

The Awakening Of A World Dharma

By Mark Sheehan

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

-Jane Goodall

We live in such a death-oriented world that we need to be reminded that *life* is important, precious, threatened. How can we be aware of the craziness and still stay sane? The President talks about negotiating with Iran while preparing for war (after Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan)? We talk environmental sanity while pumping ever more carbon into the atmosphere. We want healthy food but let chemical companies ‘modify’ and control our food supply. We fish the oceans empty while talking about nine billion people on the planet. We celebrate the Bill of Rights yet Congress passed, and Obama approved, the NDDA!

With so many conflicting emotions to sort out, it’s refreshing to come across Alan Clement’s latest book, *A Future to Believe In, A Guide to Empowerment, Revolution and the Universal Right to Be Free*. There are 108 short chapters that relate inspiring stories from his life, spiced with brilliant quotes from saints and sages. Alan says he wrote the book for his five-year-old daughter as a way to tell her something about who he is and to offer her hope.

This book has evoked praise from many of the environmental and visionary greats writing about our dire straits and the way through them. Derrick Jensen, author of *A Language Older than Words*, (a book I couldn’t put down and yet could hardly stand to read because it was so painful) claimed, “This culture is killing the

planet. If we are to have any future at all, we must unlearn everything the culture has taught us and begin to listen to the planet, to listen to life – the core intelligence of nature and the human heart. This book not only helps us with the unlearning process - the greatest challenge humankind has ever faced – it provides the essential wisdom, the spiritual intelligence, to open ourselves to finally start to hear.”

Other writers who have added their recommendations include Paul Hawken, Joanna Macy, Helen Caldicott and Dr. Vendana Shiva. Alan was at the Studio Maui early in March to share the story of how freedom became so important in his life and how revolutionaries like An Sang Suu Kyi stayed strong and free despite years of captivity. “My freedom was never theirs to take away,” she said, referring to the generals who held her under house arrest for almost two decades.

You can read this book straight through (as I did) on a Kindle, you can carry it around dipping into the short chapters to savor the wisdom or you can skim through the book, tasting the juicy quotes: “Follow your inner moonlight, don’t hide the madness.” (Allen Ginsberg) “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, if you listen carefully, you can hear her breathing.” (Arundhati Roy)

After many years as a monk in Burma, Alan was witness to the genocide perpetrated by the military regime against its own people. That forced him to “merge” his spiritual awareness with a world of political oppression, propaganda, resistance, and worldwide human rights issues.

“Aung San Suu Kui once told me that ‘ultimately spirituality and politics cannot be

separated. Both deal with the everyday life of people. And at the core of life – at the core of spirituality and politics – are the same qualities, that of human freedom and dignity.”

Alan confided that he spent the better part of five years quietly working away with this creation. He said he wanted to “bring as many voices as possible to make the case that our future depends on all of us.”

He claims that Aung Sang Suu Kyi and her colleagues in Burma “opened him up to a whole world view, the awakening of a *world dharma*, in which everyone is involved. She maintains that “nothing and no one is separate from this freedom.”

If we are to overcome the planetary death wish, we must choose life so that we can, together, create a future to believe in. Alan is making a difference. And so are you.

Learn more at AlanClements.com.

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