

Deep Ecology: Not Mind over Matter, but the Heart of the Matter

“For Teilhard de Chardin, Mary and the Feminine is the Eternal Feminine. His Hymn to Matter praises the stuff of matter which will one day be restored at the apocastiasis: ‘Blessed be you, universal matter, immeasurable time, boundless ether, triple abyss of stars and atoms and generations: you who by overflowing and dissolving our narrow standards or measurement reveal to us the dimensions of God.’”

~Caitlin Matthews

This week, in Costa Rica, we visited a Leatherback Sea Turtle research project at Playa Grande. On the beach we were lucky enough to see a pail full of newly hatched baby sea turtles. The young people researching and working to save the leatherbacks from extinction were excited and happy to allow everyone to see them at work, making sure all the babies were out of the sea-sand burrow in which the eggs were laid and hatched. They carefully sifted through the sand, removing the leathery egg shells and examining them carefully, rescuing the weaker stragglers, and recording how many hatched out of the clutch. The turtles were to be released that night when the moon was full, to guide them to the sea. Releasing them at night also protects them in that there are fewer predators likely to get them. Nature is fecund and profusely prolific in creating, but very few live to complete the journey from conception to recreation. This is a truth for us too – most never complete the cycle of their own evolution in consciousness. The question becomes, how do we maximize the greatest survival rate and completion rate? Both for us in consciousness and in saving the natural world? The two are intimately linked.



It was a very moving and exciting experience for me, and clearly the researchers were in awe of this birthing time. It is always a miraculous and joyous experience to see consciousness recreating itself into a new form. What struck me was the smallness of the operation and the lack of fanfare to the world. Except for this small group of scientists and some very hot and largely disinterested tourists, this was of no import to the world – and yet our very survival depends on the births of these babies. In much the same way, Christ consciousness is born in the lowly instincts of our animal nature, in the stable of our egos, without fanfare or recognition in the world and our very survival in consciousness depends on this birth in awareness too.

Despite this being a quiet and largely unknown event in the world, there are always wise ones on earth who recognize the birth and offer the gifts of recognition. Gold represents the gift of realizing our own royal birth and Selfhood. It also symbolizes the loving service we will give to the world out of this realization and revelation. Frankincense is the symbol of the sweet fragrance of our own honoring of the indwelling Source of our being that rises to heaven, and myrrh, the gift of anointing the “death” of our bodily, egoic self and the birthing of our truest Self that has nothing but compassion and love for our suffering world. And all the angels in heaven sing in joy witnessing this metamorphosis of being, even if no one else knows about it.

I saw the love and joy in the face of my daughter as she gazed on this new life and again when she held a living sand dollar in her hand; when she took photos of the smallest patterns of nature in the jungle and screamed with delight at finding the howler monkeys high in the canopy of camphor trees, draped over branches taking their siesta. I saw the same delight in her as she leapt, startled at a cayman



two feet away from her and examined the smallest spiders. I knew that she recognized that she was indeed seeing “god,” or consciousness in all these small and larger creatures and plants. I knew the young man gently helping the straggler baby turtles into the bucket of safety, was feeling the awe of his role as the midwife – of heralding the birth of



consciousness into the world of form. There was reverence and rejoicing. His face was alive and radiant, gentle and present. He was operating from the Divine Mother within, and although he was recording measurements, facts and figures he was doing so from a place within that indicated his awareness of the vast dimensions of God. Not only was I reminded of Teilhard de Chardin’s energy, passion and awareness, but also the words of the Taittiriya Upanishad,

*“Oh Lord of Love, revealed in the scriptures,
Who has assumed the forms of all creatures,
Grant me the wisdom to choose the path
that can lead me to immortality.
May my body be strong, my tongue be sweet;
May my ears hear always the sound of OM,
the supreme symbol of the Lord of Love,
and may my love for him grow more and more.”*

My heart leapt with hope – it just takes a few to tip the scales for love. I heard it in the passion of Greg Vogt too, in Africa recently, when talking about his conservation work with the elephants. The few are unmistakable in their quality of attention, passionate energy, enthusiasm and joy. They quietly do the work of saving the world from the right place, in the right way.

And I also saw the desultory and cursory interest of all the people that snuck away without making a charitable contribution, or sheepishly offering a small token donation to the future of our world to care-take their guilt, with deep sadness for their blindness and ignorance. They were absorbed in their own bodily discomfort from the heat, the gritty sand and their thirst. They were not moved or awakened by the facts they heard during the presentation and they were not moved when witnessing the miracle of birth. They took photos and “selfies” to show other people, and moved on to the next thing that might stimulate their stagnant trance-like states. Zombie-like they searched for “fun” in the sun, willing to spend large amounts on the immediate relief from anxiety that alcohol provides or adrenaline rushes from zip lining or jet skis that make them feel alive in the deadness of their shame and depression.

And why is our survival dependent on the Leatherback turtles that are rapidly moving towards extinction? Because the amazing Leatherback turtle eats up to twice its weight in jelly fish in one day. The average adult weighs between 600 – 800 pounds but can range between 500 – 2000 pounds. So each adult sea turtle eats between 1200 – 4000 pounds of jelly- fish per day. Without the turtle eating the jellyfish, the jelly fish proliferate and jelly fish eat fish. When the fish are all gone a major food source is gone for many marine species and for humans. Not having leather back sea turtles, that have been around for 1 ½ billion years, will have devastating effects on the health of our oceans and our planet.

