

Part IV

Humanity Risen

Chapter 13: Beyond Man and Woman

In building a bridge between the past and the future, we've traveled a lot of prose to address pre-existing expectations. The issues we are examining have a long and confused intellectual history, and it took some time to cut away the deadwood. However, looking now towards the future, the direct statement is:

Love dissolves the barriers of time and space, allowing wisdom, energy and understanding to flow between us, and embracing us with the courage, clarity and calm that overcomes obstacles and creates opportunity. When we open our hearts to one another, there is no truth that is not revealed, and – to those that love themselves – no impulse to harm that cannot be turned to the purposes of healing and creation.

Of course, walking has its advantages over jet-travel: our discussion has left us with a deeper appreciation of the challenges and opportunities before us. So far we have focused on the paths open to individuals and couples.

While we have tried to fill the huge gap between science and spirituality, the very existence of the divide should lead us to expect that only a minority will be ready to grasp the promise of love. Humanity continues to adhere to the population dynamics so well known to ecologists: expansion until the carrying capacity of the supporting biosphere is exhausted, followed by collapse.

While people have cried wolf about ecological collapse for thousands of years, if we wish to avoid indefinitely the brutal realities of an apocalypse, the principles expressed above must eventually embrace the entire Earth. The injunction is universal: it must encompass all living material forms and the spiritual forms bound to both animate and inanimate matter.

History in Principles

When *homo sapiens sapiens* arose from Africa, it was only one of at least three extant species of the genus *homo*. In every inhabited ecosystem, the developing social dynamics were heavily influenced by resident spiritual forms, including many predatory personalities. In this crowded space our ancestors were faced with the challenge of expressing our uniquely human talents.

Foremost among those, of course, is our ability to reason. Reason needs facts and principles to operate on. Philosophy and law have dominated our development of the principles we use to organize constructive social change.

Because masculine and feminine personalities are so different, we have had difficulty generalizing from experience directly to universal principles. Rather, our principles have tended to oscillate from the feminine pole to the masculine and back again.

The Western tradition was rooted in maternal devotion, and then swung towards martial honor. From the self-indulgent mind of Zeus sprung the Goddess Athena, avatar of wisdom, rooted in feminine intuition. As the Renaissance shifted economic power to the middle class, freedom –

often won through armed conflict – became the rallying cry. Recoiling from the excesses of the industrial revolution, the feminine virtue of justice took root in our public discourse.

While this progression was uneven, and often accompanied by depressing recidivism, I find it to be remarkable. The trend is inescapably towards distribution of power to individuals, and the increasingly inclusive expression of love.

In America today, among the most controversial political issues are those that extend the progression. Women demanding equal pay for equal work find themselves in conflict with sisters that want to stay at home for their children. Gay and lesbian marriage is also much in the news.

I find myself somewhat befuddled by the opposition to gay and lesbian rights. There are masculine and feminine spiritual forms, and male and female material forms. While masculine males and feminine females would seem optimal, learning involves experimentation. I can see that a masculine personality seeking to be a better husband might find an excursion into the female experience to have great value. Bonding to a feminine female might be a way of maximizing that value. The strategy also preserves many of the spiritual benefits of the pairing, while mitigating against population growth.

Similar reasoning applies to a relationship between a feminine male and a masculine male.

Given the incredible confusion sex brings to gender relations, I can even see value in strategies that isolate masculine and feminine personalities. After battling through the frightening consequences of spousal abuse, a committed feminine-feminine relationship might give the partners a chance to develop purely spiritual strategies for interacting with masculine personalities, thereby creating the possibility that they could succeed in “normal” pairings at some later time.

My sympathies lie with the Reverend Bill Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. When asked for the position of the Association on gay and lesbian rights, he responded that “we must stand on the side of love.”

In general, morality is found in any system of values that expands the expression of love. In unusual circumstances, people may make choices that would never work for us. While the choices may not be optimal, that doesn't mean they are wrong. They create an opening to a hopeful future.

We Must Overcome

Naturally, I don't expect everybody to be swayed by my moral arguments in favor of a universal right of marriage. Masculine personalities, for example, will be uncomfortable with the introduction of spiritual considerations over which they have no control.

