

Civil Disobedience

What in the world are we thinking?

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As I watch the state of the world being reported in the morning and evening world news, I'm struck by how unaware we seem to be of the real meaning of civil disobedience and its relationship to these strange times we are in that represent the heart of the consciousness shift.

Civil disobedience is the active refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government, or of an occupying power, without resorting to physical violence. It is one of the primary tactics of nonviolent resistance. **In its most nonviolent form it could be said that it is compassion in the form of respectful disagreement.**

When we think of nonviolent resistance, we think of Mohandas Gandhi. He had grievances with the government and wanted to reclaim India to be a sovereign nation. Those who stood while the military bloodied them did so much like the early Christians who sang even when they were about to be torn to pieces by wild animals.

There is a higher order indeed that flows into our hearts and hands, and this is felt differently by each of us. But this agreement or disagreement must be expressed in respectful terms.

Whether we agree with governmental policies, our neighbor's claim to a piece of our property, an issue with our child who sits in the principal's office—how will we respond?

Currently we see a blatant lack of restraint in people's behaviors and it makes me shudder. Someone shouts out in Congress and then receives millions of dollars in donations for this breach of appropriate behavior in a respected governmental body of the United States.

And it doesn't matter whether or not someone is shouting or throwing shoes—disrespect flows against our better natures and the ways we can learn and pass along the model of respectful disagreement.

In the derogatory signs that people display at debates, the loaded automatic weapons that some carry outside political rallies, and in the fierceness of our interactions—I fear that we are losing the mandate of this consciousness shift. That mandate is a call to exercise restraint, come from inner power and wisdom, and allow our true compassionate natures to move us forward not just as individuals but as a world body. Is this stance of non-violence even possible in today's polarized environment?

Surviving and prospering in this consciousness shift is not for sissies. The radical and rapid changes in the economy, the environment, our personal finances and relationships are shocking to our physical systems. And, if we're unable to manage our emotions, **we**

become no different than a rabid animal. We froth at the mouth using poisonous and inflammatory words that sow serious seeds of division and violence.

These times of economic strain push us to blame everything and everyone, including beating up on ourselves, as if that will help. Depression is rampant as is rage that flows over the top causing us to react with emotional flare-ups that are unlike our normal natures.

With enough pressure on us, will we agree to anything? Will we allow our lack of basic civility to go unchecked even though it feels so terribly wrong? Have you ever wondered how you would have acted if you had been imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp? Would you have turned in your best friend for a piece of bread? Would you have slept with the guards to survive? Would you have taken care only of yourself or have found some corner of humanity, even in your misery, to care about another? Big questions and much to think about!

My original inner guidance in 1984 was that these times we are in until 2013 will get worse before they get better. But the length of the struggle beyond that date and the awakening and growth of the New Golden Age seeds are dependent upon our individual and collective actions. In other words, **WHAT WE SAY, DO, AND ACKNOWLEDGE** today contributes either to a compassionate and respectful dialogue on all issues everywhere, or the opposite.

We are all players in this great drama and we have all come to play—to participate in one way or the other. Perhaps some have chosen to play the role of the adversary so we can better find our way. How bad do things have to get before we shift inside and decide how we will be—and act—rather than waiting for others to tell us it's ok. We are each born leaders in some way and this is the time to live within that powerful knowing. We are spiritual leaders—quiet, strong, wise and capable of meeting whatever challenges come to us in this consciousness shift. And we are capable of civil disobedience, which means we can stand in compassion as we respectfully agree or disagree with the government, with our neighbor, with the school principal, with our boss.

Civility must be the new norm, not the occasional reflection. Perhaps we need to put the media out of business as long as they focus only on the unrest, the disturbance, the struggle and anger that raises our blood pressure and pits intentionally one side against the other. We can walk away from what adds fury and helplessness to what we already feel.

We base our likes and dislikes of those around us and of public officials on many, many issues. But the way we approach debate today must change. We must refuse to treat each other the way we see played out on the world stage. We are more than we present ourselves to be today. Taking sides, or feeling strongly, is still no excuse for the disruptive behaviors we see demonstrated all around us.

We must indeed take things into our own hands—to choose to be obedient to a law of civility, to spirituality—that is our very core. We may or may not be in a position to obviously influence many. But we do influence people every day. And in this time of shift where every imaginable pressure is upon each of us, what we stand for must be a world where there is cooperation, willingness to participate in a respectful process of change.

The “below the belt” comments must stop if we are to move through this life-threatening consciousness shift and have anything left to celebrate. ***The winner isn't the last man/woman left standing after the blood-letting has destroyed what we thought we believed in. The winner is the person who stands, and in looking around the circle of others, realizes that the process of exchange and positive disagreement has produced results that enhance each other and our world.***

We must strive to manage our differences with dignity and respect, regardless of whether or not the other person offers it to us.

So by all means let's practice civil disobedience for our time—which is to stand firm in quiet and respectful disagreement or respectful alignment, whichever we feel is appropriate, and set a new standard of respect that future generations can honor and build upon that's a legacy to our true noble spirits.

God Bless,
Meredith

PS: Tell me your thoughts...e-mail me directly at mysowers@stillpoint.org