

Jubilee

*The Emancipation
of Life and Love*

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A Publication from
THE QUIET REVOLUTION OF THE HEART

2024

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We have inherited many stories
Some have served us worse than others.

What follows is a new addition
to an ancient mythology
of both the sacred and the mundane
transcribed in the voice of a common mystic
rooted in the eternal reality,
from the original to the present,
including how one reckless and
docile species ran so far afoul
and a gentle Prophet's unsettling message
as to how they may yet find their way home.

A work of fiction, like a fable or myth,
which rings eerily truthful.
Each paragraph
a tiny poem
embedded in the long arc of
the story of the cosmos
of who we are,
how we came to be,
and where we might go from here.

A story many hoped would never again be told
and some knew not how long the wait.



My chief desire is to show that what is most mysterious and most exalted is also that which, strangely enough, turns out to be most ordinary and nearest to hand, and that what is most glorious in its transcendence is also that which is humblest in its wonderful immediacy, and that we know far more than we are usually aware of knowing, in large part because we labor to forget what is laid out before us in every moment, and because we spend so much of our lives wondering in dreams, in a deep but fitful sleep.

The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss by David Bentley Hart. (Yale University Press, 2013, p. 84)

An Origin Story, Revisited

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In the beginning, there was Emptiness, the Ineffable. Without name or division, there was neither space nor separation. Hence, no motion or time. Only something like a mustard seed; in size smaller than a grain of salt. If anything existed beforehand, scientists and theologians would agree: So far beyond human comprehension, It should be considered meaningless. What came afterwards would seem utterly miraculous, if not for the fact that It was also the natural order of the universe unfurling before our very eyes.

Bound within the speck of a tiny seed was a trinity of all Matter, Energy, and Instruction floating amid the Nameless. Every molecule, every photon, every organizing principle, for all time, compressed in a single unified Seed: Destined to become, someday in the future, the infinite universe.

For clarity going forward, let *Matter* be a word to represent Energy bound in a knot. *Energy* then represents the threads which weave a vast cosmic cloth. *Instruction*, in turn, must represent the principles which choreograph interactions of Matter and Energy, of particles and waves, respectively.

In waves, Energy moves through the warp and woof of an interconnected universe. Knots of potential Energy may, at times, act more as particles than as waves. None of whom are too large nor too small to be moved regardless of the Name. At certain energetic frequencies, even the Ineffable can be felt, touched, and swayed. Everything flows responsively within the intricate dance of an infinite Universe.

For a brief moment in time, long before such concepts were yet to be imagined, (Or longer? Who knows? Only the Ineffable was there to bear witness) the density of a tiny seed pulled inward so tightly, complete stillness was achieved. Then, inexplicably, Instructions embedded in the tiny seed ordered a direct about-face. Energy converted from inward pull to outward push. Matter moved. Did the seed slowly, or rapidly, wobble, vibrate, or spin? Did momentum build to such velocity that mutual attraction was completely overwhelmed? Or rather, did the Emptiness simply yield and release? Did the space beyond so relax that barriers collapsed and existence found itself lacking any constraints?

Regardless, an event occurred which scientists from a distant vista would dub the Big Bang. Such a name only led to further questions: Was it, as its name implies, sudden and violent? Like an intense burst of aerosol spray? Or more like a bubble which gradually expands until, too thin to hold together any longer, splits into innumerable smaller versions, fractals, of itself? Or instead, has it split at all? Might the seed be expanding reality into Emptiness as it grows? Any

memories have long since faded into the mist. The images chosen are mere metaphors left to imaginations of Beings, like you and me, also known as *us*.

Though a layperson, and more mystic than theologian or scientist at that, I perceive the mustard seed, as you may too, as the Original Source at a point of midoscillation—like a wave or a respiration. The tiny mustard seed in a moment of utmost density, of utter stillness, represents the completion of a deep inhale; the pause when the diaphragm holds for an exchange of give and receive, but on a cosmic scale. We live through the long exhale.

The emerging universe has been dancing like a rippling wave ever since. Slowly expanding through the spiral and swirl; rotate, orbit, and collide; coalesce, collapse, and repeat. This era of the dance has been continuous for 13.5 billion Earth-years. Thus far, and thankfully still counting, that is. Due to the universe's ongoing expansion, and at an accelerating pace no less, we may deduce that the present moment we occupy is still early in the long exhale. Which is to say, time is in our favor.

