

Chapter Twenty-six

ENLIGHTENED WRATH

“Compassion is stronger than anger.”

Osho

Seems to me discriminating wisdom is the crux of the matter. Sometimes, of course, it takes a while to get there.

LU



GS Keep Your Heartsong Singing

I found your e-mail yesterday to be deeply moving. It demonstrated your heart's compassion, your justifiable outrage, your intelligence, sensitivity and insight. No apologies needed. There is a certain kind of anger that is in perfect accord with love. Would there were more people of your caliber in today's world.

I felt (and feel) enormous respect for your capacity to empathize and to feel both love and anger. Sometimes they go together, you now know. The more you love, the deeper the outrage at things like that recent bombing in Spain. Writer Ken Wilber

(and many Tibetans) call that link between love, compassion and anger *enlightened wrath*.

I admire you for not numbing yourself out. Today's world tends to do that. It's too much to take, especially when you're intelligent, sensitive, aware and creative, so a lot of people just sink into alienated cynicism and callous indifference. I can't blame them.

Good for you for keeping your soul alive, your feelings attuned, your heart open not only to the beauty and wonder of life but to its heartaches as well. That takes a lot of strength and courage, and sometimes endurance. I don't see you as being self-centered. To the contrary, I see you as being predominately loving, kind and selfless. Always good to count your blessings (as you are doing); also good to feel the pain and respond deeply, honestly and truly (as you are).

All the very best,

Keep your heartsong singing and be strong.

SL Compassion and Objectivity Are Essential

As you know, I normally do not think in personal terms of likes, dislikes, activities, pleasures, interest, etc. It seems a long time ago that my personal dynamics came to have more to do with *essential* matters. That is, my journey has been one of increasing objectivity; fewer and fewer preferences, tastes, judgments, goods, bads, etc. It has become more a matter of seeing clearly and deeply, appreciating life and people simply for who they are; allowing myself to empathically experience not only natural and human beauty, but the pain and ugliness of humanity's horrific activities, recognizing that the stream is incessant, and everything in it is part of the

flow that goes on and on, even as I watch and see it and feel it and accept and bless it.

That does not mean I don't occasionally get angry at the endless examples of human greed, cruelty, selfishness, barbaric violence and stupidity. The stream is, after all, the reality of the human context we live in, and "enlightened wrath" is sometimes a perfectly natural and appropriate response to it. Precisely because I love life so much, I become enraged when I see what human beings do to each other and to animals and to nature in general, usually in service to heartless greed, but especially when they do it in the name of "God" or "religion" or "discipline."

However, I tend to observe the stream from a height that blossoms out of a consciousness that is nonegoic, transpersonal, and compassionate. I can appreciate the beauty and feel the pain, and smile and weep for all of it, viewing the dance through the eyes of love and understanding and a perennial hope for a better future.

Even when that hope grows dim, or my anger burns like fire, I do not necessarily fall into despair. Despair, like remorse and melancholy, for me feels like an indulgence in an extremely addictive drug — a great pleasure, intoxicating in its self-righteousness and sensual pleasure, but also numbing, deafening, blinding. As I said to another person a while back, "Oblivion is not transcendence."

For me, if not for others, it is important in the face of rage or despair to grow even less personal, more detached, more empathic and more deeply compassionate. Nearly all human beings remain unconscious, selfish, childish, and heinously violent. Because of fear and greed and utter psycho-spiritual ignorance, they cannot help themselves. Compassion and objectivity in the face of this reality become essential. Although Jesus could not save himself when nailed to the cross, that is what he meant when he found it in his heart to say, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

. . . . There was one especially good thing about the conflict with BN. It gave me a virtually unparalleled opportunity to confront and deal with my own ego problem. I could have stood toe-to-toe with him, slinging pain in his face, being as nasty-minded, cold, cruel and coarse as he was, but that would have made me the very sort of person he is. If I had allowed him to pull me down to his level, I would have become just as blind, ignorant, cynical, malicious, stupid and closed-minded as he is.

So the first thing I had to confront was the anger, turmoil, violence and viciousness that he triggered *in me*. Before dealing with him, I had to deal with myself. What kind of person am I? Why was I angry in the first place? Just how far did my own ego-trip go? To what extent was I just as mean-spirited as he? Very interesting stuff, yes?

So I moved from shock, dismay and an angry reaction, into clarity, insight, compassion and what I regard as true intelligence. Intellect alone is not intelligence. He has intellect, a first-class pragmatic tool. But intelligence is more than that. It is receptivity, empathy, insight, the ability to perceive clearly, without distortion or projection. Intelligence uses intellect to *serve* love, connection, expansiveness, freedom of heart, soul, and spirit.

When I looked more deeply into him I saw a suffering, battered soul who has never managed to see, understand and transcend his own pain (probably inflicted upon him by a vicious, perhaps even physically violent father; I don't know that, just speculation on my part).

I then looked into myself and saw someone who now had an opportunity to apply the things I have learned over the years. Could I do that in fact? And exactly *what* have I learned? Anything useful?

Once I saw these dimensions clearly, the rest was smooth. In the end, everything worked out. He found himself surprised and impressed with the way I handled him and his abusiveness. I found myself feeling good about the way I navigated the maze in my own heart and mind.

