

Sister Who's Perspective

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Life is a collaborative effort, encompassing more than we know. In a time of abundant "information overload," news, communication, and travel across great distances, we often talk at each other without listening, communicating, or understanding. Humanity needs its icons, but also its iconoclasts to grow beyond the good and bad qualities that now limit and describe us. The essences of both God and us remain, in the midst of questions, to be discovered, experienced, and expressed. Please share in this ongoing dialogue, remembering to indicate whether and how you wish to be identified. Blessings, love, and peace to you. ---Sister Who

Overview

Every coin has two sides and for every belief there is the possibility of a myth: something that we believe which may not actually be true or which may not be true in the way that we believe it to be. Both sides of such metaphorical coins, however, have truth and insight to offer.

For those with the eyes to see and the ears to hear, myths can communicate truth that they do not directly contain. Until we look closely at our myths, however, the ones we consciously hold as well as the ones which are unconsciously present throughout our lives, we cannot use their pieces and parts to construct better ways to live each new day of our lives and more effective ways of being the individually unique integrations of flesh and spirit that each of us ultimately is.

May this issues examinations of myths and realities provide empowering insights for you.

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

The Myth of Agreement

As important as it is to openly and directly discuss resources and matters which are as a matter of fact shared with another, there is always a certain part of any agreement that is mythological rather than real. Agreements are inherently based upon current understandings. If those understandings change, renegotiation becomes essential. Had the particular change been anticipated, we would have realized that the agreement we were making, could not possibly be enduringly true.

Another perspective, of course, is that agreements have lifespans. That they are born, they live, and they die, depending upon circumstances beyond the control of those making the agreement. To expect them to do otherwise is about as reasonable as me expecting that my dogs will live as long as I do, simply because I love them.

Dogs are not designed or empowered to live as long as humans live. Humans are not designed to live indefinitely either. By involvement with life,

things wear out; but refraining from involvement in life in order to avoid wearing out, prevents one from ever truly living. So choices must be made which give value to the time, energy, and resources one's life includes.

Any agreement that requires dishonesty about limitations, is a myth—pretty, perhaps even inspiring, but ultimately a misrepresentation that can rob us of awareness. An agreement that my dogs will never grow old and eventually die, allows me to be lazy and irresponsible with the moments we have to share and invites long-standing seasons of regret when abruptly and usually without much warning, they are gone.

Seizing every moment like a treasure, conversely, brings to life an abundance of memories that will live on long after they or I am gone—empowering us to say, "we lived life while it was available to live, not wasting time in meaningless hedonism, but digging deep into love, truth, and spreading the wings of our spirits as widely as possible."

The agreement which does have the ability to endure, therefore, is the agreement with myself and with the Divine, to make the most of the life I have been given to live—to neglect no opportunity to love, to laugh, to cry, to listen, to speak, to sing, or to dance.

Once again, the value is not in the skill, but in the participation.

In living life to the fullest, I also choose to live in empowering relationship with the unseen world as well. God, angels, human spirits which have concluded their physical incarnations—even though I cannot prove the existence or interaction of any of these, I am open to their possibilities and their ongoing contribution to the wisdom and love I am able to give to others while I am still here.

It is not proving their existence which is so very important, but sharing the love and wisdom which my faith in them inspires that makes life a wondrous adventure of ongoing development of relationships.

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

The Myth of Diversity

A new friend suggested a few days ago that "we are all one." I countered that the limitations and perceptions of language recommended that he instead use the phrasing, "we are all interconnected," since describing humanity as being "one" sounded rather cultish and difficult for the human mind to intelligently comprehend. That—individually—there is a great amount of uniqueness is undeniable. That there is an enormous amount of commonality is equally undeniable. That two such contrasting statements can be equally true, is difficult for human minds to comprehend. Just because something is difficult, however, does not mean that it isn't still very much worth doing.

The myth of diversity comes into being when the perception of differences is prescribed rather than observed. We may have heard that diversity is a good thing and we may agree, but if we have not taken the time to become directly familiar with that diversity, it remains a mere impotent ideological construct. Another way of phrasing this is to say that I believe chocolate cake is delicious without having ever actually tasted it.

There are perhaps a great many things which exist within our minds as ideas with no experiential basis. While I am glad that such things can exist at least as ideas, there is much personal growth which can be gleaned from intelligently investigating actual experience.

