

David's Desk 185 Audio Companion October 2022

James: Okay, so we're doing another David's Desk audio companion.

David: That's exactly right.

James: Well, welcome, David.

David: Thank you, my friend. It's a pleasure to be doing this again.

James: Today we'll be talking about Queen Elizabeth, service, sovereignty, and the commonwealth of the subtle commons.

David: Yeah, this was the big news events of the past month, and I just felt I couldn't let it go by without saying something about it. We have midterm elections coming up in this country, and, of course, the airwaves are filled with commercials for various candidates. In it all, I just don't get the sense of people running for office out of a sense of deep public service. That's a very broad statement, obviously, and there are people who are running who I think are genuinely desirous of serving the public.

But I was thinking of Queen Elizabeth and her 70 years of dedication and just total commitment to service and to carrying the responsibility of the monarchy. Certainly, one can look at the British monarchy and see all the historical baggage that it carries on colonialism and Empire and so on. There's a lot of damage to the world that it created. But on the other hand, there was a lot of good that came out of it as well.

I think viewed from the standpoint of human history and from those beings who overlight the sweep of human development, these large empires—for all the suffering they create and the bad that they do—they also act as unifying influences within humanity, drawing peoples together in ways they might not have been drawn together otherwise and providing for mixing of cultures. Certainly, Alexander's empire did that and the Roman Empire did that and the British Empire did that. Even today, we have these remnants of that global influence in the Commonwealth.

So here is one person standing at the focal point of of that historical construct and all the energy associated with it, and she just held that energy so well. I was thinking of her as a wonderful example of somebody who holds and who carries responsibility and is dedicated to the principles of service.

James: I met her when she visited. I am from Canada, Canada's a Commonwealth, and when she was newly crowned queen, she visited Halifax, Nova Scotia when I was a child there. I have a really distinct impression of her because my mom took us there—my brother and my sister and me—to see the queen. And as a human being apart from the Queen and the monarchy, I had a distinct impression that has lasted for...wow, almost 60 years, of this compassionate, caring individual who was, as you say, in service and above the fray of the politics, above the fray of good-bad, right-wrong. For me, she held a presence of being in service and of deeply caring.

David: In David's Desk, I write about an experience that my wife, Julie and I had in London back in the 70s when we were still living at Findhorn and had gone down to London to take part in a conference. We were out one evening just strolling about and seeing the sights and came upon this crowd, as I write, who were gathered in this movie theater where they were having a premiere of the movie *Lost Horizons*. We asked what

was going on and a person in the crowd said, “We're waiting to see the Queen, she's attending the movie and she'll be coming out.” So Julie and I positioned ourselves strategically in the crowd, mainly by climbing up on a fence. And then she came out. And because it was a premiere, there were these spotlights that were there shining and the light hit this dress she was wearing—it was all white—and she was wearing a tiara or something on her head. Something sparkly—I'm sure it was not sequins, they probably were jewels, diamond encrusted or something. Anyway, it hit the light and it just was like she exploded into light. Like, the person disappeared and there was this explosion of light, this being of light. It was an amazing moment. You could feel the love of the crowd for her and her love back. So that has always stayed in my memory as well.

You know, James, when I think about these things, I think of Elizabeth and monarchy—obviously, the focus is of global energy, but at the same time, my question is, how does that converge? Or how does that distill down into our individual lives? And how is it relevant at this particular time?

Certainly, I think the idea of the having this person who's at the focal point of a global institution, which is now the Commonwealth, as well as the British monarchy, that's important because there aren't these individuals who are regarded throughout the world with affection and with respect. They seem to be in a decreasing number these days, but nevertheless, they're there, and they do act like needles that pull the thread that pulls the rest of humanity together.

But at the same time, I think of them as exemplars of qualities that we can embody in ourselves. A number of years ago, when we were having a presidential election, I wrote a David's Desk (or I wrote something...I'm pretty sure it may have been David's Desk, but it might have been something else) about electing the president within, to think about the role that the President had

in everyday life, and how the life of the nation was replicated in our own lives as we took responsibility for our own lives and for what we created in the world. It was another way of talking about Sovereignty. I said we should do a bumper sticker that says “Elect the President Within!” [*chuckles*] But nobody would know what that meant! [*chuckles*]

James: Well, I do like that. For me, she embodied qualities. Yes, she was human. I guess she had a good sense of humor, and all of these things, but the people who met her, like the Prime Ministers or presidents..lshe rose...she lifted them up out of their story where they were. And that's the qualities that she embodied in that at 25 she dedicated her life to the service for her country and for her people, and that's something that is just not found anywhere anymore in that sense. Maybe King Charles will grow into that. I'm not a monarchist in that sense, right? However, I do appreciate the qualities that individuals hold for us so that we can see them in ourselves.

