

sister who's perspective

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Overview

As much as people like to speak of freedom, merely repeating the word doesn't make it true and repeating the word too often may in fact blind us to the ways that it isn't. If the freedom we claim is not true, the only worthy response is to take action and reclaim whatever freedom was perhaps subtly and unknowingly lost. Without freedom, one will never be more than one's oppressor allows.

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

Societal Imprisonment

If a community does not give an individual within its midst any opportunity to share the best that the particular person has to offer, that community is engaging in self-sabotage and impoverishing itself—blindly rejecting what might be essential to its own growth and positive development. If that same community later asks for donations and support, it can be very difficult to listen. Sadly, this is a common occurrence within the present age of humanity. Communities say they want to thrive, but reject the means and opportunity to do so—sometimes even repeatedly.

The possibly invisible or overlooked victim within such circumstances—other than the community itself—is the person through whom the blessing would have otherwise been delivered to the community. This dynamic is very much at the center of why so many artists and visionaries are not recognized or supported until after their physical lives have ended. One could even say that the societal rejection has imprisoned them within their own identity; they cannot stop being who they are, but who they are is (at least temporarily) societally unacceptable.

All of which could suggest an obviously mythical children's story of the first platypus arriving on earth and journeying from one

continent to the next, searching for a place to call home. The only place the platypus was welcomed, however, was Australia. In every other land, the answer was only "Go away; you're too strange."

How many of us are wandering platypi, looking for home, but being either excluded or told to change, by every community we encounter? There is no escape, however, because in order to comply, we would have to stop being ourselves; from being what we were in fact born to be; we would have to forsake truth and live a lie. The alternative, of course, is for communities to develop their thinking in ways that constructively integrate the existence of platypi, but that choice is not ours to make; it can be made only by the communities themselves.

This is where popular rhetoric gets complex and confusing. In some instances, yes, one must make a personal decision to be free. In other instances, however, the decision is not within reach of the individual. What this makes clear, is freedom's multi-dimensional nature and within every societal circumstance we need to be honest about which freedoms are truly available—and to avoid devaluing any form of freedom just because either it is not available or another has already been realized.

The notion that freedom of speech is unnecessary because freedom of thought is secure, leaves us isolated and unable to collaborate. The notion that because all the basic needs have been provided (i.e. food, clothing, and shelter), other personal freedoms are unnecessary, has often been utilized to dismiss concerns about societal slavery.

By imprisonment and enslavement of any sort whatsoever, the best possibilities of life are opposed and the consequences are universally shared. By love and faith, however, the spirit reaches outward and the body must be empowered to follow.

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

Intellectual Imprisonment

While talking with a dear friend recently about my ongoing struggles to come to terms with being autistic, she said that it was her understanding that people with autism have the blessing and the burden of being able to perceive multiple dimensions of reality, but are often unable because of naturally human limitations to mentally process the frequently overwhelming flood of information coming into their minds. Her words immediately resonated with so many of my personal memories, that I hardly knew where to begin, to respond to her statement. It seems to be yet another example of how too much of a good thing might be experienced as a burden instead of a blessing.

Among the ways for such circumstances to be resolved, however, is that of having a village or family of some sort to help manage the flow. As quickly as perceptions occur, a knowledgeable member of the village or family is available, initially to redirect the energy positively but gradually to also educate such persons in ways to do such redirection and re-interpretation for themselves. More directly, one knows how to handle challenging events in direct proportion to how much one has learned, either from others or from one's own past experiences. The true enemy is ignorance.

Journeying through the experiences of my academic masters program, I was dismayed to find that many professors were more committed to their ideologies than to their students. From a certain perspective, one could even wonder if the reason they were apparently so threatened by even the most innocent questions, was that they had never learned to cope with such challenges. The ongoing danger, of course, is that their weakness will be reproduced within their students, if they themselves do not escape from the intellectual prisons their limited understanding has created.

In both cases, wisdom is not the exclusive possession of any individual, but rather (at least potentially) the collective possession of everyone present. In similar fashion, freedom is not the exclusive possession of any individual, but rather a collective blessing arising from relationship and

commitment to each other within communal groups. To the extent that a person is excluded, isolated, reclusive, or narcissistic, that person's freedom and resources diminish; the same can be said for any community.

Specifically because of just how interconnected everything is, there are as many times when isolation is imposed as there are times when it is chosen. I suspect for most who experience isolation, there is a strong possibility that both are present. If so, neither making all of the right choices nor being given all of the right opportunities is enough to create intellectual or relational freedom—or any sort of genuine prosperity; resolution requires both.

Both parts have a common adversary, however, which one might call faithlessness. If neither the individual nor the group believes that the individual is capable of doing what needs to be done, no choice will be made to provide an opportunity or to make an attempt—resulting in an imprisonment within such situations that is purely intellectual, but as effective as if it were actually physical.

Clearly, tyrants and oppressors already understand this. What they fail to understand is that such strategies are ultimately self-sabotaging and can lead only to various kinds of violence, impoverishment, and loss. By operating within the limitations of such ignorance, their own brokenness is replicated within others and the imprisonment continues.

Within reaching for the healing touch of inclusive and unconditional love and wisdom, however, all prison walls begin to fall—whether intellectual, societal, emotional, or spiritual. It is within rediscovering the treasures and capacities hidden within each other, that our own freedom and security is finally assured. It is within discovering the mysteries of all that is beyond us that we discover the ever-increasing possibilities of ourselves, individually and collectively. It is within discovering the infinite and eternal possibilities of wisdom, of love, and of life, that every form of imprisonment is a flimsy tapestry of temporary illusion, behind which are doorways to a virtually unlimited universe, far beyond the current abilities of our human minds to even imagine.

