

Bessie the Cow
Reciprocity
October 9, 2023

Greetings! I'm Bessie the cow, your Earth Interbeing messenger.

Last time, we talked about sacred places and Earth Interbeing. Today, I'll tell you about how we live in our sacred place. To start, we need to talk about creation.

We have a different creation story than Westerners. You have two stories. In the first one, God created the Earth and gave his chosen male people dominion over women, all other life, and Earth. In your second story, creation happened within a microsecond some 14 billion years ago, the Big Bang. Everything that came after that moment merely unfolded the potential of those initial conditions according to the laws of cause and effect, a process that will continue until the end of time. Both stories strongly influence the Western worldview.

We hold creation as an ever-changing, dynamic flux of reality that lies within all beings, Earth, all forces, and processes. We have a relationship with this flux of creation, the Great Spirit, that which makes us one within the sacred Earth Interbeing.

Within this ongoing creation, the Earth Interbeing balances chaos and order through interrelationships, a constant give and take of energy, information, resources, and caring. These interactive interrelationships have greater importance than material forms.

From a single virus to the whole Earth Interbeing, life survives and thrives because it adapts to ever changing conditions. We find ways to preserve and renew the dynamic harmony and balance of life within the creative flux. The Earth Interbeing dances to the rhythm of the spirit.

Without this precious balance between chaos and order, life ceases. Imbalances may cause conditions to change too fast for life to adapt; or large relational networks and systems of the Earth Interbeing may suffer devastating damage; or a disease within interrelationships may disrupt flows of energy, information, resources, and caring. Without this balance between chaos and the order of life, interrelationships, and forms of being dissipate and dissolve back into the flux.

At the root of adapting to this constantly changing balance, we find caring, both an attitude and a direction. The Earth Interbeing harmoniously cares for the Earth Interbeing, creating a synergistic outcome for the planet, beings, and forces, held together by a vast array of interrelationships, networks, information flows, and interdependencies. The ongoing survival of the Earth Interbeing within the creative flux depends upon this caring within all relationships.

We consider reciprocity as the fundamental law of Earth Interbeing. Every being receives a constant flow of gifts: sunlight, water, air, soil, place, food, seed, warmth, healing, shelter, food, companionship, relationships, love, and the spirit, to mention a few. Every gift we receive comes from a sacred being, a being with its own love of life, its own knowledge, its own intentions, its own sacred offerings that it gifts others. Plants exemplify such generosity as they

have the knowledge to make food out of sunlight and air and then give it away to animals and other beings to eat.

The Earth Interbeing's balance and harmony utterly depends upon reciprocity, in which each of us have the moral, spiritual, and planetary responsibility to reciprocate the gifts received. We know the ongoing gift exchange of the Earth Interbeing as its primary process. How do we respond to a world made of gifts?

First, we offer our thanks to the beings who gifted us. Viewing our lives and the world as a gift transforms every day into a celebration of thanksgiving (not referring to the turkey one) and a culture of gratitude. Thanksgiving leads to reciprocity, to the acts and art of giving back, from which emerges respect for moral and Earth limits that govern our relations within Earth Interbeing and which heals the imbalances caused by our taking.

Again, Western people do not think this way, as monetary transactions govern exchange. You might go to a Big Box store to buy lumber and pay the cashier for it, ending the transaction. Yet the money you paid does not reciprocate the Earth Interbeing for the loss of a tree and its habitat as the money gets pocketed by the owner who only thinks about how to make more profit. The West has an enormous debt it owes the Earth Interbeing. We do hold beings accountable for taking without giving.

The reciprocity of balance and harmony needs to replace monetary transactions. Every being has gifts they can share and use to reciprocate. Through the respectful mutuality of gift-giving and reciprocity, the Earth Interbeing has balance and harmony. You could use the food we eat as a deep spiritual practice to learn how to reciprocate for what you take. Through reciprocity, we learn and practice restoring balance and harmony within our lives and in the world, our way of living within the Earth Interbeing.

Resources

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