

Dear Friends,

In my musings I've been thinking that we are all "Similar in Faith." Faith is belief in the trustworthiness of an idea. Concrete answers can seem so reassuring: strong, stable, something to count on. But what for one person seems like a solid base, for another can be a barrier that only blocks their way. We have different questions at different times on our journey in faith, and there are myriad answers that help us move onward.

In matters of faith, we are a divided lot. Even within a single religion, many people disagree about various doctrines and theology. Yet in the Old Testament in the Hebrew language it means essentially steadfastness, where it denotes the strengthening of Moses' hands. Then it comes to mean faithfulness, whether of God toward man or of man toward God. In signifying man's attitude toward God it means trustfulness. In the New Testament the meanings "to believe" and "belief", come to the fore; in Christ's speech trust and belief are often mentioned. Therefore there is a basic foundation of ideas in faith.

This basic foundation is expressed in many beliefs. A single idea or thought can be seen from many different views. We all experience moments when it feels as if time stands still, as if we have somehow bypassed the minutes and hours of chronological time and have slipped into a space of timelessness. These moments can occur during periods of great concentration, enveloping grief, energetic curiosity, deep wondering, creative inventiveness, or unexpected awe. What is common to them all, however, is that we are totally present. We are not regressing into the past or projecting ourselves into the future. When the moment has passed, we may even find ourselves looking at our watch because we truly have no idea how much earthly time has passed. No matter what our faith background, we share a similar reaction to such moments of timelessness. They are a step into divine time — the time that holds all things in its eternal care.

One must be fully present by bringing our full attention and awareness to the moment that is now. This is similar to the Buddhist tradition that reminds us that divine time has no edges or boundaries, no beginnings or endings. Mindfulness, one of the great spiritual practices of Buddhism, invites us to enter the door of the present moment and bring our whole selves along with us. We quickly see that when we deviate from this, we are in danger of losing touch with the silken thread of eternal time and too easily find ourselves clutched instead in the grasp of the relentless clicking clock.

Another way to step away from the demands of that clicking clock is through the Jewish practice of Sabbath. Imagine spending an entire day every week being aware of each moment flowing into the next, dwelling in the fullness of divine time, rather than being consumed with the activities of work and results.

Jesus, in his famous Sermon on the Mount, taught his disciples by saying, "...do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." He was urging us to "be here now." The early Christian desert fathers shared this understanding. One desert father said to his disciple, "Sit in your cell and your cell will teach you everything." The Buddha had suggested something similar when he told his followers that they would come to understand the universe by sitting under a sycamore tree.

The Hindu tradition of reincarnation is yet another way of acknowledging that time is edgeless, that in divine time, nothing is lost, that eternity is just that — eternal, and we are in that eternity right now.

We are in the midst of an interval where we are unlikely to be aware of those moments when time stands still. The clicking clock appears to advance at an impossible speed. The days are too short- they rush by so quickly that we barely realize what day it is. The concept of living in the present is not new, nor is it impossible. Practice mindfulness of life, you will be glad you did.

Believe, be strong, be blessed.

The three of us wish you

A Blessed Holiday Season,

Jerry

SAVE \$10

**Present this coupon and receive \$10 off your
first Reiki session with Pure Reiki**

Offer Expires March 31, 2009