

Silent Night, Holy Night

Alan Seale



We had our first real snow of the season here in the Catskills today—the kind of snow that blankets the ground with soft powder and creates an amazing quiet. Tonight is truly a silent night. Although few cars ever travel on my road, it is especially quiet tonight. The geese are all gone now from Hust Pond, the wind has stopped, the deer make not a sound as they cross the meadow, and there is an incredible stillness in the air. Silent night, holy night.

The silence is one of the things that I love the most about winter nights in the mountains. I also love the crystal clarity of the cold night air—so clear that the Milky Way seems close enough to touch. And when you are that close to the stars, you begin to feel an amazing oneness with them. We are, in fact, made of the same elements as the stars. And when you look out into the amazing night sky, what you see actually no longer exists. You are looking at a picture of something that once was but is no longer, even though it appears so real in the present moment. As you peer into the heavens, time goes away, and any sense of separation between you and anything else vanishes. And there you are—just you and the universe. It is awe-inspiring, and in that moment, it feels incredibly holy.

Those moments of oneness offer us tiny glimpses into the true reality of creation. All of creation is indeed one. And we are a part of that oneness. As humans, we like to think that somehow we stand apart from the rest of creation because of our great mental and emotional development. But the truth is, every part of creation, when allowed to truly blossom and live in its magnificence, carries a tremendous wisdom and understanding of how life works, and plays a vital role in the functioning of the universe. We are a part of that—not greater than or less than or separate from.

I recently read that if all of the insects were to disappear from the planet today, there would be no life remaining within five years. On the other hand, if all human life were to disappear from the planet today, all of the rest of life would be thriving within five years as perhaps never before. I don't know the scientific validity of that statement, but it gives us something to think about. What if we were just cogs in the wheel of creation, not the ones running the machine as we can so easily think of ourselves? What if all other forms of life were equal cogs, and would thrive beyond

anything we have ever known if we were not here trying to run the machine?

It is a grand universe we live in. We are privileged to be a part of it. And if, in fact, it did not depend on us, and might even have an easier time of it if we were not here, then what is the greatest gift we can give to the universe by our presence? What is the greatest gift *you* can give to the universe by *your* presence? If the universe does not *need* us, then how can we make it better for having been here?

This is the gift-giving season. It is a wonderful feeling to give gifts to those we love, especially when the gift is carefully chosen to have special meaning for the recipient and bring them great joy. But have you added the universe to your shopping list? Have you given careful consideration to what you might give to this amazing world in which we live—this world which gives you life, breath, sustenance?

Silent night, holy night. Go out into the silent night and look up into the sky. Connect to the universe, touch the holiness of creation and know your part in it. Ask of yourself and of the universe what is the gift wanting to be given through you? And then give it. Put the universe on the top of your shopping list. Know the Love that is your heart and your essence. And as you make your New Year resolutions, consider what it might mean to live fully grounded in the Love that is the essence of your soul. Who do you commit to being as you step into the New Year? Fully be who you are in this amazing and interconnected system of life.

Silent night, holy night. The silence and holiness of nature is beyond words. It will help you touch the profound beauty of the oneness of creation. As you enter into this season of celebration, whatever your tradition, find the opportunity to experience the silence, beauty, and holiness of your soul. Bask in the holiness of the silent night, of your silent heart. Ask who you are called to be and what gifts you are called to give to the universe. Know the oneness of all of creation and your part in its magnificent unfolding.

Many blessings,

Alan

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