

Daily Meditation 10-06-22

Spiritual Lessons from Animals, continued

Good morning.

We continue our meditations on animals and spirituality. And I pointed out a couple of days ago that the season of Saint Francis's feast day is in many churches a season of having a ritual at church and blessing the animals. And very often this ritual is very well attended, and brings with it a lot of interesting animals who go to church one day a year. And it was so spiritual as opposed to religious that they only need church one day a year.

But I do want to make a point that I think we want to be careful of thinking that we're here to bless the animals. It's nice that we want it, If a blessing is a Thank You, one day a year. But I want to stress that the animals are blessing us on a daily basis.

And I hope we are blessing them back on a daily basis that is mutual, that they are original blessings, they are part of Mother Earth that is an original blessing, which is part of the solar system, which is an original blessing, which is part of the universe, that is an original blessing. And we too, are part of that original blessing.

So we want to put things in context. And another way to contextualize what we're celebrating is through the work of the indigenous consciousness. And in my book on *Meister Eckhart: Mystic Warrior For Our Times*, I put him in a room in one of the final chapters with indigenous wisdom and shamanism, and in particular with Black Elk.

And I cite just one of Black Elk's observations in today's meditation and that is about how he says that "Everywhere the power of the world always works in circles and everything tries to be round," he says.

There can be no power in a square," he says. "You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle" -- this appears on page 215 of my book on Eckhart.

And that is because the power of the world always works in circles and everything tries to be round. The sky is round. And then I've heard that the Earth is round like a ball. And so are all the stars, the wind in his greatest power whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours.

Isn't that an amazing statement? That the birds' religion is the same as the Native American religion?

The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle.

So no wonder I talk in this essay about dancing Sarah's circle rather than climbing Jacob's ladder. And Meister Eckhart echoes Black Elk's important observations when he says "Being is a circle for God. And the soul is a circle of the world."

He calls on human beings to "Be a circle filled with the Spirit of the Lord." He says

"Heaven runs constantly in a circle. Therefore it has to be round, so that it can run more swiftly in a circle, for it bestows on all creatures their being and their lives.

"Where should we begin?" he asks.

Begin with the heart, which is the noblest part of the body. It lies in the center of the body, from which point it bestows life on the whole body. For the spring of life arises in the heart, and has an effect like heaven. The heart is like the heavens because it is constantly active in a circular manner."

He says, "The spring of life is placed in the heart."

And Black Elk says,

For peace to occur, understanding must be of the heart and not of the head alone. I wish to help in bringing peace upon the earth, and not only among people but within people and between the whole of creation.

So I think this is a marvelous marriage of the indigenous mind and of the pre-modern, mystical mind. In the earth-centered creation spiritual traditions such as Meister Eckhart so richly represents and from which Jesus arrived, that wisdom tradition of Israel.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.