

November 2012

In the last few emails we have been going over karma. We have talked about the Place of Refuge that is always there, and that we can always turn to It when our karma comes up with its pain, grief, dis-ease, fear etc. In this email I would like to spend a little time talking about this Place. This is a bit like trying to explain the unexplainable, as we really need to experience this ourselves through our meditation and training. But I remember when I was a real "greenhorn" from NYC, and heard this Place discussed by Rev Master Jiyu Kennett - something really clicked. It helped me in my faith - faith that this was a real, true refuge that would really help me with my karma and my life.

When Shakyamuni Buddha had His Great Enlightenment He said that there is something that is unborn, uncreated, unformed, full of unconditional love and wisdom, and that this is a true refuge for suffering. I have heard similar explanations of that which is greater than ourselves from many other religious folks who also had major religious experiences. It is said that we all have this inherent knowledge within ourselves. We just cover it up with "stuff", and it is through our meditation and training that we can come to a personal, definite knowing of this Unborn.

I recently heard a show on Public Radio by an anthropologist. They said that there is one thing consistent with all societies, and that is the belief in/knowledge of something greater than ourselves. There are some differences in the way different societies and different religions describe this "something greater". The way Rev Master Jiyu explained it really hit me right. I would like to repeat some of the things that Rev Master Jiyu said, as they have really helped me and others.

She said:

".....the Lord [Unborn, Undying] helps and teaches at all times just by being the Lord. He, She, It is not a being and is not not a being"

"It is enough for me to *know* the Lord of The House [Unborn, Undying], more I neither ask nor seek. The Lord of The House has no beginning and no end, no past and no future. I am not Him [or It] and He [It] is *all* of me."

Rev Master also says of the Love of the Unborn that it requires nothing and wants nothing. It just *is* and It gives constantly, requiring nothing (Unconditional Love). Pure Faith is the same thing - existing constantly and giving constantly, It *is* and that is all.

I believe I have experienced this in my human existence, through my relationship with another human being - my sister. When I was very daft and wild in the late '60s and '70s, my sister was always there to help. Many times I went to her house for refuge and

help. I felt that Unconditional Love - there was no lecturing, no demeaning, no belittling of me, just love, just "how can I help?". I feel that this is the way the Unborn works. It just sits there with Love no matter how daft we are, or how far off the rails we go. When we ask for help, the help is given. Many times in my training I have asked for help and many times it comes in a form that is difficult and not what I expected, but I have always known that it is right (although sometimes this recognition takes considerable time). In the beginning our asking for help might be quite desperate, as we may feel quite overwhelmed by our suffering and yearn so strongly to be free of it. In time as we train, the asking is often a quieter thing and just a natural part of our everyday existence.

I have tried to explain a little this Magnificent Refuge. I would like to conclude this explanation with the words Shakyamuni uttered right after His Enlightenment - "Were it not for this Unborn, there could be no end to birth, decay, dis-ease and death"

If I have confused anyone I do apologize. My hope is for folks to find this Place for themselves through meditation and training. To end here, I asked Geoff if he would say a few words about how his meditation and training have helped in this regard. Here's what he had to say:

"Thanks Rev Master Basil. In reflecting on this, I thought that one could perhaps characterize training as a process whereby one comes to know the Unborn in ever increasing depth. In this process three aspects stand out to me as important. They are, faith; a consistent, solid practice; and the Teaching given by a true teacher.

Like most people I believe, I began training with some faith (without that, why would one ever begin?), and a good dose of confusion. The faith we begin with is, it seems to me, a knowing in our hearts (not our heads) of the Unborn. So, we begin with some knowledge of the Unborn. Over the years of training I have found that this faith, this sense of knowing with one's being, has just quietly, imperceptibly grown. What has helped it grow?

The other two aspects mentioned above seem crucial. First, a consistent practice in which we continually actualize this faith - that is, we continually take refuge in that which we sense is there, we let go into It, trusting that It is there. When we do this we discover again and again, that in fact It is there. So, as we practice in faith, the faith, the knowing, grows and starts to influence our whole existence, our whole way of being. Then there's the Teaching given by our teacher(s). Since we begin not only with faith, but also with much confusion (our karma manifesting), the Teaching given by a true teacher is indispensable. So many times, I have been, and continue to be, so grateful to be pointed back in the direction of stillness (the Unborn), when some confused state of mind or another has surfaced and taken a bit of a hold.

So, my experience is that by doing the meditation and training over the years, taking refuge in the Teaching and a teacher, we find that our "blood and bones" knowing of the Unborn gradually grows, and there is a lovely quiet joy to this. As for the confusion, I have observed that some of the wilder, very unsettled states of mind have simply dissolved over time. A number of areas of confusion/dis-ease still remain, but they are clearer (in the sense that it is more obvious what they are), and more "contained" - like old friends, they become familiar themes in one's life, and one can gently get on with one's training with them."

With heartfelt good wishes
Rev Basil & Geoff