Granting that there are some things for which experience is not desirable—most obviously painful or destructive personal or societal events—one can still more safely touch upon such experiences by being directly involved in compassionate rescue and rebuilding efforts. One can also listen with an open mind and an open heart to those who have received the mixed blessing of surviving such experiences, allowing their descriptions to serve as education and thereby bring value to what would otherwise be only an experience of tragic loss.

To move diversity from the realm of mere ideas into the realm of empowering experience, we must consider the resources or constitutive elements which are essential to doing so.

At the top of my list is the freedom to disagree and the ability for that disagreement to be recognized. All too often societal movements claim a union of diversity while remaining intolerant of differing opinions. A public commitment of

religious tolerance somehow fails, for example, to maintain unbiased interactions with Muslims, Jews, Pagans, or Atheists. The performance of the tasks at hand may be altogether unrelated to religious practices, but somehow negative and insidious suspicion creeps in at the moment that the religious orientation of the other is discovered.

Separating myth from reality is often no more difficult than taking an honest look into a mirror. For many people, however, taking an honest look at anything at all can be monstrously difficult—especially if what is seen creates an undeniable need to change.

Diversity within one's self, within one's life, and within one's experiences, however, requires the ability to change or adapt. One who has never changed throughout the shifting seasons of life, therefore, has not actually experienced diversity within the self or within one's relationships. The myth of diversity, consequently, is sometimes synonymous with Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr's phrase, "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose," which is usually translated as "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

I suspect this debate will be with us for a long time because both perspectives are potentially true in general, but vary one way or the other within specific examples. The point which I am trying to make here, is simply that claiming an ideal without requiring one's self to practice it, amounts to little more than hypocrisy—the sin against which the biblical Jesus railed more than any other. Better possibilities are available.

There is no reason that diversity needs to remain a myth in those circumstances or situations in which, upon closer evaluation, it is in fact more myth than truth. In fact, we have every reason to move toward integration and empowerment of diversity, but doing so will require us to relinquish the pretty but artificial illusions we have created for ourselves. The beauty that really exists is different from the one which we all too often create within our minds, but like the world of the movie, "Matrix," has other rewards to offer which the illusion can never produce, most especially the treasure of genuinely true relationships and life experience.

From another perspective, the myth of diversity is the invitation, the suggestion of what could be, if we can find the courage and faith to embrace the real and specific empowerment that a particular example of diversity offers.

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

The Myth of Hierarchy

Within the worlds of human civilization and communal interaction, whether or not we are particularly good at acting like a true community, hierarchical relationships often serve purposes of organization and communication with a fair amount of effectiveness. It is often, however, no more than the "accident of birth," as some have phrased it, which decides who will be the servant and who will be administrator. As further evidence that hierarchical relationships are a societal tool with limited scope, wisdom often comes to us through the most humble of voices.

Those who insist that greater education, wealth, or administrative power equate to any sort of true superiority, inevitably have much more difficulty hearing the voice of God whenever it chooses to come through the mouth of Balaam's donkey. It is not the mouthpiece which determines the value of the message, however, but rather the content of the message itself.

A further demonstration of how interconnected and non-hierarchical life truly is can be found within the story of Jesus' final meal with his followers preceding his crucifixion. He washed their feet—and insisted that whoever wished to be greatest, must be the servant of all. Any leader who cannot or will not serve others, therefore, cannot be great.

At a more basic level, this whole discussion is also about being able to see the sacredness of humble things. Various folk tales describe visitations by divine persons disguised as poor, elderly, weak, or disabled humans who are seeking to discover whether and/or where kindness, consideration, and compassion still reside within humanity. The fundamental lesson of all such stories is that sacredness and divinity are often hidden within the most unexpected places.

The myth of hierarchy is essentially the notion that any person is truly superior, better, or more placidly above all other surrounding examples of life. The truth, of course, is that life is so extremely interconnected that the life of the

most beautiful bird is dependent in some way upon that of the most lowly plant or insect. Noting this to be true within the world of theater, Constantin Stanislavski gave us the oft-repeated quote, "there are no small parts, only small actors."

The greatest is always dependent upon the least and vice versa. If we can all grow to understand this and consequently do our best to take care of each other, humanity will endure. If we do not, we will speed our own demise.

I do not mean to imply that hierarchy is bad; only that it is best used for organization and efficiency and not for determinations of who or what is most or least important. Things become myths when they are assigned a place or a role that they cannot truthfully serve, rather than being allowed to do whatever good they can within the limitations and abilities of their true nature.