The long exhale stretches the universe farther and farther from Center. As it does, the units of time, space, distance, and speed, by their very nature, morph in due measure. Though the metrics in the universal dance continuously change, one infant species, in one brief era, on one remote planet, attempts to rigidly define all understanding. If their gaze gently softened, what else might they see?

First, behold the tiny mustard seed. Our Greatest Great-Grandparent, the Source from which all seeds

emerge. It is One. It is Whole. It is Shalom. Let us date this earliest ancestor, representing the fullness of all space and time, in more manageable increments, as a percentage, or a century, aged 100 units of time.

In early childhood, development was prodigious. A single seed of intensely compressed energy reversed course to outwardly unfurl galaxy upon galaxy. Within time's first seven increments, as many as 200 billion galaxies formed within the observable regions of limitless space. One of the many, later named the Milky Way, is itself composed of 100 billion suns. Within its constellations, without exaggeration, orbit an equal number of planets. Maybe more. One among them, our most beloved, pulls us close to its inner core.

The pace and breadth of such change in a minute span of time is quite staggering. A fundamental principle of the unified universe may thus be inferred: Within a single thread of continuity, the waves of potential for change are nearly unimaginable. Possibilities would seem truly miraculous, if not plainly visible to the spirit's eye.

After the first seven units of time, its work seemingly complete, our Greatest Great-Grandparent paused for a period of deep rest. The Sabbath lasted quite a long time. Not until the age of $66\frac{3}{4}$ units did another meaningful event transpire. It, the Ineffable, was well past middle age when, in the expansive skies, a watery globe coalesced.

Such a long delay would indicate nothing fundamental or inevitable in the principles of the universe.

The late-blooming planet might be a mere accident, hardly a manifested destiny. Although always a possibility, it was one among many realized. Due to the planet's actual existence, its presence may at least be judged as well within the margins of probability. This unnamed planet, later to be called *Earth*, might be one random element among innumerable others. Or a singularly unique event within the magnificent cosmic dance.

Furthermore, such an event could be cherished as a rare and precious gift. Or, on the other hand, it could be received as an unwelcome surprise: For instance, as an innkeeper might greet a family of wayward migrants—one clearly expecting a child, and it illegitimate, no less. (Such an atrocious pronoun and adjective to ascribe to a child.) “No vacancy here. I’m sorry. We don’t serve your kind. Out in the stable the animals do just fine on nights colder than this.”

An unwelcome guest to mistreat, neglect, or abuse? Or a precious gift to nurture and to love as if At-One with you? The chosen images and interpretations seem to hold great bearing on the ways in which we proceed. Therefore, a second fundamental principle can be deduced: Instructions embedded in the mustard seed must have given options to express, later dubbed the *responsibility and freedom to choose*.

Almost immediately, our youngest great-grandparent, the newborn planet without a name, was adopted by a star. In elongated loops, they began circling. As a result, upon the planet, warmth ebbed and flowed with cold.

Seasons blended one into the next. The tiny planet, as if on a spindle, spun rapidly with excitement. The sun rose. The sun set. Day blended with night.

Closer to the surface, conditions were not so orderly. Silence was regularly punctuated by lightning's snap. Sunlight was often obscured by clouds of darkness. Winds swirled into vortices. Nights flashed ominously. The crust oozed red lava and spewed malodorous gas. The planet was truly a hot mess.

In the vicinity, debris sailed to and fro. If trajectories intersected, an ambush descended on the vulnerable planet. One collision landed with such a punch, the spindle tilted twenty-three degrees off-center. North and south were never quite the same. From that day forward, winter here, summer there. Days stretched forth. Then contracted. Yet another strike dislodged a chunk and flung it high above. As if tethered by an invisible cord, the mercurial moon hovered near its origin. Ever faithful to the sun, it played hide and seek with Mother.

As cosmic debris repeatedly collided with the watery planet, divots emptied again and again of waters as broad as seas. With a gargantuan splash, dust and steam arose, interrupting skies drenched in sun. Lighter elements hovered aloft. An anaerobic atmosphere swaddled the newborn planet. Heavier elements fell in sheets of liquid rain. Seas and oceans gathered once again. The high ground was tamped and fortified with minerals and vitamins.

In spite of the harsh collisions, the orbiting pair appeared quite pliable. From a distance, the two became

beautifully rounded globes. Like droplets of oil in water, the moon and planet seem to be pulled inward from an equalizing Center. Or another possibility: Maybe they were smoothed, from the outside in, as the gentle touch of a Potter's fingers molds clay on a spinning wheel.

