



David M. Valadez
Senshin Center
Dojocho

Matthew
by David M. Valadez

Deshi: Sensei, is it okay to compare the Way with other traditions?

Sensei: If you mean, “Okay?” so as to determine whether such a thing is proper or not – that is a wrong question. The Way marks the individual because it is the individual that marks the Way. The Way speaks to our own lives, and thus though there is much that we must do in order to accommodate the Way, it will not and cannot speak to us outside of our own individuality. If your individuality includes other traditions, rather than infringing upon them, or they infringing upon the Way, they and the Way will come to nourish each other as they all come to nourish you.

Deshi: I was reading this last night: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others?” Is this close to Aikido’s understanding of Love?

Sensei: It will be you who will make it close or far. For me, it is very close. For you, you will have to practice what it will be. Much is contained in the passage you just read. There is enough to last a lifetime of training.

Deshi: Can you speak upon that more please.

Sensei: To be sure, there is the message on Love. There is also a higher moral ground that is being spoken of. In addition, it speaks of a spiritual maturity – one that is marked by an inner consistency. Training involves a similar process of maturity; mature training too must be marked by an inner consistency. The phrases of “what reward have you,” “even tax collectors do the same,” and “what more are you doing than others,” beckon to us an honesty with which we are able to see whether we are consistent with ourselves and thus whether we are mature in our training and in our spirit. Pondering over this consistency, we can ask, “Do we succumb to every single impulse and inclination that those that do not practice the Way are actually identified by?” If we do, then we must realize that we are part of that mass; we must note that we are not training. She whom only trains because it is fun, exciting, meets a purpose, is with agenda, brings forth accomplishments, is convenient, or he who only trains when it is easy, carries with it a positive sense of self, etc., is like a person that would love only those that love them in return, like a person that would hate their enemies, like a tax collector, is a person only doing what everyone else is doing. He or she is a

person that does not gain spiritual maturity. However, he or she who trains when there is nothing conducive to training, when everything hurts, when obstacles are all around, when all is not well, when nothing makes sense, when boredom is all that is felt, when there are no funds, when nothing is going right, when no goal is in sight, when all feels lost, when reason and purpose have left, when dullness alone exists, when health has departed, when no time is free, when friendships have ended, when supports are weakened, etc., he or she who trains in the face of all this is like a Father that cares for and nourishes all. He or she will have spiritual maturity. He or she stands apart from the masses on a plateau of commitment, principle, discipline, and integrity.