In other words, there is that in me which in a rather odd way feels grateful to him for having attacked me. He gave me a complex challenge, and I feel that I handled it well, not only in terms of coping with him and his trip, but especially in terms of coping with me and my own trip.

Quite a journey, eh?

JB The Buddhas Beckon From Our Own Future

You object to my notion that all of us are inherently Buddhas when you say, "We are not Buddhas. To think so, act so, may be a haughty position or a cop out. Buddha and Jesus walked among us mortals."

Although I respect and learn from the masters, I am not a follower of any man, woman, or ideology. Preconceptions about masters are always wrong. They're based on whatever social conditioning we received through parents, priests and teachers regarding the nature of "enlightenment." And people who respect the buddhas are not necessarily mindless "moths circling around a candle flame," as you put it. Concomitantly, popularity is never an accurate sign of a leader's authenticity — look at the Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Billy Graham, and the rest of their ilk. In fact, I agree with the buddhas, every one of whom point out that there are no gods, avatars, saviors, lanterns, or revelatory candles, dim or otherwise. Search leads only out and away. Only introspection, meditation, and psycho-

spiritual awareness lead the way out of one's personal dungeon. It is said that Buddha's last words were: "Be a light unto yourself." I agree with him.

When I speak of the buddhas, I am not talking about haughty presumption, fearful cop-outs, egocentric separation, arrogant thinking, or deceptive pretenses. Yes, Buddha, Jesus and many others of their caliber walked among mortals, *for they too were mortals, just as we are*. They were not supernatural gods, separate from us. They were mortal *and* they were divine — *and so are we*. The difference is: they knew it, while we don't. Their message: Levels of subtle, causal and nondual higher consciousness are *natural*, not supernatural and not unnatural — and not only for the elite few.

The highest levels of Unity Consciousness and loving embrace are our birthright, our inherent humanity; they are part of who we already are. The trick is to know it directly, to awaken from our slumbers and realize it consciously, to transform the seed into the oak. That is where the work comes in, the growth, the development, the evolutionary process. We are not only acorns. We are potential oak trees. How do we grow? That is what they were (and are) talking about. They speak to us, not from the past. *They beckon to us from our own future*.

There are occasions in which it may be appropriate to angrily defy those who do not understand themselves or see the issues clearly or who lack compassion and worldcentric consciousness (such as Bush, Cheney, Rush Limbaugh and their ilk). Jesus overturning the money changers in the temple is a classic example. But sometimes the attack mode only adds more violence, more misery, more negativity, more toxic cloudiness to the cultural context, and alters nothing for the better.

If wrathful awareness — or enlightened wrath, as Wilber and a number of ancient mystics have termed it — can awaken consciousness and generate constructive change, great. And sometimes it can. If not, perhaps it is better to simply see clearly (objectively, disinterestedly, with compassionate detachment) and create change by being an example to others of clarity, awareness, serenity, equanimity, and love in

action. Not defying, but creating; not attacking, but transforming; not choosing sides, but integrating conflicting opposites. Seems to me discriminating wisdom is the crux of the matter.

Sometimes, of course, it takes a while to get there. Patience, persistence, dedication, listening to the right people, doing the work. Not just thinking differently (intellectually acquiring new philosophical translative eye-glasses), but transforming consciousness itself, involving one's self in a concrete practice, evolving from egocentric to ethnocentric to worldcentric to all-embracing, nondual pneumocentric levels of awareness. That psycho-spiritual *process* is what the Buddhas were (and are) talking about. All we need is an open mind, an open heart, an open hand, and sustained, dedicated persistence. We too can know what they knew, because they knew what we already are but have not yet recognized and actualized in fact.

Gurdjieff once said, “It may surprise you if I say that the chief feature of a modern man’s being which explains everything else that is lacking in him is *sleep*. . . . Awakening begins when a man realizes that he is going nowhere and does not know where to go.” That’s what the buddhas are forever saying and doing. They walk among us, not as supernatural aliens, but as compassionate friends who are trying to help us *wake up* to our own highest consciousness.

Sometimes they embody enlightened wrath, yes, like the Tibetan god Yamantaka. Sometimes they shine with compassionate detachment, yes. On some occasions, they go together — two poles of a single dynamic. Knowing which to use, and when — that seems to be an extension of awareness and insight that emerges from a certain natural, universal level of consciousness and perception that is available to all of us, not just a few.

We can remain the same as we were when we were 18 or so, and most of us do. Or we can use our lives for evolutionary development, and then share the fruits of our labors with others the best we can, not indoctrinating, not oppressing, not

dominating, not cynically exploiting, but simply sharing who we are and what we see with those who are receptive and ready to hear it.

Isolation, separation, posturing, blindness, darkness, ignorance, rage, retaliation, revenge, defense, attack, politics, me/mine/more — all of those and related things are *samsara*, as the ancients called it. It is just misery rooted in desire and fear, adding more misery to misery forever. At that level of consciousness, the wars keep on truckin' down the pike one after the other.

The question becomes: how to generate awareness in one's self and in others; how to foster consciousness that transcends isolation, ethnocentricity, nationalism and other forms of potentially catastrophic divisive perception. It seems to me *that* is what the Buddhas were about then *and* now. Do we listen to them and learn from them? Most don't, but some do. I trust that I am one of them. I honor them and listen carefully to what they say. In our mad, mad world, only they speak with compassion and enlightened intelligence.