Be that as it may, the basic principles of the analysis have a long pedigree in Hindu philosophy. The concern of Hindu philosophy, in broad terms, is with suffering. Suffering is a mental state through which we internalize pain as a spiritual judgment, and so block ourselves from

exercising our free will to experience joy and express love. The effects of suffering can last far longer than the pain itself.

In Vedantic philosophy, suffering is rooted in a single defect of the personality: attachment to experiences that are ephemeral, mutable or illusory. In direct contrast to Western philosophy, a Hindu path to enlightenment (and more than one has been propounded) involves renunciation of material concerns. By pursuing a deep relationship with spiritual forms, the initiate is able to tap into sources of power that allow them to bend the rules that bind the rest of us.

The last statement contains a concern regarding Hindu spirituality. Humanity's talent is in the application of mind to operate on spirit – but that doesn't mean that material concerns aren't worthy of our attention. Spiritual forms are also mutable and impermanent if they are not attached to a supportive material structure.

Obviously, in considering a model of the physical relationship between matter and spirit, we are reaching towards a reconciliation of Eastern and Western philosophies. As a point of departure for that synthesis, I am sympathetic to the teachings of Buddha. In a nutshell, they hold that:

1. As long as we have unreasonable expectations, we cannot be content.
2. To be content, then, we must:
 1. Be mindful of our standing in the material and spiritual worlds.
 2. Avoid fomenting personal hostility.
 3. Be attentive to opportunities to create lasting power in the world (i.e. - to love and be loved).

The miracle in this process is that our achievements are no longer entirely dependent upon the cooperation of three-dimensional material forms. To masculine personalities, this makes success appear somewhat “magical”.

What is essential, as we move into the future, is that we fully understand the relationship between spirit and matter. Humanity is going to be facing enormous changes, and we need to optimize our investment of energy. We must balance material and spiritual concerns.

Hindu philosophy holds that material forms are illusory, entirely a construct of the mind. I believe this is an error of interpretation. For various reasons, explained in the next section, my sense is that there is far more energy stored in our spiritual form than in our material form. What this means is that we have reached a tipping point, and that our foremost concern in the conduct of our life should be in preserving and improving our spiritual state.

I'll start with a survey of spiritual defects. I'm not going to conduct an exhaustive inventory: that would take too much space. I'm going to focus on the points that I find people struggle with most often, and use them to illustrate the power of the perspective we have evolved.

Death

We should start by adopting a completely different attitude towards death. I will not propose the Eastern perspective, that death is merely another transition. It is not. Death – the separation of our spiritual and material forms – greatly impedes our capacity to improve the lot of those we

love. Life is not something to be thrown away. But...BUT...there comes a point at which our bodies are no longer capable of sustaining the effort to interact with those we love. Under those conditions, we should not be afraid to let go.

I say “should not”, but most of us will struggle with attachments that make it hard to let go. Here, indeed, comes the “ephemeral, mutable and illusory” of Hindu philosophy.

Those of us that have invested most of our life in the acquisition of material goods will find, naturally, that our spirit is tangled up in those goods. As we approach death, we face the terrifying understanding that we will be unable to muster the energy to extract ourselves from those entanglements. When we die, we will leave large parts of ourselves behind. By investing in our impermanent attachment to material things, we will have damaged our eternal souls.

Conversely, the donation of wealth in the service of others creates a connection of gratitude between them and us. This is the foremost reward of grace.

People that invest in relationships of power face a similar dilemma. While our ability to create suffering in others is illusory, those that subscribe to our dominance obviously are invested in the illusion. There is no less power in their attachment to us than in our attachment to them. Again, as we approach death, we find ourselves faced with the prospect of leaving large parts of our personality behind.

Finally, we may find ourselves invested in activities with those we love. When our death is sudden or unexpected, we may have additional work to do before they are prepared to let us go. This is a judgment call by the partner to the work. The eulogy “she has gone to a better world” is a form of magic. It is a projection of will that launches a loved one across time and space to find that better place, and call to us through the connection of love to join them there. Depending upon our circumstances, it might be better to invest in that possibility than to invest in reclaiming the lost expectations of this life.