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Emotional Imprisonment

For basic comprehension, the mind commonly forms associations. Within that formation, the distinction between "need" and attachment," is very small. If, for example, I am the only one who can supply what you need, a power struggle has been created and the person in need stands the greatest chance of losing. The additional complication, however, is that regardless of being in fact needs rather than mere desires, a great many needs go unmet and those affected must either devise ways to live with unmet needs or die.

For myself, one such example is the ongoing absence of lifepartner, family, or community. The most recent rejection was encapsulated within the statement, "you're too holistic for me," by which I think he meant to say that I wasn't "Christian enough." Meeting an emotional need by sacrificing spiritual integrity, however, impresses me as being inescapably self-sabotaging—essentially imprisoning the greater part of one's self for the sake of emotional attachment.

Obviously this is an extremely common interpersonal dynamic within the spectrum of human experience. The fact that this dynamic is common does not, however, make it less damaging both to one's self as well as to the larger spectrum of humanity too. Would we ask Godde to be less than divine in order to be more accessible to humanity? Yet that is exactly what many practitioners within diverse human religions have done.

If I am correct that the Divine is to be legitimately associated with eternity and infinity, rather than being temporal and finite in the ways that humans are, then Godde existed before Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, or Paganism were ever created; Godde existed

"That which stands between ourselves and what is greater than ourselves, is not only a limitation, but also an attack on life itself—which must continually grow in order to truthfully be what it is."

-- Sister Who

before there was even human language to question whether in fact the Divine is real and before there was any complex system of ideas to explain in human terms what Godde is like.

A principle danger of creating a closed system of ideas by which to explain Godde, is that our minds, emotions, and even actions are thereby made subservient, are restricted from various kinds of development (some of which could be quite positive), and are offered no escape except to deny one's faith altogether.

My personal goal is positive relationship with that unified immaterial consciousness and reality which has inspired the creation of every religious and/or philosophical system. One could ask what is so compelling about the pursuit of greatest wisdom and greatest love, that so many diverse attempts would be made, but that is another question for another time and far too complex to address here and now.

So how do we find happiness within the presence of such transcendent mystery or has "mere" awareness made us prisoners of our human emotions? I suggest that the principle adversary of such restriction is spiritual awareness—or what one might call "the soul."

This is perhaps the most mysterious part of ourselves as well and it is perhaps the eternal hunger to know and understand the soul within each of us that drives us to reach for connection with a sense of soul that is also beyond us. In seeking Godde, therefore, we are seeking to embrace the immaterial parts of ourselves.

Similarly, in discovering immaterial parts of others, we may very well be discovering tiny pieces of Godde within each of them. Like a jigsaw puzzle with an infinite number of pieces, each addition to the larger picture brings us ever closer to a greater wholeness than we ever imagined to even exist. Is that more or less the same as being "too holistic"? Perhaps to certain perspectives it would be, but I remain convinced that the rewards of wholeness will always be greater than the rewards of being anything less and that those rewards can be found not only within heaven, but within each moment of life on earth as well—if only we will take the time to see them and thereby be free.

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

Spiritual Imprisonment

In some ways, persuading someone that no truth exists other than that which the particular speaker or leader declares, is the most insidious and tragic imprisonment of all, because it targets one's very soul and blinds that person to any possibility the Divine may choose to reveal. While societal imprisonment stands between a person and his or her community and intellectual imprisonment stands between a person and an honest ongoing search for truth, spiritual imprisonment stands between a person and Godde.

Time and time again, like the elephant in the circus restrained by a small metal stake, we do not try to escape the limitations of our current world-views or global understandings, because we do not know that escape is even possible; we live within a smaller world, only because we do not know that a larger one exists. Almost as insidious is somehow programming a person's mind to believe that escape would be futile and ineffective, even if it could be accomplished. Despite freedom's inherent value and potentiality, history is filled with those who at the first opportunity freely chose the security and predictability of imprisonment rather than freedom.

Being by whatever means deprived of any desire to be free, an invisible (and for the most part internal) prison is forged, which requires no guard, no wall, and no iron bars.

All that life needs to ultimately prevail, however, is a tiny crack in the sidewalk.

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Additional Informational Internet Websites:

www.GodSpaceSanctuary.org

www.DenverNeVaar.info

www.YouTube.com/DenverNeVaar

On a Personal Note

The cancellation of the June 23 presentation of three modern "morality plays" featuring Sister Who, was quite devastating. Potentially the most important performance of my life, I worked very hard to memorize ninety minutes of dialogue, but music still needed choreography, the voice-amplification system needed to be tested, and the stage crew had not yet been informed of even minimal relevant details. Whether or when these works will be presented within an alternative venue in the future, is completely dependent upon the availability of adequate resources. The church secretary's refusal to allow for even minimally adequate rehearsal time, however, ensured that any attempt at performance there, would have been a complete disaster.

Perhaps most people do not understand the extreme amount of work and effort required to do this unconventional ministry at all. So why do it at all? Specifically because after more than twenty years of serving others' personal and spiritual growth in this particular ritual garb, I am more convinced than ever that this is indeed who I was born to be. More concisely, I do it because I feel I have to and therefore also persist in striving to make the work as good as possible.

One such effort was the presentation of a speech and inclusive prayer on July 1, just outside of the Colorado State Capitol building, in honor Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Bradley Manning, who has also been described as either gay or possibly transgender, according to various sources. For those of you who have Internet access, a fifteen-minute video that includes the complete text of that speech, as well as some shots of myself and others arriving and leaving by motorcycle, has been uploaded to my online channel at www.YouTube.com/DenverNeVaar.

In other news, Sister Who will be competing in archery at the World OutGames in Antwerp, Belgium, during the first week of August. All related prayers and/or positive thoughts are much appreciated.

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