

## Shining Forth

By Edie Weinstein-Moser

Within each of us, glows the spark of the One who created us. It was implanted when we took our birth. It's what unites us in both a common humanity and Divinity and can stand up to hatred, fear and violence. When we sit in silence within the stillness of our minds and fullness of our hearts, we can feel its inexorable pull and the call to love without limits. What would it be like to truly love with God's heart (whatever you perceive God to be)? Who could you possibly judge or condemn? What if you could turn that same compassionate eye to the man or woman in the mirror? On the altar in my bedroom sits a statue of Kwan Yin, the Chinese Goddess of Compassion, given to me by a friend. She is a constant reminder of the need to face myself with gentleness.

We are taught that we should "love thy neighbor as thyself." Nowhere in there are we told to love them more than or instead of ourselves and yet, so often that is exactly what we do. What that leaves us with is the sense that we have to prove ourselves worthy of love, which is the farthest thing from truth. I have discovered that you can't give what you don't have. When we recognize that we are love incarnate, then it is so much easier to offer to those whose paths we cross, whether it be family, friend or stranger, the totality of who we are. In the Rastafarian culture there is the concept of "I and I", rather than "you and me", indicating that there is only one of us here, fully worthy of loving and being loved. I have also heard of a greeting either in African or Native American tradition that references each person as "my other self". What we do to others (whether that be two-legged, four-legged, winged, finned, flora or fauna), we ultimately do to ourselves. By virtue of being born onto this planet, we can't escape the intricately beautiful web of life into which we weave our shared dreams and visions. In Hindu tradition, the greeting "Namaste", with hands in front of heart in prayer pose, translates to "The Highest or Divine in me honors/recognizes the Highest/Divine in you." A friend of mine honors his Jewish roots and his yogic practice by combining Hebrew with Sanskrit and greets others with the blended word "Shalomaste".

Each of us is so powerful, when armed with love. We can make such a difference in the lives of those who surround us, even if we have never met. One life impacts on another. One kind word, one caring deed may plant a seed that may take years to root down, but blossom it will.

One of my dearest role models for from-the-heart compassionate living, is His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Since the late 1950's this political/spiritual leader in exile has taken a stand for mutual honoring and respect. I had the great joy of hearing him speak at my alma mater, Rutgers University in September of 2005. What he shared, mirrors my deepest understanding of the meaning of love in all fullness.

He expressed that in this period of time, the concept of 'us and they' can longer afford to exist. "It's just 'we'. Destruction of your enemy is now an outdated concept." He feels that as human beings, we need to practice "internal disarmament". He continued: "Attachment is always biased; the closeness feeling you have is only toward your friend. Compassion as a sense of concern is unbiased. It depends on the recognition that others are just like myself. Today's attachment may become tomorrow's hatred."

We don't have to be an articulate speaker or revered leader to make a difference. We simply need to embody the Divinity we are. I invite each of us to live fully from the heart, shining forth that "God spark" that we were before we took our birth and will always be beyond time. In this way, together we can be a greater force for good in the world.

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