

DISCERNMENT AND JUDGMENT !!

(With Life and Death as Examples)

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Discernment is the observation and recognition of differences and degrees of duality. There is white/light and black/dark, and varying shades of gray inbetween. There is hot and cold, with luke-warm in the middle (human scale). There is life and death and reincarnation, and a journey from one to the other, to the other. This way of looking at life and death is simply through objective observation and clear recognition of degrees of difference.

Judgment often comes up somewhere along the discerning line when we humans are triggered emotionally. We detach from discerning and jump into judgment, which is the result of emotional reaction to perceived facts. "I like this." "I hate that." "This is good." "That is evil." Judgment brings discernment and observation to a screeching halt. Within the activity of discernment, emotion is just one avenue for gathering and observing information. As soon as emotion triggers judgment, it stops the process of dispassionate, conscious observation and scientific clarity. An emotionally charged position is taken which must be defended, and facts are used to bolster that agenda. Conversation and dialogue grind to a halt. Positions are taken and defended; ensuing actions are based on those positions and are not easily open to change or new information.

So in the case of our topic, death, we may have to work a bit to keep our minds and emotions open. I know that I did in the beginning. When my infant son died of SIDS, a part of me said, "NO, I hate this. This is wicked and evil. Life is good. Death is bad. This is not right. It is no good." But where did that leave me? Or my son? Was his death just a terrible mistake? Could I live with that? No. After those immediate emotions passed and I could breathe again, my heart was broken, but my mind was opened. In time I could see so many reasons for his death that the duality and judgment between life and death became a moot point. Without my personal judgments, my petty likes and dislikes, desires and aversions (expectations all) our relationship continued to develop.

Anyway, the point here, is to take death as a simple fact of life. What can we know about it? What can we do about it? With such an attitude, our actions and concepts come from a dispassionately observed, clear thinking place. To understand death, we must understand life. As death is the shadow of bright life, we might well begin by discerning the cosmic laws and the patterns that are the modus operandi of life. Death is a fractal of life and many of the same laws hold sway. Life and death are just different forms of EXISTENCE.