Such beautiful perfection, however, is a sly conceit. The presence of liquid water, evenly spread by gravity, hides many blemishes. Over the planet's battered surface, from the highest peak to the deepest crevice, is a range of 65,000 feet. If situated side by side, the descent would be twelve miles deep. Sometimes the world differs profoundly from the ways which we perceive.

Eventually, airborne collisions occurred less often. Storms calmed. Stillness settled over the water and the land. As it did, the processes of Life began. In less time required for the universe to assume its expansive shape, processes initiated which culminated in this present moment, and us as participants. No memory was retained, nor does a record exist, of how the processes began. Speculations have been reduced to subjective explanations of well-crafted theories and myths. Here are two examples to help to understand.

Certain imaginations, none of whom were present at the time, view Life as perfect at conception. Perfection soon fell, however, and was forever lost. The Creator gave Adam breath, Eve a rib, before handing her off to her husband for life. Unfortunately for the newlyweds, the Creator looked away or dozed off. One cunning, disobedient snake slipped into the garden and

spoke to two naively obedient listeners. A single flaw was the source of humanity's downfall for eternity. Many a neighbor has suffered the consequence. The rest, as they say, is dismissed as history: For better or for worse, what you see is what you get.

Rather than Adam, but in a strikingly similar tone, some imaginations suggest Life branched from one last unified common ancestor. With less creativity, the ancestor was named LUCA. She is the last known point from which all living Beings diverge and ascend. Such a theory, however, fails to integrate the convergence and cooperation of interconnected Beings with no hierarchical rank or order.

Though attributes of how and why are explained subjectively, descriptions of when can be grounded in hard evidence. In the planet's earliest rotations around the sun, almost immediately on a cosmic scale, impressions were made which resemble the cells of Life as seen today. The markers are dated to the fifth increment of time following the planet's chance formation.

These earliest indications of Life were found in fossilized rocks like thumbprints impressed upon geologic tombstones. The marks were located in far-flung places now known as Australia, Africa, and Greenland. The evidence, however, may be circumstantial. The weight of physical objects leaves distinct impressions. In contrast, like waves or wind, the animating energy of spiritual consciousness leaves less than a wisp.

From the Big Bang to LUCA, or Adam unto Eve, beginnings are assumed to begin in a singularity. And

yet, what is most meaningful exists in relationships of pairs and groups. Since these disparate stories seem inherently narrow, imperfect, and incomplete, might there be a Third Way? Let's see.

As the watery globe coalesced, Instructions coded in the tiny mustard seed almost immediately generated five processes for Life's incarnation. For ease of translation, these five are known as cellular formation, autocatalysis, homeostasis, adaptive replication, and metabolism. The processes, in all likelihood, began concurrently. Diversity followed by convergence is far less time-consuming than a linear sequence of new grafting onto old hierarchically. From the outset, convergence instilled interdependence of cooperative relationships, and afterwards, symbiosis. Later known as *Life*.

Because Life circulates as particles of Matter, and the animating energy we call Love radiates in waves, because neither can manifest without the cooperative symbiosis of the other, what appear as two are here joined as One. Henceforth they unite as *Life and Love*. The phenomenon described may be known by another, more familiar name: *God*. Merely two linguistic symbols for one reality.

One of Life and Love's Instructions, called cell formation, may have begun at the edges where two inhospitable environments meet. In the tumultuous conditions of the unnamed planet, edges blended to form niches. For instance, deep in the oceans' depths, hot gas emerged from the ocean floor. It blended with cold

water descending from above. Where the hot gas and cold liquid met, a niche was formed. Likewise, imagine a shore where water laps over land. As tides recede, a niche emerges in shallow pools left behind.

At these marginal edges, where differences overlap, material elements assembled a porous boundary to separate inside from out. The tiny refuge allowed exchange with, and safety from, unpredictable conditions outside. A stable container provided consistency for the inner workings of Life and Love.

Lipids, more commonly known as fat molecules, may have been among the first to circle the wagons and form cells. Lipids, by temperament, are quite unique. One half of the molecule clings to water. The other half avoids. Together, they are insoluble. In wet environments, they assume the shape of a sphere, like a moon, planet, or star. Within the spherical refuge, water is safely harbored from the thirsty atmosphere.

