

Eucalyptus rubida

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We individualise the Universe

Many people will recall Brian Swimme's saying: "Once the earth was molten lava, and now sings opera." This highlights the emergence of the human over time and the complexity of the consciousness we now have.

Thomas Berry says: *We are a product of the universe and in us the universe is becoming conscious of itself in both its physical and spiritual dimensions. that to take the Universe Story to heart is to awaken to "our own deeper self," "the Great Self," which is the heart-mind of the sacred universe.* (The Sacred Universe)

The title of this article seems to me to be another way of saying the same things but from a different level of thinking. It comes from Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*. Applied as it is to the human, it points out the uniqueness of who we are in relation to the mystery from which we come and which we individualise or personify. It is as if this ultimate mystery (God) needs to emerge in countless different forms culminating in the human. The fuller quote from Aurobindo is:

The true Person is not an isolated entity, his individuality is universal; for he individualises the universe: it is at the same time divinely emergent in a spiritual air of transcendental infinity, like a high cloud-surpassing summit; for he individualises the divine Transcendence.

Everything individualises the Universe. Even the sun orchid individualises the Universe. The galaxy in its self-organizing creativity individualises the Universe. Somehow the Great Flaring Forth (Big Bang) individualises that latent mystery that is outside space and time.

As for us, perhaps we can say we personalise the Divine Transcendent. We

are the Universe come into consciousness of itself.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who was a contemporary of Sri Aurobindo but who never met him or possibly knew his writings says in a similar vein:

Are we not at every instant living the experience of a universe whose immensity, by the play of our senses and our reason,



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is gathered up more and more simply in each one of us? But even in the interest of life in general, what is the work of works for man if not to establish, in and by each one of us, an absolutely original centre in which the universe reflects itself in a unique and inimitable way?

This new consciousness of our identity in the scheme of things is new to our generation and can put us into conflict with our former great story coming out of scripture and culture. But it does not have to put us into conflict with the past.

The former story was born out of a mythical consciousness, and arose gradually over maybe between five to

ten thousand years. The myth grew organically as all myths should. Today there is an imperative for it to grow into a new phase of human awareness as we encounter more of our cosmic origins. Nothing has to be abandoned. Everything can be accorded its rightful place in the Great Story which has many chapters.

This new consciousness is being named across the world as an *integral consciousness*. It has new characteristics, among them being an openness to the wisdoms of other traditions, and a willingness to situate our cultural thinking among them in a spirit of brotherhood/sisterhood.

More and more there is a consciousness and a desire for one mind to be the characteristic of our the new millennium. This does not mean abandoning what we have but bringing the best of all our traditions to the service of a new humanity that is redefining itself at a new level of divine emergence.

The task is epoch determining, and just a little scary, as we witness cultural upheaval across the world. Tens of millions have found a new home during the last century and the momentum does not seem to be slowing as refugees seek acceptance even in already stressed countries.

The call is out to all countries and all cultures to be open and accepting. We can be grateful that this is one of the characteristics of integral consciousness.

The kind of spirituality emerging in the new consciousness recognises the sacred dimension in all the created order and not just in the human. A spirit of kinship is replacing the notion of stewardship that we inherited from the former cosmic story.

Trevor Parton

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