

VIRTUAL/ VIRTUOUS—the Commonsense of the Sacred/ Secular

Failure of human prevision (virtual) contributes to nature's failure of provision (virtuous.) It is a matter of commonsense that the sense of the sacred (spirituality) and the sense of the practical (secularity) have to be joined in the work of common interest. The Bible Story of Joseph of Egypt is a lesson about joining the common sense of the sacred and the common sense of the secular. Joseph interpreted the Pharaoh's dream; the Pharaoh responded by putting Joseph in charge of storing grain in times of plenty against the years of want. The spoiling of ecological systems and climate change warn (prevision) of foreboding failures of nature's capacity to provision as in the past.

For religion to claim exclusively the high ground of the sacred and to build corporate structures that stand against the secular is counter-intuitive and destructive for it creates voices of confusion in collective consciousness. The conflicted voices of the sacred and the secular put personal/ social consciousness in conflict with itself "ad intra". This uncivil schizophrenia is self-induced violence that destroys the ground of common purposes of the sacred and secular. The "signs of the times" are before us but our eyes are closed.

Where does this schizophrenia start and how is it perpetuated. It begins with education and it is perpetuated in education; specifically in the unsustainable culture of dual school systems that are set against each other on assumption that the realm of the sacred can and should be taught and removed from the realm of the secular. "Religious" schools are unintentionally agents of irreligion. The cultural costs of competing structures are neither sustainable nor desirable.

Tools of virtual communication (computers) make it possible for education to bridge the breaches between faith and reason, religion and science, and the spiritual and the secular. By nature, parents are primary educators; home computers let parents be much more active in returning the significant education of children to the family environment, which makes learning a more holistic experience for children and parents alike. Much structural expense is avoided, buildings, buses, books, etc. Religions can reprioritize, take the high road, collaborate with public schools and enable parental home-schooling

You ask, "How can I help life on Earth, not threaten it?" While we may think we have little or no control over life or Earth, I would suggest, "Look around where you sit, stand, observe and think." How does nature succeed? By symbiosis. How can I contribute to nature's success? By being symbiotic, by resolving conflicts, relieving stresses on nature not aggravating them; by being accommodating. Recognize, that what is virtual can be virtuous and that we can make the virtual virtuous-in-action — that's the creative power of self-reflectivity, of intentional consciousness.

What things do I see that are unaccommodated, and destructive to life's diversity? All of nature is hurting because of hurtful things we do; the evidence is everywhere. From there, move on to how you can live more simply, more lightly. Avoid actions that waste energy, add to atmospheric heating and air pollution. Thinking is a way of linking up with the virtual, of living virtuously, less wastefully, more conservatively. Think always. Think before acting. Travel virtually. Devote your energies locally in community betterment. Make natural spaces more accommodating to local natural life, birds, insects, fruits, flowers, vegetables, etc. Discover the natural/ sacred rhythms of life. You will be happier, so will your community, and so will nature.