So: love life, hew to it and the opportunities it presents, but don't cling to it. When death comes calling, release yourself into the opportunities of the future.

Egotism

Paradoxically, the exemplar of egotism is Siddhartha himself [2]. Raised as a warrior in a world free of pain, the young prince in rapid succession metes out death, loses his true love, and is brought face-to-face with the reality that his paradise generates unjustified suffering for his subjects. Discovering that he cannot erase suffering, in true warrior fashion, he sets out to conquer it. Renouncing his riches, he engages in a program of self-torture. Ultimately abandoned by his cultists and too weak to care for himself, he is faced with the inevitability of his own death. At that moment, he abandons his attachment to the illusions of his past. Nursed to health by a simple girl, he discovers that, having cast off his attachments, he is able to project his spirit wherever he chooses. The nobility of his impulse, freed of the blemish of his egotism, allows him to transmit his new-found peace to his acolytes, where before they had found only despair.

As the parable illustrates, egotism is fundamentally the belief that our spirit would be irrevocably

damaged by attempts to accommodate external realities. Pig-headedly, Siddhartha the warrior couldn't stop trying to defeat pain. Pain is a signal from life that something needs to change. Like: go rest under the bhodi tree, young prince!

Of course, I am being unforgivably disrespectful. When an avatar sets out to uproot a deep-seated spiritual dysfunction, he assumes the burdens of an entire culture. Only by plumbing the problem to its ultimate depths is he able to create a universal pathway to redemption. As did Jesus of Nazareth (an avatar of self-?), Siddhartha may have followed the only path open to him.

For most of us, though, egotism is a defensive mechanism. It is a means of avoiding necessary adaptations in our spiritual form. The tools of our defense are often anger and violence: mechanisms that isolate us from our peers, and therefore that preserve the illusion of our self-sufficiency.

Obviously, religious intolerance and nationalism are cultural manifestations of egotism. Military history is a record of our attempts to avoid the necessity of investing in spiritual accommodation and adaptation. Through the mechanisms described in our discussion of death, the suffering we generate in defending this illusion will be taken out of us when we die.

As our discussion of Siddhartha illustrates, there is a fine line between egotism and messianic commitment. Obviously, it is in our interest to struggle against evil, even when the concrete realities are stacked against us. Prayer is the proper tool for that struggle, and the reward is gratitude.

Carelessness

In a Native American parable, a grandfather explains that in his dreams there are two wolves. One wolf is aggressive and selfish, the other is gentle and wise. When his grandson asks which wolf will win, he answers “The one I feed.”

We suffer under the illusion that because we are born into our bodies, we have sole possession of them. Unfortunately, this is a condition that requires active attention to defend. Many of our psychological processes are hidden from us, deep within the brain stem and limbic system. As Cozolino [3] explains, during maturation the cortex develops neural pathways that extend the influence of reason over those systems.

My experience, however, is that the spirits that like to hide in the ancient parts of our minds have become adept at providing pretexts for the self-destructive conduct they engender. When we are angry, the little voice inside justifies the anger as the consequence of our victim's disloyalty – obviously a self-perpetuating condition. Similarly, when we indulge our greed, we are simply transferring resources from a party too weak to protect them. This is one of the most dangerous aspects of spirituality, which I have described previously as “Eve's bargain”. Unless we know ourselves extremely well, we can become trapped in the illusions generated by our symbiotes.

Women must exercise special caution in this area. They have the power to bind personality to matter, and when they indulge lust, anger and fear, they too frequently bind a personification of those emotions onto their targets. These can enter into the target and eat them from the inside.

Now, the technique is not necessarily bad policy. While I am disturbed that Priestesses of the Goddess talk about “using the sword”, I realize that the law of natural consequences is a powerful method of moral education. My sense, though, is that most women – either because they are unaware, or due to simple carelessness – do not put away their toys. They let them hang on too long.

