

A Conversation: Can Meditation Help the World?

She was an environmental activist.

Her passion for the earth radiated from every pore.

To her, sitting in silence was worse than an ordinary waste of time. It was white, middle class indulgence. “How can this sitting in meditation help the world?” she asked.

“I don’t know” were the first words to come from my mouth.

After some time I asked, “do you think we are connected to the animals, the plants and the earth”?

“Of course”, she answered, “we are all part of one body”.

“Do you think it makes a difference if you can actually sense the earth under your feet supporting you, feel the vitality of the air moving through your lungs and nostrils and gratefully taste the indescribable freshness of cool water when thirsty?”

“Of course, but what does that have to do with meditation?” she wondered.

“For me meditation is being alive to all that is. This includes profound gratitude for the gifts that sustain us and the deep inter-connectedness to our shared life”.

“But what about thoughts and feelings, aren’t they different than the physical stuff you are speaking of?”

I reflected for a few moments. “ It seems to me that everything is part of one thing. All our thoughts are connected to the physical world - first through the tissues, synapses, neurotransmitters, etc. in our physical bodies. Our thoughts and feelings effect our actions and those of others in the world. Each thought is like a pebble rippling in the pond of life.

For example, the other day when the weather became so cold, I was feeling concerned about the local homeless people. I then read a story about a twelve year old boy who had the idea of collecting blankets and giving them out. The article showed pictures of very grateful people wrapped in the warm blankets. This young boy’s thoughts created feelings and actions that made a difference for needy people and through the newspaper article, inspired others. This is happening all the time”.

She then said, "I see how thoughts create actions, but are you saying that just sitting in meditation is helpful?"

After another breath and a long pause, I said: "the more caring and clarity that I grow in my inner world, the more these qualities live in our shared world. The more at home I am in myself, the more at home I am in the world. In my opinion, when I generate violent thoughts, there is more violence in the world, even when I do not act directly upon the thoughts.

Through meditation, I can see the kinds of thoughts that arise in my mind and I can choose to cultivate those that are more helpful and life-giving. Working directly on the external situations of the planet, as you do, is essential. It also seems to me that healing THIS mind and heart, this 'inner' world is inseparable from healing the 'outer' world. One Body, One Life , One World!"

"Thank you, what you are saying makes sense to me. Can we meditate together? " she said.

May this New Year, 2016, be full of Blessings for the world and for each of us.

May the reality of our interconnection with ALL be realized in daily life.

May ALL lives be valued equally,

May warm-hearted caring for each other- Love- be our guiding principle.

Thank you for the Gift of your Being

Love.....Russell

www.russelldelman.com

