

JUSTICE?

As we practice, we become increasingly sensitive to ourselves and the transitory experience of our lives (our thoughts, emotions, sensations) and it becomes obvious to us that the underlying stratum of our lives is anger, and underlying this anger is fear. All of us become angry -- I am only incredulous of the person who insists, "I am never angry." Doubtful indeed.

Since it is our anger and its subsets (depression, resentment, jealousy, backbiting, gossip, on and on) which dominate our lives, it is necessary to investigate the whole problem of anger in our lives with care. For if there can be a life free of anger, right there is the promised land of milk and honey, nirvana, an existence in which our own worth and that of others is a blessedly confirmed reality.

We could investigate this subject in endless ways. For the purpose of this short note, however, let us just speak of the difference between the anger of psychological maturity and the anger of spiritual maturity (an absence). For the psychologically mature person, the ills, injustices of life are handled by a counter-aggression -- in other words, there is an effort to eliminate the injustice and create justice. Often this is a dictatorial action, full of anger and self-righteousness.

In spiritual maturity, the opposite of injustice is not justice, but compassion. Not me against you, not me straightening out the present ill, fighting to gain a just result for myself and others, but a compassion, a life which goes against nothing and fulfills everything.

All anger is based upon my judgments, whether of myself or others. The fantasy that anger must be expressed for us to be healthy is just that: a fantasy. We need to let those judgmental angry thoughts pass before our witnessing, impersonal self. We gain nothing by expressing them. It is a fallacy to feel that anger unexpressed hurts us and that we must express it (and hurt others).

The best answer to injustice is not justice but compassion, love. You say, but what am I to do in this difficult situation? I must do something...Yes, but what? Always our practice must be the basis for our actions. An appropriate and compassionate response never comes from a fight for justice but from that radical dimension of practice which 'passeth all understanding'. Easy? Not at all - perhaps in some situations agonized weeks or months of sitting may be necessary. But definitely the resolution will come. No person can dictate this resolution to us, but our True Self can - if we open wide the gates of practice. In a way this is also an answer to the often-asked questions "What is sitting all about?" "What is sesshin all about?"

So let us not adopt some facile, narrow psychologically-oriented view of our lives. The radical dimension I speak of demands of us everything we are and have. Joy, not happiness, is its fruit.

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