

## **It is my way of saying “yes” to life. Interview with Deborah Felmeth, Damascus**

*What comes in mind hearing the expression Crossing the Threshold?*

The first thing that comes to mind is that I have a choice about whether I am entering in or leaving, and that I am doing both at the same time. So Crossing a Threshold always has the sense of being in a place where the relationship changes, but it could change in any constellation, it's not better or worse, it is not past or future. It's simply a change in constellation, as if a geometry. Crossing the Threshold also seems to mean that there is an achievement that is possible, in other words I have reached something and now I am crossing the threshold where it will become fruit. So that is a different shade of meaning, and as it comes into my mind it has a feeling to me of excitement it's like “hu” (gesture of exhaling) - this threshold, it may be joy! It's got life in it.

*What do you think of the phenomenon of fear?*

Fear (laughing) I think fear is perhaps a habit that is developed, and maybe it has different roots. But I think it comes from not allowing the breath to enter the body, not allowing the ground to be the gravity which supports you, not allowing the possibilities to unfold whatever they might be. So it has a constriction. Fear is a 'drawing back from'. That is why it has to be with the breath for me..(strong inhaling) “I do not know what's going to happen”! And it limits the possibilities. Fear means that “I can not do that, I can't do that” ...so it becomes very still...even though it sometimes might look like “grrrr” (Sounds like a wild animal) and it might go running down the street. A fear is ultimately a lost connection with God. If I am really breathing my connection to spirit, always, the divine source is here.

*Does fear have a purpose? Or to put the question in another context: Abdullah Ibrahim mentioned that fear is coming from the devil. But what is coming from the devil is also coming from God. So there is maybe something to learn from it. Living in paradise is for me living without fear and living out of paradise has a purpose for mankind...*

We are born out of paradise and we have a task then in front of us, to be become aware. Satan is often said to be coming in any time ego moves you, then Satan has a little hook and he's really got you. So it's not 'I' when searching to return to paradise, it is the divine in me, through me. But if I think I am doing it, and it is my work, it's mine, then fear has all the chance in the world. It's like rubbing his hands, oh yeah, we can really take the ground out from under you without much trouble. It's easy to pull the rug out from under when you think it's all your doing. Fear is not being connected to the divine source.

*Is there any experience in your life which opens you to your very own artistic process?*

Breath first...nature...completely...I am a woman of the water, the lake, the river fresh water. I am a little bit afraid of the ocean. But all other water, I find my consciousness is very nurtured, nourished and encouraged to express itself when I am near water. So I want just to be in the water, on the water, near the water. But breath first. I am really in love with breath, with breathing, with tasting this life-force that comes into our body, and it is shared with every single living creature! So my inspirations are also in the idea of harmony. As a person who loves to play music and to sing and to move I find they're all related to each other in terms of harmony, and they can be very obvious or they can be more distinct. But they're always in a harmonic relationship, so the vibration of the world is of interest to me. I was a weaver for a long time. And I always felt when I was weaving, and even when I was spinning wool, that I was participating in creation. I was not doing it, I was participating in it. Everything was doing it! Ah, now I'm doing it too, we're all doing it, the world is doing it! Weaving cloth then became musical to me, because the relationship of the colors was like the relationship of the notes. So it feels like visible music instead of audible music. And I would find myself composing on the loom. (...)

*Is there any precondition or preparation for arriving at your artistic process, rituals or something like this?*

Setting the intention, setting the clear intention. In Sanskrit it's called sankalpa. And I noticed with sankalpa that it should be clear, it should be simple. Our intention can not have three paragraphs.....Rather, a very simple statement. My intention is to trust.

*Do you know the feeling of something like a rift within ourselves, or us and the world, and does your art have a special way to deal with this feeling...*

Yes there is a rift. And we are disconnected. And I think that all art in general is the approach toward being in synchrony with that paradise, with all that is. But I would not say that my art is in specific an attempt to do that. It is my way of saying "yes" to life. "Yes, Yes, Yes." When it is difficult "yes". When it is beautiful "yes".

*And what do you think about the connection of the inner human structure and the so called virtual reality?*

When you first said "inner human structure" I thought the question is going to have more to do with anatomy and physiology, which I am passionate about. So I am very interested and explore a lot in myself, and also in classes with students, everything from embryology to this present moment and who is the micro-biome. Who is this living in you? Because there is more information about

the micro-biome than there is actually from my own DNA! We are in this together. I am very much in worship of the chance to be in the body. The virtual reality I have had this much experience with it ( gesture for small). And while I found it fascinating I do not find it attractive at all. In other words, I have not tried to get more than this much because I am a sort of like: "This" (shows around..) is such a world! Why would I try to approximate.... (Laughing) So I maybe don't know enough about the virtual reality of the games and such things. But I am wary of it, I'm not eager. No.

*Can art help to create methods and strategies for a healthy and sustainable life?*  
Insh' Allāh. Yes. God willing. A sustainable life, yes! I think, I believe, I want, to live in a world in which artists are not the occasional, unusual, but they are the norm. I think it is a shared life. That is not to say that there is no competition in art. There is. And that's unfortunate to me, because I want to take us away from that kind of judgement. But I certainly think it can help. And I think it is possible.

*How can we strengthen the human quality of being connected through art?*  
By providing more opportunities to each other, inviting each other into that way of looking, moving, seeing, sounding, sharing. It is an open invitation. Everybody's got something to give to the party.