If the age and spread of geographic tombstones are any indication, the earliest cells formed quickly and concurrently. They drew on a variety of methods and materials in a multitude of diverse environments. Therefore, the formation of stable containers in unstable conditions may yet be another principle operating within the natural order of the universe. For simplicity, allow stability, care, and protection to be subsumed within the fundamental principle herein named: *Continuity in the midst of change*.

Like the walls of a home, or the fabric of our clothes, as well as the skin they shelter, the microscopic

cells which comprise each of the above could be fractals of the principle at work. To be otherwise exposed and unprotected, prone to the dangers outside, would leave Beings literally turned inside out.

As physical cells played with various methods, other processes practiced their emerging roles. Based on Instructions echoing from the tiny mustard seed, certain prominent elements performed a dance later called *autocatalysis*. As a result, these elements were able to join, separate, and reconstitute. Such a process allows for longevity in the midst of instability; again, continuity in the midst of change.

Imagine a compound molecule, such as yourself, whose external conditions change. An event occurs: Another molecule is encountered. Without affinity, prejudice, or malice, the first is profoundly altered. It literally comes apart. Embedded within the scattered elements, somehow the wisdom seems intrinsic. Like magic, or a miracle, in a series of transformative steps, the original compound returns to itself unharmed. Healing follows adversity. What was once whole, could be broken, and find its way to wholeness again.

Indeed, compound molecules discovered what was once divided could return to wholeness—and be doubled. The process of autocatalysis, initially beginning with One, could bring into existence duplicates. Emanating from a continuity now called *heredity*, replication was possible. Not only that, but the molecules also discovered an ability to alter incrementally. After many revolutions, and much practice, patience, and persistence,

autocatalysis learned to replicate and adapt. A learning process capable of change, incorporating death, and striving for perpetuity, would later be called *evolution*.

As its name implies, autocatalysis is a process of self-(re)generation. The process may also be a precursor to homeostasis—a term which describes the tendency for a cell, and systems of cells, to flexibly maintain internal stability in the midst of surrounding change. Two terms, homeostasis and evolution, describe the tendency to protect and maintain Life as well as the Beings who comprise it. The former in the immediacy of the day-to-day. The latter for perpetuity.

Had life been so unfortunate as to manifest itself in a perfected state, even a slight variation in external conditions may have tolled its death knell. Instead, as mercurial conditions outside shifted, Life and Love flexibly adjusted. Mutations allowed the processes of life, like their offspring, to learn, adapt, diversify, and proliferate. Lessons hard won? Some, yes. But, to the third and fourth generation, forever worthwhile.

Many adaptations incorporated by Life and Love were unequivocally neutral. They neither extended nor shortened, added to nor took away from longevity. Qualitatively beautiful and blessed, Life and Love creates playful diversity rather than a final solution for the singular best. It is a process which seeks to lengthen the lives of many, not to perfect the few. For those with ears to hear, and eyes to see, the evidence abounds.

If a neutral variation happened to associate with Beneficence, far and wide it spread. Beneficence was

naturally selected and cumulatively multiplied. It fostered Life and Love and lengthened longevity. Such a statement may seem tautological because goodness and care are so plainly evident as is water to the fish and the forest to a tree.

Maleficence, on the other hand, aims to kill before it dies. Rather than diversify and integrate, it stifles. It eradicates. It attempts to consume without limit. Maleficence destroys in a relative instant, because it cannot love throughout time. It is like an unquenchable cup filled to overflowing. Eventually it gurgles and drowns in its own toxicity.

Maleficence is naturally deselected because it inhibits Life and Love. That which causes harm is bound to disappear. Branches which prove themselves incompatible, those that stifle others, inevitably wither or rot. Fortunately, for us, Maleficence does not instantaneously combust. To evolve, Life and Love yields with patience. It awaits change, hopeful for learning and adaptation. Reconciliation is much preferred over elimination. Beneficence, like Life and Love, is destined to thrive. This too is a fundamental principle embedded in the Instructions echoing throughout the universe.

As cell formation and autocatalysis developed, other activities were underway nearby. Whereas in some encounters compounds learned to separate, replicate, and reconfigure, in others two met and merged. At first, contact was entirely random. Soft, round bodies with no appendage could only lazily drift and hope for

chance encounters. As amorphous hosts became more plentiful and concentrated, opportunities improved. Upon contact, like a hospitable host, one would open and welcome a surprise visitor.

