

Daily Meditation 07-01-24

Pride Month: Science's Latest Findings on Sexual Diversity among Numerous Species

Good morning.

In today's daily meditation, we are talking about the new findings in science about the diversity of sexuality in nature. And traditionally, of course, the argument against homosexuality is that it's "unnatural." But that that statement comes from heterosexuals. And the fact is, that 8-10% of any given human population is going to be gay or lesbian, and we have to adjust to that.

But equally important is to look at sexuality among other species. Now, for many years, I've been using the number 464 other species that we have studied, and found gay and lesbian populations in them. But more recently, and these are the facts that I'm sharing today, 1,500 species have been so identified. And we are told that this is vastly under-reported.

So there's a great discrepancy there, and that many scientists have found this reality, with beetles and elephants and giraffes and so much more, but have actually been under-reporting it.

So thirdly, what we have here is a statement from Creation itself, that sexuality is very diverse in nature, and that humans should not be pronouncing against a minority (those who find themselves gay or lesbian), but should yield to the scientific facts, that this is how Creation is. That sexuality is not a simple direction, it's multi-direction.

And I also recommend highly this recent book, published by University of Chicago Press, a short book called *A Little Queer Natural History*, by Josh Davis. It goes into many of the findings of the multiple expressions of sexuality that we find in nature. Not just in humanity, but among many other species as well.

And I end the essay by pointing out that homophobic legislation, which has blossomed lately as a kind of backlash to gay marriage and other advances toward homosexuals and transsexuals too. But this backlash, which has been fierce, this should be stood-up to, by more intelligent legislators, who understand the diversity of sexuality -- and what the price we pay is, for diminishing the dignity and the rights of sexual minorities.

For example, a recent study found that LGBTQ+ people are more likely to experience mental health struggles, than those who are heterosexual or cisgender. LGBTQ individuals are 2.5 times more likely to have depression and anxiety, or to misuse substances, compared with heterosexual individuals. And LGBTQ+ youth are at increased risk of suicidal thoughts, as well as attempts at suicide.

And what they find is, this is not something that's intrinsic to being gay or lesbian. It's a cultural thing, a societal thing. It's largely part of what's brought about by bias and stigma and discrimination, that young people feel and undergo in schools, and with bullying, and so forth.

So I did some research on the numbers of anti-gay legislation that have blossomed recently. "A living community that is safe, affirming, and accepting of who you are, directly relates to lower rates of suicide, and to better mental health outcomes," says one expert who has studied the facts. So it's necessary that people push back against anti-LGBTQ. legislation, and create safe, accepting and supportive communities.

Just one concrete example: Something as simple as, Be the house for not just your child, but maybe your child's LGBTQ friends can come over, feel safe, get cookies after school. Be the place where they know they can just let down and relax, and where they won't be confronted with the kind of hostility that is all too common out there today.

And studies show that there's been this tremendous increase in anti-LGBTQ legislation, or attempts at legislation. Something like 400 bills have been proposed in the last couple of years, to limit the rights of gay and lesbian people. And clearly this antipathy trickles down. Economics does not trickle down, but antipathy *does* trickle down. And the young feel it in the air, and they feel it at school, and it is very deleterious to their health and well being.

So when Jesus talks about loving your neighbor as yourself, and about loving people who are different from you -- a good example being the Good Samaritan story, where Samaritans were very cut off from the basic Jewish population of the time, they were hostile or considered the enemy or something different, the "Other" -- all that Jesus was trying to melt.

And I think that in the name of Jesus, churches and religious leaders are often themselves practitioners of homophobia, and actually teaching that God is homophobic, that God is against gay and lesbian people. This is truly a travesty.

And the fact that the diversity of sexualities found now throughout nature, is an affirmation of those who are looking for peace, their own peace, and justice and fairness and equity -- and of those who are passing laws to support the equity and the rights of these individuals, including, of course, the right to marry. All that is on the side of the teachings of Jesus.

So I share these thoughts the day after June. I'm speaking them in the month of June, but you will see them on July 1. But that doesn't matter at all. The recognition of gay rights and gay pride is not restricted to one month. It should spill over to the other 11 months as well.

Thank you. See you next week.