

Intelligent Design: An Esoteric Perspective

William Meader

Introduction

Did the universe appear through random events, or is it the product of a vast intelligence? This question has triggered debate among scholars, philosophers and theologians for countless centuries. In contemporary society, science and religion seem to hold these opposite perspectives, and the debate between them rages on. Religion has long viewed the universe as the product of God's creative work, and therefore is of intelligent design. Science, on the other hand, contends that the universe (and life) came into existence through natural laws and evolutionary processes. In the eyes of many scientists, divine intelligence is not needed to explain the complexities of creation. Though these two perspectives may appear irreconcilable, Esotericism sees them both as partial expressions of truth. From this perspective, there is an overarching intelligence that gives design to creation. And, at the same time, the laws of nature are responsible for that design. This is because the laws of nature are an expression of God's intelligence. It is not an intelligence that is separate from the design, but is the design itself and the natural laws that govern it.

Before examining this subject in depth, it should be stated that my intention is not to address the political and educational dispute regarding intelligent design. In the United States, this is an issue that is currently at the forefront of national debate. Sadly, the polarized positions held by both sides seem to be arguing without recognizing the full scope of intelligence. Too often we interpret intelligence through a lens that is biased by our own mental experiences. Stated differently, our understanding of intelligence (either superhuman or subhuman) is prejudiced by our experience with it. Some researchers are coming to the realization that psychometric tests may only be measuring a narrow band of intelli-

gence. The yardstick of measure is too often determined by the prevailing scientific point of view. As such, the current political debate on this subject seems woefully ill-informed.

The One Life

To understand this subject, there is a foundational idea that must be initially grasped. It is a tenet stating that, in the ultimate sense, all things are really One Thing. Sometimes called the Primary Principle, this notion suggests that there is a single universal life force that permeates all of creation. This singularity of life has been called God, Brahman or Allah, to name just a few titles given it by various cultures. From the esoteric perspective, this One Life exists within the subjective and objective (inner and outer) worlds, and its most external expression is the physical universe we see and know. When this principle is fully understood, it becomes apparent that all things are part of its expression. For example, kingdoms in nature, (such as the animal and plant domains) are merely the demonstration of differing categories of this intelligence that have taken form.

If the universe is One Life in outer expression, then its intelligence must underlie everything contained within it. Nothing can escape its all encompassing embrace. Yet due to our limited perception, we still tend to see the Creator and creation as distinct and separate, and that one

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is the cause of the other. As such, creation is normally viewed as an effect of divine intelligence. In our ordinary perception, there appears to be a separation between creation and the intelligence that gave it birth. Yet this is an illusion. Intelligence is not separate from the forms it has produced. It may outwardly seem so, but this is due to our limited capacity to see beyond form and appearance. The intelligence that created the universe is not remote from creation, but is woven into the fabric of creation. For example, the instinctual mind of an animal is not separate from God's creative intelligence. Instead, it is a category of God's intelligence outwardly expressed in animal form.

Admittedly, at first glance this idea may be difficult to grasp. It is particularly challenging for people raised within a Western culture. Historically, the West has been conditioned by the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). In each of these religions, the separation of God from creation has been emphasized. Indeed, these theologies are rooted in this concept. The belief in original sin, as well as repentance and redemption, are central to these religions. They have emerged because of this assumption of separation. Given this, it is not surprising that some scholars have referred these religions as theologies of exile. Esotericism, and most Eastern religions, do not hold this separative view. Instead, the gap between God and creation is understood as merely an illusion. This illusion is due to humanity's preoccupation with form, and its disregard for the living forces underlying form. It is not God and creation that is the basis of reality, but God as creation. Creation is God's intelli-

gence expressed through form. In truth, form would not exist, but for the intelligence that underlies it.

Universality of Intelligence

It is important to therefore realize that intelligence is not confined to what we typically consider as living. Indeed, every attribute we see within creation is a feature of this intelligence in outer display. Objects (forms) have a variety of characteristics related to them. For example, they may display color, texture, and

geometric design, to name a just a few characteristics. These attributes are examples of living intelligence. Emotions and thoughts are attributive, and therefore represent intelligence as well. To experience happiness is to register within consciousness a specific type of intelligence. When looking at the splendor of a sunset, intelligence is realized, and we call it beauty. Intelligence is always revealed through attributes, and everything has attributes. Even the stones we walk upon, the water we drink, and the air we breathe, are part of this intelligence and its livingness. Of course,

this means that God's intelligence permeates the events that are despicable to us as well, such as war, famine and the cataclysms that befall our world. Everything is a part of the One Life, and we, as human beings, are mere cells of intelligence within it, each participating in its incarnational thrust.

Within the scientific community, the theory of evolution is the preferred model for explaining the universe and the development of life. Evolutionary theory is in opposition to the belief in intelligent design, as advocated by religion.

