

## **Oneness. Exploring the truth of nature**

William Edelen

*"Men and books lie ... only nature never lies." — Thomas Paine*

*"Nature is always true. Only in nature can truth be found."— Goethe*

Over 100 years ago, Kierkegaard observed that maturity consists in the discovery that "there comes a critical moment where everything is reversed, after which the point becomes to understand more and more that there is something which cannot ever be understood." The "critical moment" is to realize that so called "human wisdom" pales before the wisdom of nature.

In fact, Loren Eiseley, the distinguished Anthropologist and Chair of the Philosophy of Science Department at the University of Pennsylvania writes that, "There is no such thing as wisdom." The only "wisdom" can be found in nature where the spiritual and the material are one.

There is a belief held by many that I have always found to be especially pitiable. It is the idea that only man (*Homo sapiens*) is special, sacred and made in the image of God. Many want to differentiate between the supernatural and the natural, the sacred and the profane. But if the creation is the work of an omnipotent mystery, then the entire cosmos is its revelation and everything, sum total, is natural, sacred and spiritual and reflects the image of that same mystery.

"How we delude ourselves," wrote Albert Schweitzer, "if we think otherwise. When we consider the immensity of the universe, we must confess that man is insignificant. Man's life can hardly be considered the goal of the universe. Its margin of existence is always so precarious. A man is ethical only when he considers every living cell, whether plant or animal, sacred and divine."

Dr. Lewis Thomas, head of New York's Sloan Kettering research center said, "Every living thing is alive thanks to the living of everything else. Every form of life is connected. The planet Earth is like a single cell. *Homo sapiens* is really a very immature and ignorant species in the horrible way it has treated all other living organisms."

We are all manifestations of the Mystery. We are all made from the same elements. From the same fund and the same material came every living organism. The little chipmunk is of the same dust as we, and he breathes the same wind and drinks of the same waters. His days are warmed by the same sun and his little heart pulses just like ours and was created by the same First Fountain.

This view of reality, of the oneness of everything, long held by native peoples and Eastern sages is today being confirmed by physicists and astronomers. "The universe is everything, both living and inanimate things, both atoms and galaxies, and if the spiritual exists, the spiritual and material are one, for the universe is the totality of all things," wrote Fred Hoyle in *Frontiers of Astronomy*.

Behind and beyond our senses lies a plane of consciousness in which all is related and all is one and all is now. Everything is united in the Mystery as one, the energy of the sun dancing in a wood-burning fire, a cucumber cucumbering, a flight of geese honking into a north wind, a rising tide crashing and breaking against a resisting beach, a wild stallion, with nostrils bulging the pride of the free racing to his mare, mist covering with affection hemlock and pine, a cougar stalking a fresh spore on a mountain trail. It is all one and all natural and all sacred and all divine, and all revealed images of the "great Mystery" behind it all and known to us ... as Nature and all truth.

"We are the children of this beautiful planet that we have lately seen photographed from the moon;" wrote Joseph Campbell. "We were not delivered into it by some god, but have come forth from it. And the Earth, together with the sun, this light around which it flies like a moth, came forth from a nebula, and that nebula in turn from space, So that we are the mind, ultimately, of space, each in his own way at one with all, and with no horizons."

Even life and death are one. Life, so called, is only a short episode between two great mysteries which are yet one. Spring begins with winter, and death begins with birth. We all share the same breath together in this short episode, the trees, the birds, the animals and the humans. We dance to a common rhythm.

This interval we call Life is a Mystery between greater mysteries which are yet one in a universe where all is natural (nature) and sacred, an image of the Source, the First Fountain, that we call in our tradition ... God.

William Edelen is a former minister living in Palm Springs. E-mail: [edelen1234@gmail.com](mailto:edelen1234@gmail.com)

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