

Is There Life After Death?

(revised March, 2012 (and subsequently, see below))

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We are part and parcel of the Universe and share its immortality

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Abstract

Our sense of individual immortality is a consequence of the self-awareness of the Universe caught knowingly in the act of looking at itself through human eyes. I am how the Universe becomes self-aware and experiences itself. The immortality of the Universe is therefore quite naturally intuited to be my own. The Universe is a conservation domain: all parts of the Universe are immortal or otherwise conserved. Our true immortality is the eternal nature of the Universe itself - including its capacity to continuously evolve and

create information, life, and self-knowledge.

Human life oscillates between a generalized (genomic) and a specific (phenotypic) expression. The creation of a new human being is remarkably analogous to the creation of a new elementary particle: both processes require a symmetric energy state which recapitulates the original environmental conditions of its specialized domain.

Science reveals the spiritual character of the universe in that it: 1) is ruled by natural law; 2) is a completely conserved system; 3) is wholly interconnected causally; 4) conserves symmetry no less than energy; 5) begins and ends as light; 6) pursues an agenda to experience and understand itself through entropy, information, evolution, and life. Religion reveals these same truths, but veiled in various intuitive and symbolic forms, usually packaged in comforting and "user-friendly" myth, song, images, and ritual. Religion provides an insulating buffer, a "dark glass" between human consciousness and the blinding reality of cosmic activity.

Intuitive Section

Is there life after death? Do we have an immortal soul? Ever since childhood I have pondered these questions. My intuitive response has not changed in over seventy years - yes, to both questions.

Even as a child, my reaction to the question of "life after death" was to ask if there was life before birth - the symmetry of the notion still appeals to me. If one, why not the other? I still feel that it makes as much sense to worry about the one case as the other. In any event, it is present life we need to concern ourselves with, not death; we have some control over life, but none at all over death.

This past July (2009) I turned 72, so the question nags at me more urgently than in my youth, and I have occasionally looked around for reassurance or rational proof of "life everlasting" in one form or another (I have no orthodox religious belief, although I obviously feel a strong spiritual connection with the universe). My work in physics and General Systems has turned up some interesting affirmative suggestions and hints, although I can't say they rise to the level of proof. I will discuss these below in the "rational section". Here I only consider my intuitive musings (and it is to answer just such imponderable questions that we have an intuition and create religions). Some questions are beyond the power or domain of science to answer, but that doesn't mean they don't have answers.

Instinctively, my basic reaction is - why worry? What will happen will happen and I can do nothing about it. The Universe will do with me what it will. But since the Universe has already shown its tendency in this regard, in that it has, without my asking, without my worry, without my foreknowledge or consent, given me this present life and experience, the odds are, it seems to me, overwhelmingly in favor of the Universe doing again what it has done before. That my life should be a single experience (a "one-off") seems to me about as likely as the chance that we are the only life form in the Cosmos. It has

become apparent that life is something that the Universe itself brings forth as an emergent property of the information content of its atomic, dimensional, and energetic structure, and the more we learn about the Universe, the more it seems certain that it brings forth life abundantly throughout its spacetime domain.

In other words, the outrageously improbable existence of this our present life is the best evidence we have for the next and/or previous life, which by the same argument was and will be not greatly different from this one - although the factor of personal, as well as biological, social, and cosmic evolution must be taken into account. My sense of the situation is this: there is a partially-conserved "I" that is unique to this life experience, and will not be repeated (nevertheless, it will be conserved in historic spacetime, or "karmic" history). But there is another, wholly-conserved "I" that is not unique to this life experience, that will have many, perhaps infinitely many, more life experiences. This eternal or wholly-conserved "I" does not remember (in human intellectual terms) its individual manifestations; but it is this eternal "I" that grows with each life experience and evolves with the Universe - its "memory" is in genetic and evolutionary terms.

The partial "I" is unique to this body, and passes into history (historic conservation) when the body dies. The source of this partial "I", however, is the eternal "I", which is the life spirit of the universe itself, forever seeking to know itself, grow, and evolve through a suitable physical instrument and organized ("quantized") locus of energy and information (the individual body and personality). The eternal "I" is the universe. "I" and the universe are one. We share this eternal "I" with all life forms, everywhere in the Cosmos, but the particular physical body in which it manifests imposes a unique experience upon each seemingly separate life experience. Human life is special in that it is (locally) the most highly evolved life form (on Earth), and because of our intellectual capacities we are able to participate in and actualize a human version of the creative dynamic of the universe, thus becoming a co-creator or fractal resonance of the Life Force of the Universe. In this sense as "fractal co-creator", humanity is indeed the "image and likeness of God", and we are the life form (on Earth) which is best able to understand the universe (as through philosophy), advance its self-knowledge (as through science), and appreciate its beauty (as through art and our capacity for aesthetic experience). But all life-forms advance the self-experience of the universe (the most intimate form of self-knowledge), and all are sacred in this respect.

