

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

It is perhaps the contrasts of life rather than the congruous elements that provide opportunity for integrity to flourish. Like a star shining within an especially dark night or diamonds displayed on black velvet, love is easiest to see when surrounded by hateful or apathetic attitudes. Feeling overwhelmed by extreme chaos and confusion is often the way that an attack may come. Hopefully this month's essays reach in a contrary direction.

Being Good When the World is Bad

I have lost track of the number of times I struggle with insomnia and within attempting to turn bad into good, I go to my computer during the very early hours of the morning while everyone else is still sleeping and type out newsletter text, website updates, song lyrics, or some other creative expression. In remaining open to untimely artistry, however, it does seem that a number of works have come into being, that otherwise would not. I suppose what is most important, is simply that I am listening--in spite of whatever inconvenience I may need to tolerate.

In the past, the goal seemed to often be named as "perfection," but the word now seems to have evolved to "normal." The extremes to which this is pursued are really quite astonishing, even though doing so is inherently self-sabotaging and ultimately far more limited and even unproductive. Very early in life, I saw this as being an irrational impossibility for myself and began looking elsewhere for a basic orientation.

In contemplating my relationship with the surrounding world, it seems that I have never learned to be both loving and effective in my response to bullying. So the goal has been reworded to striving to be loving in spite of the surrounding world's dynamic of bullying, but as a human being, I do not always have the

strength to do this. Unfortunately, in most cases, I may not choose to be a victim, but I am absolutely victimized by greater forces beyond my control.

Is this a better way to be? I am reminded of a particular episode of a then-popular sitcom on television, in which the character of an actress is forced to go to court, loses the case, and remarks that she'd "rather be a guilty innocent person than an innocent guilty person." I tried to find truth in her words.

The focus of US law, of course, rests upon "innocent until proven guilty" in order to oppose the former possibility. The court case portrayed, illustrates how this principle is not practiced, but rather depends upon having sufficient evidence to confirm one's innocence, without which a guilty verdict is logically rendered. The question with which I am left, is whether or not this principle is real if no one is willing to defend it.

If it is not real, then a myriad of evils will follow. If it is real, then life is worth living and love remains a fundamental dynamic within the universe--even if a large number behave according to the mental illnesses of greed and narcissistic individuality. If mental illness has become the new norm, how will those striving for mental health cope?

Yet health is health and illness is illness, whether or not they are confirmed by any conscious awareness. Health will continue to be beneficial and illness will persist in being destructive. Moving away from any manifestation of destructiveness, is not always possible to do.

Being healthy and beneficial while one has no reason to do so, confirms one's inner identity, whether or not anyone notices. Is there any reward? Perhaps, but there is absolutely no reward in the negative corollary, so perhaps even the chance of something good is still better--no matter what.

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

Being Honest When the World Lies

As I have often said, one of life's problems is that one stands too close to its experience, to remember all that would otherwise be known. At each day's end, however, one must live with being whomever and whatever one is. Having a voice is incredibly important, but only if one finds the courage to speak.

That being said, it is equally important to sufficiently engage in preceding times of silent contemplation, to have something to say. Merely making noise, in most cases brings nothing good into being. As bad as lies may be, only silence remains if good is never openly or clearly spoken.

Nonetheless, if one's context is more committed to lies, speaking anything true is more likely to be punished. The question with which I am left, is whether someday I will be more content to look back on years of punished truth or rewarded lies. Whether or not I will remember, is decided by remaining conscious and alive or, conversely, dying.

Even if there is no heaven or conscious awareness of such, failing to remember may be equivalent to never living at all; having something good to remember is what brings value to the experience. Lies do not have the ability to bring value to anything. Telling the truth, whenever one is able, encourages and even nurtures a different and better reality.

Yet truth is not always rewarded. Some will insist that truth is its own reward, but I am not always convinced of this--which leads to the question of whether rewards are even essential. Perhaps integrity ranks higher.

If I am not what I am, why are struggles worth tolerating? For me, at least, integrity is the reason I persist, because it is what makes me real--and in the words of the Velveteen Rabbit of literature, "once you are real, you can never be unreal again, except to people who don't understand." So even when I am standing too close and am punished for being so, I persist in being as real as I can.

Within being real, I discover meanings and experiences of love--which makes all of the struggles seem worthwhile. As much as I feel moments when Godde does not seem real, I also experience times when developments go

improbably right and I am compelled to think that something or someone characterized by love is watching over me. The blessing is that this reality doesn't depend upon me.

The challenge of being honest when the surrounding world lies, therefore, is being willing to see such moments, instead of being blinded by any assertion that they are in some way less real. If I am the only one within a particular room who is not in some way blind, I must persist in not closing my eyes. In one way or another, I was given eyes and the only thing that makes sense is to use them.

If I do not, I will be less than I am; I will be the reason that I am small, rather than being as large and expansive as I am able to be. I am also sometimes able to embrace this greater way of being, by listening to my own words--by listening to my own honesty rather than to the lies of others. The truth may be that I am merely one individual within the midst of an incomprehensibly large crowd, but this only confirms a need to be as expansive within my thinking, feeling, and experience of life as I am able to genuinely be.

What I find most painful are those times when the surrounding world attempts to force me into a smaller box; into limitations and dynamics devoid of love. As much as I need time to heal from such attacks, moments for recovery are not always available and I am all too human in my response. I try to reassure myself that if I did not experience such times, no one around me would have opportunity to demonstrate love and advocacy.

Yet I do not enjoy providing opportunities which others too often neglect, serving only to deny them the ability to say that they never had a chance to do otherwise. Yes, they did; I was there to witness such moments. My preference, nonetheless, is not for their punishment, but for their awakening.

