

Part II

Biblical Science

Chapter 5: Justifying Faith

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. [NIV 2 Kings 2:11-12]

In the late 1800's the British press, stimulated by the mathematical ideas of Reimann, held contests to stimulate people to write stories that described life in a four-dimensional world. When I read passages such as this quote from 2 Kings, that history often comes to mind.

I have tried to think in four dimensions, and found it extremely difficult. While the excerpt echoes the descriptions of Apollo, the Greek god of the sun, the recorder of this story did not have the concepts to convey clearly the experience. Typically, the majesty and awe of the scene is reflected onto the writer's culture ("The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"), which is again a human tendency that impedes rational dialog.

In the chapters of this part, we are going to re-examine scriptures that have shaped the political dialog in America over the last 30 years. These scriptures cover the entire span of the Jewish and Bibles. I will attempt to demonstrate that adding spiritual evolution to biology and politics clarifies the more confusing elements of the record, and affirms the meaningfulness of these ancient stories.

Religious Significance

While it has been popular among intellectuals recently to assert that religion creates more trouble than it solves, my belief is that if religion didn't exist, we would invent it. Religion is simply spirituality in an organized institutional context. Religion adds value to spiritual experience by transmitting understanding across generations, and providing management structures that allow the public to appeal against corruption.

Religion requires written scripture. Without it, the purity of the spiritual message would be almost impossible to maintain. Unfortunately, the writers of scripture lived in specific cultural and historical settings. They drew upon that setting to establish the significance of the works of great spiritual leaders.

Thus, in interpreting scripture we must separate three threads of thought. Scripture has these elements:

- regulation, or universal principles of human conduct that support constructive relationships,
- *situational* ethics, or the positive impact of applying those principles to solve problems in a specific historical context,
- and meaning, which relates our individual and social experience to some larger purpose.

Of these three, meaning is the most difficult to obtain. In my understanding, our failure to grasp the physical nature of spirituality has been a serious impediment. Through this discourse, I hope to demonstrate that the central problem of our existence is to develop methods that transfer

power from the forms of matter to forms of the spirit. This is not a struggle unique to Mankind. It is as old as the Earth itself, as a revisit of the creation myth of Genesis reveals.

Genesis

After the formation of the universe, the basic building blocks of matter were in a disorganized state. Our observations of quasars reveal the incomprehensible violence of the process. Since spirit arises from the alignment and coherence of the fibers bound to , the agitated state of matter in those initial moments suppressed the development of spirit.

This state of affairs persisted, in our case, up until the formation of the Earth. In its early years, the planet was still too hot for spirit to attain any significant size. When it cooled, as it says:

...the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the waters.
[NIV Genesis 1:2]

In interpreting this passage and others that follow, we are going to examine the relationship between matter and spirit. As spirit grew, it needed appropriate mechanisms to support the transfer of power from material forms. At each stage, those material forms also enabled spirit to grapple with the question of its relationship to the cosmos. If our material form has trouble apprehending spirit, the early excepts from Genesis demonstrate that spirit initially barely understood matter. The definiteness of the descriptions of the material world improve as the material forms developed more sophisticated sensory organs.

Through the interaction between matter and spirit, information was stored in spiritual forms that could outlast individuals and even entire species of organisms. As long as the spiritual forms could establish an attachment to newly dominant forms of life, they could endure. Given the slow pace of biological evolution, this would not have been too difficult to accomplish. Once the spirit forms were well established, they were able to survive even catastrophic extinction episodes (these may, in fact, be the “days” of Genesis). It is the remnants of these spiritual records that the authors of the book of Genesis were recording.

So how should we interpret this first passage of scripture? We know that life originated in the oceans, quite possibly in the depths around hot sulfur vents. That chemical energy would have been simple to channel. Large colonies of those first living beings produced a harmony of spiritual structure. That is the “Spirit of God”, as it was manifested on Earth in that age.

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light...and he separated the light from the darkness. [NIV Genesis 1:3-5]

The next age of the Earth was the age of algae, creatures that used photosynthesis to power their chemical machinery. The spiritual structures produced from algae would have been conscious of the diurnal cycle – day and night – as the power transferred from matter would have varied according to that cycle. It would have been clear that the light arose from someplace outside of the ocean, which at this time would have been permeated by the spirit rooted in algae.