Humanity is unique, however, in its creative capacity; humankind is the fractal iteration of the universal Life Force, a resonant form that completes the evolutionary purpose and cycle of the biological information realm. Humanity has taken on the divine role of controlling evolution and its own cosmic destiny. Humanity is a mirror, created by the universe, so that the Universe may see itself.

We are the Universe learning about itself through our life experience, and evolving as it does so; this self-exploration will never cease, because the Cosmos' potential for growth, evolution, and self-experience will never be exhausted.

And where and when does this next life occur? We can't know and it doesn't matter. Where and when did our previous life occur? We can't know and it doesn't matter. It may be elsewhere (and elsewhen) in this Universe, it may be elsewhere (and elsewhen) in the Multiverse. It simply happens, just as this life simply happened, because self-knowledge and growth through the information pathway of life is the evolutionary purpose of the Universe/Multiverse. While the individual, in the sense of "information", may enjoy considerable freedom of movement, karmic linkages ("cause and effect") may require our next manifest experience to be right here on earth - we may have to "stew in our own juice". This seems to be the view of the Eastern religions - karmic chains may only be transcended through "enlightenment", and do not apply to the physical body (which in that case does not reincarnate). The

Western view seems to be an all-or-nothing, one-time-only "salvation vs damnation".

We are the eyes and ears, the emotions and intelligence of the Cosmos, the only way it has of experiencing itself, of knowing itself, of enjoying and appreciating itself, and of actually continuing to grow and evolve. Through us the Universe experiences love and beauty and new forms of creativity - through us the Universe writes symphonies, enjoys sunsets, builds rocket ships, experiences love, and creates more life. Humans are fractal iterations of the Cosmos' living, creative power. The Universe explores its creative potential through life and through us, and this is why it continues to bring forth life with ever greater powers of intelligence, creative capacity, perceptual acuity, and aesthetic refinement - the better to know itself. "Universe know thyself!" In this sense the Universe is a narcissist. This is the real source of the notion that "God is Love": the Universe loves itself. And this suggests to me that whatever part of us may survive from one life experience to the next, the part that the Universe may wish to salvage for its evolutionary journey of self-knowledge, discovery, and growth, is the part of us that loves and celebrates life and the Cosmos in some form - whether as an artist, scientist, philosopher, athlete, or lover. It is simply inconceivable that my life experience should be wasted on me alone - completely obliterated and rendered meaningless by death - without somehow serving the larger evolutionary purpose of the Cosmos that created me. And the best way to do this is by this life experience informing my (or the) next life experience - if only by enriching the self-knowledge of the universe. The purpose of life is therefore the experience of life - lived and enjoyed to its fullest potential. To think otherwise is to reduce me, all human experience, and the vast and ancient universe itself - to inconsequential trivia. It is actually a ridiculous notion. The universe exists for a reason; we - including our growth and evolution - are part of that reason.

Rational Section

The "[Afterlife Tetrahedron](#)" is the perhaps the best "rational" model bearing on this issue that our [General Systems work](#) has produced. In the model, we see that the "Biophysical face", which corresponds to the biological realm of the "[Fractal Hierarchy](#)" or "[Information Ladder](#)", does not explicitly contain the Conservation pole of the model, and indeed is the only face which does not. ([See the "Tetrahedron Faces" model here.](#)) It is just this lack which identifies this face as the biological face, as we associate this lacunae with death, a phenomenon peculiar to the biological realm. We note, however, that the Conservation pole of the model is explicitly connected to all three poles of the biological face. The Biological Realm is therefore completely embedded in the conservation matrix of the larger structure, but these connections are implicit rather than explicit. The model shows three conservation connections; I will examine each in turn below. (Readers should print out and refer to the "[Afterlife Tetrahedron](#)" diagram as a guide to what follows.)

1) The Conservation connection to the Entropy pole: this connection is dimensional, including the gravitational "[The Conversion of Space to Time](#)". The dimensions of spacetime are conservation domains created by the entropy drives of free and bound energy - the intrinsic motions of light and time. Time's intrinsic motion creates history and historic spacetime, the conservation domain of Information and matter's "causal matrix" ("Karma"). (See: "[Spatial vs Temporal Entropy](#)".) All actions and events are permanently recorded in historic spacetime. Historic spacetime is what we see when we look out in space to the distant galaxies. We actually can see only a tiny fraction of historic spacetime; most of it, including all of our own history, is hidden from our view. It is nevertheless perfectly real and the continued reality of yesterday is absolutely necessary to sustain the reality of today. All earlier cultures have understood this, as is especially evident in the practice of "ancestor worship". We are all immortal in History. Memory is one way in which we experience the reality of this temporal connection; another is the celebrated notion of "Karma". Light is connected by space; matter is connected by time; all are

connected by gravity. Massless light is non-local, atemporal, and acausal; massive matter is local, temporal, and causal.

