

May 2020

Greetings!

First, I would like to send my love to all during these very difficult times. It has been really nice to see how many people have opened themselves up to the love and pure flow of the Eternal with a beautiful sense of compassion. My eyes tear up when I see so many people putting themselves in risky and dangerous situations to help others. I am overwhelmed with gratitude. As for myself, I am still taking "refuge from the storm." This comes up as the best thing for me to do now. I am still in "touch" with many people and would be glad to hear from any of you.

I think that speaking about my daily routine can be helpful to many of you who may be experiencing cabin fever. The first thing I do after brushing my teeth is to go right into my meditation for half an hour, no matter how I feel, or what I have to do that day. This is something I advise people to do on a daily basis. It really sets me up to keep my training going in the day ahead. A typical day would include cooking and eating, reading, listening to music, and watching television, much like the rest of you. As a break from routine, I have been doing some gardening on the roof, taking occasional walks, and going shopping when necessary. I feel that the most important part of my daily life is being mindful of when I leave my place of stillness, which can happen when I find myself being judgmental of myself or others. An example of this would be when I pay attention to current events and find myself in a place of anger. When I recognize this, I take a deep breath and let that anger be converted back into stillness and acceptance. Another example would be when I wake up in an agitated state from a difficult night's sleep. Doing my meditation first thing in the morning really helps me to get back on track. Another stumbling block for me is that during the day I can be overwhelmed with a general sense of despair. I imagine many of you experience this along with a sense of hopelessness. Mindfulness really helps me to get out of this loop and takes me back to looking up, being still, and feeling at one with the love of the Eternal.

Finally, I want to speak to an issue that training has helped me deal with - that is, feelings of fear, worry and panic. These days, it is understandable to be going through this. When they permeate through us and take over, it can lead to a great deal of suffering. We have to be very diligent in getting back to our place of meditation with its stillness and peace. I find for myself, that this is not easy. It is important for us to distinguish between a state of fear, worry and panic, and genuine concern. We are all concerned at this time about our health and any economic difficulties we may be facing. It is when these things become overwhelming that it turns into fear, worry and panic. At this point we just let the love of the Eternal wash over our fear and panic and we can get back to the things that need to be done in these turbulent times. I also bring this up because the training and meditation really helped me during a very difficult time in my life.

Many years ago, I was diagnosed with a tumor in my colon. I was overwhelmed with fear. What came up at the time was that I should do extra meditation, just take one step

at a time, and deal with what was in front of me. This really helped me. When the fear arose, I was able to recognize it, let it dissipate, and go back to what I was doing. However, the night before the surgery I was hit very hard with a sense of fear and panic, which went on for a very long time. I said to myself "what the heck have I been doing all these years. I have to meditate now." It was a very difficult time, but after about an hour or so, the fear started to dissipate. The next morning when I went into surgery, I was peaceful, very accepting, and not fearful. The surgery worked out fine.

You can see that I am a big advocate of meditation and training, taking refuge in the Eternal, because it has helped me so much in my life. I guess this is why I am known as the cheerleader monk in the groups I lead. As I always say, if you do this kind of training and meditation, I guarantee that it will help you. If you are doing it now, keep on going through these difficult times. Don't let anything stop you.

Take care.

With all my heart,
Rev Basil