

sister who's perspective

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Overview

We are creatures of time and space, in some ways defined but also limited by each of these dimensions. They do not, however, so much form a cage able to imprison the human spirit as a stage upon which to perform every story and interaction we can imagine--and from which we can learn.

Whether this month's words are thus regarded as plot exposition or direction, I sincerely hope that they are helpful to you.

Creating Sacred Space

There seems to be a great focus at present upon investing in renewable energy and "going off-grid" (meaning that one's electricity, water, and heat come from independent natural sources instead of coming from local utility companies). In contemplating this a bit deeper, however, this seems to lean toward disconnection, isolation, and ultimately narcissism. What finally became clear to me as a more worthy goal consistent with further development of healthy community, is working toward circumstances within which one has greater ability to give than merely an amount corresponding to what one has received--specifically because the composite gift is the raw materials received augmented by wise and creative investments of time and energy.

Pragmatically this could be illustrated by remaining connected to the grid of local utility companies, but generating more energy using solar cells, wind turbines, and so forth, than one ever uses. One's excess energy thus becomes a means by which one's neighbors are encouraged to prosper--thereby further encouraging the development of healthy communities within which it is joyful and mutually empowering to live.

All too often, popular notions of creating sacred space focus upon little more than

creating paranormal spiritual experiences. At the heart of making anything sacred, however, is the challenge of integrating or inviting a sense of sacred presence. That being noted, if one does not first believe that the Divine does have the ability to be present within one's daily life, the empowering effects of abiding holiness will remain unknown.

More concisely phrased, if one does not first create space within one's mind and heart, efforts to create space within one's material world will be meaningless and ultimately ineffective. At the heart of all sacred presence, of course, is also some sort of manifestation or presence of genuine love. What I found most astonishing within others I met while in theological school, conversely, was the presumption that Godde could be ordered to appear within any particular ritual or material worship space, in the manner of a trained circus act--which infers human dominance over divine reality instead of genuine love for what humanity can neither control nor fully describe, yet also neither intelligently deny nor finally disprove.

In spite of and also in the midst of human arrogance, Godde keeps showing up--often in diverse, contrasting, and individually unique ways. Creating sacred space is simply an activity of putting forth one's best invitation for the Divine to do so. Arrogance, conversely, has never been a virtue and there is no academic degree or theological training which will make it so.

What is important to note about the previous paragraph is that creating sacred space is always a relational activity and it is a very small step from this to making it also a communal activity. By wisely giving more than one receives, one embodies qualities by which divine presence is made real. In thus infusing wisdom and love, the world itself also becomes genuinely sacred space.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

Creating Sacred Thoughts

It is neither entirely true nor entirely false that one can choose one's thoughts, attitudes, and feelings. Either way, an invitation to every person throughout life is to develop sufficient self-discipline to steer such internal currents toward more desirable outcomes. Like a dancer, a martial artist, or even an airplane pilot, what is required for this is both dedication and practice time.

My Neo-pagan friends are often fond of anarchy as a manifestation of freedom, but anything taken to an extreme brings the negative effects inseparable from having too much--which is really no better than having too little. Somewhere between these two extremes, a demonstration of self-discipline which is truly healthy and effective can be found. At the heart of such self-discipline, are wise discernment and intelligent choices.

As with all other conversation, a certain amount of healthy skepticism is both recommended and--potentially--ultimately empowering to the internal dialogues and the wrestling with complex ideas, in which one engages within one's self. My choice is to deny no thought its voice, but equally to hold each thought accountable for its relationship to all others. It is only my own internal vigilance which will discourage unhealthy imbalances from taking root.

From one perspective, I must be wary of selecting parameters that are censorious; that essentially prevent certain voices from ever being heard. From a contrasting perspective, I must require every thought to be as wise as possible by questioning and testing it from every direction. My goal within such moments is to expose any weakness or error and immediately take any corrective action deemed both wise and necessary.

It is easy to say that all of life is sacred, considering what the actual energy of life is, but translating or making this obvious within concrete actions and the stage props with which one chooses to equip one's personal environment, is a much more daunting task--which will not effectively happen on its own if one is for whatever reason negligent. As truthful as it may be when one is older, that

after earning a living and responding to various emergencies, there simply wasn't any time left to invest in one's own holistic health, there is no refuge within this from the effects of any and all such negligence. The consequences relentlessly begin with one's thoughts about one's self, about one's surrounding world, and about life itself.

If the thoughts about love which I allow to fill my days do not inspire me to action, there may be very little actual life or sacredness within them. If the thoughts about personal worth which I allow to populate relationships do not build bridges of understanding, then isolation and conflict become significantly more probable. If my thoughts about the meaning and purpose of my life within the context of a shared world do not have a beautifying effect upon everything around me, I will most likely have unintentionally engineered a hellish substitute for innumerable better possibilities.

In creating sacred thoughts, I can offer renewal and new beginnings to every wish of which I can conceive. Just as every thought follows the one which preceded it, however, I must begin with what I have. Yet I do not have to be only a direct expression or reflection--I can instead choose to be a contrasting response. Additionally, while there is no uncaused effect, I have the ability to create new positive causes as well.

Sacred thoughts may be the most readily available positive causes, but they will never happen all on their own; someone must be mentally and emotionally listening, in order to thereafter choose a response. Even before that, every thought requires a mind and every feeling requires a heart; no individual is holistically complete without both. As a keeper of both, any individual is thus an embodiment of infinite possibility.

