

AUTHENTIC BEAUTY

heart&soul

MIND, BODY & SOUL

SHERRI SHEPHERD STRIPS DOWN TO HER NATURAL BEAUTY

FALLING IN LOVE (AGAIN) WITH **NIECY NASH**

CELEBRATING **MOM**

LOST AND FOUND WITH **T.D. JAKES** DAUGHTER, **SARAH JAKES**

MUHAMMAD **ALI**

EQUALITY IN **HEALTH CARE**

DANCE WORKOUT LET THE RHYTHM MOVE YOU

VEGAN IS THE NEW **BLACK**

6 STEPS TO TURN YOUR PAIN INTO POWER

CO-WASHING. HAVE YOU HEARD



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DISPLAY UNTIL END OF MAY

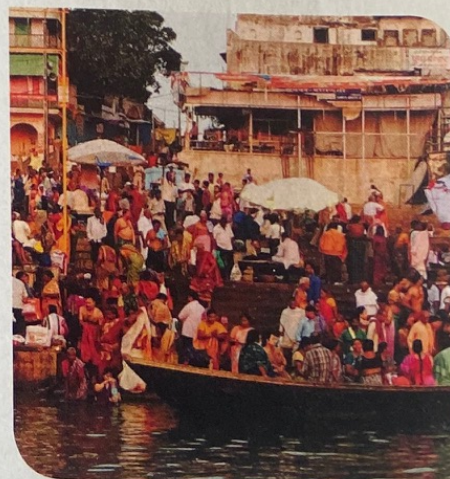
APRIL/MAY

No Place Like Ohm

THE BEAUTIFUL JUXTAPOSITION

By the time we got to Varanasi, it was late in the day and the sun was about to set. I had been traveling for days and was wiped, but was told to get on the boat so as to not miss the sunset ritual called Arti, where thousands of townspeople gather every evening (every evening!) for prayer on the banks of the river Ganges. It was day three of my journey to India and not a moment in my life before this one could have prepared me for this experience; almost impossible to even remember, let alone describe.

I scanned my panorama and took it all in: ancient stone buildings meeting river, piles upon piles of garbage in the murky water; cows, monkeys and mules walking through the crowds. Women dressed in bright colored saris washing in the river, their gold jewelry illuminating orange from the flames that burned on the bank. Men with





shaved heads or long dreadlocks in robes and in jeans, children filling their water bottles. The smoke from incense clouding the purple and pink sky. Marigolds everywhere- placed in tiny paper dishes floating past the boats. People plunging and praying to the river, known as great Mother “Gangaji”. Firecrackers smacking sound-waves. Thousands of devotees chanting over static loudspeakers. Babies crying. Dogs barking. We arrived in front of the open air crematorium. Seven or eight bonfires on the side of the riverbank. Ashes spilling into the water, stacks of wood; dozens of loved ones stoking the flames. My mind tried to wander from accepting that these were real people burning in these bonfires, but my heart wouldn’t let me escape. I felt here, that my relationship to living and dying would never be the same. As I smelled the herbs burn with the dead I thought, this should be terrifying. But it wasn’t. It was the most beautiful thing I’d ever seen.

PRANAM

Reverence to the Divine Inside
SIMPLE YOGA PRACTICE

Pose 01 Savasana Pranam

Laying on the back, arms outstretched, legs relaxed, whole body open to receive the gifts of your life.

Pose 2: Panchanga Pranam:

Touching the ground with knees, chest, forehead, hands under the shoulders, seat to the sky, bowing to the Divine Self.

Pose 3: Namaskar Pranam

Palms in prayer in front of the chest balancing our beauty and our beast within at the heart.

After two decades of practice and twelve plus years of teaching yoga, this trip to the Motherland turned me into yoga. I’m not entirely sure what I was seeking before going, but I do know what I found; side by side with over a billion others. I danced with chaos and peace, poverty and luxury, ear piercing noise and silence, sensory overload and deep inner calm. Shiva-Shakti. Yin and Yang. Sun and Moon. I bent down and lay my head on the earth. It was all that was left to do. In this foreign land, true beauty: raw and cracked open, dirty feet and tangled hair, purified from my own limitations and beliefs. All my yearning, all my wounding, burning in my own inner crematorium. Jarring, yes. Beautiful, yes.

In Haridwar, we went to a temple that offers dinner to hundreds of Sadhus every night. Sadhus are spiritual wanderers, considered “holy ones”. Men and women who live on the fringes of society and spend their days in devotion to the divine with the intention to acquire the mystical powers needed for healing our planet; their daily survival relying on the bits of food and shelter that are given to them by the public. I had the opportunity to sit with a much older sadhu named Vishnuji. I told Vishnuji that I teach yoga and asked him: “Is there is any message that I could share with my students in the United States? What would it be?” He smiled, his eyes brightening, and said, “Teach people to love themselves. To love the Mother.”, and then asked, “Why do the people of the material world hate so much?”. I answered that I believe it’s because we have been taught to value the way things look on the outside versus the way we feel on the inside and this creates a disparity that is unbearable to live and love with, so we turn to hate. “Please remind your students that we are all beautiful, Divine beings of Spirit” he said as he took my hand to his heart, recited a chant and walked away.

BEAUTY PLAYLIST

Om Asamato [feat. Deva Premal]
BEN LEINBACH
Beautiful Ones
MARY J. BLIGE
Shamans Drums
ATMAN
SunBear/Ohm Mani
TRIBAL GROOVE
Beautiful
THE LEMONHEADS
Thank U [itunes originals version]
ALANIS MORISSETTE
I Know
JUDE
Meditation Raga of North India
INDIA NATIONAL SITAR ENSEMBLE

Today I sip my experience like a warm cup of chai in cold New England hands, Vishnuji’s question burning my upper palette: “Why do the people of the material world hate so much?”. I remember the burning bodies in Varanasi, and how death is honored and seen. Here we wrap our lives around running from our fear of death, clinging to our importance as if it’ll keep us alive longer, trying to look and feel younger. What is beauty? Are we more beautiful with Botox, diets, money? Even our yoga practice is sold to us as a fountain of youth.

Is beauty in the plumpness of our lips, or the sweetness of the words that exit them when we speak with kindness? Is it found in the sinewy muscles of our legs, or how they kneel in reverence at the threshold of the shrine? Is it the luster in our hair, or the fragrance of burnt sage wafting from their follicles? Why would we want to smooth out the lines in our faces when they tell the story of our courageous hearts? The sufi poet Rumi said: Let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground- How can I remind you, dear friend, that you are a beautiful, Divine being of Spirit? Get down on your knees and I’ll tell you.

Sherry Sidoti

Is the Creator, Director and Lead teacher at FLY Yoga School on Martha’s Vineyard. Her teachings urge us that yoga reminds us of who we are: Already Whole, and Everyone the Guru.

For more info: visit www.flyyogamv.com