

Winter- Inspiration for the Inner Journey of the Philosopher



Winter is here!

Across the northern hemisphere, winter has taken hold. Bangaloreans have brought out their warm clothes, there is a definite nip in the air. In many other parts of the country and the world, winters are harsher, and far more measures are required to counter the chill. To a greater or a lesser degree, this season is a time to generate warmth. For the philosopher, the season takes on a deeper significance, it goes beyond the physical.

Cycles in Nature

For the poet, the artist, the scientist, and lovers of the great outdoors, Nature is the great muse - much inspiration and solace is found in her lap. The philosopher too looks to nature for inspiration and a deeper understanding of reality. A keen observation of nature, combined with a deep understanding that the human being is a part of nature and not apart from it, holds many keys for a more meaningful and harmonious way of living.

The significance of Winter

The characteristic cold of winter marks a certain fridity, a slowing down of movement all around nature. This reminds us to slow down with the frantic movement of our hectic lives and pause to breathe and introspect. Winter is about going within - establishing an inner silence and calm that enables deeper introspection. The slowing down of the movement is in the external - it is not to be confused with passivity or disconnection. The seed planted in autumn sprouts in spring, in winter it is seemingly passive to the eye, but underground it is a flurry of life, with roots spreading deeper underground. The silence and deep introspection of winter is a way to strengthen our roots, our connection with ourselves, and with the values that are at the core of our lives. Winter is a time to clarify and strengthen what is essential, discerning from that which is superficial and letting go of habits, patterns, and tendencies that are no longer an aid to our



growth or the betterment of the world around us. As deep and strong we develop the roots of clarity and introspection in winter, that much more vibrant and vital will the subsequent expression and fruition be in the spring that is to come after.

Sol Invictus

In the depths of winter, on the 21st of December is the Winter Solstice. This is a moment marking a peak in the annual cycle, the longest night of the year, metaphorically the peak of darkness. The word Solstice shares its origin with the Roman idea of Sol Invictus, which translates to "The Sun is invincible". This is an idea that myriad other cultures of the ancient world share - Through their practices and myths, like the myth of Amaterasu in Japan which reminds us that however challenging the current moments are, the sun is never overpowered by the darkness - it always emerges. The light always prevails over darkness! May we all take the opportunity to dig within and build the inner strength that will enable a strong response of truth, beauty, and goodness to the challenges we are faced with.