

## Daniel's reflection for week beginning 17th July

### Everywhere and Nowhere

For three years there was a great drought in the village. The adults were emaciated, the babies listless, the animals skeletal, the countryside desiccated. Without a harvest it had become a place of death. Then came the rumour of a rainmaker. A last chance. The fittest were sent out to search for him. Blessed by this they found him and persuaded him to return to their arid home. He listened carefully to their desperate story and then shuffled away into the local hills. After three days it began to rain. There was transformation all round. The smiles returned as bodies grew stronger, eyes began to shine as people danced to the greening of their fields. To thank the rainmaker for his achievement, and to learn his secret should the calamity return, they searched for him again. 'No,' he said to them, 'I did not make the rain fall. Things were out of order in this place. There was no inner peace in the people. Nature was affected. So was I. I waited here in the valley until once again I became part of the rhythm of life. When this happened the rain fell.'

Too often we think that our inner spirit and the ways of nature are separate phenomena, that they belong to different life forces. But there is only one source of being. In his commentary on this parable, Carl Jung writes: 'When someone tells me that in his surroundings the wrong things always happen, I say, "it is you who are wrong, you are not in Tao (the path of nature) ... When one is in Tao right things happen.'" In Christian terms one might refer to the cosmic Christ, to a kind of Christ consciousness, the indwelling divinity that integrates, infuses and redeems the whole of creation, awakening and reconfiguring the human psyche and the ways of the universe into the one flow of grace. But what did the rainmaker actually do to find this universal rhythm of being? The story goes he breathed himself into a listening stillness. Breathing and stillness. These are the contemplative spaces, he told them, in which the soul moves to the music of life in the present moment, in which authentic connections happen. It is in those spaces of connectedness that everything belongs – and the rain falls.

Breathing is the very experience of life, of being, of unity – and of . In his *The Naked Now*, Richard Rohr OFM explains that the name and nature of can only be breathed. The correct pronunciation of the Hebrew 'Yahweh' is an attempt to imitate the very sound of inhalation and exhalation. Notice what happens when you gently breathe in for 'Yah' and out for 'weh' a few times. It brings a sense of peace. It is the invisible life force that links all created things. The one thing we unknowingly do every moment of our lives is therefore to speak the unifying name of . This makes it our first and last word as we enter and leave the world. The baby arrives gasping for breath. She is gasping for life. She is gasping for love. The individual umbilical cord is broken only so that a more universal intimacy may begin. Our first breath, and every breath, brings us into deep and vital conversation with all beings and thus with the divine essence. In our breathing we are part of a common body. We are the human lungs of . And this experience of the sacred is open to all and sundry. It is the one precious connecting lifeline we all share. It is our common bond. There is no Islamic or Jewish way of breathing. There is no religious or secular way of breathing. As far as I know there is no special Roman Catholic way of breathing. The winds that blow across the many playing fields of are always utterly even.

Breathing and stillness. Into what depths of stillness did the rainmaker's breathing lead him? He retired to the hard edges of the dying village so as to be still, to be rooted in his deepest self, confident in his own truest being, secure in his own capacity for loving and being loved. For that he needed to be wholly at one with himself, stripping himself of his illusions every morning and evening of those three silent days. 'If we connect with the stillness within, we move beyond our active minds and emotions, and discover great depths of lasting peace and contentment in universal serenity,' wrote Eckhart Tolle. The rainmaker waited so as to become fully conscious and in tune, to reconcile, in himself, like Jesus did, a disintegrating village, a fractured humanity and a splintering universe. And only then, in his relaxed but intense awareness of his own being, and that of others, and of all Creation – only then did the rains fall.