Cleaning them up is actually not terribly difficult. Anger, fear and lust are extremely disorganized forms of spiritual energy. While we may take pride in our ability to focus those emotions, in the long term they also eat their originator from the inside. As a matter of self-preservation, conflict with destructive personalities should be conducted as a rescue mission, rather than retaliation in kind. After all, it doesn't pay to feed them. Almost any spiritual form will opt for peace, given the opportunity to adopt circumstances that sustain the opportunity to grow.

We discover now the great depth of wisdom in the Stoic prayer that opened Chapter 8. The admonitions in the letters of Paul can also be seen in a new light. We create peace by offering peace. And peaceful collaboration, of course, is the active principle in Buddha's path to enlightenment.

Actually living these principles is difficult, of course. Most of us will falter, in part because destructive spirits see our efforts as a threat, and do their best to corrupt us. However, taking care to exorcise the demons is not onerous. I often find myself saying “I'm sorry. I was wrong to be angry with you. Will you forgive me?”

Grace? Say: “Good Life!”

Humanity is the apogee of Life's progress on Earth, but progress implies learning, and learning involves error. The consequence of error is pain. Our focus in the last section was to identify strategies for managing pain.

If we succeed in managing pain, we should expect that some kind of beneficial result will follow. Success, joy, peace: all are desirable outcomes. Their defect is that they are principles of stasis. If we attain any of those things, why would we want to change?

But life *is* change. When we find joy, all of life feels it in us. Naturally, the source of our joy becomes a coveted resource. Unless the resource is infinite, that places our joy at risk.

So I will propose grace as the beneficial result of our struggle for spiritual maturity. Grace is manifested when we address life's needs with a minimum investment of physical, emotional and spiritual effort. It is a capacity that arises most naturally through deep integration of masculine and feminine personalities. It is also a capacity that preserves the options available to Life, thus opening us to respectful collaboration with the other creatures and personalities we share our planet with.

Now the voice of greed within us asks “But why should we be gracious? Why shouldn't we take us much joy, peace and success as we desire?” The reason is because when we discipline

ourselves to sustain Life, it gives us gifts in return. As trusted collaborators, we obtain a passport to higher levels of existence that no amount of force could ever access. The proof from physics is simple: force is leveraged from matter. Matter is slow. The powers we are given as collaborators with Life are spiritual powers, and spirit, while anchored to matter, is anchored in multiple dimensions. When it wants to escape us, it sacrifices its three-dimensional attachments and flees. There's no way for us to keep up.

So, given that proof, what are the strengths of grace? If people choose insanity, and follow greed anyways, what tools does grace provide us to overcome their folly?

Healing

Greedy people take more than they need. When resources are limited, by consequence someone else will face deprivation. That leads to competition. Certainly, if enough people are in want, the only way greed can hang on to its hoard is through violence. Whether through deprivation or violence, greed creates unnecessary disease and injury.

Injury and disease are physical effects, but they have manifestations in our spiritual form. Grace provides two ways to undo the damage.

First, we can send our consciousness back through time, and ask our two-dimensional allies to restore the image of our healthy self. Because they are us, they are generally happy to do so, in so long as they trust our commitment to strive to maintain a relationship of grace with them.

Obviously, if the physical damage includes the introduction of some foreign agent, that must be eliminated first. Again, there are certain visualizations that can be used to guide our two-dimensional allies in projecting the invasion into higher dimensions, where it typically starves.

Secondly, when the distance to our past health is too great to bridge, we may pattern ourselves on a willing template. It's generally wise not to be too greedy: we should choose someone who is fairly close to our body type to begin with.

While healing occurs most rapidly when we participate consciously in the process, there are people who can intervene on another's behalf. They offer some illuminating testimony.

Father Amorth, the Catholic exorcist, reports [1] that priests reach through dimensions to clear away hanks of hair, jewelry and other objects that had been attached to and distort the victim's spirit. Faith healers use the same trick to pull out objects left behind during surgery. A shamanic healer I met recounted removing a spider-shaped spirit that had attached itself to his patient's uterus, and was squeezing the tissue out through her fallopian tubes. He recognized the spider as a manifestation of her mother's jealousy.

