

TO SAVOR THAT WHICH IS SACRED

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The two words, savor and sacred, seem to be missing in our vocabulary and in our contemporary life. The word “savory” is mostly used to describe food that is delicious and tasty. However, “to savor” can describe how we choose to focus on something positive, beautiful, and impactful with all of our senses of sight, smell, hearing, and feeling. It is as if you are inhaling emotionally into your innermost being something that awakens your essence in every cell of your body.

The word “sacred” can refer to our beliefs and/or feelings about something of great value that may be personal, cultural, religious, or spiritual, which is worthy of veneration. Here are a few examples.

The ancient Hawaiians had a strong relationship with the stars and constellations in the heavens and also with the oceans, which they depended upon for their survival as islanders. Over generations they studied the stars and constellations and their movements in the heavens. They also had great knowledge of the oceans, the waves, the currents and seasonal patterns. Their religious deities emerged from their relationship with the heavens and ocean. They would pray to their sacred deities and ask for help, especially on their long ocean voyages sailing



to far-away shores. They would connect with their deities through prayer, through festivities, and with gratitude for keeping them safe. Their deities had divine powers.

Another example of that which was and still is sacred is the culture and beliefs of the American Indians in their respect and reverence for the lands they have inhabited and worshiped for generations. They treasure the mountains, the rivers and lakes, the forests and plains, the wildlife and all the plant life that gives them food, shelter, and protection. They show deep respect for the spirits of the animals they hunt and kill for food. They savor the meat and celebrate the hunt with prayer, ceremony and spiritual gratitude. They understand and appreciate their inter-

dependence with all aspects of nature and hold sacred the circle of all life.

Across many cultures and religions, there are sacred objects, recordings, ancient writings, jewelry, icons, and precious stones. There is a sacred vibrational energy that can emanate from objects that may be religious, historical, of personal and/or cultural value. In Judaism, there is the Torah, which contains the five Books of Moses. They believe that God gave the Torah to Moses. It was handwritten in Hebrew without punctuation, and it contains the history of the Jewish people, as well as their behavioral commandments. The Torah is chanted when read during a service. They so treasure

the Torah that to destroy a Torah is equivalent to a homicide.

In the U.S., there are numerous Christian religious groups that have honored, worshipped and celebrated the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. In our past, people took time to savor the beauty of the religious holidays, to sit quietly listening to the religious music and the special homilies, and to attend the beautifully decorated churches and cathedrals. There are great sacred works of Christian art, sculptures, and artifacts that have been handed down through the centuries. These days, so much of the Christmas holiday is blanketed with marketing, selling merchandise, pressure to buy presents, and planning festivities and

celebrations. It is a crescendo of social activity that many people find exhausting. There is no time to savor that which is truly sacred. In some ways, we are losing out on our connection to the basic tenants of our religious doctrines.

Ironically, many would be emotionally nourished by slowing down and taking time to savor the beauty and the spiritual wonder of their religious heritage, beliefs and values. They would be able to access a deeper awareness of spiritual connection, self-worth, core values, and life's purpose.

Our children need our help and guidance too. They need to learn how to separate from all the electronic technology and commercialization that so many seem to be addicted to these days. At a deeper level, the children especially need to learn that they are spiritual beings. They are loved and valued, and they have a life purpose. If there are children in your life, won't you set aside some time during the upcoming holidays to instill a sense of the sacred with them? It could be as simple as looking up into the night sky and telling them the story of the Star of Bethlehem. They will savor the moment and remember it for a lifetime. ■

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