When we read these facts, our mind is engaged and we want to find a solution, debate the cause and effect, and are filled with fear and urgency or become apathetic and hopeless. We do not engage our hearts where true creativity resides. Facts engage the mind where

solutions to problems are thought up. While technology and scientific knowledge may be helpful, it mostly results in us throwing up our hands in despair and deciding science will find a solution to the growing problems of major extinction of the planet's many species.

Someone else will do it through the intelligence and knowledge that we do not possess. **We abdicate our responsibility not realizing that the solution lies within our own awakened hearts.** Science will not solve the problem, because it is addressing the problem from the same level at which it was created. For instance, science discovered plastic as a solution to many of life's challenges. The plastic that is now swirling in the leatherbacks habitat is choking them to death. Leatherbacks have little spines in their mouths and esophagi that prevent the jelly fish from coming back up – it also prevents them being able to regurgitate plastic bags that look like jelly fish in the sea. These great monolith prehistoric warm blooded reptiles (the only one) could go extinct because of the last hundred years massive scientific advances. Our scientific knowledge solves one problem and results in another one, *unless* that knowledge is subsumed under gnosis and the passion of love motivates us.



For instance, living in the paradigm of awakened consciousness we would not necessarily *ban* plastic bags, but would use them with great awareness, circumspection and care. Only when science is used in the service of love, only when knowledge and gnosis are re-united in consciousness will anything really change in the world. And then, and only then, will we treat plastic, (invented by knowledge,) and sea turtles and ourselves (created by gnosis,) with mindfulness and reverence. If you really honored plastic bags, the brilliant minds of scientists who invented them, and the process that produces them; if you really felt gratitude and took care of them, then this same awareness would extend to every living thing as well. Plastic bags would not be used indiscriminately and discarded mindlessly with an attitude of consumerism and greed, but carefully, with an attitude of regard which would extend to every living thing. It was not lost on me that it was a plastic bucket in which the little sea turtles were placed in order to save them.

Banning something, is the same rhetoric of the dualistic, egoic mind. It creates another –ism – plastic bag-ism. It is the language of separation, not unification. It is not different to every other –ism. Fear based thinking results in more hatred, rejection, splitting and difference in the world. It solves nothing. Mindfulness requires a quietening, a slowing down, not frantic urgency. Mindfulness is a shifting of attention to the dictates of the heart and getting to the heart of the matter, instead of jumping to superficial conclusions, instant solutions, giving advise, finding quick fixes and racing around in a fit of reactivity, or on the other hand refusing to be aware of the demise of the world by burying our heads in the sands of denial.

Only when our hearts open and we feel the joy and wonder that we, *just like the sea turtle*, are manifestations of love, incarnated in order to fulfill our migratory path back the place where we originated, knowing ourselves to be the wonders of the universe, will we treat everything with awe and respect. This is an innate knowing within everything. The sea turtle knows its way back to the place it was born 4000 miles away and we have no idea *how* it navigates it's way back. We too, if we listen, know the way back home – we just have to be very quiet, listen to the innate call, relax and swim steadily. The process is inherent – we manage somehow to get out of touch with the urgings of the soul and are distracted by the shadow we cast by standing in the way of the sun and the moon. We can find our way back home and in so doing we will save ourselves and our world. Back at the place where we first began we will lay the eggs for future life. Quietly without fanfare as we give birth to ourselves, we will bring life and re-creative service to the world. Social action will be loving instead of frantic and self-defeating, argumentative or apathetic. May each of you realize that not only is the Force with you, it is you.

Exercise:

- We will be visiting a Turtle Research Project in Bali – read up all you can about the crisis in Bali, the customs, traditions and mythology of the people around turtles.
- Learn everything you can about the four species of sea turtles.
- Consider how you still “ban” certain behaviors in yourself only to find that another part of you will somehow violate the ban. How does this inner dynamic play itself out in societies?
- Pay attention to what touches your heart, awakens your vision and brings excitement and energy to your life. Here lies the answer to the creative genius within.
- Consider the importance of keeping alive the wonder of children and how you would want to awaken a child to the glorious mysteries of nature all around them. How would one do this?
- Consider the following chart. How much of your allegiance is to the one column or the other?
- Do you find yourself judging one or the other?
- How do you shift allegiance from one paradigm to the other without judgment?
- How do you integrate the two to create a unified mind and consciousness?
-

INTELLECT (EGO’S) UNDERSTANDING

Literal
Factual
Linear
External
About others (seemingly)
Dualistic (me/them) (either/or)
Historical (Past, Future)
Time Bound
Specific
Story
Heroes and Villains
Obvious
Physical
One time event
Work and doing
Facts, figures and specifics
Externally referenced
Fragments

WISDOM ~ “KNOWING” (SOUL’S) UNDERSTANDING

Symbolic, meaning making
Analogy/ metaphor/dreams/visions
(Beginning/Middle/End) Cyclical
Internal
About me (seemingly)
Unitive (both/and)
Present
Spatial
Universal
Myth
Aspects of self
Hidden
Archetypal
Ongoing process
Play and Being
Underlying Principles
Internally referenced
Unifies

Listen to your own vocabulary to discover the paradigm
in which you mostly operate.

**Read and study the Taittiriya Upanishad on the
origin and source of creation.**

