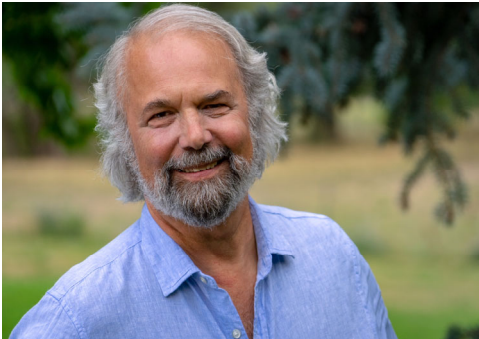


# SPIRITUALITY: IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK IT IS

PULSE OF SPIRIT  
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**DAVID KARCHERE** is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.

Martin Cecil often spoke these words: *Spiritual things are spiritually discerned*. He sometimes added, *...not mentally discerned*.

I remember pondering those words as a young man, not entirely appreciating the significance of them. Today, as I reflect on the mystical encounter we have the opportunity to experience, I think of this when it comes to real spirituality: *It's not what you think it is*.

This teaching is present in philosophies and spiritual teachings around the world. Lao Tzu said it this way in the Tao Te Ching:

*The tao that can be told  
is not the eternal Tao.  
The name that can be named  
is not the eternal Name.*

In Islam, Muslims honor the principles of aniconism which refers to the avoidance of visual

representations of sentient beings. Images of Mohammed are generally not allowed.

Mosaic Law says this:

*Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God.*

*Leviticus 26:1*

Ancient teachings on regarding *images* and *idols* often referred to physical objects that in ancient cultures were seen as not only representations of gods and supernatural forces but as an embodiment of those things. Today, we recognize that an *image* or *idol* is not only a physical object but also something in the mind. A person can have a picture in their mind of a religious figure and

begin to relate to the picture as if it were the reality of Divine Presence.

An image of Jesus as a European-looking man in a robe and sandals with long hair and a beard may evoke an awareness of a reality, and if it does, that can be powerful for a person. But the spiritual reality of the Divine Presence that the image in a person's mind refers to isn't wearing a robe and sandals. It isn't European. And his name isn't Jesus, which is an English translation of what was originally an Aramaic name, which had its origin in a Hebrew name. We translate that Hebrew name directly into English as Joshua.

Should this diminish a person's relationship with the one they call *Jesus*? Not at all. The image in the mind and the name itself can assist a person to tune in to the mystical reality of his presence if you let them. But *spiritual things are spiritually discerned*.

The mind can help. An artistic representation of Jesus can evoke an intuitive feeling connection. And through that connection, there can be spiritual discernment. But the full significance of what we are connecting to won't be appreciated if a person stops with the name and the image, whether embodied through art or in a person's mind.

Part of the imagery and pattern of naming Jesus that comes to the fore at Christmastime has to do with his place in what is sometimes called *heaven*, a dimension of reality that is invisible to our physical sight. The familiar Christmas carol, *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, contains this line: *Come and behold Him, born the King of angels*. I don't know of any other place in which Jesus is referred to that way. It seems that the author was attempting to name Jesus' place of sovereignty in the Invisible. *Do angels need a king to rule over them?* Certainly not an earthly one. But still, I appreciate Frederick Oakeley, who wrote these words in

1841. Through the gift of his lyrics, perhaps people tune into a reality that they spiritually discern.

There is a female percussion band with the evocative title, *Mob of Angels*. It's a great name for a band. But is the angelic reality really a mob? It is a pattern of perfect relationship. There is an angelic constellation that has what is central to it.

George Frideric Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" celebrates Jesus with these words, taken from the Book of Revelation, 19:16:

*King of kings, and Lord of lords...*

Does this mean he has a literal crown and sat on a throne? Does he have all the other instruments of worldly government? And what kings and lords is he King and Lord over?

