

An abridged form of this segment was presented to the congregation of the Creative Life Church in Hot Springs, AR, on Sunday, November 22, 2009. Your comments are welcome via email: creationspirit@gmail.com. Succeeding presentations regarding other aspects of The Inward Way will be made on the second Sunday of each month at the 10:30 AM service of the Creative Life Church, 229 Bayard Street, Hot Springs, AR. The public is invited. In addition, meetings of The Aristotle Group, formed for purposes of metaphysical exchange, are held on the second Saturday of each month from 10AM-noon at the same location. These meetings also are open to the public and participation is encouraged.

From Being a Turkey to Thanking the Turkey

This presentation has a rather weird title attached to it: “From Being a Turkey to Thanking the Turkey.” When asked for the title of the program for today, this one just came up in me, so I honor it here and give myself fully to whatever comes out of the still, small voice. Upon hearing this title, I looked up the meanings of turkey in the dictionary. The one most familiar is the name we give the bird many of us consume during this season. Turkey also means talking frankly, as in, “he’s talking turkey to us,” which sort of fits this presentation. What really struck me, however, is the third definition of turkey: slang for being a theatrical flop. Hence, when someone behaves in an untoward fashion, we sometimes say, “what a turkey he is!” Just as in a dream, when we live on the stage of life being both the play write and each of the actors—should we miss the main point of our spiritual demonstration by flailing away in the world and meaning of ego consciousness—we are indeed being a turkey. Acting on the stage of ego consciousness has distracted us from being what we really are. We are neither the play write nor the actor. We are the awareness of our spiritual story unfolding. So I suspect you’ll see a little of these last two definitions in action as we proceed.

Although this talk is essentially about Thanksgiving—the perpetual act of giving appreciation for all that graces us each moment—I’d like to begin instead with a metaphysical premise: we give appreciation and gratitude for what orders our lives not just with words, but by *demonstrating* the spiritual meaning of the gifts we receive daily. Otherwise, we’d just be trying to spiritualize ego. Spiritual demonstration, then, is where we begin—and what is our spiritual purpose. Don’t let anyone talk you out of this definition of gratitude. The demonstration of spiritual purpose is also very scientific, for it is the clear evidence—the proof of spiritual awareness—put out into the Universe.

For example, we all have heard of the Indigo Children, the multi-talented, so-called future leaders of our world. As we know, they have many characteristics attributable to highly spiritual and intellectually talented individuals. I suspect that most of us would declare that the Indigo Children are the very youngsters to whom we must trust our future if we are to have better days ahead. What a gift they are!

Indeed, the Indigo Children are a gift, a gift far beyond what we have come to believe about them and their purpose. If we look at what these special youngsters represent spiritually—as a symbolic representation—it doesn’t take long to reach a sound conclusion that the Indigo Children *also* mirror for us these same characteristics. So, we

take just a moment to ask the simple question: what *additional, even deeper*, meaning do the Indigo Children have for me? And the voice that comes out of silence booms the answer like a roaring lion: their spiritual purpose is to make us aware of these very same aspects in ourselves—those special characteristics and dimensions of consciousness that we have long forgotten or much denied. It's like being able to see beauty in another simply because that inherent beauty also resides in us. Yet, then, as now, the beauty is sometimes denied because it is hidden from our awareness. Now, thanks to this mirroring of our own talents and abilities in a bright and bold image of the Indigo Children, we can join them in building an inspiring future. Truly, this deeply rich collaboration is sure to inspire the world to mend its ways. And we express gratitude genuinely by joining with the Indigo Children in the exercise of spiritual power.

Likewise, if we take just a moment to survey some of the other holidays, we will find that these special days of celebration not only point to a select purpose of their own, but they *also* point the way for living spiritually. For example, let's take a quick look at the 4th of July—Independence Day—a day dedicated to the celebration of our freedom from the “mother country.” History tells us that our forefathers left England in order to achieve religious freedom. In a way, this certainly could be broadened to a larger array of freedoms, like the freedom of speech and a plea for social and political equality. Freedom from slavery and oppression are also found among any meaningful definition of independence.

