

David's Desk #190 Audio Companion

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(edited for clarity)

James: Hi, David

David: Hi James

James: Welcome to another episode of David's Desk Audio Companion.

David: Thank you

James: Today we're talking about something that's near and dear to your heart—Incarnational Spirituality.

David: That's right. I was getting ready to write David's Desk a few days ago and I just had this strong urging to write about Incarnational Spirituality, which is not a topic that I've explored in David's Desk. Obviously, I've explored it in other venues, but I've wanted David's Desk to be a place where I just discuss various topics of interest with regard to how we live a spiritual life. I'm feeling that this year, what I want to do is to put more attention on sharing some of the some of my thoughts around the work that I've been doing with I.S. So it seemed to me a good opportunity to provide a definition of what Incarnational Spirituality is—a hard won definition, I should say, after many years of exploring it and talking about it and learning about it with all of you who have joined me in this enterprise.

James: What I really liked in the David's Desk is that you begin with what your subtle colleague said, that the challenge with humanity is not that we're too incarnated, but that we're not incarnated enough. This quote has captured my heart and my being ever since I've been involved with Lorian. It planted a seed that has

dug burrow deep in my soul and I have been attending to that for the last eight years, ten years almost.

David: That was the reaction that I had as well when that inner colleague made that comment. So what exactly did he mean by that? How did one incarnate enough? What did that constitute? It was pretty evident from the context in which this occurred that he wasn't saying, "well, you have to become more physical." It had to do with our relationship with the world around us and with each other and within ourselves.

I explained a little bit of that progression in David's Desk. It really began with the work that I did with my initial subtle colleague John and to some extent had roots in the experience I had when I was 17. But there was one thing that I didn't go into as fully as I might have in the David's desk partly just because of space—I didn't want to make it too long—and I thought I would talk about it with you. That was the experience I had when I was seven of recapitulating my own process of incarnation. One of the dominant aspects of that experience, one of the strongest parts of it was the power of love as the driving force behind incarnation. In the research and work that I've done over the past 20 years into the incarnational process, that has always stood out as a hallmark.

There are, of course, many, many reasons why a soul may choose to take physical embodiment, but at the heart of it is a love for the world and it's that love that actually establishes the initial connection. A soul may develop other connections with the world and with physical life, some of which become karmic in the popular sense of that term—ties and habits and patterns are established that in some way are something the soul needs to work out and something it wants to learn. That's a surface motivation for taking incarnation, but at the deepest level, the soul engages with the world because of love. That to me is a very powerful thing to recognize—that within each of us, there is this core of resonance based on a love for the world around us and for its beauty and its wonder, and for all the life that is evolving here with us. Part of the task for Incarnational Spirituality, I feel, is to help us reawaken to

that. Because if we can feel that as a genuine experience within us, then that transforms how we relate to the world around us.

James: I really get that sense. The first time I realized it, a part of me woke up and said, "Oh, my God, I'm alive! Why am I here? Why now? Why here?" Having that sense that at the very root of everything, I'm here because I so love the world and that is the root of my being, allows me to work from that place. Just holding that lightly, even with the circumstances of challenge and suffering that I see around me or that I have within my own life, opens a way for me to respond to what I'm experiencing in this moment.

David: Yes, exactly. In our Western culture, I think that we inherit the sense of the physical world being a kind of prison, a place of exile, or a place where we have to learn hard lessons and work out our karma and so on. What is not as prevalent for us is the sense of this being a place of joyous opportunity, a place of wonder, and a place that loves us and to which we can respond with our love.

You see the news and you see the suffering that people are having and you understand that humanity has created situations in the world that make it an extremely difficult and painful place to be. But if we've created that we can uncreate that. We can shift our relationship with the world and with each other. We just need to have the tools with which to do so. One of the hopeful things for me about this time in our history is that there are so many different toolboxes emerging that in essence carry the same tools, which fundamentally are coming out of a place of love and joy, to help us shift our perception of the world and our relationship to it.

James: When I attune to the fact that I came here for love of the world, the next thing that comes up for me is joy. It's very interesting to witness that—to go beyond what we're thinking about the situations we find ourselves in or that the world is in and just go right to that place of I'm here for love of the world, and I have a sense of joy. Now, what do I do with that is the next question.

David: And what shift does that create within yourself?

James: There's a spaciousness, there's an openness, there's the willingness to see what we're doing, what we're creating, and as you say, is there a way now to uncreate that? I can uncreate it within myself and my response to it. How can I take action in the world to uncreate it to help share this sense of why we're here.

David: I feel our human world builds on itself through resonance. We could say through habit, but essentially, if I send out a hateful vibe, and something in you resonates to that for whatever reason, and then you add to it, and then someone else adds to it and someone else adds to it—all of that accumulates in creating a certain kind of atmosphere in the world that generates actions that are reflect that resonance of hatred, that vibration.

If I do the same thing but from a loving place—if I say, I may be aware of all these hateful, angry, fearful energies around me, but what I'm going to put into the world is a sense of honor and respect and lovingness, and compassion and joy, that's the energy I'm going to put out. That finds its resonance as well.

If that has a chance to build, if people say, this is what I can do (to go back to what I wrote about in my last David's Desk), this is an act of poiesis, of making. I recognize that I am a maker, I do have that creative ability in myself. Then we realize that we have the tools to make changes. Even if we just make them within our immediate circumstances—our family with our neighborhood, whatever—it becomes cumulative, it spreads out and other people are empowered and encouraged by that. I feel that one of the important ideas behind Incarnational Spirituality is a sense of the degree of power that we have to incarnate qualities that can help change the fate of the world.

