

DEPRESSION

I would like to suggest the following reading for the ITC in July. It is from the article "**The Pledge of Kwan Yin**" by Professor Raghavan Iyer, from *Hermes November 1979*. Throughout my own life, when I have struggled with depression, this passage has always been a cool soothing balm that purifies and uplifts.

RHAGAVAN IYER

"The Kwan-Yin pledge is a Bodhisattvic vow taken on behalf of all living beings. It is closely connected with the *bodhichitta*, wisdom-seeking mind, the seed of enlightenment. The idea that an unenlightened human being can effectively generate a seed of enlightenment is the central assumption behind the compassionate teaching of Mahatmas and Bodhisattvas, of the Buddhas and Christs.

"A drop of water is suggestive of an ocean; a flashing spark or single flame is analogous to an ocean of light; the minuscule mirrors the large. Herein lies the hidden strength of the Kwan-Yin pledge. What may seem small from the standpoint of the personal self, when it is genuinely offered on behalf of the limitless universe of living beings and of all humanity past, present, and future can truly negate the finality of finitude, the ultimacy of what seems urgent, the immensity of what appears immediate. The human mind ceaselessly creates false valuations, giving ephemera an excessive sense of reality, to uphold itself in a world of flux.

"To negate this tendency in advance and to assign reality only to the whole requires a profound mental courage. It requires, while one is alive, a recognition of the connection between the moment of birth and the moment of death, of the intimate relationship between the pain of one human being and the sorrow of all humanity. But it also involves a recognition that greater beings than oneself have taken precisely such a vow, have affirmed this pledge again and again. Therefore, one can invite oneself, however frail, however feeble, into the family of those who are the self-chosen, unacknowledged but unvanquished friends of the human race."