

Meeting the Divine Mother in Nature

Nature as Mirror and Teacher Universal Worship, March 13, 2022

We make a distinction between the natural and the artificial. The artificial (the product of artifice) is unique to humanity. This distinction is not in the external world but exists solely within us. Nature is a whole and includes all our productions. What can we learn from this?

HINDUISM:

The most exalted experience of bliss
in any realm of being
is directly knowing the universal Mother,
the supremely blissful one.
Ecstatic lovers of Kali the Sublime
are not pilgrims to sacred shrines,
for they hear all existence
singing the glory of the Goddess.
-Ramprasad Sen (trans. Hixon)

BUDDHISM:

Mountains and waters right now are the actualization
of the ancient Buddha way. Each, abiding in its
phenomenal expression, realizes completeness.
Because mountains and waters have been active
since before the Empty Eon, they are alive at this
moment. Because they have been the self since
before form arose they are emancipation realization.
-Mountains and Waters Discourse (Sansui Kyo), Zen
Master Dogen (trans. Kazuaki Tanahashi)

ZOROASTRIANISM:

Whoever teaches care for all the seven creations, does well and pleases the Bounteous Immortals; then their soul will never arrive at kinship with the Hostile Spirit. When they have cared for the creations, the care of these Bounteous Immortals is for them, and they must teach this to all humanity in the material world.

-Shayasht ne Shayast 15:6 (from Zoroastrian Statement on the Environment, adapted for gender)

TAOISM:

The Great Clod emits a vital breath called the wind. If it doesn't blow, nothing happens. Once it starts to blow, however, myriad hollows begin to howl. Have you not heard its moaning? The clefts and crevasses of the towering mountains, the hollows and cavities of huge trees a hundred spans around: they are like nostrils, like mouths, like ears, like sockets, like cups, like mortars, or like the depressions that form puddles and pools. The wind blowing over them makes the sound of rushing water, whizzing arrows, shouting, breathing, calling, crying, laughing, gnashing. The wind in front sings aiee and the wind that follows sings wouu. A light breeze evokes a small response; a powerful gale brings forth a mighty chorus. When the blast dies down, then all the hollows are silent. Have you not seen the leaves that quiver with tingling reverberations?

-Chuangtze (trans. B. Watson)

INDIGENOUS:

Kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water was a real and active principle. For the animal and

bird world there existed a brotherly feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them and so close did some of the Lakotas come to their feathered and furred friends that in true brotherhood they spoke a common tongue...

The old Lakota was wise. He knew that a man's heart away from Nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence.

- Chief Luther Standing Bear, Lakota Sioux (born 1868)

JUDAISM:

O God, who makes, forms, creates, and emanates the highest worlds! "You made all with wisdom" (Ps. 104:24), higher above and lower below, "to join the tent [together] to become one" (Exod. 36:18).

And You made trees and grasses bloom from the ground in the shape and pattern of what is above, to make known to the children of Adam wisdom and discernment through them, to reach what is hidden.

- from the Prayer of the P'ri Eitz Hadar, the first Haggadah published for Tu Bish'vat seder of fruit that celebrates the New Year of the trees, 17 th cent.

CHRISTIANITY:

Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value

than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

-Matthew 6: 25-34 (NRSV)

ISLAM:

There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end.

Qur'an 6: 38 (Trans. Abdullah Yusef Ali)

TRUTH:

Art is dear to my heart, but nature is near to my soul.