

What is Alive



It was 1:30 AM on January 2, 2015. New Year's Day had barely ended and I'd been asleep for a few hours, but for the last 20 minutes, in a hypnagogic state. I had been trying to arrange the pieces of a powerful dream, so that I could record it on the morrow. As more and more of the pieces emerged, I was finding it harder and harder to hold them all in place. Here is a present-tense account of what happened.

An urgent voice pleads, "Get up and write it down!" "No", I reply, "I'll easily remember. It's really powerful." It's so cold that I've got extra blankets on the bed and I even have my head under the covers, hoping my warm breath will heat up all of the trapped air and finally make it down to my feet. I do not want to leave the bed. But the voice is quite insistent, "Get up *now* and write it down!" Eventually I submit and turn on the blinding light, stagger to my desk and grab a pen. It was a hard delivery, but here is the dream I uncovered.

A Socratic voice asked, "What is *alive*?" I found this to be a strange question, so I asked one of my own, "What do you mean, 'What is alive?'" The voice responded, "We can agree, probably, that humans and dogs are alive; perhaps, even daffodils. But what about rivers? And rocks? Are *they* alive?" I said, "Yes, I think *everything* is alive!" This made me feel both intelligent and inclusive until the next question came, prefaced by a graphic image. I was shown a discarded, pink, plastic parasol, with its gaudy head sticking out of a garbage can. The question was, "What about this gaudy, pink, plastic parasol; is *it* alive?"

I balked at this one. I thought, "Could a denatured plastic artifact be a living thing?" I didn't answer, so Socrates answered, "Yes, it *is* alive; every atom of its being is singing to its creator and harmonizing with its fellows. Even denatured plastic artifacts (he had read my mind!) are making music from the prison cages of their forced, misshapen, mutant isolation. They are like jailed inmates who use spoons and plates and heating pipes to talk and sing together from their separated cells."

I thought about this for a while, but he interrupted my contemplation with another startling observation, "Even a disintegrating cadaver is alive, as it intelligently and compassionately redistributes its molecular makeup to the neighboring ecosystem. It is like a person about to emigrate from Europe to America, who calls his friends together to give them all of his possessions before he leaves. Because the soul is not a hoarder, it only uses what it needs for incarnation. And when it is finished, it recycles meticulously. There is nothing more alive than love.

Socrates remained silent for a few moments as we pondered this idea. Then he said, "Do you think scientists are finally backing themselves away from their pathetic, little materialistic models of reality and into *real* truth?" I said, "Explain that to me." "Well", he said, "string theory is a *start*; a pretty feeble one, but one that's headed in the right direction." Then he said, "Listen to this sound for a few moments" and he played an audio-visual of four strings "talking" to each other. They looked and sounded like four fingernails scraping along a chalkboard - real sounds, but utterly discordant. I had to cover my ears and swallow my sound-soured saliva. The noise was more pathetic than a beginner's first violin lesson. "That", he said, "is what string theory sounds like when you leave the conductor and the musical score out of the equation. God is the conductor of life, and cosmic consciousness is the musical score. Without the conductor and the score, you only have the chaos of hopeless musicians screaming their existential angst into the unheeding void. How could they have gotten it so wrong?"

We both took time out to consider this. Once more, he was the one to break the silence. "Imagine", he invited me, "Rembrandt's son finding his father's paints and daubing the walls of his nursery with his little, pudgy fingers. Such 'art' is to his dad's 'The Nightwatch', as is science's string theory in comparison with the description of creation in the prologue to John's Gospel!" I know that passage very well, so I mentally rehearsed it before he spoke again: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God....and the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us..." Socrates allowed me to finish my mental rehearsal and then he continued, "The Big Bang and the word 'Om' are two different explanations for creation. One says it was merely an explosion, the other says it was a Song of God."

I chewed over this for a while before he once more took up his thesis. "The 'Om' of Hinduism, the 'Logos' of John's Gospel and the 'dream time' of the Aborigines, all got it right. Creation happens through *sound*, and then light dances this creation into particular forms. Sound is the *blueprint*. Light is the *material* needed and incarnation is the *work force*. Matter is simply densified light which sound (intelligence/mind) uses to fashion different kinds of 'stuff' - rivers and rocks, dogs and dinosaurs, daffodils and, with a little help from humans, gaudy, pink, plastic parasols."

Socrates concluded his nighttime, dreamtime lesson by answering his own initial question, "What is *alive*?" He said, "Souls know how to sing at each level of their experience, from the timeless hymn of their essence to the incarnated harmonies of family and friends, right down to the ever-changing cells that make up their bodies and organs. All is *alive*, even the dancing atoms and their inner, pirouetting electrons and their quirky quarks."

“Consciousness is the inner composer that organizes all of matter into the cosmic symphony. It is Brahma (creator of life), Vishnu (sustainer of life) and Shiva (reorganizer of life) working seamlessly as a Blessed Trinity under the baton of Source. Without consciousness, science is legless and humanity is hopeless. It is Nero (mindless science) fiddling as Rome (planet Earth) burns under the assault of a karma-denying hubris.”

So I wrote it all down and then, at 2:02 AM I crawled back under the covers, breathing Ruah into the darkness to warm my frozen toes.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Tír na nÓg
March, 2015