

Daily Meditation 09-04-23

Wisdom & The Role of Cosmic Awareness East & West

Good morning.

In today's essay, we are continuing this theme of the role that cosmic awareness plays in human consciousness, and in particular, in our quest for wisdom.

So much of the last 300 years, the modern era has been a quest for knowledge. Knowledge, of course, is important and valuable, useful and practical. But it's not enough.

Pursuit of knowledge instead of wisdom results in what we have today in terms of climate change, in terms of the degradation of our soils, forests, oceans, habitats, wild animals, birds, and all the rest, all these species that are literally going extinct today.

And they are canaries in the mine, if you will, alerting us to our future extinction, if we don't get wiser. It's not more information, it's more wisdom that is needed.

And so Gabrielle Marcel, the wonderful French philosopher of the late 20th century, says that

the function of the true sage is to link things together, bring harmony. And this is true with wisdom seekers of Greece, but also of the East, as he says, in classical China, Lao Tzu and Taoism. What strikes me in a really marvelous light is that the sage is truly linked with the universe. And the texts from the East are revealing an unmistakable order to be established in life. Whether of the individual, or the city, or the Empire, is in no way separable from the cosmic order. Microcosm mirrors the macrocosm. We don't fight the way the universe works, we mirror it.

And the important thing he says, I think, it's hardly possible to insist on it too much, is that

the true aim of knowledge, and life itself, is to be integrated in the universal order, and not at all to transform the world by bringing it into subjection to the human will, demands, needs, or his desires.

This is of course, a rejection of modern consciousness, which puts humanity first. Francis Bacon saying "we will torture Mother Earth for her secrets," which we've done. And now we're paying the bills for it.

Or Descartes, "I think therefore, I am," as if he birthed the last 13.8 billion years of the universe, and the sun and the moon and the stars and oceans and earth that made him possible, gave him a body. Arrogance quadrupled.

Barry Lopez wrote a very wonderful book on wolves. And this is one thing he says in that book.

The scope, the casual irresponsibility and the cruelty of wolf killing is something else. I do not think it comes from some base, atavistic urge, though that may be a part of it. I think it is that we simply do not understand our place in the universe, and have not the courage to admit it.

We don't understand our place in the universe, nor do we have the courage to admit our ignorance. That, from Barry Lopez.

Hildegard von Bingen:

The fire has its flame and praises God.

The wind blows a flame and praises God.

In the voice, we hear the Word which praises God.

And the Word when heard, praises God.

So all of creation is a song of praise to God.

All of creation is a song of praise to God. Notice that emphasis on the All you see on the cosmos. And she talks of fire, wind, voice, Word, and Creation as a whole. So she's integrating the physics of Earth, Air, Fire, Water, into this mantra about praising God, which is of course gratitude, gratitude for the universe, gratitude for our existence. This comes first

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.