

**A Personal Practice of Reflection and Renewal  
for Individuals of All Faiths and Traditions  
During the Twelve Holy Nights of the Year  
December 25 til January 6**

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***The Eleventh Holy Night - January 4***

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*Passion and Compassion*

Passion and Compassion is tonight's polarity. They are another polarity that relates to the heart.

I want a heart that is both passionate and compassionate. Passion and compassion have to do with joy and suffering in earthly and spiritual realms. To feel one and not the other would lead to a very lopsided life.

Passion arises in the earthly, selfish heart wanting heavenly joy through earthly experience. It is the feeling of intense enthusiasm, demanding hunger, or painful longing.

Passion fills our souls with self-interest and drives us to self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction.

Passion's selfishness is necessary. It is a joyful expression of individuality. Sadly, passion can become inflamed, obsessive and never be satisfied. Uncontrolled passion brings suffering to the soul. Passion lives in a balanced metamorphosis between the force of arousal and the release through satisfaction. Passion can flame out in unrelieved arousal or die stillborn in apathy.

We need to find our passions and to know them well. We can share the ideas that are shaped by our passions and we can engage others in the deeds that fulfill our passions.

However, as an emotional feeling, our passions are a solitary experience. We feel only with ourselves.

Compassion is different. It is the other side of passionate feeling – the side that is not “by myself” but “with the other.” Compassion is the heart of the spiritual heart.

Compassion is the sharing of feeling. Compassion is not shared ideas, imaginations, or visions. Compassion is not the sharing of intentions or deeds. It is simply and purely shared feeling.

There is no selfishness in compassion. To experience the feeling of another, we must die to our own feeling, die to our own passions. “Thy feeling, not mine.” We find we suffer another's suffering and we rejoice in another's joy. There is something humanly divine in the experience of compassion.

However, we must choose compassion. Compassion is the intense awakening to the needs of the other, not the awakening of one's own needs. To have your feelings overtaken by the feelings of another, unconsciously, is dangerous and shows a lack of boundaries and self-protection. Compassion is a conscious and willed love. With the “with-ness” of compassion, we become one through dispassionate

love.

A synonym for dispassion is “composed.” How do we live a life composed of passion and compassion? That is the contemplation for this Holy Night.

Let us strive dispassionately to be compassionately passionate and passionately compassionate.

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### *Questions to Contemplate...*

Write down twelve passions. Revel in your selfish delights and cravings. Do not hold back. Do not cool down your heat. Go to the extreme end of this pole.

Over the coming days, weeks, months explore these passions. Finely draw their images and plan to execute the necessary actions to fulfill these passions. Are they practical or impractical? Whose help will you need?

Do these passions give your life meaning? Do you suffer because of them. Which of them become the torture of an itch that can't be scratched?

Now go to the pole of compassion. Whose feelings do you bear in your heart? Whose feelings do you reject? Do you ever feel another's feelings as if they had taken over your life? How can you establish your freedom?

Have you thought about what it means to know another's feelings? This contemplation will strengthen your humanity and your individuality. From the place of dispassion love is a free choice.

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