

Science, Climate Change, & the Call for Spirituality & Art

Good morning.

In today's essay, I share with you a wonderful article about the importance of bringing science and spirituality together. It is about two scientists who are trying to see people responding in favorable ways, to the reports from science. But as they say, scientific knowledge is never enough by itself, never enough by itself. In other words, facts just stand there and they don't necessarily motivate people to transform and be transformed, and that is precisely the work of spirituality.

As they say, scientific curricula often miss the powerful tools to create the necessary spiritual cultural transformation that will support pro-environmental behaviors and decisions, at all scales and over time. So fear and doomsday warnings are not enough, they do not necessarily move people, especially when they keep coming out every month or so ... it just piles up like pages and papers on a desk. They say we need something more powerful than fear to motivate people, something more powerful than fear to motivate people, and that is true.

And Thomas Aquinas says, "You change people more by delight than by argument," and uh, well fear sometimes changes people, uh it's not a motivating factor that, uh, sustains uh, the deep work that's needed.

And then we quote from environmental lawyer, Dr. Gus Seth:

"I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought with 30 years of good science we could address those problems but I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy. And to deal with those meanings spiritual and cultural transformation, and we scientists don't know how to do that."

So I think it's important, this call from a lawyer, an environmental lawyer, for spiritual and cultural transformation, and to name the real obstacles to combating climate change are selfishness, greed, and apathy. These are problems that a healthy spirituality is well-equipped to address.

So my book on evil, "Sins of the Spirit, Blessings of the Flesh: Transforming Evil and Soul and Society," just came out in a new edition a couple years ago, I take up these issues of selfishness, and greed, and apathy, and how to deal with them.

What are the teachings over the centuries from our spiritual traditions, East and West, that um, awaken the, the energies and bring about the empowerment, so we can move from selfishness to a sense of the whole, the whole community, from greed to a sense of giving, and from apathy and acedia to a sense of being fully alive.

And in my book, I bring East and West together, because I deal with the chakras of the East and the capital sins of the West. We talk about seven chakras in the East, we talk about seven capital sins in the West. And I point out that in many ways they parallel each other, that uh, if sin is missing the mark, and if the chakra stands for the whole energy field within us, at seven

different places in our physiology, um, then when we're missing the mark, maybe these chakras are being uh, affected also.

So I think it's a new and fresh way to talk about Evil.

I think that religion has oversold sin. And the result is that many people are walking around numb, numb to the notion of evil, while evil itself is, uh, is coming down on us, the shadow is everywhere. It's in the headlines every day, about how to address this shadow named by Gus Seth as selfishness, greed, and apathy, that holds us back from making a dent, uh, indeed, making a movement, of uh, ecological sustainability in awakening us all.

So I do think that the Creation Spiritual Tradition has so much to offer, and that these scientists are reaching out to ask us into a dialogue about values, how we move into an educational system that can teach values, with that we might survive. Thank you, we'll see you tomorrow.