Eventually, the amorphous hosts met partners of unusual shapes and merged specialties and skills. Mutual interdependence generated synergy. Symbiosis followed. For example, neighbors of various shapes generated motion with their bodies to push, rotate, or sway. The roomy, oblong host sensed they were being propelled ahead. Other neighbors, differently shaped, attached to the bow rather than the stern. Like arms widespread, they reached out to draw others in. Where two or more were gathered to work cooperatively, opportunities for survival, replication, and longevity soon followed.

Not long thereafter, they discovered the cooperative arrangements worked too well. Not every ounce drawn inward was useful to consume. Indeed, unused substances, if allowed to accumulate, were quite toxic for cellular bodies to hold. Therefore, on the front end, symbiotic hosts and partners learned to act with self-restraint. Consumption became selective. On the back end, if you will, receivers learned to release and pass along.

Components expelled by one were abundantly well-suited for their neighbors' consumption. This allowed accumulations to dissipate and extended the longevity of everyone. Like weaves in a braid, the sequencing fostered interdependence and mutual flourishing. Each

assumed their role to nurture a neighbor's well-being. The space they inhabited was becoming organized, balanced, and self-sustaining, later called a *system*.

Within the process now known as metabolism, proto-Beings learned to limit what was taken in. A complete minimum was most beneficial, for them as well as neighbors nearby. By living within limits, the integrated body participated in a practice of self-regulation, later called *self-expression* and *freedom and responsibility*. The cells' internal integrity was harmoniously maintained alongside the external environment composed of neighbors nearby.

Concurrently, nature's elements were being assembled into complex arrangements. A patient practice of assimilating simplicity into complexity bonded the four elements most plentiful: hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen. These four combined with phosphorous to generate peptides. Peptides extended the practice and arranged themselves into the more complex nucleic acids. Nucleic acids stepped it up a notch and assembled deoxyribonucleic acid. Better known by the acronym DNA, this compound material was destined to become a preferred carrier for instructions in heredity and replication.

In other developments nearby, the four most prevalent elements combined, but partnered with sulfur instead. Amino acids were formed. Amino acids bonded together in more complex strands later called *proteins*. Proteins compose the structure and scaffolding of the physical-material bodies known as *Beings*. In diverse

arrangements of the most common elements, Instructions from the Greatest Great-Grandparent were embroidering the threads for a vast and living web.

The concurrent processes organizing symbiotic life soon overlapped. Instructions choreographing interactions of Matter and Energy performed a magical leap. When matter learned to absorb solar energy, a new equilibrium was achieved. The spinning planet jettisoned into live animation. During the period of Life's conception, our youngest great-grandparent, the unnamed planet, was itself quite young. In less than five units of time after the infant planet coalesced, Life and Love had found a toehold and has yet to release.

Of all Beings identified, one of the first, the oldest thus far, has existed for twenty-six units of time; one quarter of the age of the entire universe in its current oscillation. Our oldest grandparent was named neither Adam, nor Eve, nor LUCA, but Cyanobacteria. Cyano was among the first to merge the processes to metabolize energy, adapt, reproduce, and die. The earliest Beings were the simplest and, by no coincidence, the most resilient, it seems.

After Cyano's period of gestation a second season of Sabbath ensued. For twenty-two units of time, Life and Love took a break from diverse proliferation to hone its basic craft. During the rehearsals, some notable adaptations emerged. Cyano was so prolific, its exhalations altered the anaerobic atmosphere. The skies were supplemented, one part in five, with oxygen. As a

result, the planet became more hospitable for the future offspring who rely on oxygen to survive.

During this same period, some cells diverged from Cyano and adopted an identity of their own. They integrated something like a cell within a cell. One wed with another in a symbiotic relationship. The cell within was later given a name, *nucleus*. Contained within the nuclei were the nucleic acids which would come to such prominence. The complex strands of DNA and RNA contained therein encoded amino acids to form proteins. Furthermore, by way of DNA's memory and instructions, proteins organized into physical bodies and united with the energetic-spiritual conscious to animate them.

Through studious practice and mastery, nucleated cells also developed organelles called *mitochondria*. Within the cell, mitochondria transform energy acquired from sources outside. Then, in an act of mutual reciprocity, they redistribute energy to animate the host.

The process by which mitochondria developed must be common to us all. Every cell which contains a nucleus, from the simplest to the most complex, also contains mitochondria. Whether nuclei and mitochondria were developed by mergers and acquisitions, or as proprietary innovations, no one quite recalls. Events and processes leave behind few imprints, and even fewer explanations. If Life were represented as a tree, Cyanobacteria would occupy a ramifying root, but mitochondria and nuclei would be integral with the trunk. They join the interconnected branches above to a shared history, a mysterious story, of common origins.

