

THE USES OF PAIN

Following the meditation Susan will share a few thoughts with us related to fear growing out of her work as a therapist.

Fear is endemic and finds its seeds in the very fabric of the human experience on this planet, lying deep within the collective unconscious. Much fear stems from pain, which underlies the whole experience of being human. It's said that pain as we experience it is unique to humanity on our planet and also unique to this time -- this time meaning this second of three solar systems. In other kingdoms in nature and in other cycles of time, this experience of pain did not and will no longer condition human experience. But in this second solar system wherein love is working out, pain is a necessary factor. Pain gives us the experience to learn how to alleviate it-- both in ourselves and in others, thus providing the opportunity to serve, to develop compassion. For service is the path of evoking the soul.

The challenge of dealing with planetary pain has evoked the new group of world servers. Their task is to provide the pathway through which the new kingdom in nature, the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of the soul can come forth. So if we view the world situation from this perspective we can understand that the present pain in all aspects of our planetary life is providing the necessary conditions whereby humanity is being presented with a tremendous opportunity to serve. And to serve brings joy, dispelling pain and fear.

Rather than avoiding pain through suppression and distractions, the Tibetan advises us to try to understand its uses, seeing its virtues as there are many. Pain helps us to grow, to change. It leads us out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberation, out of agony into peace.

Peace, light and liberation-- these are the ultimate goal of the human experience of seeking the way. Sometimes when we speak of the path we do so by defining it as a way of fire. It is a fire that we willingly choose to enter into. Fire is painful and so if you call for the fire to enter into your life, it's said you had better be ready for it. Pain itself is akin to fire, it is a fire which burns away the dross of the earthly existence, in order to find that purity which is hidden within.

As human beings we've all traveled many ways, only to find them wanting. The way of fire begins with a deep appeal to something other, to something we sense beyond the pale of earthly existence, beyond the horizon or the boundary of the known reality. This search will eventually lead us to cry out, "Naught in me seeks the way of peace, naught in me yearns for earth. Let the fire rage."

During this period of lockdown, when social contacts are few and many are suffering mentally, emotionally and physically around the world we can only imagine the psychic condition within the atmosphere of the plan which this situation is engendering. As we hold ourselves together we can find within it opportunities to help others.

Many people have attributed periods of imprisonment or challenge to the gaining of tremendous strength of character and the birthing of ideas which proved the ground for future developments--people such as Sri Aurobindo, Jawaharla Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr, and, of course, Nelson Mandela.

One of the most poignant examples of this challenge of confinement and its transformative impacts on one's life came from the experience of psychologist Viktor Frankl. Frankl spent three years in a Nazi concentration camp and used his time to cultivate self-reliance and a life of service to others in the camp to whom he reached outto with love and compassion. He wrote:

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”

“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”

He spent the rest of his life aiding others through his books and psychoanalytical tools of liberating others by aiding them to gain this meaning in their lives. Kathy Newburm