Science contends that consciousness comes forth as a result of physical form. However, Esotericism sees this as an inversion of the truth. It is not the evolution of physical form that determines the development of consciousness, but the reverse. Consciousness is what is evolving, and form naturally changes in response to it. Form is merely the outer garment of consciousness. As consciousness evolves, the outer form responds and adjusts accordingly.

Initially it may appear that Esotericism supports the religious perspective, and therefore opposes evolution theory. Yet this is not the case. Esotericism does embrace the notion of intelligent design. However, unlike religion, it does not hold the assumption of separation. The same can be said about science and its reliance on evolutionary theory. Evolution is a fundamental principle within the esoteric perspective. However, it is not the Darwinian model of evolution that it advocates. Science contends that consciousness comes forth as a result of physical form. However, Esotericism sees this as an inversion of the truth. It is not the evolution of physical form that determines the development of consciousness, but the reverse. Consciousness is what is evolving, and form naturally changes in response to it. Form is merely the outer garment of consciousness. As consciousness evolves, the outer form responds and adjusts accordingly. What science

considers the cause of evolution, occultism sees as merely an effect.

Contrary to the attitude of many scientists and theologians, intelligent design and evolutionary theory coexist and are equally true. When rightly understood, they support and enhance each other. Evolution is indication of life's changing relationship to the intelligence that underlies, conditions, and shapes our universe. All things change and grow. Such changes occur because of life's capacity to realize higher categories of intelligence. This intelligence is always present, and needs only to be discovered. We do not develop intelligence, but evolve into intelligence. At each step in the long journey of life, the mind of God is present, waiting to be realized and implemented through form. Intelligent design is God's knowingness in manifestation. In the deepest sense, it is creation itself.

Book Reviews

The Universe in a Single Atom, by the Dalai Lama. Morgan Road Books, New York, 2005. Hardback, 216 pages. US\$24.95.

The Dalai Lama's name recognition and stature as a teacher guarantee wide readership for all his publications. But *The Universe in a Single Atom* takes his contribution to the thoughtful literature of our time to a new level. Its purpose is to compare modern science to traditional Buddhist teachings—not a unique endeavor, since we are familiar with the work of Fritjof Capra and many others. However, the Dalai Lama's book stands in a class by itself in terms of its authoritative presentation and readability.

Nobody would question the Dalai Lama's exceptional grasp of Tibetan Buddhism and good understanding of the larger field of Indian spirituality. What comes as a delightful surprise is his grasp of modern scientific discovery, whether it be Einsteinian relativity, quantum physics, or neuroscience. With characteristic humility and humor, the author initially attributes his knowledge of science to "reading news coverage of important scientific stories in magazines like *Newsweek*, or hearing reports on the BBC World Service." Clearly he knows much more, and he proceeds to credit discussions with many experts during his world travels and conferences at his residence-in-exile in Dharamsala, India. He also describes the fascination he developed in childhood for mechanical de-

vices—which certainly were not plentiful in Tibet in the 1930s and '40s.

However he acquired his understanding of science, evidently he was a quick learner. He has a grasp of scientific concepts that most of us could envy. Indeed, this reviewer, who has subscribed to *Scientific American* throughout his adult life, learned almost as much about modern science from the book as he did about the various schools of Buddhist thought.

Among the topics discussed in *The Universe in a Single Atom* are biological evolution and human consciousness. The author depicts evolution as a process driven not only by random selection but also by the collective karma of the sentient beings involved. He rejects the notion that sentience could have evolved from inanimate matter. Similarly, he discounts the claims of some neuroscientists that consciousness is a product of the brain, citing Buddhism teachings that consciousness and matter are eternally distinct aspects of reality.

The Dalai Lama stresses that Buddhism places experience ahead of both human reason and scriptural revelation as the primary source of knowledge. Here, “experience” includes not only laboratory experimentation but also the analytical meditation of contemplative Buddhism, which is approached with comparable rigor. He frankly rejects some of the traditional teachings of his religion and remains open to the possibility of further modification of his beliefs in the light of new scientific discovery. To do otherwise, he explains, is to fall into the trap of fundamentalism. At the same time the author is critical of modern science insofar as it promotes the view that the objective universe is the only real one. For him, the subjective universe in which we think and grow spiritually is equally real.

The last chapter presents an impassioned appeal for greater recognition of the ethical dimensions of scientific research, particularly in fields like human cloning whose long-term impact on human evolution are unpredict-

able. The Dalai Lama ends with the following reflection:

Since the emergence of modern science, humanity has lived through an engagement between spirituality and science as two important sources of knowledge and well-being. Sometimes the relationship has been a close one—a kind of friendship—while at other times it has been frosty, with many finding the two to be incompatible. Today, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, science and spirituality have the potential to be closer than ever and to embark upon a collective endeavor that has far-reaching potential to help humanity meet the challenges before us. We are all in this together. May each of us, as a member of the human family, respond to the moral obligation to make this collaboration possible. This is my heartfelt plea.

