

SPIRITUAL AMNESIA



12. Searching for Wisdom

As a child, I was curious about wisdom. I wanted to learn how to be insightful, sage, and powerful. Of course, I didn't even know those terms; but I was fascinated when an older person, who was almost everyone, would say or do something that seemed just right in response to what was happening. I noticed that when people acted in ways that just naturally fit the situation, they seemed to be at ease, confident, and rather pleased with life in general. I figured that if I was lucky, as I got older, I might somehow magically acquire this strange and wonderful ability. Then I, too, would be at ease, confident, rather pleased with life, and with myself. And, with my "Self."

Sometimes I would ask older kids and adults for advice about how to get a head start on achieving wisdom and power. "You're not old enough," or "It comes with age," were their standard replies to my inquiries. Occasionally someone would say insensitively useless like, "Don't worry about it; it's all in your head."

Well, those dismissive answers sure didn't help! Maybe THEY didn't know how to go about it, either! Perhaps they'd never addressed those questions; or had given up, imagining that those lines of inquiry were invalid, having also been put off by their own unsatisfying experiences in asking older kids and adults. Even so, I kept listening to the discussions of my elders. My curious passion to learn about wisdom and personal power was relentless.

Grownups spoke of wisdom respectfully, as a quality of awareness and personal power that was special and desirable, like love. But then, they couldn't seem to define love either. "You'll know it when you find it," they'd say. Maybe wisdom was like that, too?

My dad used to tune in to "The 2000 Year Old Man" on the radio. As Pop seemed to respect what that character had to say and often laughed as the wise old man was being interviewed, I listened carefully. Yet, no matter how sincerely and seriously I paid attention, I still didn't get it. The 2000 Year Old Man sounded far more confused and much less wise than me! (Years later, I discovered that we had been listening to radio broadcasts of comedy by Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner.)

Occasionally, I would get discouraged. Wisdom seemed like something that anyone would want to possess, yet finding a way to become wise was a mystifying, confusing, and frustrating process for me. Wisdom and personal power were not talked about at home nor ever addressed in school.

Sometimes, after searching diligently for knowledge, insight, and wisdom, without bringing home any sagacious bacon, I would vent my frustration with a self-indulgent fantasy. What if, like the baby, Kalel, (who was found by Ma and Pa Kent and raised as their son, Clark), I was an orphan from some distant planet peopled by a race of happy, enlightened philosophers, unfortunately doomed because their sun was about to explode.

And my extraterrestrial parents, two famous professors at the Universal College of Enlightenment, had saved my life at the last possible moment by secretly shooting me away in an escape pod that eventually brought me to Earth. Soon thereafter, Ma and Pa Vanderbeck had found me in a farmer's field sitting next to an open capsule in a crater one afternoon and brought me home to love and raise as their own little boy.

Our becoming alienated many years later, during my teenage years, now makes sense. We began as aliens to each other. In retrospect, my parents were aliens to each other too, both before and after I showed up. I believe this happens in many families.

No wonder the fervent questions that I posed as a boy seemed to make such little sense to my adoptive parents and other grown-ups. After all, how many children inquire about existentialism or the sound of one hand clapping? And when I would ask, "Where did I come from, REALLY?" they must have thought I was after the old story about the birds and the bees. (But I knew that inter-species love created no human offspring.)

Eventually I attended Sunday school and later, worship. I kept my eyes and ears open because I'd been told that religion was full of wisdom and the Good Book taught it to you. Besides, everyone knew God was all knowing and ever-present. However, no one I met in those Sunday get-togethers, well-dressed teachers and preachers included, was able to guide me in my quest for knowledge, insight, and wisdom. More troubling to me, my regular talks, private prayer sessions, and occasional pleadings with God seemed to be one-way communications.

Being a practical little guy, I began to formulate my own cosmology. I decided that I needed a personalized, custom-designed perspective to augment the religion in which I had been raised, which apparently served everyone I knew, excepting me, just fine.

Of course, I reminded myself, I had to create my own universe. It was in my genes.

Please consider this creation myth as my personal foundation for wisdom, so far . . .

13. Remembering Spiritual Amnesia

In the beginning there was emptiness, no thing, no where, no when -- not even a great void. Then, God created space in which to imagine and bring into being all dynamic forces, natural phenomena, profundities of life, and sentient beings.

God originated universes and galaxies, nebulae and milky ways, and stars without number. Energy and light were brought into being. Around most of the stars, planets were lofted to swirl in their ellipses, and around some of them, orbiting satellite spheres were set spinning. At one of these bright stars, a planet with one slowly spinning moon was kept separate, barren, and untouched for God's own pleasure and delight.

Earth was held as a garden for God's Will. There all possibilities and impossibilities could be made real. Even that second most rare possibility of all could be brought forth on Earth . . . Life!

And so, the Earth gave birth! Seas were flooded and filled, mountains piled high, and winds made free. Algae and amoebae, bacteria and butterflies, green plants and vibrant flowers, and wonderful varieties of creatures abounded in the water, on the land, and in the air. Yet something even more wondrous was missing.

As God looked upon this garden world with joy and delight, he or she had a feeling that it needed just one wonderfully unique and final touch to be perfect and complete. Just as one of us might cook a delicious dish from an old family recipe, then taste it with approval but think, "*It's really good, but it still needs something really unusual to send it over the top*" - God considered the ultimate missing secret ingredient of all Creation.

Imagine God suddenly smiling. "I've got it! As I am love and power without limit, I shall make from my spirit that which has been missing. I shall sprinkle my essence all over the plains and slopes of the world. As each twinkling mote falls to earth, it will become a person, a woman or a man; and occasionally, someone simultaneously both."

