

# Centre for Ecology & Spirituality, Glenburn *Eucalyptus rubida*

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## We are Here for all of Us

This is the title of a hauntingly beautiful song by Alicia Keyes, and is a compassionate response to many of the ills affecting people across the world. ([link](#)) What immediately struck me was the hidden implication of the word 'us'.

As an ecologist I wondered how inclusive this term could be. Couldn't it also include all life forms, and maybe also the entire cosmos with its families of planets, stars, and galaxies.

We are composed of millions (or billions) of atoms and molecules. These have been collected over 13.7 billion years and are now concentrated in our bodies. As we grow these atoms and molecules are replaced on a regular basis. Nearly all of them have been shared in the past by uncountable forms of life and minerals. As for the elements you only have to look at your medicine chest to find medication like magnesium tablets (to prevent cramps), iron tablets (to top up the iron in our blood) and calcium for our bones. Along with around 60 elements they find a place in our bodies. And the same is true of all other plants and animals. We are all made of the same stuff.

It all comes down to what is your ecological and even cosmological identity. An identity embracing the whole cosmos is not unfamiliar to generations of mystical thinkers.

Only the other day I happened across a delightful epigram from Satram, who was a student of the Indian sage Sri Aurobindo and his companion, The Mother. He states:

*"our progress is not measured by the amount of inventions we create ... but by the amount of the world that we are able to reintegrate and recognize as ourselves"* (Sri Aurobindo or *The Adventure of Consciousness*)

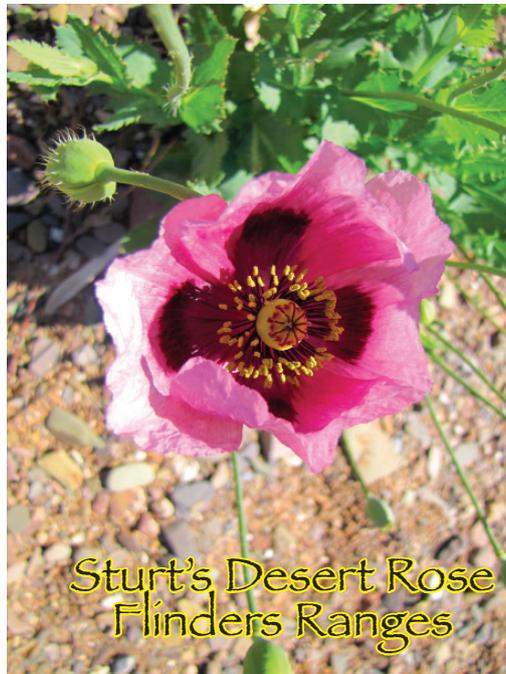
Australian deep ecologist John Seed in describing the Council of all Beings he says:

*"We see that the pain of the Earth is our own pain and the fate of the Earth becomes our own fate."*

*"I am part of the rain forest protecting*

*itself. I am that part of the rain forest recently emerged into human thinking."* (Answering Joanna Macy in her 2012 book *The Greening of the Self*.)

In the Upanishads there is a recurring theme which to some extent begs translation. However its frequent



recurrence in different contexts bears on the same identity implied in the above quotes:

*"This invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is reality. That is truth. And you, Shvetaketu, you – are that!"* (Chandogya Upanishad)

The Western reader is not used to this kind of language. In this instance the writer of this Upanishad is asking his/her point by telling the story of a father and son, where the father Uddalaka explains the deep mysteries of the Self by several examples. In this we are reminded of the parables of another great teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, in this instance maybe the one about a treasure buried in a field.

The title of this essay brings us back to the great teaching of most religions - love of the neighbour. When the

neighbour is seen in the particular context of an integral ecology, we might see a new insight into John Seed's words: "we see that the pain of the Earth is our own pain....", as he reflected on his passion to preserve the rainforests.

The song commences "We are Here for all of Us", and this refrain constantly recurs throughout the song. We owe a debt of gratitude to our artists who continually draw us out of our unconscious forgetfulness or neglect of the things that really matter.

In 1967 Rev Martin Luther King anticipated what we now call an 'ecology of connection' when from his pulpit he declared "It really boils down to this, everything is interconnected.

Ervin Laszlo in his foreword to Pierre Pradervane's new book *365 Blessings*.. reminds us in modern language terms ".... We need to embrace the planet and its inhabitants with the same care and concern we feel for ourselves. There are no "others" on this planet, no strangers."

Nor can we forget Pope Francis' *Laudato si* where he announces an Integral Ecology, and more than once the refrain "It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected" (#138)

Sturt's Desert Rose pictured here blooms in the desert for all of us and not just for the insect it attracts to preserve its lineage. It blooms for all of us just as the title of Alicia Keys says 'we are here for all of us,' such is the intensity and depth of interconnection across our planet and is realised across time 'by the engine of cosmic intention' that Marianne Williamson poetically states in Day 4 of the above book *365 Blessings*.

Brian Swimme used to refer to that 'great river of grace that flows through our lives.' Other times he called it a 'profound wisdom'.

Maybe we are all called to review our cosmic, Christian and ecological identity.

Trevor Parton

