

July 2020

Greetings!

I once again hope and pray that all are doing well during these times. The detention center, assisted living/nursing home, church, and library are still closed to visitors, so my groups are not quite ready to start up yet. We have started an online virtual meditation group on Saturday mornings, which seems to be going well. If anyone would like to join, please let me know, and we will send you instructions that will enable you to participate. I have been keeping busy with the roof garden, which is doing quite well. We had a very nice strawberry season. The Walla Walla onions and tomato plants, along with the greens, are thriving.

We have previously talked about how greed, hate/anger, and delusion are major obstacles to the immaculate flow of the Eternal, pulling us out of our still, peaceful place of meditation, and causing great suffering. Being mindful of these states allows us to let them go. I want to continue to discuss other forms of delusion, which are often the most difficult to be aware of, and can thus lead to a great deal of pain. In the previous email, we discussed FAULT FINDING. In this email I would like to discuss giving in to a false sense of superiority or inferiority. This is truly a delusion, as we know that the Eternal flows equally through everything and all beings. Harboring a sense of superiority or inferiority blocks the flow and hinders our practice. I have been working on feelings of inferiority for a good portion of my life. Often I felt that I wasn't smart enough, or creative enough, or didn't possess a physique that was good enough. Once I started my training, I was able to see that others who possessed the attributes that I coveted were having the same kind of spiritual difficulties as I was. In my training I worked hard on this and was able to see that it was all delusion. On the other side of the coin, there are those who have a false sense of superiority, are full of pride, and go around looking down on others. On one level these states are opposites, but they are manifestations of the same delusion, causing us spiritual dis-ease and suffering.

This delusion, as I mentioned earlier, can cause a great deal of harm when we act upon it on our own or in conjunction with others. When we look at the world in this manner, it can morph into sexism, racism, homophobia, and other delusions. These deluded attitudes tend to be full of hate and anger, and they can lead to things like slavery, ethnic cleansing, and concentration camps. So, we have to be extremely mindful in our training when we become aware of a sense of superiority or inferiority. Our training will help us catch these habits of mind before they harden and manifest in behaviors that cause such great suffering.

If we are prone to feelings of inferiority then we will tend to see ourselves and behave as a victim, and if we are prone to feelings of superiority we will tend to behave as a perpetrator. Whichever side of the equation we tend to be on – victim or perpetrator - either way, the remedy is to open our hearts and not fall prey to judgement or blame, by constantly letting go of any anger or hate towards others. It is very easy to get caught up in this hate/anger, stemming from feelings of superiority and inferiority, and it takes diligent ongoing meditation and training to catch ourselves. This allows the pure,

immaculate love of the Eternal to flow and convert this delusion. When we do this, I can attest that it helps greatly.

Daily meditation and daily training in mindfulness, while keeping the precepts in your awareness, is the key that opens the "gateless" gate into peace and living a life of pure love.

With all my heart,
Rev Basil