Matter is only tangentially linked to historic spacetime, the conservation domain of Information, "Karma", and matter's "causal matrix". We live only in the ever-moving present, not in the historic past, which continually expands "behind" us. By contrast, light fully occupies its conservation domain (space), and expands and cools as space expands and cools - light is inseparable from its entropy drive (intrinsic motion c) and its dimensional conservation domain (space), which that entropy drive creates. Conversely, it is matter's time dimension which moves and not matter itself. Matter is separate from its historic conservation domain, and does not expand or age with the expansion and aging of historic spacetime. "Diamonds are forever" - atoms simply do not grow old. (Biological aging, decay, and death is a "systems effect" peculiar to living forms, necessitated by Darwinian evolution and by population pressure upon finite resources, and is genetically controlled.) (See: "[The Time Train](#)".)

The separation of matter from its entropy drive (the intrinsic motion of time), and the conservation domain created by that drive (history), is necessary for several good reasons, among them: 1) the equilibration of the entropy drive of bound energy with the entropy drive of free energy ("velocities" c and T) - the intrinsic motion of time is (and must be) the metric equivalent of the intrinsic motion of light; 2) the isolation of matter's quantized symmetry debts (charges) from the attenuating effects of entropy (note in this regard that light itself bears no charges of any kind). The *metric* relation between light (free electromagnetic energy) and spacetime is gauged by " c " (the electromagnetic constant); the *entropic* relation between matter (bound electromagnetic energy) and spacetime is gauged by " G " (the gravitational constant). (See: "[Entropy, Gravity, and Thermodynamics](#)".)

The separation of matter from its historic conservation domain is the chief source of humanity's "angst" regarding our conserved status in the Cosmos. This separation, however, is actually illusory. We are very much a part of historic spacetime, but we are situated on the leading edge of its expanding domain, tangentially connected to the remainder of history by the single point contact of the "present moment". (See: "[A Spacetime Map of the Universe](#)".) The tangential "point" connection between matter and historic spacetime is why gravity is so weak. Gravity creates matter's time dimension (by the annihilation of space), but it only creates enough time to provide the required entropy drive for matter's tiny "point" connection to history - the "present moment". (See: "[The Half-Life of Proton Decay and the 'Heat Death' of the Cosmos](#)".)

2) The Conservation connection to the Symmetry pole. This is the source of information in its most basic form as the charges of the fermions, the quarks and leptons which comprise matter. (See: "[The Particle Table](#)".) (The inertial forces of spacetime are a dimensional manifestation of the connection between the Conservation and Symmetry poles of the "[Tetrahedron Model](#)", but like gravity, these forces do not concern us here.) Charge conservation is information's most fundamental conservation mode. Charge conservation is a temporal form of symmetry conservation, somewhat as history is a temporal form of information conservation. However, the expansion of history dilutes the causal connections of its information content via ever-branching causal networks, but quantized charges, which exist only in the present moment, are not subject to the historical forces of entropic enervation (as noted above).

The charge of most interest for present purposes is the "identity" charge of the weak force, carried in explicit form by the neutrino, and in implicit form by the massive leptons (and perhaps the baryons). Identity charge is related to the elementary particles in exactly the same way as we commonly think of the relationship between the soul and the body. No elementary particle (lepton) can enter or leave the manifest Universe without its accompanying neutrino or identity charge, just as we think of the soul

accompanying the body at birth and leaving it at death. The identity charge is the basic information bit that makes possible the birth of matter into the Universe. The "Big Bang" is essentially an explosion of energy and Identity, creating the manifest Universe. Our religious notions of God and the human soul are therefore one way in which we intuitively apprehend this fundamental physical conservation connection; another is our subjective experience of "beauty" - which is the Symmetry conservation principle emergently expressed in biology and the Information Realm. See: "[Identity Charge and the Weak Force](#)" and "[The Weak Force as a Bridge Between 2-D and 4-D Reality](#)".

3) The Conservation connection to the Causality pole: this is the raw energy connection between light and matter, in which the free energy of light is transformed to the bound energy of matter in quantitative accordance with Einstein's famous equation $E = mc^2$. Matter is essentially an asymmetric form of light, one-half of light's particle-antiparticle form. We can think of matter as an asymmetric, massive form of light's energy transformed to rest. *The charges of matter are the symmetry debts of light.* See: "[Symmetry Principles of the Unified Field Theory](#)". It is from these charges that information and life are created. Hence life is derived from light as a conserved form of light's three fundamental properties: energy, entropy, and symmetry.