The truth of honesty, ultimately, is that as many opportunities as possible will be created for awakening. What this may cost me in the meantime can be quite ghastly, but perhaps someday the scars and unhealed wounds won't matter anymore. The love which remains, conversely, will matter very much.

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

Being Spiritual When the World is Not

Seeing alternatives is always challenging, but not seeing is even worse. Perhaps the most significant challenge of spiritual realities is that they are invisible--so one must learn to see with more than merely physical eyes the realities which can make the constructive difference. This may be the most important characteristic of being spiritual: seeing with more than one's physical eyes.

Is a reason to do this even necessary? I try to avoid delaying my response while asking this question, because finding the reason often requires a long pause. One only has a limited number of moments to live, so it makes sense to use them wisely.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge--at least for me--of being autistic, is navigating the dishonesty and duplicity of the majority of people around me. This in no way negates the individuals whom I've met who do not embody this dynamic, but leaves me noticing that we are a minority. Be that the case, the survival of anomalous persons is still quite essential to the survival of humanity.

So it is not the need for survival which is ever called into question, but rather the means. Where there seems to be a great amount of ongoing debate, is the question of how this survival will be accomplished--precisely and specifically. In each case, the proposed answers value some aspects while dismissing the importance of others--not recognizing that any sense of wholeness will be incomplete without some harmonious integration of all of them.

Ultimately there are as many ways to do this as there are individuals so engaged. To suggest a way is to ridiculously assert that a particular method will work for all equally, but that is never true. Each and every method must be adapted, individuated, and uniquely employed, according to the circumstances

unique to the particular individual.

What I nonetheless find to be a common thread, is remembering the principles, values, and realities that one has tentatively chosen--at least until new information or understanding becomes available. What is curious about the diversity of perspectives and choices I have encountered, is that the majority of them assert a permanence and inclusivity they do not actually possess. Yet contemplation and awareness persist throughout most enduring experiences of any significant depth.

Perhaps some would call it "maturity," but rather than superiority, this refers to an accumulation of experiences, memories, and contemplation that creates a greater reality within the particular individual and different consequent responses to continuing events within the individual and collective unfolding of life experiences and encounters. At the heart of true spirituality, therefore, is the state or action of remaining aware of invisible but persistent realities. One is what one is, specifically because one is aware of what others generally do not see.

Metaphorically, one has vision within a world that neither has vision nor consistently values those who do. Nonetheless, without vision, the world will neither survive nor in any way progress beyond what has already been. The true pioneers, therefore, are not those who explore geographical spaces, but rather internal and invisible landscapes, without which the external counterparts will never become completely real and can never be fully and genuinely loved.

As much as love is the power by which all other powers are rendered harmonious, it too is invisible yet essential. One could even say that it is an essential non-material component of being truly alive. Considering the absurd focus on zombies within movie, television, and dress-up occasions, one must wonder whether there is more spiritual truth to this idea than anyone would prefer.

To be animated without life is common within books and movies classified as "horror," but that confirms the opposite all the more.

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

*"Faith is doing what's right,
without a reason to do so."*

-- Sister Who

Being True When the World is False

I persist in resisting any suggestion that living with broken promises is normal. While I have most certainly encountered those who recommend settling for this rather than the alternative of persevering in faith, life without hope seems far too empty and meaningless to be worth the struggles that each day includes. I still believe that promises are meant to be kept, even if the cost to do so is at times rather high.

I can only hope that Godde will somehow ultimately make everything right, in response to the many incidents when I have become a victim of others' lies. Nonetheless, the fact that they lied, does not release me from any duty to surround and fill my life with truth. It is once again the challenge of demonstrating what kind of person I will show myself to be.

I find it curious, however, that humans are among the very short list of creatures for whom this is necessary. Even the thought of acting in ways that are contrary to who they are, it seems to me, never crosses my dogs' minds. They remain incomprehensibly loyal and honest in ways that put others to shame.

Their love is astonishingly unconditional also, suggesting that in certain ways they may be more evolved beings than humanity has thus far become--and they are probably not the only creatures of which this could be said. Noticing those better examples, brings truth to the general falseness of human life on this planet. So much of human behavior is nothing more than an unintelligent sort of grasping after selfish whims.

While this is necessary within particular circumstances, I continue to believe that the best of humanity is demonstrated within the moments within which desires are subverted to higher principles. Being true when all others are false, is one way of showing this; going hungry or being hurt to prevent a loved one from having the same experience, is another. In the words of the horse within *The Velveteen Rabbit*, "When one is real, one doesn't mind being hurt."

At least then, it truly matters.

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

On a Personal Note

As the mental illnesses of narcissism and greed seem to increasingly flourish, the life experience of persons such as myself seems to become increasingly difficult, but living in any other way has never made any sense to me. Additionally, I continue to be amazed by the accomplishment of good within the least supportive circumstances. Even when I am at my worst, certain others are still able to extract empowering insights from the ways that I respond to various challenges.

Be that as it may and doing my best to refrain from judging the work too harshly (which I could often do), I anticipate creating twenty-nine new episodes of my ongoing television show this year and making the first show of the new year, the 500th episode produced. I'm not sure that any other public access television producer has ever done this. If there are persons who would like to be either guests or audience members of that recording, please contact me at your very earliest convenience.

I still hope to produce an inspirational calendar for 2021 and may even create a new holiday television special as well. All of this in spite of continuing but thankfully minor negative neurological problems. If there is any holiday gift for Sister Who for which you would like to believe or pray, it would be for a true manifestation of family and community.

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

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