It is thus not just that one can create sacred thoughts but that one must, if the world is ever to know the wisdom and love of which each one is capable and if the world is to ever know the unique healing touch which can only arise from within each one of us.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

Creating Sacred Words

The question comes to mind of whether sacred words can ever be accidentally or unintentionally created. The clarification that would need to be requested, however, is that of precisely whose intention would be required. From a faith perspective, it should be obvious that good intentions are not always of human origin, but also of course that good intentions are not in and of themselves sufficient to create sacredness.

Considering the number of words available within any societally established language, choosing the "right" ones can make all the difference to a collaborative possibility. In keeping with what has been said thus far within this monthly newsletter, what is at stake here is finding ways to infuse communication with divine presence. That is, selecting words that empower love and wisdom to do their unique healing work.

An age of humanity that demands instant gratification, however, may be ill-suited to the creation of sacred text--which by its very nature has a goal of spending whatever time is necessary to find and select the most effectively empowering words. An idea that is communicated in one manner may lack the power to heal which it would have within another. On a similar note in the words of Mark Twain, "If I had more time, I would have written less." Not just any word will do.

The advantage of writing is nonetheless that once written, the words may be kept for literally centuries. While what determines whether or not or to what extent particular words will be considered sacred, varies

*"When we neglect
our bodies, minds, spirits,
or relationships,
we deprive them
of the vitality they need
to respond effectively to times
of difficulty or opportunity."*

-- Sister Who

enormously from one generation to the next, there is a potentially endless possibility of refinement of the words chosen. Perhaps this is why Walt Whitman's signature work entitled, "Leaves of Grass," though published in 1855, was revised throughout the next forty years until the time of his death.

A primary additional challenge to creating sacred words is that, sacred or not, every word in every language within every time must be interpreted. Words that may be sacred within a particular context, therefore, may not be within different circumstances. I am thankful for the educational and formative influence which allegedly sacred text has had upon my life, but I have come to the understanding that the sacredness was not within the words themselves, but rather within the dynamic of shifting life in positive directions which the words produced.

It would be analogous to stating that in order to connect with the power and presence of my life, direct interaction with me is always preferable to merely reading letters I've written in the past. The words of my personal letters, monthly newsletters, or even actual book manuscripts are hopefully helpful, but serve only as bridges to greater understanding and not as destinations or stopping points, beyond which no one is encouraged or even allowed to ever travel.

By carefully selecting additional questions to clarify some points and expand upon others, the real work of personal and spiritual growth continues. The activity of creating sacred words is thus a participation in that ongoing growth and certain questions which may seem trivial at the time, may ultimately be the most important at all. A significant part of sacred-word creation, therefore, is granting the freedom--perhaps even the duty--of intelligently questioning the words of others and especially those described as being in any way sacred.

Central to all of the above, of course, is the task of finding one's own voice; the expression of the absolutely unique spark of life that resides within no other person.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

Creating Sacred Life

There seems to be little argument that the world is currently suffering from the effects of an epidemic of narcissism. In striving to find a way to confirm whether or not one is an example of that, it occurred to me that since narcissism is the negation of relationship, a reliable test might be contemplation of the ways or the extent to which one engages in expressions of love that could be described as unconditional and "self-sacrificing."

It is specifically within such qualities that one's interconnections and relationships are most validated, affirmed, and empowered. In actively demonstrating such love, one also becomes a one of the world's healers as well as a vessel of divine presence. In learning to demonstrate unconditional love and self-sacrificing generosity, one actively works against any introduction or integration of narcissism within one's life.

I recall reading somewhere a number of years ago of the importance of giving to those who have no means to repay, in order to confirm that the gift is genuine. If one gives only to those who are able to give in return and in fact expects them to do so, any love and/or generosity associated therewith, has no integrity, but rather is in essence a lie.

Conversely, to the extent that one loves as Godde loves--unconditionally, in ways that are self-sacrificing, and in ways carefully designed to benefit others--life takes on larger proportions and implications than one's physical body and/or experiences will ever be able to describe. It is specifically within making one's self aware of these larger proportions and implications in ways that are genuinely loving, that a sense of the Divine is once again real within our world--thus also making life and living into sacred and miraculous phenomena. Virtually every elderly person whom I've met has agreed that life is too short; none of those who have filled their lives with sacredness, however, seem to regret doing so.

Making life sacred is simply a matter of bringing greatest love and wisdom into it.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

On a Personal Note

I seem to be in a liminal state of hopefully limited duration. Production of what will ultimately be twenty-four new episodes is expected to commence within the next two to three weeks. Photos for the 2018 calendar, tentatively entitled, "Evolving to Overcome," may also begin to manifest within a similar time frame. A possibility has also been presented for reconstruction of the God Space Sanctuary cathedral, but a number of considerations must first be resolved before any direct action accomplishing degrees of permanence is undertaken.

My personal experiences are wavering between a sense of exile and isolation, and a sort of confidence and perhaps clarity related to reinvigorating my ministerial work, through eventual completion of an important book manuscript. Circumstances at present are certainly not ideal, but a great many literary works have been written within less-than-ideal contexts. Through trying, however, I may be learning more than I realize I am.

Regardless, I strive to understand the nature, specific definition, and breadth of this ongoing ministerial work, anticipating that knowing its complete identity might provide guidance to the selection of routines around which my life is structurally oriented. Yet in all moments, autism remains both a burden and potentially a blessing.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

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