



Wisdom Path

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DON'T CONFUSE LIBERALISM WITH SPIRITUALITY: AN OPINION By Judi Thomases

In the aftermath of our rancorous election, it might be helpful to set down some truly bipartisan thoughts.

During the campaign, several New Age friends sent me missives entailing their political fears of a Republican win, going so far as to threaten to leave the country in such a case! Nor was this type of viewpoint new - I had already heard, in years past, a lecture by none other than Ram Dass (a paragon of New Age "wisdom") castigating the GOP, and had been given taped courses sold commercially of other such luminaries spewing the same thoughts.

Since these are people who view themselves as a particularly enlightened branch of Liberals, it's fair to ask the question: Can anyone imagine the Dalai Lama or Mother Theresa fulminating against a political party in this way?! Of course not.

So let's explore the subject of political allegiance from a deeper perspective, a perspective that can be called spiritual.

The truth is that, as Quantum Physics has revealed, people create, moment by moment, their reality from their thoughts and beliefs. These differ greatly because of their differing life experiences, and in turn bring more such experiences that keep reflecting these beliefs. People strive for good as they perceive it (including criminals, who see their actions as good for themselves at that moment). Since everyone creates his or her own world in this fashion, we are all responsible for our creation. There are no victims...except victims of one's own (perhaps misguided) reality-structures. In a very real way, we continually perpetuate the life we are living, and if we want to change it, we must begin by changing our thoughts, beliefs and values.

This is a simple formula: Change your thoughts = change your world.

Against this backdrop we can see the adherence to a political belief system as the outgrowth of a set of experiences that have shaped one's notion of reality, and that strives to support one's set of values regarding what is "good" for the self or for others. (The same can be said for religious adherence.) So far, no harm done.

But damage can occur when one begins to see one's own belief system (reality structure) as the only world there is, and as the only "good" reality that should exist. This false notion immediately invalidates everyone else's worldview. And it denies that others have arrived at their viewpoints via their own life experiences... their own individual journeys, as it were.

In politics, those who hold differing viewpoints do so because their life experience plus worldview support one or another reality construct. Relative values of "good" or "bad" are fluid - even what is considered moral or ethical at any time. In truth, people come to their viewpoint by measuring their beliefs and experiences against what seems



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good to them at a particular time in their lives. "Good" people can believe in either set of values at any time. Therefore, "good" people can belong to either political party, completely certain at the moment that theirs is the "only" reflection of what is right.

To understand this truly means that one can never denigrate another's party or another's beliefs because everything is simply relative. Nothing is immutable. There is no touchstone other than certain higher truths that really can't be denied. What can these possibly be?

Foremost would be the understanding that we are all one. All people are the same under the skin. In fact, according to physicist David Bohm, we're all simply one energy system. Anything that divides us from one another represents falsehood. So any political divisiveness reflects incomplete understanding. Any politician that trumpets his or her belief (value) system over another's is perpetuating this division instead of solving the underlying problem - whatever it might be - that needs to be addressed. We can only reach true solutions by addressing our human problems as a united people, not as a fractured and fragmented house.

Next, as soon as one realizes that one is creating one's world moment by moment out of the stuff of our thoughts, one faces the awful realization that one can't blame anyone else for one's experience of that world. There is no such thing as being a victim, since all is chosen. Reaching such an insight is the very benchmark of soul wisdom. The answer then becomes how to start choosing another reality, another set of beliefs. That someone outside yourself can "save" you is a falsehood. As soon as personal responsibility is accepted, true change can begin. This can be a very scary concept. Many political demagogues are very threatened by this idea, for their livelihood depends upon the perpetuation of the exact opposite notion - a notion, in fact, in which many of Liberalism's tenets are rooted.

And finally, let's consider what some of the characteristics of a truly elevated leader might be. There would be little of egotism; instead, humility and self-effacement would shine forth. An aura of authenticity would surround that person, and it would be easy to describe him or her as genuine, sincere, and without artifice. Serenity of manner would be continually reflected, a true inner peace. There might be a childlike playfulness along with remarkable wisdom. People would marvel at the leader's detachment from intense (negative) desires. And his or her ability to trust in the universal flow and to see him or herself as co-creating under the guidance of the Divine would be the very basis of this leadership. Such a leader would honor the concept of personal responsibility and freedom of human choice, but bear the deepest compassion for the suffering of the consequences of some of these choices.

Does this description sound like any politician we now have?

I write this essay not in support of any political system, nor to castigate any other, but to hold up to view an altogether new way of approaching politics—a view that would spiritualize it. Is that even possible? I don't know. But in order to heal the deep rent in the fabric of our society we will need a very different approach. This would go beyond mere bipartisanship. Nothing short of an evolution in consciousness is demanded.

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