WHAT DOES GOD LOOK LIKE IN AN EXPANDING UNIVERSE?

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A Feeling for the Whole

BY

Gwen Gordon

Sitting out on the grass on a moonless, cloudless night I gaze at the arch of the Milky Way, letting the forms of beloved constellations reveal themselves in the wealth of the luminaries. I sink back into a happy sense of my own nothingness before the certainty of the stars. I do not experience terror at this vastness of space-time but an aspect of immensity that is comforting — all those stars and all the invisible worlds beyond them are necessary for me to have come into existence. I am this immensity gazing into itself, born from the fire of its stars and cooled down enough to be able to think, see and admire. No matter how remote these distant ancestors are, in this moment I know that we would not be without each other and that we are now becoming only by means of each other. A sense of awe sweeps through me.

Still shimmering with the warmth of communion I go to my car, turn the ignition key and put my foot on the gas. Instantly, I feel a sharp stab in my heart. I take my foot off the gas and the pain goes away. I'm not thinking about CO₂ emissions and the greenhouse effect, nor how there are too many cars and how driving alienates us from nature. I am not in the role of environmentalist, a social critic, or a critic of the life damaged by an act of violence against me. My sensitivity I feel, giving up driving is not for the greater good, it is simply an act of love.

Love has everything to do with the past of life. The sensitivities that love awakens are sensitivities awaken are the vehicles by which we make our evolutionary journey and become. Most of our species have evolved the capacity to love and as a result, understand and love one another. The immediate physical and emotional world and all that is past, present, and future, that we have been carrying our way through the dire epistemological crises we face.

From our current depth and scope of attempts to fix things only make them worse. We need to be aware of the scale of the global ecology that the faculties nor feeling faculties alone are at our job. We need our existing capacities to be heightened, and tuned to the depths of the universe that the subtle capacities to be awakened.

We do not have to have a big master plan. We have to listen to the knot in our hearts, the throb, the goose bumps on our arms, deeply into them to find the guidance we need to moment. This is the genius of the whole, close to us as our own body/minds. And it's in our task to love and liberate our deepest creativity, it is our
alienates us from nature. I am not in this moment an environmentalist, a social critic, or a cosmologist. I am life pained by an act of violence against itself. From the sensitivity I feel, giving up driving is not a sacrifice for the greater good, it is simply an act of love.

Love has everything to do with the perpetuation of life. The sensitivities that love awakens and the love that sensitivities awaken are the vehicles by which we carry on the evolutionary journey and become fully human. Most of our species have evolved the capacity to sense and as a result, understand and love only our most immediate physical and emotional world. However, it is only by awakening our sensitivities to the whole of life, past, present, and future, that we have a chance of finding our way through the dire epistemological and ecological crises we face.

From our current depth and scope of sensitivity our attempts to fix things only make them worse. We are such an intricately interconnected network of patterns on the scale of the global ecology, that neither reasoning faculties nor feeling faculties alone are adequate for the job. We need our existing capacities to be vitalized, deepened, and tuned to the depths of the universe and new subtle capacities to be awakened.

We do not have to have a big master plan. But we do have to listen to the knot in our hearts, the roar in our throats, the goose bumps on our arms, and inquire deeply into them to find the guidance we need moment to moment. This is the genius of the whole universe, as close to us as our own body/minds. And if we are to sustain the life of the planet, fulfill our evolutionary destiny and liberate our deepest creativity, it is our singular task
to awaken these sensitivities – on behalf of all that has been, all that is, and all that might become through us.

All beings are unique fields of sensitivities. Sensitivities are what make a flatworm different from Picasso, a heron different from Bill Gates. They are the fruit of evolution and the earmark of individuality. The more complex the life, the more developed and finely tuned its sensitivities. Our sensitivities are the living, sizzling universe within us as well as our means of embracing, articulating, enhancing, elaborating and adoring that universe. What distinguishes humans from a slime mold is not only the range, power, and expression of our sensitivities but our ability to self-sensitize, to consciously increase or diminish our sensitivity to the Whole. This is one of the most direct and powerful ways we can participate in the evolution of the cosmos.

Sensing the Whole does not require nightly meditations on the Milky Way. What it does require is the development, liberation, and exquisite tuning of all our perceptions toward dimensions that are not available through ordinary experience.

Learning to sense the Whole:
- Requires that we become devoted students of life’s patterns, rhythms and forms.
- It requires inhabiting our full fifteen-billion-year-old, evolving story so that the resources of our deep memory – its myths, songs, stories, and dreams – are available to our imaginations.
- It requires inhabiting deep time so that both our far distant ancestors and the yet-to-be-born are real to us.
- It requires fully inhabiting our animal bodies to resonate and feel with the core of all life.

- And it requires continuous creative reaches to find our own unique expressions.
- It is to dwell simultaneously in a world that never is and in a world that is always.
- And it is realizing the unity we share with our thoughts of the foundations of life, its rhythms, and its life and between them.

The word “whole” is finished, undivided, unbound. But the universe is always coming to pate deeply in the complexity through
PART TWO: WHY ARE WE HERE?

- And it requires the liberation of the artful, spontaneous creative play within us, through which love finds its myriad forms.
- It is to dwell in the silence through which we are able to create ourselves and our world moment to moment without getting attached to our plans, our desires, and our perspectives.
- And it is recognizing moment to moment the identity we share with the whole of creation — such that our thoughts sympathetically resonate with the deep structures of the world, our bodies move in its rhythms, and all our actions celebrate and enhance its life and beauty.

The word whole is misleading, for we imagine a big, finished, undivided thing just waiting to be comprehended. But there is no “whole” that isn’t itself continuously evolving through our perception of it. We participate deeply in the universe by evoking its subtlety and complexity through our very sensitivity to it.