

Knowing Sacredness

Delusion stands between knowing the sacredness of all life and the Earth and living sacredness. We may conceptually understand the sacredness of life and the Earth, but we cannot know how to sacredly interact with others until we deeply know and live our own sacredness. The sacred path moves us to that knowing, to awaken from the delusion of separation.

Most religious traditions view the sacred as external to us, a supernatural being that lives in heaven. According to the Western religious traditions, we enter life in sin, bereft of sacredness. Within this view, only when we profess belief in the stories taught by the religion will the sacred bestow his grace upon us and save us from eternal damnation. Because of our sinful nature, we will even persistently sin after our salvation, but the merciful god never stops forgiving those who believe in the stories about him.

In Western culture, we live as self-determining individuals and exercise our power to live as we choose in pursuit of our own happiness. The culture strongly reinforces our willingness to harm others for self-benefit and then to ignore the suffering we cause. As the culture denies the sacredness of life and the Earth, it ignores and undermines living as sacred beings.

Those who choose the sacred path of the Earth Interbeing have the purpose to further life on Earth through living the sacred ways and values¹. We come to know and live our sacredness and the sacredness of all. To do that, we humble ourselves.

The sacred path begins with removing the ways we harm others and the Earth, the path of self-discipline. Before we can know our sacredness, we overcome our willingness to harm others for self-benefit. Those on the sacred path do not seek the sacred but prepare us to know the sacred by changing our ways and views.

The path of self-disciplines requires us to refrain from acting within the world until we know what to do. To know what to do requires us to adhere to the sacred ways and values, which we cannot know if our willingness to harm others muddies our understanding. If we rashly act without knowing what to do, our ignorance will only cause more harm. Before we can know ourselves as sacred beings, we need to attend to uncovering our sacredness that our harmful ways obscure.

We attend to how we nourish our sacred being through the choices we make. On the path, we learn to know what harms and what furthers life on Earth, using the sacred values as our measure. By recognizing our need for spiritual nourishment, we do not seek the sacred but prepare for sacredness by persistently choosing what will nourish us spiritually and then make that nourishment our own by living it.

Through a firm and skillful self-discipline, we move away from what harms. We perseveringly keep our focus on ridding ourselves of the ways that we harm. The path takes times – years, decades. To do this difficult work over a long period of time requires the energy of resolve. Every time we change our

¹ **Sacred Values of the Earth Interbeing** (work in progress): respect for the sacred unity and equality of life on Earth, patiently bearing the burdens of life, yielding to the sacred to know how to compassionately further life on Earth, humbleness and gratitude, lovingly nurturing and caring for the Earth Interbeing, giving back for what we receive or take, mutually beneficial and affectionate interactions, and self-discipline to remove the ways we harm life on Earth.

harmful ways, we release the sacred energy blocked by that harm, which reenergizes our resolve to take the next step on the path of self-discipline.

The more the harmful culture has entangled us, the more difficulties we have in overcoming how we harm others. When we can perceive the sacred appearing through our faults and difficulties, they become the means for us to approach the sacred. By viewing our faults and difficulties within a sacred frame, we give ourselves the opportunity to know how to overcome our faults in ways that furthers life on Earth.

We have the challenge to know the sacred within all our difficult relationships and situations and to respond in respectful, caring, and generous ways. Although we do not welcome the hardship and difficulties, we persist in knowing the sacredness of all we experience without resistance or wanting to make the path more to our liking. We learn to respond to what experience needs to further life on Earth rather than to what we want.

We easily see the sacred coming through a beautiful flower or the affection of a child. However, we feel challenged to see the sacred coming through our most severe hardships and problems. We cannot withstand them on our own, and thus we come to the sacred to know our way through them. If we persistently deepen our spiritual being and path, we will come to see the path that the sacred has opened for us through even our most dangerous problems. By taking that path and yielding to sacred direction, we transform ourselves.

The hardships will break our heart open, but in the opening, we come to know our sacredness. We have reached our sacredness by centering our being on the sacred, the stable point from which we can face inner and outer challenges. Our inner being and outer experience have become one.

Instead of harming others, we learn how to further life by living the sacred values. Because we know life and the Earth as sacred, we interact with them with equality, respect, and care. By observing how other beings interbe, we learn how to interbe through mutuality, reciprocity, and furthering life on Earth. We cultivate our inner sacredness by learning how to live as a sacred being, reflecting the values and purpose of life on Earth.

We benefit from entering the sacred stream of life with the only purpose to further life on Earth in the sacred ways and values. We keep our self-discipline and respond with flexibility to what arising experience needs. Nothing can stop us from living sacredly for as long as we live. Becoming more sacred has no end.

We become filled with the sacredness that we have always had. Our sacred influence pervades and nourishes all so that all may grow in sacredness. By coming to know our sacredness and the sacredness of all, we have come home to interbe with all life on Earth. And the sacred path continues without end.

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