



Faith: Deepening our Power to Inquire, by Sharon Salzberg

With faith we can draw near to the truth of the present moment, which is dissolving into the unknown even as we meet it. We open up to what is happening right now in all its mutability and evanescence. A pain in our body, a heartache, an unjust treatment may seem inert, impermeable, unchanging. It may appear to be all that is, all that ever will be. But when we look closely, instead of solidity, we see porousness, fluidity, motion. We begin to see gaps between the moments

of suffering. We see the small changes that are happening all the time, in the texture, the intensity, the contours of our pain.

No matter what is happening, whenever we see the inevitability of change, the ordinary, or even oppressive, facts of our lives can become alive with prospect. We see that a self-image weâ€™ve been holding doesnâ€™t need to define us forever, the next step is not the last step, what life was, is not what it is now, and certainly not what it might yet be. [â€]

Questioning means longing to know the truth deeply, and insisting that we can. It means leaving whatever distant slant we may occupy to come close and see more directly what is true. And it means being willing to be honest about how we ourselves are seeing things, even if that vision differs from the norm. Learning to question means feeling we have the innate right to all of this.

For faith to be alive and to deepen we need to use our power to inquire, to wonder, to explore our experience to see what is true for ourselves. This requires us to approach life with an inquisitive, eager, self-confident capacity to probe and question. It requires us to examine where we place our faith, and why, to see if it makes us more aware and loving people. To develop a verified faith we need to open to the messiness, the discordance, the ambivalence, and, above all, the vital life-force of questioning.Â If we donâ€™t, our faith can wither. If we donâ€™t, our faith will always remain in the hands of someone else, as something we borrow or abjure, but not as something we can claim fully as our own.

--Sharon Salzberg, from "Faith"