God may have paused and grinned, deciding, "I am going to have some fun with these human beings. I shall give them everything they need to make their lives fulfilling, plus two experiences to make those lives interesting and challenging: Free Will and Spiritual Amnesia. I will provide each being with the freedoms to make the most of his or her Unique Blessings, relationships, humor, passionate purposes, and services to others.

"Yes, I will enjoy watching these folks, my Children, discover their divine origin and natural powers, and realize they are one with each other, with the earth, and with Me." Over time, all will recover from Spiritual Amnesia and realize that they have always been enlightened and are one with the source and the way.

14. Our Unique Blessings

As we transcend our NAPs and recover from Spiritual Amnesia, it becomes ever more clear that we human beings are naturally endowed and empowered with the abilities to:

- Pay attention to our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.
- Examine the consequences of our acts and their impacts on others.
- Compare these consequences and impacts to our values, life goals, and ideals.

As we grow aware and skillful with these abilities we become able to proactively:

- Choose to make positive changes in our ways of living.
- Act purposefully, both individually and cooperatively.
- Grow in knowledge, insight, wisdom, spirit, and power.
- Become servant leaders in guiding others in recovery from their NAPs and celebration of their own Unique Blessings.

Recovery from Spiritual Amnesia is a wondrous opportunity and an awesome responsibility. And each of us is accountable for accepting or denying that challenge. Ultimately, as we each learn to *Play the game of life with a Full Deck*, we can inspire and lead others to discover, master, and serve others with their own magnificent seven Unique Blessings.

Many of us have read self-help books, attended personal growth seminars, invested in therapists, and visited with gurus and New Age teachers. Yet, somehow, most of the personal growth stuff we learn doesn't seem to result in the intended immediate satisfaction, or the desired positive and lasting fulfillment. It becomes easy to get lost searching for someone to rescue us, rather than learning to save ourselves.

Together we can learn to liberate ourselves, those close to our hearts, and our students with the rarest of God's creations - consciousness of our divine origin, unique blessings, and powers to

serve. Only then can we be fully alive, loving each other, the earth, and ourselves ... as all of us are loved through God.

15. Ego

If everyday logic worked, we would all have been enlightened long ago. The Negative Automatic Program would now be an ancient bad joke on humankind, an appendix to our consciousness, rather than the dominant influence over it.

Our options are clear. Are we going to continue to BE HAD by our NAPs, or are we going to do whatever it takes to liberate ourselves, take charge of our Unique Blessings, and simply be the "havers" of NAPs?

This is a life or death choice!

Many of us have tried varieties of methods for "self-improvement." However, there has never been anything wrong or deficient about our essential Selves!

How could anything be wrong with a Self that has a divine origin, natural powers, and which is one with God, everyone else, and the earth? Each Self is perfect!

The problem with Spiritual Amnesia is that we mistakenly identify our Selves with our egos, which are simplistic and inaccurate constructions of self, generated by our spiritually amnesiac NAPs. Some say that E.G.O. stands for Edging God Ot.

It is time to know your genuine and natural Self. And knowing your Self begins with personal accountability.

16. Who You Are Is Not Your Mind

One of the pitfalls in the notion that we can think our way out of our NAP-induced problems is the commonly accepted belief that one's identity is the personality "in the mind," or that one's Self is somehow centrally located between our ears. It seems reasonable to believe that the "seat of intelligence" must be located in the brain. And it is common to exchange the terms "brain" and "mind" as identifiers for the same thing, or two very similar aspects of the central locus of human awareness.

Quite simply, an individual could conclude that essentially, "I am my mind." Or, "I think; therefore, who I am must be my mind."

As children, we used to believe that we, our identities, were our bodies. We identified with how we felt. I am hungry, or full, or sleepy. When we fell and skinned our knees, we would run home crying, "I hurt myself!"

Later, as we grew, we began to identify ourselves by our roles and goals and achievements. "Hi, my name is Gary. I'm Alison's husband and Tom's buddy. I am about to return to college for a Master's Degree, something new and different from my BA in Journalism. I'm a fair neon light maker, and an aficionado of exotic sports cars.

Everyone has a story, his story and her story. But still, as adults we know that the story is not the same as that person's essential being or true self.

As we become older, wiser, and more sophisticated, we may begin to realize that "who I am, really" is something beyond the body and the story. At that point, one might take the view, "Since I experience my senses and thoughts and emotions through this organic computer between my ears, THAT location must be the central location of where I am! So, the conscious part of me (currently expressing itself) is my brain; therefore, 'I am my mind.'"

Perhaps not. I am not my knee, and I am certainly not that physiological computer between my ears. And most definitely, I am not my mind's "I." THAT notion is simply a projection of the Negative Automatic Program.

Who I really am begins with my Divine Origin; not the NAP's delusional imposition of a Spiritual Amnesiac with an ego.

In science fiction movies, when an android starts thinking it is really human, it becomes dangerous. As well, when a human identifies with his or her NAP, that human ego is not sane and may be dangerous to its Self and to others.

All that Eastern Stuff about ego boils down to a Spiritual Amnesiac mistakenly believing that the NAP is the Self

Ego-lessness is in no way "losing your Self," but rather, intentionally going out of your mind to BE your Self.

When I am out of my mind, I no longer have Spiritual Amnesia; nor am I under the control of the NAP. I may still have an ego; but I have the option to not take it seriously, or to make it a big deal. Ego is just the identity of a NAP. I do not have to identify with my identity, or my NAP. I don't even have to take my identity personally. I can stop living under the influence of my ego . . . or being had by my NAP.

Playing the game of life With A Full Deck
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