Yet, if we look beyond the reasons our forefathers left England for this new land, it is not too difficult to see independence as freedom from ignorance, darkness enlightened through deeper meaning and purpose. It's also the kind of freedom that sheds the shackles of ego and mass consciousness, which bind us to a false sense of security. When we consider these forms of freedom--crystallize in the freedom to act from the Truth we find inward—we reach far deeper into freedom, opening the opportunity for making a real difference throughout the world.

With such freedom to practice the Truth—unafraid of how others who might be mired in the false imagery of ego or mass consciousness would judge our acts—the world changes into one of authentic living. Contrarily, wherever such fear of judgment guards against the full expression of one's Truth, we live in a world governed largely by deceit and deception. All around us we see the general tenets of “goodness” and “justice” abdicated in favor of amassing personal gain, largely at the expense of unsuspecting citizens. It's no wonder we feel burdened on so many levels—and why, in general, we could justly be labeled turkeys.

A question I have is this: “What part do we play in solidifying such conditions, such societal symptoms?” It's a fair and necessary question to ask, for only we can act to change these conditions to ones far more favorable—to the loving, compassionate way. It would take a major treatise to list the myriad ways we could contribute to a reversal of such conditions and circumstances, but it will suffice to lump them all into a single declaration: celebrate spiritual freedom daily. Activating the expression of the Truth we find within and sending it forth into the world demonstrates the freedom of living

compassionately. Focusing ourselves on this single spiritual path, The Inward Way, casts forth the real fruits of freedom expressed.

Spiritually, each of us has a responsibility to live by the Truth we hear within, and in fulfilling this responsibility we embolden others to do likewise. In this are we true followers of Christ consciousness, and thus the example for spiritual integrity. It is in Christ consciousness that we are freed from what has held us hostage in the jail of illusion and false belief. By expressing or demonstrating Christ consciousness we also express the highest form of gratitude into form.

Then there are the presidents' birthdays and Martin Luther King Day that we celebrate. In each of these holidays, we have the opportunity to celebrate the dedication to authentic leadership, which steps way beyond mere political expediency, in favor of using the Truth found within as the central pillar of a wider and deeper vision for humankind. In this wider and deeper vision we are One, adhering to our inherent charge, the charge to lead only from the Truth of our Being. Once again, to demonstrate what we are called to Be is the highest form of gratitude.

When we celebrate holidays like those attributed to past presidents or the social equality agenda of Martin Luther King, let us understand that by expressing the key ingredients of authentic leadership—not only on these special days, but *every* day—we will be contributing to the uplifting of the spiritual fiber of our planet and the leadership void the spiritual demonstration fills. And, yet again, we will also have demonstrated the deepest sense of gratitude, not simply with a “thank you,” but with the fullness of our Being.

This could easily lead us to deal with the “loving days:” Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. In each of these we are encouraged to honor those we say we love with gifts to one another, in one way or another—a special day for giving our “valentine” a gift of love; another for honoring the loved ones who brought us into being. Indeed, these are good reminders for expressing our deep-seated feelings of love to the ones who have given us what we have seemed to need. So much are these days now celebrated in our lives that millions of dollars are made through the sale of cards, flowers, dinners, and gifts as expressions of appreciation and gratitude. But when viewed beyond the obvious, we come to see that each of these holidays can also serve to remind us to love one another *every* day by respecting everyone in the individual expression of their divinity.

This conversation about appreciation and gratitude reminds me of how we sometimes deal with the Sabbath. We celebrate the Sabbath, depending on our religious foundation, on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Each week, no matter what our religious affiliation, we hold a single day as sacred in observance of worship. We rest from work and instead rest our soul in the sacredness found in communion with God, in whatever form one is accustomed to or prefers.

I’m confident each of us has witnessed—perhaps even done so ourselves—people acting holy on the Sabbath and then expressing something other than their inherent divinity during the rest of the week—perhaps even later that same day. To me, this points to the need to widen and deepen our spiritual understanding to include the real meaning of the

divinity we each are, and along with it the spiritual meaning of Sabbath.