What if we take those words as an opportunity for a mystical encounter? And with that encounter, spiritual discernment? They allude to a central Presence in the constellation of Divine Being. The question becomes, *Can you feel it? Do you tune into it?* And then, *Do you know that Presence?*

If we look at nature on Planet Earth and at all Creation in the known universe, we see the same thing. All Creation, in all its dimensions, from the micro to the macro, has a center. The atom has a nucleus, and so does the cell. The Sun is the center of the solar system. And the supermassive black hole, Sagittarius A\*, is at the center of the Milky Way Galaxy.

The social and political organization of human beings follows a similar pattern from ancient times to today. There is always a central, unifying feature. And if there isn't, the pattern falls apart.

There is a chief, a president, a parent, a king or queen, or a CEO.

If the entirety of what we know in the physical dimension of reality is designed like this, do we think the spiritual is any different? Humankind is both plural and one. There are eight billion of us and one human race. *E Pluribus Unum*. Out of many, one. The constellation of Creation is multi-faceted with a center to it all. The Creator is the same way. The Creator is a constellation of Being that comes to focus at its center. As is said in the Hermetic tradition, *As above, so below*.

*King of angels. King of kings, and Lord of lords...*

Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. And they are not what you think they are. They have a reality that is not defined by what we think of them.

If someone thinks of this reality as Jesus, they might miss the reality that the Christmas story is pointing to. Here is what the Christmas angel said about what was transpiring:

*I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.*

*On earth, to all people.* Jesus was born into a Jewish family and taught Jewish people. But as proven over centuries to some degree, is that he was relevant to the whole world, not just to the Jews of his day. A Christian person today might think that what he brought was just for Christians. And we might tend to think of Jesus as someone who is relevant to Western culture. But there was no Christianity when Jesus walked the earth, other than him and his teaching, which he offered to all who would listen. And according to the

Christmas angel, what he brought was significant for all people.

Is this declaring that the Christian God is supreme? Or that all people on earth must acknowledge Jesus as their personal savior? *Spiritual things are not what you think*. The Christmas story points to a reality that is present with all people—a reality that is central to the Family of God and central to the Family of Man.

Before a person encounters the mystical, it is just a mystery. Once encountered and experienced it becomes known. People tend to make up all kinds of things about spiritual things, and because those things are generally unknown, no one knows any better. When spiritual reality becomes known—when we learn to rely on our God-given capacity for spiritual discernment—we know the truth of it. Not all at once. And not so we can lord it over others or sell the knowledge in some form. We know it for ourselves. The vibration of Love that emanates from it fills our hearts. The wisdom of its unfolding truth guides us. We have a personal relationship with it—not so much with a man in a robe and sandals from 2,000 years ago, though you can feel the reverberation of his presence on Earth even today. You have a relationship with a Being of the present whose nature is unspeakable Love.

He is not a figure of any religious denomination, even though many try to own him, and all are free to acknowledge him. He is the Lord of Love for all people, without prejudice, without respect for belief, color, age, ethnicity, gender, or anything else. He is not who you think he is. He is himself, and he stands as the central feature of the Family of Being. When you love and adore him, you are loving and adoring all of Reality, because the very heart and essence of us all is in him.

If you had the infinite ability to create a reality that was the best it could possibly be, you couldn't create anything as magnificent as this—someone as magnificent as him at the center of us all.

This is the reality to which the world turns at Christmastime. The degree to which it is felt is remarkable. Yet so often for a person, the feelings of home and love at Christmas aren't allowed to take them to an experience of spiritual discernment and knowing. They have an emotional encounter that can lead to all kinds of places, but without the mystical encounter that brings the knowledge of spiritual reality. And so,

they lack the ability to sustain their Attunement with the spiritual or to bring it to the world. Our world needs people who have that realized ability—people who reverberate with the vibration at the center of the God Family. People who know God, not as an idea, not as a belief or tenet of religious faith, but as the constant core of Being, at the center of the Human Family, calling us all to oneness and peace.

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