David: Exactly. Yeah. The point that I wanted to make in David's Desk this month is what is it in the life of this individual that we can find in our own lives? Where does her example strengthen qualities within ourselves?

James: This idea of being devoted to service, and within Lorian, we're moving into service beyond ourselves, beyond our community, to the world, to Gaia, to be in service too, right? And she's an exemplar of that for me.

David: Yes. And, you know, it's a big ask, and those qualities can be expressed in a number of ways, at different scales, different levels of expression. I think so many people now are experiencing the challenge of meeting the responsibility to their families and to their everyday life. How do I pay my monthly bills? How do I keep food on the table? How do I keep illness at

bay? People do take up that responsibility, people hold at that individual level, at that familial level.

The challenge that we face is that we're being asked to think beyond that into a global scale, and that's not easy. This current election that we're having in our country illustrates that. Obviously, the issue of climate change is a major one. I mean, right now, there's a huge hurricane building, bearing down on Florida and threatening massive flooding. We've still got fires, and yesterday here in this area we were still getting smoke from regional wildfires. So the issues of climate change are not going away. They're getting ever more urgent. There's a need to begin holding in our own lives, the well-being of the world that we're sharing together, and to recognize, as Vance said in the Summit, we're all part of a single world and the well-being of all species is important.

So there's this juggling of how do I handle my individual areas of responsibility, and at the same time, begin to think in terms of how do I serve this larger whole of which I'm a part, because increasingly, we recognize how inextricably they are tied together.

James: When I listen to what you're saying and I look inside, I feel a part of me saying I don't have the energy to go beyond my family. Where do I source because I don't source...If I'm just looking at my physical energy—I eat something, I feel energized, like that kind of energy—at the end of the day, if I was just looking at a physical way of supplying the energy I need to do the things I need to do to keep my family fed and safe and have a roof over their head and deal with whatever neighborhood issues that are coming up, your tank could be empty at the end of the day.

Where is that source that you can expand your circle of caring, that sense of I care for myself, I care for my family, I care for

my neighborhood or my tribe, and I care for the world. It has to come from a deep source within myself that is beyond where most people are sourcing right now to be at that level of service. That's my sense.

David: I agree, James. Let's look at this from an I.S. point of view. The way that I handle that, because physically, there are definitely certain limits to my energy. I'm really good in the early morning and through the first half of the day and around 1pm and I can feel my tank begin to run out. So I think, yes, how much energy do I have? How do I prioritize that for the things that I need to accomplish? And there are, of course, all these family things I want to do—I've got a new grandchild, I have a new grandson on his way next year, and as you say, there's a lot of personal work to be done.

But at the same time, this idea of a Gaian consciousness—I think at times we may think of it and we get hold of the wrong end of the stick; we think of it in terms of its large scale, that in some way I'm going to have to hold the world and supply all this extra energy to do projects and things that affect the globe.

But the other end of that stick is that I'm never outside of Gaia. I'm always within the wholeness of the planet. So whatever I'm doing, that moment and that event and that activity is a portal into the larger domain of Gaia itself, which we all share. Physically, that is not so apparent, because physically we're obviously located in these bounded bodies. But energetically, we are part of this larger whole.

Let's say that whatever I'm doing—I'm cleaning up in the kitchen, or I'm working at the computer, or I'm just sitting here and reading or arranging things here in the living room—whatever I'm doing, I'm touching Gaia, my body is touching Gaia, my energy field is touching Gaia. And it doesn't take a great deal of energy—it doesn't really take energy at all, for me

to think in myself here's love that pours out through the portal of this moment to this larger whole. Here's a sense of acknowledgment that I'm part of this larger whole. Here's a sense of appreciation and a sense of caring for this larger whole. That may not sound like a great deal, but what it does is it builds a frame of mind and builds a way of looking at oneself and a way of looking at the world so that when opportunities arise, that something comes forward where my energy can go into something that's larger, then I'm primed for that, so to speak. It's not a not a burden, but it's a natural outflow of the relationship that I've already established with this larger wholeness. We're not served by getting caught in a binary between the "big world" and the individual,

James: As you're describing that wholeness and I let go the "Oh my god, this is too big!" kind of story, I actually felt my breath expand. Oh, I'm breathing. Alright, so I'm breathing. Gaia is breathing, Gaia is breathing, like I'm breathing. There's no distinction between me and Gaia in that sense of I am an expression of life just being and being breathed, like my breath going in and out. And that expanding into a fuller sense in that moment by just shifting as you say, just shifting a perspective. It's not little me as this separate thing trying to do something that's really big; it's just me recognizing and acknowledging that I am part of the whole. I don't have a distinction when I look at life. I'm alive, you know, and life is moving.

