

teenie yogini

Trading the Darkness for the Light

A Yogini Reacts to the 2008 Election Campaign

We have celebrated the Autumn Equinox and Persephone has begun her descent into Hades. As the days get shorter and the nights longer, it might feel to some of us as if the darkness descending in nature is merely symbolic of a different kind of darkness. Specifically I mean the energy of anger, aggression, mistrust and fear that seems to be pervading the upcoming election.

Personally I've tried to limit my intake of election coverage because I could feel myself descending into the darkness perpetuated by bitter, biased and downright mean media coverage & electioneering by the campaigns. I could feel my heart closing and my attitude toward "the other side" getting more and more negative. I wrote in a previous newsletter about judgment and how it closes the heart. Why do we negatively judge those who think differently from us? Once we choose our candidate, what is it that makes us then question the intelligence of everyone who has chosen otherwise; or reject the other candidate(s) as corrupt, or incompetent, or ... (you know what words you've used!)? I speak for myself, but I've heard enough to know I'm not alone.

Yoga teaches the principle of ahimsa (non-harming). This non-harming is practiced both in action, speech and thought. To yogis, thoughts have power. You harm others by thinking hurtful thoughts about them. But more importantly, you also harm yourself – because of your connection with all of life. And so, when I reject those who disagree with me as biased and uncaring, and get angry to the point of resentment, I am also directing that anger at myself. I feel my own heart closing, the darkness descending.

Too esoteric? Let me try again: A Course In Miracles talks about our outer world as a projection of our inner world. As such, if I am especially irritated at someone for being pretentious, it probably means that there is some pretension within myself that I have yet to recognize and overcome. Opens a whole can of worms, doesn't it? This is a good



teenie yogini

way to ferret out the latent impressions (samskaras) that distort our vision of reality and of ourselves.

Another relevant yogic principle is svadhyaya – self-study. By understanding our own motivations and samskaras we are able to move beyond them to see ourselves clearly and to recognize our own innate divinity. So, when I found myself getting caught up in judgment and angry self-righteousness, I had to back up and ask – what is this? What is it within me that is causing this level of anger, bordering on hatred? Where is all the love I'm supposed to be shining into the world?

The first part of my solution was to decide to back off from the judgment and recognize the humanity – and the divinity - of those on the “other” side. I say the “other” side because deep down I think we all want the same thing. We just are at different points on the journey and so have different ideas of how to get there. Don't imagine I don't have to stop myself every day and do this – this road toward enlightenment doesn't really get easier because you can do a handstand!

I've also decided to visualize the success of my candidate and also to visualize the entire population being surrounded by and motivated by the light of love, compassion and awareness. If we could all see the truth and beauty in each other; if we could see ourselves in each other, how could we not have a nation of peace and prosperity for all?

Finally, I give gratitude for the ability to live in a country where I am free to evolve, free to speak my truth, and free to display evidence of my political preference without being arrested or shot. I am grateful to be surrounded by people who care enough to send me emails saying "don't get caught up in the anger and fear."

We are living in a time of awakening consciousness. We can't continue to operate from a place of fear and separation. As Rev. Erica said at Unity on Sunday, a government cannot give us peace. Even the greatest president cannot give us peace. Ghandi said to “be the peace you want to see in the world.” We can fight for power and domination, but we cannot “fight” for peace because fighting is antithetical to the principle of peace. The only way we can truly have peace is when we are each peaceful in our hearts. The only way we will have prosperity is when we each recognize that there is enough for everyone and open our hearts both to give and to receive.

Please don't get me wrong, I'm not anti-election, and I'm definitely not saying anyone shouldn't participate. So while working on your peaceful hearts and visualizing a loving and compassionate country, please, please, get involved! As a nation we only approximate a democracy if the majority of the people participate. When 1/8 of the

teenie yogini

population actually votes, it is hard to pretend that our government is “of the people, for the people.” So if you’re not registered to vote, time is running out! October 7 is the deadline to register. You can even do it online (rockthevote.com).
