every task is fresh, new and alive, like the
River it appears the same but different
Experience your foot

Oneness is in letting go to exist as a complete whole
Not the pieces, not trying to know, not proof
But One with the moment

Yesterday contains wisdom not prediction and
Tomorrow prediction not wisdom
Now contains both

Time and experience giving birth to a growing truth
Oneness must be misunderstood
Goals without goals

Interconnected we can hear the flow of events
Through time and space to through now
This is Oneness

Interconnected we can hear the flow of events
As it illuminates the moment and
We know the next step

Oneness is openness without trying
Naked, empty, afraid, but filled
In the connection

Healing

There is no glory in pain but only in healing
Suffering to discover one's healing
To become healing

Healing is always discovered in our relationships
With man, with earth, with self
And with our God

We can only discover healing within the healing relationship
This is not the same as fixing something
Entering the between

As one part of a community its health is ours
And we share in society's destiny
We cannot escape

The healer links man with the divine to illuminate
That man's lost path to well being
Then he can begin