May it be ours too.

The author confesses to knowing nothing of mathematics, often considered to be the key to scientific understanding. Here, any such weakness may be the very key that makes this personal testimony accessible to the layperson. *The Universe in a Single Atom* is knowledgeable, evocative, and superbly written in a nontechnical, readable style. It is a “must-read” for esoteric students and for all thinking people.

Editorial Staff

Sword Of Shamballa: Mystery of the Return of Christ, by Barbara Domalske. AuthorHouse, 2006. Available from major online retailers or from the publisher at www.authorhouse.com/BookStore. Paperback, 293 pages. US\$19.70.

The teachings of the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul, as every student knows, are not an “easy read.” At most I can read about four pages an hour, since much of my time is spent pondering what I have read. D.K. himself urges others to extract the essentials from his teachings and re-package them anew, for future aspirants and disciples.

Barbara Domalske has done precisely that. *Sword of Shamballa: Mystery of the Return of Christ* is an inspiring synthesis of teachings relating to the Reappearance of the Christ. She manages to synthesize, in under 300 pages, the Tibetan's modern message and the historical Christ's timeless one regarding the ongoing mission of the Christ and his anticipated return this century. Almost every relevant esoteric precept from the Ancient Wisdom teachings is recapitulated in concise, matter-of-fact sentences. Her brevity and style make this book a valuable introduction to the Wisdom teachings. But even amidst this brevity one finds (microcosmically as it were) an echo of the Tibetan's didactic style, with its intentional redundancy. It is appropriate that the author dedicates her book to the Master D.K. and to his master, the Christ.

In addition to restating the existing teachings, Domalske presents some new ideas of considerable merit. The "Sword of Shamballa," which is the book's title, relates to Jesus' seemingly paradoxical statement that he wasn't necessarily bringing peace, at least in the short term, but rather "a sword," which symbolizes war, conflict, and cleavage. The paradox is resolved when one realizes that not everyone will profit from the advent of truth and power, of a light that shines on bad old habits, misdeeds, and selfishness. The numerological values of "sword" and "Sword of Shamballa" (by both the RAN and AN methods) is 7. Thus they point to the seventh-ray energy of the incoming Aquarian Dispensation:

Destroying evil is first-ray work that produces purification and advances second-ray building, so that the seventh ray may bring spiritual energy into contact with substance. Hierarchy constantly works to defeat planetary evil coming from the forces of darkness (p.97).

In other words (and as the Tibetan repeatedly has written) the old, fossilized forms that have outlived their usefulness must be destroyed so that the new forms may serve the New Age. Jesus made a similar comment

about "old wineskins." On pages 103-4, the author writes:

As the Sword of Shamballa works to build the Aquarian Dispensation, new forms will result. This change requires an intelligent human response based on love-wisdom, not violent reactionary fear, terror, hate, or separation. Christ brings Shamballa Energy that initiates humanity into the liberating Aquarian Dispensation. The emphasis will be on life, free from the tomb of matter through right relationship, communion, sharing, and goodwill. The Sword of Shamballa intensifies the light in the world by bringing life more abundantly, revelation, and striking a great blow at world glamour.

Domalske also believes that this idea of the Sword may even replace, or at least complement, the iconography of the Cross in the Aquarian Age.

This number 7 (most often 16/7, or $1 + 6 = 7$, but also 61/7 or 6.1./7) also represents the energy that Domalske feels pervades the book and was a motivating force behind writing it. For example, "Holy Spirit," "Jesus Christ," "Divine Grace," "The Spirit of Truth," "World Servers," "Cosmic Divider," "Sword," "Sword and the Cross," and "Sword of Shamballa" are just a few of the phrases that have the "7" energy. After noticing the preponderance of this "7 energy" in so many key phrases, the author examined other relevant phrases, most of them drawn from the Tibetan's writings, to see if there was any further pattern or confirmation. The results are presented in the Numerology Appendix.

Pythagoras noted that "number" is sacred, and that truth can be ascertained by an attention to numerical relationships, forms, ratios and geometry. Meaningful correspondences regarding triples abound, one obvious example being Action-Reaction-Stasis, Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis, Father-Mother-Son, the Holy Trinity, and so forth. The number 2 is obviously associated with the world of duality in which we live, the play of opposites and the Middle Way. Both 2 and 3 are spa-

tial dimensions, proceeding from the undifferentiated, holistic One, which is no mere quantity but encompasses All.

