

Small Talk – May 5 3031
By Michael Small

Did you miss it, or did you remember it. Yesterday was a holiday of sorts. It is simple and fun filled. Over the years it emerged gradually from the ground up and spontaneously was learned by word of mouth. It comes from a cinematic blockbuster that was first released on May 25, 1977. Have I shaken your memory loose? The title of the film was *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*. Just yesterday morning I was awakened by hearing the words “*May the 4th be with you!*” It was May 4th – get it? Question, how a new mind-bending series begins with *Episode IV* is another story?

Curiously, a central theme undergirding all nine of the movies is the ancient and ongoing struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Those resisting and battling “evil” are empowered by a mystical force. When engaging with the darker side, persons going into battle are blessed with the mantra – “*May the Force be with you.*” In the pinnacle of battle, at the turning point, the Jedi Master Obi Wan Kenobi is heard telling a young Luke Skywalker – “*Use the Force!*”

I think that these films were successful, in part, because they captured the imagination and they tapped into humanities deep, deep yearning for something more, something that stretches beyond the limitations of human imagination, something that is power-filled, mysterious, life altering, hopeful, something not made with human hands. Of course, in the world of faith for over tens of thousands of years humans have shared in this journey – seeking, knowing, accessing the power of spirit, divine, creator, companion, wisdom, god(s), mystery, the force – known by many other names.

Both in the Greek and Hebrew languages the word for “Spirit” can be translated as breath, air, wind, and spirit. In this time of miraculous technology, medical “miracles”, smart phones, coming quantum computers, artificial intelligence, space travel, research and development persons who explore the depth and mysteries of origin, life, and the mysteries of the cosmos – how do we understand the power and mystery of “spirit”? In a rational and linear world, is there a place for mystery and the presence of a “cosmic other”? ***Can spirit and science walk alongside one another?***

I would invite you to simply start with breath. Close your eyes. Settle in while sitting with feet grounded on the earth, bring stillness to mind, body, and thoughts. Breathe in and out – expanding the lungs, moving the diaphragm. Pause. Emptying the lungs. Do this for five or so minutes. As breath moves in and out of your body, I would argue that “spirit” moves in and out of your body and surrounds you. Think about this – all of life on earth, in some way, breathes. The earth breathes. There is constant flow and movement throughout the known universe. We know and experience breath/spirit in common – it is at the core of life.

I do think, believe, if one is willing to deeply listen, while pausing to be fully present in the moment – the voice of “spirit” will be heard. Mystery and surprise will emerge taking each of us to never before seen possibility! To hear, to know “spirit” requires practice, discipline, and intentionality. It asks us to unfold and open up. Spirit does not constrict, but it expands. It does not blame and judge, but it leads, inspires, and blesses. Spirit and Science can, do, and must always walk side by side. Perhaps they become a form of Yin and Yang. From Spirit comes inspiration, comfort, challenge and the possibility for relationship and common ground. From Spirit comes the possibility of healing.

Breathe In – Breathe Out – Be aware – Listen – Relate – Respond.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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