

You Are an Outpost of Evolution: Creativity

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The Self-Creating, Self-Organizing Universe

If you are like most people, you have wondered about the purpose of your life. We seem to instinctively know that finding our purpose will instantly bring us into accord with the nature of the universe that clearly knows its purpose. Humans, as all beings, are outposts of evolution; we are creative tendrils for the universe, taking it to where it has never been before. Einstein revealed that we are living in a physically expanding universe. If that is true, then a purposive expansion is an indication that the universe is expanding in consciousness as well.

Process theology indicates that the universe delights in being purposive. If creativity is its game, then evolution is its aim-its purpose. Clearly the universe is not a collection of dead matter bungling its way through evolution from one astonishing miracle to another.

The reason we want to know our purpose is, like the universe, it lets us operate from life's deepest realm, where right action emerges by itself and we are spontaneously self-creating and self-organizing, with neither stress nor strain. In such an instance, we cease to be fragmented, "a house divided against itself," and experience the well-being of wholeness.

In a true spiritual context understanding our purpose is tantamount to entering into "the kingdom of God"; arriving at this awesome province of power that is at once, "the pattern that connects," or what we commonly speak of as love.

With the knowledge of purpose, the creativity of power and the unity of love, we become the beings spoken of in the Book of Genesis as, "made in the image and likeness of God." Without these three attributes of knowledge, power and love, we may live merely as a shadow of our astonishing potential.

Creation is what the universe is about and we are outposts of its intention to evolve, which is its spiraling ways toward creating more complex beings for its sheer joy, or as Hindu sage Aurobindo expresses it, "We are made for the delight of God."

With a little stretch of our imagination we may be able to see that the rich young man who came to Jesus and asks, "Master, how can I inherit eternal life?" was really reaching towards his true purpose-his spiritual mission, his impulse to be uniquely what he was in the world. This encounter is really exemplifying our true worth in the world-being who we really are and doing what only we can do.

In this sense, the rich young man wanted to know how to be an outpost of evolution: the frontier that is forever new. That he has kept the commandments all his life merely says he had only explored the known territories, the familiar grounds humans share in common. It says nothing of his having experienced the boundary-shattering realm of his original creativity and uniqueness entrusted to him by Spirit. Though he is attempting to, the rich young man has not answered his deepest call to be an outpost of evolution, that is, adding his novelty to the total body of unique experiences the universe calls upon each of us to contribute and thus allowing it to reciprocate its joy in us.

Purpose puts us into a flow like a spring growing from the original confines of a pond, spilling over its boundaries and flowing to become a river. The river then becomes a creative force for a whole society of life-forms even as it nurtures the plains for plant and animal life-the greater whole. The life of the river is an act of universal creativity, but that is only a part of the story. For as the river commits itself to its natural way, so does purpose bring us into the creative flow of evolution, allowing us to go to where none has been before. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah captures this moment of cosmic awe in his words, "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands."

The dialog between Jesus and the rich young man who ironically is seeking a wealth he sees in Jesus that is lacking in him, is a further lesson in what our true wealth is. Jesus will also say "Seek not to store up treasures on earth . . . but store up treasures in heaven . . ." instead. In other words don't put your value in what you own but in who you are. This is because who we are can always generate what we need, but what we own cannot generate who we are.

Our spiritual purpose is hidden in our intuitive knowledge and not in our rational sphere. Knowing this, the wise teacher needed to detach the young man from his wealth, an overwhelming value for him belonging to his rational mind and standing in the way of his experiencing the "treasures of heaven"; the fruits of eternal or intuitive life. Yet, the young man comes seeking what Jesus has because he realizes the emptiness of his wealth in the context of his missing creative joy. Purpose, patterned as our intuitive feelings, is integrating, energizing, transforming and holistic, because it works in accord with all creatures and beings.

When Jesus told the young man to give away all he had to the poor and come follow him, he was indicating at least two things. First, that acting in accord with our true purpose is working from our universal center of creation which is the only sufficiency we need to sustain us. No other wealth is needed. Secondly, working from our true purpose requires total commitment. There cannot be any attachment to things of lesser value, even those we once regarded as of paramount importance. Jesus is also quoted as saying "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." We are to understand that our greatest creativity requires our greatest commitment, "You can't serve God and mammon."

Our interest to solve the mystery of why we are here is much more difficult than the one of accepting where we will be when we are not here. A Buddhist paradox, called a koan, aims at kicking consciousness out of the rational mind and into the intuitive, and in the direction of the answer to this cosmic puzzle. The Zen koan asks, "What was the face you had before you received the face with which you were born?" This is similar to the paradox Jesus gave the rich young man in saying, ". . . go sell everything you have, give it to the poor and come follow me." The implied paradox is "How can I be rich when I have nothing?"

Of course, science, which has been the Sherlock Holmes of deducing from physical cues how the universe began, has no patience with metaphysical thinking. Instead, science traces creation back to its originating moment, where we find, contrary to the smug, "Elementary, my dear Watson! Elementary!" that things are not that elementary at all.

Science tells us how the universe came into being but not why. For that answer we must return to the realm of the koan, a paradox, a mystery that lends itself to meditation and spiritual insight, rather than to cold logical or rational thinking.

Far from being a dead, inert thing, we are learning that the universe is alive and whatever is alive has purpose. Its purpose is to create. Order is directional, evolutionary, and irrepressible even when forms and entities break down and release their energy, their aliveness. Something there seems to cause energy to readily leap from the seeming chaos of disintegration, or even from its undifferentiated pure essence, into form.

How strange is creation any-way? Isn't it totally bizarre to be participating in this thing called life that, in the first place, should not even be? The hard realist would most readily convince us that religion is as improbable as waking up to the smile of the Mad Hatter. But look at the alternative science offers. Fifteen billion years ago, nothing existed, not even space. Within less than a nanosecond the physical universe exploded into existence.

Everyone knows when there is an explosion a chaotic mess results. Did it then? No! The universe over massive expanses of time began to organize itself into more complex forms. Billions of years followed and eventually life appeared from matter.

Life forms then became more complex, not only reproducing themselves but new forms. Later, mind came forth says science.

The way the Book of Genesis tells it is, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

The Consciousness that Creates

The consciousness that creates is the consciousness that reaches out beyond its present boundaries. Creativity is often put in a double-bind because conformity, labeled morality, is given such a high value in our society that creativity can quickly take on immoral overtones. Debates surrounding stem cell research and abortion come to mind.

Also, as despicable as war is to most of us, many advances in technology were first funded because of their application in warfare. The most powerful I can think of is the atomic bomb. But understanding what happens within the atom has been a windfall for technology such as microwaves for cooking and wireless communications.

The challenge for us all is to remain centered in wholeness, which the Bible calls "holiness" and to think of ourselves as holons, wholes within greater wholes, and therefore let our quantum leaps of creativity operate around the principle of wholeness that includes concerns for our environment and its creatures.

In this manner, we can extend the spirit of Genesis 1 to all that we create--"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."