Within seeing the sacredness of even the most lowly and broken person, seeing beyond the betrayals, failures, and oppression they have endured and from which they may need to be healed, a glimpse of heaven can still be seen. It may take a bit more work, however, to shovel away the layers of dirt that have buried that treasure away from view. If we knew the treasure to be found there, however, I have no doubt that we would all do whatever was required to bring that treasure into the light.

It is specifically because we do not know, however, that faith in ourselves and in each other is essential to our will and our commitment to continue digging. Whether the greatest of administrators or the lowliest of servants, the work of bringing treasure into the light is everyone's job to do. Failing to pick up a shovel and get to work, impoverishes ourselves and everyone around us in ways we have obviously never imagined.

We live within a vast world of buried treasure. Perhaps one of the greatest gifts of God is that we are born into a world within which, metaphorically, the ground beneath our feet has been so thoroughly seeded with treasures to be found. It is quite possible that other worlds have far less treasure available to them and that they wonder at our neglect of what is available to us.

In reviewing the movie, "Contact," a few days ago, I was once again inspired by the wisdom of the extra-terrestrial person: "In all of our searching, the only thing we found which made the emptiness of space tolerable, was each other."

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

*"Opportunities
are divine invitations
to expand."*

-- *Sister Who*

The Myth of Equality

If we ask equality to do what it cannot, to do what we ourselves must do in other ways, we render it a pretty but impotent myth. If we naively insist that the realities of our lives are synonymous with the realities experienced by others, without the least investigation of whether or to what extent our perceptions are true, we turn a belief in equality into an excuse for avoiding discussion of actual circumstances. If we leave those without legitimate ways to get their own needs met, in situations which are oppressive, we make a mockery of any claim that equality is in fact a virtue to be rightly desired, pursued, and maintained within one's life and person.

The notion that human society is stratified and always will be, invites those who have less to tolerate the existence of those who have more than they need—and vice versa. When pressed for an explanation, often the only one that comes is simply, "it's just the way it is." What this statement fails to consider is why things are the way they are or to what extent it is all of humanity working together that have made things to be that way.

The hope within this, of course, is that if we can all work together to make things badly, then we can also all work together to make things better. If we can build a structure poorly, this example itself can offer a myriad of clues about ways to do things much better. What we must remember is that the truth of equality means that no amount of pessimism or cynacism is able to prevent optimism and idealism from surviving—perhaps even thriving—within even the most adversarial circumstances.

The myth of equality encourages us to be blind to adversarial, misleading, and incongruous circumstances. The truth of equality invites us to not only see those circumstances honestly, but to rise up to meet them with all of the faith and ingenuity we possess.

Ultimately, it is not so much equality as interconnectedness which brings the power of truth and love to our lives, allowing myths that may have blinded us, to fade away at last. In fact, it is the perception of equal value across contrasting abilities, characteristics, and resources, which may produce the relationships within which we are once again part of the larger family of life and creation—both the seen and the unseen.

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

On a Personal Note

Significant progress has been made during the past few weeks on renovation of the house and property that are now also known as God Space Sanctuary. A rewrite of my second pre-dissertation doctoral paper is awaiting approval. If approved, four more such papers remain to be written. It would be most encouraging, however, to be able to put this one behind me and get on with the next paper. The title of the second paper, incidently, is "The Development of Symbiotic Individuality." If anyone would like to receive a copy of this paper, feel free to let know and I will be happy to send a copy to you, but please understand that much of it is geared toward the requirements of Walden University for such papers. With regard to my motorcycle, I have located a new repair shop which shows great promise for finally providing fuel-efficient transportation for me. The GMC Jimmy I acquired in July as my primary transportation is much larger, not nearly as fuel-efficient, and in need of many more minor repairs than I would prefer, but continues to mostly get me wherever I need to go.

Video production has encountered some delays, but I am anticipating resuming this activity within the immediate future. I am also contemplating the creation of a new holiday television special as well as a new video version of the award-winning modern morality play entitled "A Circuitous Journey." A number of circumstances are necessary for such production, but suffice to say for now that intuition is suggesting these projects will be brought to completion within the relatively near future.

Whatever discouragements may come, I believe it is important to keep dreams, love, faith, and hope alive. Your continuing prayers, positive thoughts, and support in this are very much appreciated. Within the larger picture of life, who we individually and collectively become, will be our most significant contribution of all.

May God's blessings, love, and peace be with you now and always, *Sister Who*

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