

COSMIC FORCES – THE PLAY OF THE UNIVERSE

In the last article¹ we looked at the possibility of the solar system having purpose. Now let us look at something wider – the purpose of the cosmos (or rather the fact that there must be such a purpose) and that resulting from this purpose all cosmic forces, great or relatively small, are nothing other than the unfolding of and the play of the universe. Let us think about this: if the universe is intelligent, it reacts. It must react because intelligence reacts. But what does or can the universe react with, other than itself or some higher level of intelligence than itself?

Each day, we as human beings react to the circumstances around us. More than that, we react or respond to our own inner intelligence. Even our thoughts are generated within us – they don't come from outside. If, for example, we see something that we desire (we might be hungry and see some food) our thought processes will be channelled along or shaped by the desire, in this instance for something to eat. If we are then distracted by an emergency, our thought processes and intelligence will respond to that rather than the desire. In a slightly more enlightened state, our mind might not be distracted so much by desire but we will still react to circumstances; the arising of compassion, for instance, is an intelligent response to the world we see around us.

We cannot fully understand the intelligence of a plant or a tree but we do know from observation that there is a response mechanism. When the conditions are right, there is growth. A plant will respond to light and warmth and will send roots into the soil to absorb water and nutrients. Plants and trees are sensitive and the presence of sense indicates intelligence. Even the word “sense” comes from the same Latin root as “sentient” - having the ability to feel or perceive things. Something causes the form of the plant to change – upwards, downwards and outwards. Forces are at work here, forces that are extraordinarily complex and, as the great thinkers and seers of our race have long pointed out, are not merely a question of heat, light, moisture and so on (see

¹ *The Solar System – an Expression of Reality or an Accident?* April 2009

the writings of Rudolf Steiner, for instance).

Let's begin, if we may, to think now on a somewhat grander scale – of the movement and presence of heavenly bodies, not just as individual planets, stars or solar systems but the enormous galaxies that pervade our universe. Every galaxy is in effect a huge group. Within each galaxy are vast numbers of constellations – groups of stars with their systems and each solar system is effectively a group. But a group of what nature? Certainly a group that has its own intelligence and, following on from the previous article, it is logical that each group is a vehicle for the expression of consciousness.

On a tiny scale, consider for a minute your own body. It is composed entirely of cells which consist of molecules formed by clusters of atoms. If we could be a microscopic observer, we would see that our body is empty space populated by billions of little systems – atoms and molecules – moving round each other. From a slightly wider viewpoint, we might observe that these form vast structures of tissue, viscera, bones and so forth. It might then dawn upon us that a gland or an organ is a collective structure, a group of sorts; yet all of the extraordinary, miraculous structures that we may be familiar with as the various components of the body respond to the body's inner intelligence, the intelligence of the *whole* form. Recognising the body as a vast structure of parts made up of billions upon billions of smaller structures, we can see also that the body is an intelligent unit; moreover it is not one that is entirely self-serving because we know that it has purpose. That purpose is to serve as a vehicle for our own consciousness. If we then take a group of people, we know that it is possible (or inevitable) for there to develop some sort of group consciousness. The individual units within the group respond to the collective consciousness of the group. The strength of their response is determined by the extent to which they are attuned to or aligned with the group. The more coherent and cohesive a group is, the stronger and more influential the group consciousness. Each of us is affected by the consciousness of our families, associates, communities and so on and, of course, by the collective consciousness of

humanity itself. But we are not automatons and by our individual state of consciousness we contribute *to* the collective consciousness as well as respond to it. We are part of the whole and the whole is part of us.

So from the level of pure appearance, the view of the outer form, a human being is head, torso, arms and legs that are composed of smaller parts; but we know that in reality a person responds to all manner of inner influences and forces as well as to the obvious outer environment. In fact, as we all know and experience, the inner forces of emotions, thoughts and perceptions which combine to colour our awareness in any given moment are very powerful and more influential than environmental factors, important though those are. How our body moves within society – our behaviour – is the result of the play of our inner forces which themselves are influenced by others outside our immediate control.

Translating this to the cosmos, we might, instead of seeing everything as countless separate components, view the universe as a whole. If the universe is intelligent and therefore responsive, it must be driven by something; we cannot understand it but something there must be in order to promote responses. Think of it as a living, breathing organism and a different picture might build up in our minds. Instead of being a vast empty space with innumerable mysterious, fiery, gaseous objects populating it, of chemical elements and a multitude of forces, perhaps the universe is an extraordinary playing field for consciousness. We might smile at or even deride the thinking of our ancestors who gave names to and personified the various heavenly bodies and forces. But might they not have been a little closer to the truth than our modern, matter-of-fact outlook? At least they were attributing intelligence to the environment and the universe, which may be a more intelligent approach than regarding everything as simply energy and matter. Of course we cannot understand it all but surely it is better to be open to all possibilities than to have a mind that is closed.

So, what of cosmic forces? If the physical universe is an expression, or rather a collective multiple expression, of consciousness and a vehicle for it, energy in the form of

forces must move. Those forces can move as an interaction of physical circumstances, just as in our physical bodies there is movement as an automatic response – respiration and digestion are two obvious examples. But also arising in our bodies are responses resulting from thought. The heartbeat, breathing and all manner of other physical reactions are affected by our thinking and emotions. In the same way as our inner being causes outer reactions, is it not highly likely that the observable reactions and behaviour of the vast and innumerable bodies that comprise our universe result, in some way that we cannot possibly understand, from their inner nature? At some level, way beyond our comprehension, something is happening internally throughout the entire universe. Whatever the responses, whatever the drive, of the inner intelligence of the universe might be, the effects are inevitably vast and incredibly powerful.

If we choose to deny the consciousness and intelligence of the whole then we deny our own. Cosmic forces are like the breath of the universe, ebbing and flowing, the yin and yang of life. Everything is simply the play of consciousness responding to and interacting with itself, the *veda lila* of the ancient rishis. Shakespeare described the world as a stage; perhaps the reality is that the universe is the grandest of theatres.

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