In this interpretation, we obtain a clearer sense when we translate 'And God said, "Let there

be..." as "And God provided to Life...". Life is the fusion of matter and spirit that grew on the Earth.

And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the waters under the expanse from the waters above it.
[NIV Genesis 1:6-7]

In the next age, Life established a foothold in the fresh waters that run down to the sea. This was not a trivial biological problem. To avoid being swept back into the sea, organisms must be able physically to attach themselves to the beds of rivers and streams. Having accomplished this trick, the evolving spirit differentiated those two environments, and the ecosystems supported therein developed along separate paths.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered in one place, and let dry ground appear." ... [NIV Genesis 1:9]

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." [NIV Genesis 1:11]

With a foothold on the river beds came the ability for Life to raise itself up out of the waters and onto the land. Life's colonization of the land was incomplete until the development of spores and seeds, which when dispersed could take root and reproduce the parent's material and spiritual structures. The reproductive consistency enabled those spiritual forms to achieve a much more sensitive comparison of the environments they inhabited. Rather than just the gross mass of the algae bloom, the suitability of life to one environment or another was reflected in the minute and subtle variations of forms between individuals of the same species growing in different locations.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night." ... God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night... [NIV Genesis 1:14,16]

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ... "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." [NIV Genesis 1:20,22]

These passage describe the rise of pre-mammalian animals. While lacking the capacity of critical thought, these animals possessed sophisticated sensory organs, with sight specifically referenced in the passage. Sight enabled life to determine the source of the light consumed by plants – the sun and the moon. The specificity and detail of visual information supported the evolution of new behavior patterns. Nocturnal foraging, migration and hibernation allowed animals to colonize areas that would otherwise have been too harsh to survive through the winter.

This takes us to the fifth "day" of Genesis. Let us continue into the first part of the sixth day, and

then take stock.

And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, each according to its kind.” [NIV Genesis 1:24]

This, then, records the rise of the mammals.

The Missing Link

In the modern age, Mankind's attraction to is often a reflection of the sense of stillness and we find in natural settings. This is the image conveyed by . However, it is a misrepresentation. Survivors of an earthquake, a volcanic eruption or a shark attack will testify that is a horrifically violent place.

Remember that the material competition is also a struggle for dominance between spiritual forms. The principal mechanism for the transfer of spirit is iron. Iron is the most stable of the elements, from which we can infer that it is the form of matter that best attaches to spirit (matter obtaining its mass through its association with spirit). Plants use iron in chlorophyll to capture light energy. That energy is used to construct material and spiritual forms. Animals use iron in blood to transfer to cells the oxygen needed to burn food, and to remove carbon dioxide waste.

When a carnivore rips out and digests organs, muscle and sinew, it is also acquiring spiritual forms that it integrates, to the degree it is capable of doing so, into its spirit. Herbivores do the same when they digest plant life, but the plant spirits, less localized materially than their animal cousins, do not register the consequences so starkly.

The problem with all of this ripping and digestion is that it is terribly inefficient. It takes tens of thousands of pounds of meat to support the life of a 500 pound lion. Most of the Spirit attached to prey is returned to its originating species, where it is born again. But the violence of the death causes an intermingling of personalities, and perhaps a state verging on disassociation between an animal spirit and its material form.

How long would it be before the Spirit of Life as a whole realized that this inefficiency was a terrific barrier to its evolution? Obviously, great advantages would accrue if the Spirit encouraged the development of a form of life that could operate on spirit directly, without reliance upon the iron-based mechanisms of chlorophyll and blood.

And God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move over the ground.” [NIV Genesis 1:26]

Through the authority of the more mature spiritual forms (“us” and “we”), the Spirit of Life raised up Humanity. Humanity, possessor of cortical capacities that allow it to organize spirit through thought, without digestion of forms based upon chlorophyll or blood. The Spirit of Life entrusted Humanity to take stewardship of all the material forms of Life. Humanity was to

analyze and understand the relationship between spiritual and material forms (to “rule over”). And Humanity was expected to use that knowledge to assist in the growth and development of the Spirit of Life.