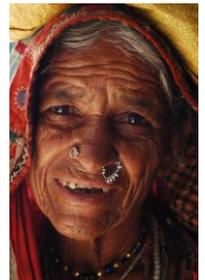


## Y O U T H



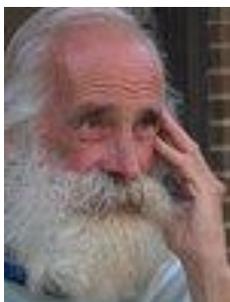
Youth is not a time of life. It is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips and supple knees, it is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigour of the emotions. It is a freshness of the deep springs of life.

Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of fifty more than a boy of twenty.



Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair, these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.

Whether seventy or seventeen there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement of the stars, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing child-like appetite for what next and the joy and game of life.



You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

While the central place of your heart receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage, grandeur and power from the earth, from men, and from the Infinite, so long are you young.

(Authorship uncertain – probably Schweitzer)

Contributed by Jenny Bull  
Photos from RGB Free Stock Photos

**The Head or the Heart:** where does reality lie? If we try to discover the truth by discarding our own attributes, like unwanted clothing, we discover that the head and the heart are central to our very existence, and perhaps not in the way that we originally thought. If we practise the meditative exercise of 'letting go', '*Net-neti*', 'not this, not this', and let go of every distraction that captures our attention, even the thoughts that traverse the mind. We find that we do not disappear and that the more we step away from existence, the more we discover insistence that is the inner ground on which we stand.

This inner ground is that on which all else stands, and which persists after all intellectual constructs have been dispensed with. It is experienced as a feeling of inner certainty and heart centred. This centre although apparently standing alone, is not unlike one of the numerous stars that light the heavens and a unique portal and expression of the all comprehending light of the cosmos.

To the Bhakti Yogi it is the heart centred love and devotion that gives life and significance to everything that they do. Its source is limitless and is accessed by feeling deep within when dealing with life's problems, rather than the cerebral response based on previous experience.

When you love you embrace more than yourself, and the love referred to by the Bhakti Yogi is not the love of self-interest, but that which has the interests of all at heart. It is the selfless love of the Christian '*agape*', not different to the love of God for man. It is the love for life that has given rise to the world as we know it, and it grows from a central truth, a single point of perception, not limited to any finite location in its comprehension.

The Bhakti approach to life is quite simple and does not trust entirely the ramifications of mental constructs, as most ideas are cautionary bases, and not charged with the love that courageously drives life forward. Action is based on heart centred decisions, not rashly or impulsively taken; but by first stilling the mind and then feeling for the correct response.

To trust feeling is to trust the field, that is the in-dwelling '*purusha*' or pure consciousness. Meditation in all its forms is the way forwards to gaining the inner clarity that refines perception so that we trust our instincts. The still mind removes the obstacles and allows the inner light or intelligence to manifest. This is not achieved overnight and takes a degree of dedication and constant practise. The essential reading that will help in understanding the process is '*Reflexive Self Consciousness*' by Eugene Halliday.

The heart centred wisdom that rises in the still mind, is to be affirmed and brought into the light of day, and just as the lower mind of the senses, conditions us for life on earth, so the mind of the heart or wisdom mind, prepares us for the life of the spirit. We have to make many decisions in order to make our way in the world, and many of these focus our interest at many levels on material survival and future re-births through our children's children.

There are many examples in our spiritual history of what are believed to be divine incarnations, and of children at a very young age exhibiting talents for beyond the norm. These evolved souls bring with them levels of integration and insight that they could only have been born with. The power and form that structures life is the reality that lies within, it is the love and truth which is eternal and guides all living processes on earth. The yogi, who is able to respond to the truth within his heart, builds an eternal body and does not suffer the second death but continues from life to life, fulfilling the law and the will of God. To trust heart centred decisions does not come overnight as it is easy to slip into old response patterns. We have to continually remind ourselves that yoga is union with an ever present Truth and Love that is tested within the forge of temporal existence, before we can again re-enter the unified world of spirit.

Gordon Smith (Founder Member)

*"I wish we all entered a state in which we could see  
the true self inside even the most wretched of human beings  
and, instead of condemning it, say:*

*'Rise, thou radiant one!  
Rise, thou eternally pure one!  
Rise, thou who wert never born and canst never die.  
Rise, thou almighty one.  
Manifest thy true nature!'"*

Vivekananda