

The Divine Power of Self-Surrender

A Review of Ashley Turner's Urban Priestess Workshop, by Jaclyn Bauer

Revved to write my first review of a workshop at Moksha Yoga, I arrived at Moksha's Riverwest studio for Ashley Turner's Urban Priestess workshop on April 28, 2012. In my eagerness and excitement I neglected to read the event page carefully enough to realize that the workshop was going to include both a physical practice and a lecture. Imagine my surprise when I glanced into the studio to see the classic blue Moksha mats laid out for a class of asana. I bent my knees slightly as if to convince myself of the mobility of my jeans, only to realize they were a bit too big and that my pink lacy underwear would most definitely be exposed in my first downward facing dog.

Twenty-four minutes and ninety-seven dollars later (the whole of my paycheck from the job I had quit 2 hours before), I was geared up for an asana practice - physically anyway. Mentally I was furious at myself for having eaten too much hummus right before, having been too distracted to realize the workshop was going to involve asana, and for having spent \$97 on clothing when I was morally opposed to the idea of yoga clothes that cost more than \$6 and come from anywhere except Target. All of this ran through my mind as I slipped, or rather stumbled, into the workshop 6 minutes late.

Making my way to the furthest corner of the room, I sat down, closed my eyes, breathed a slow deep breath...and realized I forgot a pen.

Little did I know that this was the best state of mind in which I could have entered a workshop that spoke directly to the power of perception. Focused on the spiritual elevation of femininity and the secrecy bound up in the feminine presence, the ordained priestess, certified psychotherapist, and writer and member of LMU's Yoga Philosophy program, Ashley Turner led the "women only" workshop with an utterly divine presence.

Ironically, at the end of the workshop, the priestess and protector of her heavenly feminine order, kindly asked every woman present to bathe in the ecstasy of the connection we had fostered as a group and to contain all that we had learned within the physical space of the studio and the metaphysical space of our minds. Code for: don't go out and spread the word of the priestess.

And so, my task to balance a job with an unspoken moral agreement, fell on me as every woman's duty as a priestess falls on her. Ashley revealed a universal principle, though, that I don't think she would mind me sharing: the necessity of truth's unrevealed state. As Ashley said "the feminine is truth...and truth is messy." It's easy to turn away from truth and ignore its presence because of how ugly and disconcerting its message can sometimes be. But if we ignore truth, we ignore existence, we ignore ourselves as truly connected yet individual selves, and in this state of ignorance we lose all opportunity to grow from our hardships. It may be a messy

truth that life isn't perfect, but if we can embrace those moments and events with the feminine attribute of openness we may learn something monumental about ourselves.

As Ashley spoke, I realized my lack of focus, my anger at myself for things both in and out of my control were masks of discontent shielding my true concern: I was afraid of writing this review, of my manager telling me that this article stunk to the high heavens and to write a full review of the workshop revealing all of the secrets of the Urban Priestess tradition. And in the recognition of this fear, though the fear wasn't overcome by any means, the task bound up with that fear became more manageable.

I left the workshop empowered, decked out in new yoga clothes that have since become my favorite daily yogic wear, and shining with the internal beauty of femininity that Ashley made me so aware I embodied. The experience was far beyond explanation or comprehension apart from the intuitive connection that was fostered between all of the women present, and I would urge any woman to attend Ashley's Urban Priestess workshop if given the chance. Ashley's spirit is one of divinity, her internal being one of unsurpassable beauty, and her knowledge of such a vast depth that it was worth every setback to experience her presence.