

NOVEMBER 2011 NEWS

Again late ... but then rather late than never. It was my intention to write about my Yoga experience in India on the way back from India. However, I had a cold, was dreadfully tired and even although I don't sleep on planes, managed to dose on and off for many hours.

In the beginning of this year, I attended a weekend workshop with a Yogi named Guru Mukh who comes to teach in South Africa from Los Angeles. At this workshop, she mentioned that there would be a festival held in India to welcome in the Aquarian Age (11-11-11). She said, "If you want to be there, just say, I am going to India in November and it will happen."

Well, despite a rather nasty year filled with some of the biggest challenges I have ever had to endure, I went to India.

I want to say a huge thank you to my friend Roshnee who paved the way and helped make the trip a reality for me. I have been doing Yoga for 30 plus years now and ascribe most of my spiritual growth to the journey with Yoga. So for me it was not a matter of if, but rather how am I going to make this happen!

So, on the 3rd of November, with a non-healing tendon in my foot and a work load that should have kept me at home, I was on the plane to India.

One of my greatest concerns was that I was not going to cope with seeing animals that were hungry, neglected and sad. I had heard so many stories like this. So a large part of the flight over was spent in prayer asking God, the Angels, the Guides and anyone listening, to protect me from sights that I could do little about. Clearly they were all listening as I left feeling that the animals in New Delhi and Rishikesh are not badly off at all. (I only saw 2 sad horses and 1 sad donkey.)

I was traveling with fellow Yogis; none who I would call close friends but certainly people I share a deep common interest with. So since we had some time to share in New Delhi, three of us organised to do a short tour of Delhi. We arranged this beforehand and were met by a travel guide who could not speak a word of English but, nonetheless, whizzed us through New Delhi showing us beautiful buildings, statues and some over filled parks. None of us had a clue what we were seeing but happily took photos of who knows what. In retrospect, what this served to do is prepare me for the mad traffic and sights in Rishikesh. Thank you New Delhi!

Later that day, we arrived at an airport just outside of Rishikesh. Our transport had not arrived, apparently nothing unusual, but we piled into a car with some other ladies; luggage stacked on top of the car at least 1 – 2 meters above the car roof and off we went.

Well, I still don't know where Rishikesh starts and ends because we drove through densely populated areas, then some clear spaces, then more densely populated areas and so it went. Eventually we travelled along a very spindly road through a forested area and about 2 hours later, arrived at the biggest Ashram in Rishikesh.

Now, when I speak about densely populated, I mean just that. I suppose one would call it pure chaos in many ways. Cars, scooters (no helmets), bikes, cows, dogs, monkeys and hundreds of people all in the same place at any given moment. Urinals on the road side... no, not men peeing at the road side; real urinals! It soon became clear to me that clearing one's nose and spitting is absolutely accepted, as is the abluting in public. I, of course, immediately fell in love with the cows.

All shapes, sizes and demeanours ... they too ablate whenever they want ☺. What struck me most was that none of them feared humans. Man do we South Africans have a far way to go!

After a long ride through the forest area, where one finds elephants from time to time (none seen), we arrived at the Ashram in Rishikesh. From there we were directed to our accommodation which for me was called the Raj Palace. I soon learnt that the word "palace" certainly does not mean palatial as we understand in the West. But it was home for 7 nights.

Once I got over myself regarding the dirt, pollution and noise (day 3), I then got a real Indian cold. Man did I feel ill! High temperature, shivers and all the rest. My poor roommate, who I did not know from a bar of soap, was subjected to coughing and spluttering for the rest of her stay. At least it was not Delly belly!

Our festival organisers had organised a resident Ayurvedic doctor who cared for all the delegates with great compassion and care but just like our western medication takes 10 days to assist one when you have a cold, so does the Ayurvedic medication take 10 days to make a difference. It was, however, wonderful to sit in front of a doctor who actually listened to me.

There were two other challenges ... wet toilet floors, always wet, foot marks on toilet seats ... and food. Oh, how blissful to come home and have dry trousers around the bottoms. I soon realised that people use little toilet paper but rather use water to clean themselves after abluting.

The last issue was food. One is warned again and again against eating suspicious food and drinking water that is not clean. So besides making sure that I only used double sealed bought water, I also asked the kitchen at the hotel to boil all my water. Over the top, maybe, but at least I got no Delly belly.

The organisers had arranged that we were all (600 – 800 of us in total) fed Ayurvedic food. Day one was great except I realised that I was rather precarious about eating out of metal plates. (I must have been in prison in a previous life time.) Day 2, still fine but by day three, my western taste buds just went into revolt and said "no more". So then it was a matter of finding a "safe" restaurant in Rishikesh. I soon realised that going to eateries where other Westerners went and restaurants that were busy, were safe. I must say that I never looked into their kitchens as I may just have become nil per mouth for the rest of my stay!

The food at a little place called Tip Top was great as was the food at Roof Top. Otherwise, thank goodness for health and nut bars brought from South Africa.

Now I suppose I am painting a pretty bleak picture, which I don't mean to do, because the experience was amazing and I would go back tomorrow.

India is shopper's paradise. Beautiful cloth, esoteric and spiritual ornaments and tools that cost nothing. Polite people that smile even when irritated. Drivers that don't speed and have no road rage. People that are respectful. Streets that one can walk at night and still feel safe. People that chase after you if you leave something behind. People who ask how you are feeling and want to hear what you say. People with nothing who offer to give you their money because the ATM is not working. A hotel that is prepared to lend you money because the ATM is not working.

Fellow South Africans, were did we go wrong?

To get back to the animals ... as an animal communicator, I get to chat to animals wherever I can. What struck me is that animals REALLY cherish freedom. I saw cows eating polystyrene and plastic and still say that they are happy.

Guru Gi from the Ashram is apparently trying to raise awareness regarding the cows. He has created an area where a few cows graze and are cared for. Yet when I spoke to the street cows, they could not imagine being restricted to an enclosed area. Sure, more nutritious food would be appreciated but not at the price of freedom. Every day I witnessed an Indian person bowing to and touching a cow. When I asked the cows what this meant to them, they said, "Everyone does what they do." (No EGO in their lives.) I frequently saw a shop keeper feed the cows and occasionally the dogs.

Now don't get me wrong, there is a great need for Vets and a sterilising campaign in the area. I would love to have the finances to organise such a campaign.

Every day I bought vegetables, fruit and cake as one gets no dog food to feed the animals. How very different from feeding my own cats at home. I came across a guy who only possessed the clothes on his back and offered him some cake. He indicated towards his tummy and said, "I have a fat tummy (which he didn't); they are hungry. Rather feed them." Well, again I say, "How lost are we?!"

On the day that I left, I sat on the banks of the Ganges; just reflecting and allowing the water to speak with me. Soon a dog arrived, introduced himself and we had a wonderful chat. I became rather mesmerized looking at the water and chatting with the dog, when I felt a sensation against my head ... warm and breathy. When I looked up, there was a cow licking at my head. I then knew what a cows lick was all about! ... but also how privileged I am.

Well, that was me ... ready to stay in India forever.

Next month I will write about my Yoga experience and share the information regarding the time ahead called the **Aquarian Age**.

Love and light
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