In spite of the aforementioned theories and myths, in all likelihood our ancestry did not originate from one Being distinct and unique. Certainly not one literally raised from mud, wind, and bone. Odds are much more in favor of a convergence of diverse material and energetic processes animated by spiritual consciousness. As is Mystery's tendency, it may seem paradoxical: Life and Love is simplicity embedded in complexity, resiliency woven from fragility, continuity in the midst of change.

Also during the second Sabbath, some cells diverged to form another unique identity. They retained the mitochondria and stayed close to the family. But within the porous boundary, a close cousin was fostered, a unique organelle later called *chloroplasts*. In a stroke of genius, chloroplasts learned to bypass the intermediaries. Like their ancestors of old, they relearned the ability to absorb energy directly from the sun. Chloroplasts assumed the roles of energy transformation as well as the synthesis of proteins and nucleic acids. With the step towards multi-purpose generalist, they became slightly more independent. To state this somewhat differently, the more specialization within a system, the more interdependent the Beings.

During the ninety-fifth increment of time, the second Sabbath drew to its conclusion and Life and Love's diverse proliferation began in earnest. Right away, cells began to mimic the resonating patterns of Life and Love. They combined into more complex, intimate,

and symbiotic relationships. Multicellular Beings emerged. Almost immediately, in the increments of the universe, a lineage of photosynthetic Beings, better known as *plants*, developed. Soon thereafter, other multicellular Beings, better known as *animals*, arose. The younger animals are directly dependent, within one or two degrees, on the presence of their elders: living, breathing plants. Plants gather the sun so food can be shared, and, in long exhalations, they cleanse the oxygenated atmosphere.

Without plants, the existence of many neighbors would suddenly cease. The least resilient would quickly die of asphyxiation. The few who managed to catch a breath would succumb more slowly to starvation. Therefore, neighbors wisely and carefully nurtured the habitats of plants as if they were a beloved neighbor's home. At one time it was commonly known: If the lives of plants grow long and prosper, their dependents grow more robust as well.

As with the accretion of the planet, so may it be with the presence of the multicellular Beings. Emerging so slowly, so late in the long arc of the universe, rather than destiny, they may be little more than another possibility realized. Their apparent abundance on the unnamed planet may reveal only a short-term phenomenon like flecks of grass which wither in a season.

For a brief moment, let us entertain a more appealing narrative: Life, and its indivisible symbiotic companion Love, could paradoxically be both fundamental and unique. Unique because, though it is possible that

Life has arisen and faded repeatedly throughout the seasons of time, from our current vantage point only one small sample remains. From here, we see no other planetary Beings with which to compare. For all intents and purposes, we might be a once-in-a-lifetime cosmic event of infinite preciousness; a rare, singular moment in the eternal dance of the Source some call God.

Likewise fundamental because, just as embedded Instructions manage interactions of all Matter and Energy, we too are clearly woven into the fabric of the universe. We are here. We exist. We are one element in the long exhalation of the presently expanding universe. We are Breath. We are Spirit. We are the distant, interconnected great-grandchildren of One Ancient Seed.

In either case, fundamental or unique, as threads within a web, we are indubitably beholden to care well for our elders, neighbors, siblings, and kin including their habitats of soil, water, and air. Everything, including each other, including ourselves. Life and Love, and the Beings made manifest, could be a precious gift. In which case, we are simultaneously both the givers and receivers as well as the gift itself. Life and Love's overarching purpose, for all participants, may be to extend the gift far into perpetuity.

Sadly, the vision of one late arrival became occluded as if a plank had lodged in one of their green, green eyes. They lost the ability to take a perspective other than their own. For example, the gift described above was

read as if the pronoun "we" referred to them exclusively. When, in fact, "we" includes us *all*.

The late arrivals had neither the experience nor maturity to witness, much less comprehend, the Greatest Great-Grandparent's long history. Though newborn infants on the unnamed planet, they began to think of themselves as more than just unique. They lauded themselves, among all others, as ultimate, as supreme; an incredulous notion, previously unheard of in the entirety of the universe.

With this in mind and spirit, let us proceed with patience and humility. Following the Way, we may soon discover from where they diverged and the Middle Path to return to Jubilee.