

# Love your Enemy

One day in fall, my husband, Tom had just finished filling the bird feeder, when a flock of two or three hundred black birds descended into our garden. We watched for a few moments as they chased off other birds, and raucously scratched through and made short work of a few pounds of bird seed. I was lost in the beauty of the moment - the abundance, the feeding for their long winter trip, the black movement against the translucent red of the oak tree in the clear blue autumn sky. Lost in a reverie, I was startled by my gentle, loving husband's comment, "Goddamn blackbirds - pity I still don't have a gun.... just look at them - greedy, aggressive little crap birds!" I laughed at the obvious projection but also felt puzzled by his response. Not that I feel in any way self righteous about it .... I have said the same thing about mosquitoes and any number of other beasties that have somehow inconvenienced me ... I am guilty of anthropomorphizing, attributing human motivations to, wanting to destroy... just like everyone else. I got angry at Tom .... destruction is so catching. "What are you talking about? They are beautiful! I hate it when you talk like that!" It took me a while to recognize *my* projection.

I think if I were able to listen deeply at the time, I might have said something like, "It's really frustrating, going all the way to the mill to buy food and have it be gone in 10 minutes, especially when you have so much to do. These birds sure are hungry this time of the year." Of course, I didn't say that .....

/ like blackbirds! They have now become the symbol of a spiritual eco-practice for me. This is how it works:

**What is it that you hate? Take a moment to free associate and just write a list off the top of you head - things you often say, half jokingly.... Don't censor yourself. Be really honest. When have you said things like, "I don't know why God made ....." "The world would be better off without ..." I hate the cold, I hate it when I ...."**

Look at the list and ask yourself, "Why do I hate?"

What feelings arise when you think of this aspect of creation?

What need are you trying to get met though saying things like this?

What beliefs do you hold?

Where did you get these feelings and beliefs? Through indoctrination, loss, experience, suffering, inconvenience to yourself?

How do you anthropomorphize i.e. project human motivation, feelings and thoughts on to other creatures?

**Then:**

Ask yourself how much you understand about how this hated aspect fits into the system of the creation?

What purpose does it fulfill?

What would happen if it no longer existed?

If you don't know, intentionally research it until you understand deeply

What if your hatred could destroy it?

How can you learn to live in respectful communion with...

What does this plant, animal, bug, reptile, season, represent and symbolize about you?

Can you find blessing in this hated aspect of creation?

Can you see God in what is hated?

Can you make peace with it?

Can you stop hating? Can you stop saying this?



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Create a "Creation Mobile." What happens if you remove any one part of the mobile?

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