David: Exactly. James. Let me give a simple example. One of the exercises in Incarnational Spirituality is the Touch of Love. By calling it an "exercise," it gives it a certain panache that may actually get in the way because it's really just a simple gesture of relationship. But on the other hand, if I think of it as an exercise, I can think of it as something that I intentionally practice. So let's say that I'm sitting here, I've got the iPad on a table in front of me. If I lay my hands on this table and I just feel the relationship between the life in me and the life in this

table, that we're both part of this Gaian whole, and out from me pours a sense of appreciation for the table—for one thing, it's supporting the iPad so that I can talk to you more or less at eye level. And I can sit in a more or less comfortable chair here in my living room while we have this conversation. It makes it so much more informal for me than sitting at the computer with earphones on and all the paraphernalia. So I have appreciation for this table, I have love for the life that's within it, for the sacredness that's within it, for the holding, the carrying of the spirit of matter that allows this table to exist. At some level, there's a consciousness, there is an intelligence that is giving itself in service to allow matter to exist.

I may not fully understand what that consciousness or intelligence is. I can call it Gaia, I can call it the Spirit of Matter, I can call it Bob. But the important thing is that I can enter into a relationship with it. I am in a relationship with it anyway because my body is built out of that matter.

So I'm just allowing love to flow from me. I don't actually even have to touch the table for that to happen, but the touching provides a nice sense of tactile contact and emphasizes the sense of the relatedness. The remarkable thing that happens is that I feel a response, I feel energy coming back to me. Actually what I feel is what something you were mentioning earlier, which is an expansion. I feel part of something much larger and and therefore I can participate in the energy of that much larger field.

So my tank gets bigger. And when my tank gets bigger, then I find I have more energy with which to engage with my life. It might not always be physical energy, it may be psychological energy, it may be subtle energy, it may be emotional or mental energy. In that sense, it's a very simple thing to do, but it opens a portal to a very wonderful and spacious reward. That's a way in which I feel we can become more spacious in how we deal

with our life and more expansive, rather than being constricted into the narrow and tight confines of our emotional anxiety and our mental worry and so on,

James: That expands my definition of being in service. To be in that kind of a relationship in in the expanded...so the table is part of my world in a very different way, in terms of my relationship with it. As you were saying that, I was going back to my experience of meeting Queen Elizabeth and then your experience of the crowd, the love flowing from the crowd to her and from her to them. In some sense, she held that for the Commonwealth. It wasn't the little human being separate from everything; it was like the Touch of Love, an experience of holding a relationship with something so much larger than your own unique physical being, and yet able to do that for 70 years or for ourselves able to do it every day as we go about our ordinary lives.

David: Yes, exactly. I'm obviously not part of the Commonwealth, I'm a citizen the United States, but I have a great feeling for what the Commonwealth offers to the world because it's one of the few organizations that has a global perspective—the United Nations is another one. And these are so important. Any institution or organization or effort that creates bridges and allows the various diverse elements of humanity a platform in which to work together and find collaboration and partnership, that's so much needed these days—both at a practical level, but also in the way in which we think of ourselves. To think that all of us, whether we're part of the British Empire or not, we're all part of the Commonwealth of humanity. That's another way of thinking about what I call the Subtle Commons—that it's a Commonwealth of Life that extends through both the subtle and physical universes.

James: And in Incarnational Spirituality, we're moving more explicitly to articulate that relationship for ourselves and for

others who are coming into the I.S? community because it's a natural expansion of now here's our next step is to expand into this, our next step. Our next step,

David, This is so important. Something that makes me very excited about it is that we are each embodiments of this commonwealth of life. But it doesn't ask us to sacrifice our individual sovereignty in the process. This is really the remarkable thing—that this greater field of Gaian life is enhanced, and in some ways is furthered by our experience of individual sovereignty.

This makes it different from a lot of human organizations where you have this choice that you're given—you're either going to be an individual or you have to be part of a group. We see these efforts now, these movements around the world, such as the result of the current election in Italy, towards more autocratic governments in which the state has more power than the individual.

And the commonwealth of life, the subtle commons, the Gaian constituency does not like that. It honors each unique manifestation of life and seeks to help us to thrive and be the fullness it can be. The word for that is synergy, and it's such an important concept.

I think that was something, despite all the historical baggage of colonialism, that Elizabeth inherited with the throne. She herself, through her love and her compassion, as you say, embodied an attempt to give flesh to this synergic principle.

James: I love that, David. It does feel that way to me as well—that I don't need to lose any of my unique individuality to be in that level of relationship with the commonwealth of the commons, of the subtle commons of Gaia. As you say, that's really exciting. Because it's my individual note. I come back to

this—there's an orchestra of life, and my individual note that I play into that orchestra, however well I play it or skillfully I play it, is part of the whole and it would be a loss if each of us was not able to sound our own note at this time in that whole.

David: Exactly. I 100% agree.

James: Thanks, David. This was a very touching conversation today for me.

David: Yeah, one could say almost regal.

James: We could. Well, thank you. Bye for now.

David: Thank you, my friend.