

Leading in Turbulent Times

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Insight in action



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Exile and the Promised Land



- Exile in the wisdom traditions is not exile from a place – it is a condition of being
- We can build a house and stay there for 20 years and be in exile the whole time
- The Promised Land is also not a place, but an internal state of being
- Getting to the “promised land” is an image of a realized person, an integrated person – whether in Babylon or in Calgary
- This state of internal integration is the destination



Leading Now Requires a New Awareness

- In today's world we need leaders who are integrated on the inside, rooted in who they are, not lost in exile
- Leading today requires a new level of consciousness of self, other, and the world
- We cannot continue to move from one day to the next, putting out fires and essentially living in exile from who we really are



Turbulent Times Lead Us Into Exile



- In difficult times, we go into Exile
- We become rooted on the outside
- We feel tossed around by external events
- We measure our lives by external benchmarks of “success” and “failure”
- We get consumed in fear, doubt, insecurity in the face of uncertainty, anxiety, and at times, even despair



We Enter *"Small Mind"*

- We enter what wisdom traditions call small mind, a narrow consciousness
- Our internal state becomes what Buddha termed "small mind"; what the kabbalists called "machun d'katnut"
 - Narrow perspective
 - Rigidity/loss of Creativity
 - Distance/alienation from the other
 - Disconnect from a wider view of our lives
 - Governed by fear



Liberation Comes from a Return to *"Large Mind"*

- We leave the desert of exile by entering Large Mind
- We reach inside for "machun d'gadlut", for large mind, or expanded consciousness
 - Broad focus
 - Openness and Possibility
 - Connection/Relationship with the other
 - A Panoramic View of our Lives
 - Anchored in Equanimity and Acceptance



An Example of Large Mind: From the Bodhisattva Vow

- May I be a guard for those who are protectorless,
- A guide for those who journey on the road;
- For those who wish to go across the water,
- May I be a boat, a raft, a bridge.
- May I be an isle for those who yearn for landfall,
- And a lamp for those who long for light;
- For those who need a resting place, a bed,
- For all who need a servant, may I be a slave.
- For every single thing that lives,
- In number like the boundless reaches of the sky,
- May I be their sustenance and nourishment,
- Until they pass beyond the bounds of suffering.



How Do We Do This?

- 1) Shift Our Perspective
- 2) Give Up Control
- 3) Anchor on the Inside
- 4) Serve on the Outside



Shift Our Perspective



- Look Back from the Future
- Remember the truth of impermanence – this will not last forever
- Don't stare at the gaping hole – look back from a better time
- When you look back from ten years, twenty years from now, ask yourself:
 - What were the opportunities of that time?
 - What were its gifts?
 - What do I wish I did then?



Give Up Control



- We cannot “control” external events
- We can shift our internal response to them
- We shift our internal response by transforming ourselves: transforming our afflictions, our hurts, our anger, our fears, our delusions, our craving, our resistance
- Start by welcoming them, smiling at them, embrace them with compassion



Anchor on the Inside

- We cannot “control” external events
- Don’t wander lost in the desert
- Cross the desert to the Promised Land within ourselves
- In our own center, we have a vast ocean of resources and strengths: our own oasis
- We can build our sense of stability there
- Mindfulness and other practices support finding our way into our center



Serve on the Outside

- We cannot “control” external events
- Make room in our lives for service
- This serves us as much as it serves others
- Service brings us out of small mind and into large mind
- It connects us to our inherent goodness
- And reminds us we are part of an interconnected whole, one square in the universal tapestry of life



Closing



- May all beings be safe and protected.
- May all beings be healthy and strong.
- May all beings be happy and live joyously.
- May all beings live in peace.

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