Not everyone will be convinced by the numerology which is clearly of importance to the author, and a pervasive sub-theme of the book. Many people are troubled by the issue of equivalence in the hundreds of languages spoken and written today. Different languages would obviously—and quite capriciously—give different numerological “energies” to the same reality. Various titles of the Christ can be traced to every number from 2 through 9. For example, “the Teacher” has a value of 3, while “Prince of Peace” has the value 8. Skeptics would argue that you can find a number to make any desired point. On the other hand, a surprising number of titles correspond to the master numbers: 11, 22, 33, and 77. And Domalske can rightly claim that 16/7 phrases and words predominate in her book. Besides, the book’s merit rests on its larger message, even without its numerological correspondences.

From numerology, Domalske turns in Chapter 11 to geometry, presenting a “new thoughtform” in the form of the Prayer Triangle (which she first published in *The Beacon*, May/June 2003). The triangle links the three power points or centers: the Individual (Humanity), Christ (Hierarchy), and the Father (Shamballa). Beginning at the Humanity center, we mentally focus the prayer before directing it to the Christ center. Then in the name, power, and consciousness of Christ, the prayer is filled with Light and Love for transmission to the uppermost Father center. The Father’s response to Humanity completes the third side of the triangle.

As one who is devoted to the teachings of Jesus the Christ, and of the Tibetan through Alice Bailey, I was privileged and delighted to read *Sword of Shamballa*. Barbara Domalske regards these teachings as the “evidence of things unseen,” and the coming Return as a fact inevitable. This reflects her faith as a Christian, and as a student of the Ancient Wisdom, which is evident throughout the work. Reading the book was an experience of almost effortless grace, of re-

minding me of what I already knew, simple truth cascading upon simple truth, refreshing me, and helping me to re-dedicate myself to the service work at hand. Although confident in her knowledge and faith, the author is at the same time humble, like the Tibetan. D.K. suggested that, if students found his teachings helpful, they should use and apply them in daily life. *Sword of Shamballa* helped to re-focus my attention on the Mystery of the Return of the Christ.

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Spiritual Symbolism in the Wizard of Oz, by Javier J. Farias. Doggie in the Window Publications, 2005. Contact the publisher at POB 1565, Duluth, GA 30096 or at www.doggieinthefwindow.biz. Paperback, 199 pages. US\$12.95.

Popular literature—including children’s literature—often contains thinly disguised but profound wisdom. We are already familiar with Temple Richmond’s ongoing work of uncovering the esoteric meaning of the Harry Potter books.¹ Now J. J. Farias shares a delightful study of that old favorite *The Wizard of Oz*.

Most of us know *The Wizard* from the MGM production of 1939, one of the most successful motion pictures ever made—and the one that assured the 16-year-old Judy Garland a place among the immortals of the silver screen. But the story goes back to 1899, to a series of children’s books written by the American author L. Frank Baum. In fact a number of movies were made before the appearance of the 1939 blockbuster. Farias’ interest includes Baum’s life and books as well as the screenwriting and production of the MGM movie. The depth of his analysis becomes clear when he points out subtle details, not only from the book and the movie itself, but also from footage that was cut from the movie. Mr. Farias makes the important

¹ For example, see her article in *The Beacon*, May/June, July/August 2004.

point that Frank Baum was a Theosophist, strongly suggesting that the story's esoteric content is not just a figment of Farias' own imagination but was intentionally planted. What is surprising is that so much of this content made its way into the movie.

Spiritual Symbolism in the Wizard of Oz depicts the story, particularly the yellow brick road, as an allegory for Dorothy's spiritual journey. The drab, monochrome Kansas represent earthly existence, while the "Living Technicolor" of Munchkin Land represents the higher reality of soul existence. Dorothy's companions, according to Farias' description, represent her undeveloped subtle vehicles: the Tin Man her emotional body, the Scarecrow her mental body, and Toto her animating spirit. The Cowardly Lion is her undeveloped will aspect. The Wicked Witch of the West is Dorothy's troublesome ego, while the good witch Glinda is her higher self, urging Dorothy along on her path. Every facet of the story, from the apple trees that are reluctant to surrender their fruit to the flying monkeys, is given esoteric meaning.

Dorothy and her companions pin their hopes for the solution to their problems on the all-powerful but mysterious Wizard of Oz. Farias associates Emerald City, the fortress-like structure where this demigod hides from the world, with the institutional Church. When Dorothy—and the story's readers—discover that the Wizard is just an inept man behind a curtain, they are forced to recognize that solving life's problems and achieving one's spiritual destiny lie solely in one's own hands.

We might take issue with some of the correspondences Mr. Farias suggests. For example, the Emerald City could symbolize a Masonic lodge instead of the Church. But the author's objective is to make us question the obvious, think, and progress on our own spiritual paths. We one cannot but be impressed by the contribution he has made and the insights he has shared. *Spiritual Symbolism* is written in a lively, easy-to-read style that will delight its readers.

Editorial Staff