James: As you said, we can choose our inner environment, the atmosphere that we're creating within ourselves. I see it in my day to day, how I show up. There is choice and there is awareness. Knowing that I'm here for the love of the world and allowing that joy to arise, I can hold that as a bass note as I walk around—that's

the song that I sing. Even though I am responding and reacting to the situations around me, my being is grounded in that place of love and joy for the world, for the situations that we're in. I can (and do, actually) walk in the world in that way.

David: Yes, I know you do, James. There's another interesting part to this, and that is the idea that the soul enters the body in the way that a driver enters a car. That was the image that was always presented to me back in the day, way back in the 50s and 60s when I started encountering people in the metaphysical and esoteric and spiritual worlds before I started doing this work. As I wrote on the David's desk, John's perspective was a more ecological or systemic one—that the soul incarnates into a system of relationships.

There's another way to think about that as well. It's important to say that there's no one description that I have found that absolutely or accurately or precisely matches exactly what it is the soul does to enable incarnation, because so much of the process happens in a non-three-dimensional world that our language is not equipped to describe.

But one of the other images that I found helpful is to say that the soul essentially expands itself. It generates a part of itself that is in resonance with the characteristics of the world. It doesn't actually enter anything, but it creates within itself that which is in resonance to the world. The metaphor that I've used for that is one that's familiar to me as a writer. When I get up in the morning and I go and I sit down in my chair before the computer to write something, I don't incarnate into a separate body of "the writer." I'm still David, but now I'm focusing a part of my consciousness on the particular information and the particular skills and the environment that I need to produce the writing. Even more than that, I'm not just writing in general, I'm writing something specific, whether it's David's Desk or it's a story or a class. That orientation to the material creates even more specificity. But at all times, I remain David. At all times, I'm a seamless whole. There's not a "husband David" sitting on the couch and a "father David" sitting in the chair or another David off in the kitchen doing something else while

"writer David" is sitting at the computer. It's all one whole that's now focused on a particular task.

I think of the soul in a similar way. We're never out of our soul, so to speak, we're never away from it. We have this image that we journey away from the soul, we journey away from our wholeness in order to come to this physical place. But in fact, we're as much soul now as we are at any other time in our existence, It's just that what we're experiencing is dimension of consciousness that is more focused on a particular set of relationships that enable us to engage with the physical world, just as I have a set of mental relationships and emotional relationships that let me engage with a particular thing that I'm writing. I find that that is a very helpful perspective—in thinking of myself as a whole being, not as a being split up into parts with a soul here and a personality there and somehow they're in conflict with each other.

James: I have dived into this also, and I have two other ways I like to think of it. The first is taking a shape, like plasticine or playdough that you can mold into a particular shape. It's still plasticine or playdough even though I'm taking shape of the writer. The other way is as a story. Sometimes we get lost in that shape or story and we forget about the wholeness that we are. We may feel that we're apart from that sense of wholeness, that sense of our soul, because we're lost in a story or we're lost in a particular shape.

Remembering takes an act of will. It takes some experience, it takes takes the tools and techniques that you've developed to help people remember that they're not this particular shape, and they're not this particular story—those are expressions the soul is taking on this moment.

David: Yes. Many years ago, when our children were small, we would take them up to the Seattle Center. There was this whole area that was devoted to children called The Children's Museum. They had rooms with different things that a child could engage with or learn about. In one room, the floor was covered with Legos. There wasn't anything else in the room except Legos and a very soft carpet. You could go in there with your child, and the child could just build

to his or her heart's content from all these Legos. I enjoy building with Legos, and I experienced the joy and excitement too, of coming to this room and thinking, wow, look at all these Legos and crossing the threshold into the room.

But then you start building with the Legos and sometimes you just can't quite get the right shape to come together or the right pieces to fit. On occasion, I would see one of my kids getting frustrated. There'd be this moment of frustration of hitting whatever they're rebuilding and destroying it completely. And I thought, this is really a metaphor for incarnation because we come to this room full of planetary Legos, the Gaian Legos, and our soul is just filled with wonder and joy and love at having this room to play in, but then when we actually start putting things together, some of these things fit and some don't. That's when the frustration arises and we want to destroy the Legos. [*chuckles*]

James: That's a wonderful metaphor. I can see myself in there as well because Legos were also a part of my children's growing up and there were moments when a world was created and there were moments when the world was destroyed. It really is up to us, isn't it?

David: Yes, it is, to a great extent.

James: And so Incarnational Spirituality is a practice as a set of tools and techniques and teachings that help you take ownership over the fact that this is up to us.

David: Yes. And, hopefully, to take that ownership out of a sense of love and joy and a sense of one's own worth and, and inner sacredness and power—that we have these rich spiritual resources to draw upon. It may take some practice, it may take some work to be able to do that, because we may have built up layers of habits that get in the way, but the tools are there and that wondrous, hope-filled core of love for the world is always there.

James: David, I'd like to finish with how you finished your David's Desk. You say, "To enable wholeness is the need of our age. We are called to do so in service to our world. How we hear and respond to that call is up to us. What is important is realizing that we can respond. We have what it takes in the wholeness of who we are to remake our world. Incarnation brings us to where we are needed and with the tools we need in order to do so. The rest is up to us."

David: I can't think of a better ending. James.

James: Thank you.

David: I did think of it, didn't I? [*chuckles*]

James: Yes, you did. Thank you very much. Thank you for another great conversation.

David: And thank you to all of you who are listening to this and reading David's Desk. Thank you very much.

James: Okay, bye for now.

David: Bye bye, James.