Most healers state that they are either guided by the afflicted, or merely facilitating self-healing. Especially when we are afflicted by malice generated by others, the power of self-love allows us to simply side-step the interval of our affliction. By walling it off, we leave our tormentor to deal with the dysfunction they have generated. Psychologically, this is "eat your own dog-food" in action. The tormentor, as the generator of the expectation of injury, generally is wide open when

it boomerangs back on her.

Non-Violence

We have analyzed trauma as a process by which the tormentor attempts to consume the spirit of the victim. Many people survive trauma by stepping outside of themselves during the event, sometimes into a future where they possess the power to secure their survival. Others adopt the characteristics of the tormentor, and use violence to escape.

Grace offers a third alternative to the threat of trauma. That is to open ourselves completely to the tormentor, so deeply that he cannot escape participation in our experience of pain. Nelson Mandela may have some testimony to offer on this subject.

In the intimacy of this engagement, we often find that our tormentor is himself the victim of trauma. After suffering from deep spiritual injury, one way for the future tormentor to learn to heal is to visit the trauma upon random victims until someone demonstrates a method for coming away unscathed. This may be among the reasons that tormentors tend to prey upon the most gracious among us.

One way to short-circuit this process is to offer ourselves as a spiritual template in the tormentor's self-healing. I have found this to be a powerful strategy. The tormentor, in torment themselves, finds that large parts of his personality simply refuse to continue to participate in violence when offered the alternative of peace. I have heard first-hand testimony from a survivor of racial violence that resonates strongly with this perspective.

When dealing with a tormentor, we should be careful to recognize the difference between torment as a studied practice for accumulating spiritual energy, and abuse as a defense against intimacy. The supermarket clerk that ignores our “good evening”, the beaten child that pulls away and lashes out when we hug them: both are seeking to preempt intimacy that they expect will open them to pain.

The most compelling response to preemptive abuse is to simply let it pass through us. By choosing not to respond, we establish trust in the defensive party, and help to orient them towards healing.

Prayer

Thus far, we have discussed greed and violence as individual conflicts. The behavior patterns of consumption are deeply rooted, however, having originated hundreds of millions of years ago in blood spirituality. In modern times, they have established bastions behind the screen of political authority and the corporate veil. The people that break our bones and attach our bank accounts are merely puppets, and ministering to them does little to stem the abuses of the system. In this day and age, there are simply too many frightened people to convert into willing accomplices.

Grace has two tools to aid us in this struggle. If we are strong enough, puppets have a tendency to forget what they are about when they enter our sphere of influence. The pattern of grace simply overwhelms the spiritual signal originating from the puppeteer.

The more powerful tool is prayer. When we encounter a puppet, we can follow the spiritual link back to the puppeteer. We then co-opt the communication channel by injecting a message of peace and conciliation.

This is obviously a terrifying prospect to the puppeteer. Martyrdom was a typical outcome in the early days of it, and continues today in Tibet. Fortunately, recent personal experience demonstrated that prayer as co-option quickly links together victims.

Once the gestalt is formed, they often find it fairly easy to begin taking apart the cabal of puppeteers using the methods of healing and non-violence. A direct frontal assault is usually ill-advised. Healing their puppets leaves the cabal isolated and weak, and eventually susceptible to ministration themselves.

A danger in this process is that the cabal will attempt to co-opt the network of healers. Patience is the key virtue here. Grace is effortless; dominance requires constant reinforcement. Eventually the cabal will wear itself out – or get bored.

Gratitude

Healing, non-violence and prayer are all intense and intimate spiritual acts. Through them, an individual of grace acquires a breadth of spiritual connections that would be impossible to establish through physical encounters.

Among the people we establish connections to are those whose lives were improved by our intervention. When they think back on the change, they validate the pattern of our personality. That validation is a spiritual pressure that we can use to continue to expand the influence of grace. Because it is a spiritual pressure, it knows no limits of time, space or incarnation

He with the most toys wins? Not at all. You can't take toys with you. Gratitude lasts forever.