We are divine for all time—that’s *all* we are. Divine is what we always have been, are, and always will be. Being divine, are we to express the various aspects of divinity on only one day a week? Or only once a year on a particular holiday? If we were to begin a new nutritional regimen, would eating healthy meals only one day a week or once a year suffice? If we commit to a healthy exercise routine, would exercising only one day a week, or on only one day a year dedicated to our commitment, fill the bill? Hardly. Just as in these seeming mundane matters, expressing gratitude requires of us a *regularize* practice of demonstrating our commitment to higher purpose. It is through this endless expression that we lead spiritually. This is the Sabbath honored and celebrated justly. Otherwise, the expression we’re conveying is some combination of ego and mass consciousness, neither of which are the Truth, and certainly not good examples of authentic gratitude. And there we would be, lingering yet again with our necks sticking out: “gobble, gobble, gobble!”

To be like a turkey would be like a tree expressing itself as a horse, or a raindrop expressing itself as a blowing leaf. We are to Be and to express only what we are, faithfully and always. Thus we express our sincere gratitude by fulfilling our divinity, honoring the sacredness of each eternal moment as the Sabbath—including the precious moments savored in authentic relationship.

With this principle in place, then—and using these outer signs as indicators of a larger purpose—we can now move to the day we will honor on Thursday. One thing we can say without equivocation about Thanksgiving is that it has a huge impact on our society. Just think about what it has to say about gathering as family, and about giving thanks for the many gifts accompanying loving family, as well as all those supporting us in daily living. The most important thing in this regard is not that we take one day a year to stop this crazy merry go-round we’re on in order to express gratitude. Rather, just as in the other holidays, we’re reminded in the celebration of Thanksgiving to express gratitude as an everyday obligation.

By obligation I don’t mean we *must* express gratitude every day, but that when we fill ourselves with such good imagery and daily acknowledge the myriad gifts bestowed on us, we obligate that spirit of gratitude to every cell of our body, as well as out into the Universe. Keeping a daily gratitude journal—or even just taking a moment as we put our heads on the pillow at night to scan the day just lived for all the marvelous blessings we’ve received—can make all the difference in our attitude about Life.

I like the Southern acknowledgment of gratitude: “I appreciate you.” Conveyed sincerely, this simple expression really makes a difference. So, even though we have a single holiday devoted to Thanksgiving, supposedly connected with the Pilgrims’ landing years ago on our eastern shore, the commemoration of the event is not what’s so important. It’s the purpose garnered by a deeper reflection and commitment to giving thanks regularly throughout our time on this planet. This can extend to the food on our tables, the brilliantly colored flowers in our garden, a smile, hug, simple straightforward eye contact, a tender touch, the blue skies and rainy days alike, each a rendering inspired within.

Indeed, each heart rendering is a validation of the Truth that makes Life grand.

In a very real way, these expressions are a sign of compassion, both for the others as well as us. Allowing the *awareness* of gratitude expresses compassion for us. *Demonstrating* our awareness faithfully embraces the rest of the world with the glory and grace of compassion. In each such moment we are rendered whole and hearty once again. Dressed momentarily in some attitudinal costume of doom and gloom, expressing appreciation for another frees us from those garments, if only for a brief moment. Even this is helpful, because in this one brief moment we will have freed ourselves from a stray, erroneous thought of being separated from God—and thus others. It is through the *regular* exercise of appreciation, and not just several times a year, that we are opened to the generosity of Spirit found only in our Truth individualized. There are many holidays, a good many more which can instill in us the will to celebrate Life to the fullest.

I can tell you this—be assured of this today and *every* day: each sign of kindness and thoughtfulness you extend to me activates a sense of appreciation and love pouring through me, and in such moments I know in yet another form that we are One. Each demonstration is such a wonderful, yet simple, way of reaching one another on the deepest levels. Truly, this is freedom lived and gratitude demonstrated. Yes, every day I greatly appreciate you, more than you could understand only from words. For all you are and do with your beautiful lives, I am grateful.

And, oh, yes, I am grateful, too, for the symbolism and reality of the turkey we celebrate this week. It's all such a good reminder to give thanks moment by moment. Now, just because I'll have a good bit of turkey *in* me by the end of the day Thursday, please don't *call* me a turkey!