

“A SIMPLE INTERFAITH SEASON”

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We hear the word Interfaith all the time, don't we? But just what does Interfaith mean? If we break down the word down into its two components, one can better see what a good definition of Interfaith might be.

“Inter” ~ derived from Latin, is described by Webster's Dictionary and Roget's Thesaurus as ~
between, among; with each other, together, mutual, reciprocal.

“Faith” ~ also from Latin, means ~ *an unquestioning belief that does not need proof; complete trust, confidence and reliance.*

Isn't that a great description! Now taking this a bit further, do you think it's possible to have an Interfaith world? I do. How? With all the seemingly endless strife across the planet, where it seems as if very few people or countries are getting along, how can we have an Interfaith world, full of respect for each other and everyone's beliefs? Very simply.

Let's take a look at a simple example, let's talk about snow, or rather snowflakes! I think we would all agree that snow is comprised of snowflakes, millions and perhaps billions of tiny snowflakes:

- Each one, unique and beautiful in its own right.
- Each one unique and beautifully created in its own time.

And mankind?

- Each one of us is unique and beautiful in our own right.
- Each one of us is unique and beautifully created in our own time.

And the animal kingdom?

- Each one, unique and beautiful in its own right.
- Each one unique and beautifully created in its own time.

And, just as with the billions and probably unmeasurable number of snowflakes created by God, Creator, Yahweh, Allah, Buddha, Mother Earth, whatever term you may use, in His or Her grand design – all life is no different! Each one, unique and beautiful in its own right. Each one unique and beautifully created in its own time.

What do the snowflakes gently falling to earth provide? Meaning, do they stay the same design throughout their life? And what do we provide? Do we stay the same throughout our lives? What does the animal kingdom provide? Let's think about this.

Yes, the snowflakes are unique and individually created, as is mankind, and as is the animal kingdom. And yet, after falling gently to the ground, snowflakes form a covering blanket, all joining together to provide another purpose another part of God's design. As you look at each

snowflake individually and see each one's unique beauty that is just one part of the design. However, when joined together, the blanket that covers the earth comprised of all those beautiful individual snowflakes provides a source of insulation to the roots and branches of all nature, keeping those same roots insulated until spring, when the warmth of the sun shines strong again, for everything hidden under those unique and united snowflakes to blossom. They live their unique lives to join together through a common spirit of oneness, and one purpose. Instilled by God.

Don't we all act like snowflakes at some time or another, or maybe each and every day? Don't our companions in the animal kingdom act like snowflakes toward us? Let's think about this for a moment. How many times have you smiled at someone while in line at the grocery store? Someone you didn't know? Now, you didn't know what their religious philosophy was, nor probably their ethnic background. And yet, you had the impulse to smile and share a moment with a complete stranger possibly someone of a different faith than yours, a different economic strata and yet, you smiled.

Or how about the times you may have chatted with someone while waiting at the post office, or while pumping gas, total strangers, remember, unique and individually created and you felt a comfort level to talk with them even if just for a moment...not knowing one thing about them except they were sharing that same moment with you in line, or pumping gas.

How about the times you have heard a bird sing? Or watched a spider weave its web? Or marveled at ants carrying huge leaves 10 times their size? How about the times your beloved pet knew just what to do for you in a moment of stress with a wagging tail, or a soft purr? And in those moments, each of you, or all of us, are joined together in a welcoming and covering blanket of humanity and compassion embracing our uniqueness, but also joined together through a common spirit of oneness.

And after each one of these experiences, didn't you feel just a little bit happier in that moment, or felt like being a little nicer to others because someone had just been nice to you? What would you call these experiences and feelings? I call them Interfaith! Meaning, 'interfaith' with respect to our uniqueness! And yet I believe it is a oneness of purpose, even through those simple moments with people we do not know, which leads us to care about all lives...a oneness of purpose instilled by God.

Now, we can take this a bit further, as most of you know I like to do. We can think of all the snowflakes that may have fallen throughout the ages...

- ❖ Snowflakes on the Mount swirling around Moses as he received the Ten Commandments
- ❖ Snowflakes that flitted through the Bodhi tree leaves under which Buddha sat contemplating of God
- ❖ Snowflakes swirling around Mecca while Mohammad meditated to God
- ❖ Snowflakes that may have lit up the Star in the sky above that Manger so long ago

Snowflakes fall on every country on our planet regardless of ethnic background, regardless of culture, regardless of religious affinity. Why is that you may ask? Because they are snowflakes, individuals, unique, and created by God to come together as one.

Not so different than you and I, and the animal kingdom, right! Simple, isn't it? And that's all it has to be, that simple. Keep in mind the basic definitions "inter" with each other; "faith" complete trust. Not religious doctrine, but a concept created by the All, the Universal One ~ God.

"And so it is written, and so it is done." Very simple. ©