Gravity, time, and matter constitute our most direct experience of the raw energy conservation connection. Gravitation directly connects us to the rest of the Cosmos in proportion to our mass or bound energy content. Gravity, like Identity charge, is also a "hidden" connection in that its force is so weak we are only aware of it in the vicinity of very large objects - such as the Earth. But gravity is nevertheless a powerful conservation force, not only creating matter's time dimension via the annihilation of space, but also returning bound energy to its original symmetric form of light - as in the activity of our Sun. The gravitational conversion of matter to light goes to completion in Hawking's "Quantum Radiance" of black holes. See: "[Gravity, Entropy, and Thermodynamics](#)".

A conservation "subroutine" which is peculiar to biology is genetic reproduction and the conservation of genes (genetic information) through successive generations. Other conservation modes in the human sector of the biological realm and [Information Pathway](#) include memory, language, writing, and various technical and social mechanisms which specifically address the conservation of information across our generations: schools, books, libraries, etc. Besides gravity, our spiritual awareness (socially expressed as religion) is the "still small voice" which tells us of our conserved cosmic connection. "Spiritual awareness" also resides in our natural experience of the overwhelming beauty, majesty, immensity, mystery, and power of the Universe. It is also likely that the conservation of light's connectivity and unity are corollaries of the larger conservation principle of Symmetry (as formalized in "Noether's Theorem").

Hence the evidence for conservation is there if we choose to look for it. We see it in memory, historic spacetime, and "Karma"; in charge conservation, the phenomenon of beauty, and the notion of personal identity and the soul; and in gravitation and our spiritual awareness of personal connection to the Universe. Finally, we see it in the continuity of our genetic heritage through the eons of time, and in the evolutionary progress of the Universe toward self-knowledge, discovery, and the exploration of its creative potential, even as it returns inexorably to the original perfection of light from which it was born.

Our Universe of light, spacetime, and matter is the conservation domain of electromagnetic energy. We are part of the Universe, part of its evolutionary adventure of self-discovery. We can not escape the universal principle of Conservation, even if we wanted to. Is there life after death? We should ask instead: is there a Universe after our death? Of course there is. And we will continue to be part of it, just as we have always been part of it. (See: "[A General Systems Approach to the Unified Field Theory](#)".)

For a scholarly and thorough treatment of the entire metaphysical realm, including issues discussed above, see my late father's book ["Trance, Art, Creativity"](#) on his memorial website.

Questions Regarding "Karma"

Only biological life forms which experience death do not experience a full cycle of causal (cause and effect) consequences - because death separates them from karmic consequences which are still "in the pipeline". Hence death can prevent "justice" from being fully served, whether reward or retribution, and because this seems to violate natural law, we have invented "heaven and hell" to complete this normal lawful cycle in the "afterlife" - bringing by this hypothesis the life experience into alignment with all other natural phenomena in the Universe. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19 and many other biblical references of similar import). Because we know that in every other respect the Cosmos is a scrupulously conserved domain, it is a quite natural expectation and reasonable assumption that the karmic cycle will somehow be fulfilled, even in the case of biological life forms.

Of course, the "experience of life" as we humans know it, is of quite a different order of reality than the "experience" of any inanimate object or atom, and how to factor this difference into the equation is a very difficult issue. Is the biological "experience of life", because of its inherently mortal (and/or insubstantial) nature, simply excused from, raised above, or otherwise not a part of the normal physical cycle of cause and effect? Can we escape "justice" by the biologically simple and normal act of dying? Is the human notion of "justice" not a legitimate part of the karmic cycle of cause and effect? Or is the karmic cycle fulfilled by all the ancillary causal connections we have set in motion before our death, and which continue after? Do we, in effect, remain a part of the local history we have set in motion?

Summary

The universe speaks a language of conservation - the conservation of light's spatial, symmetric form in an alternative, asymmetric dimension (history); the conservation of light's energy in an alternative massive form (atomic matter, momentum), with an alternative, asymmetric entropy drive (the intrinsic motion of time); the conservation of light's various symmetries as the conserved charges of matter (which include gravity's "location" charge). (See: ["A Short Course in the Unified Field Theory"](#).) The time dimension is necessary to accommodate the energy accounts, entropy drive, and causal relations of massive particles with relative spatial motion (rather than absolute spatial motion, like light). The historic dimension also allows charge conservation to conserve symmetry debts into an indefinite future. The conversion (and conservation) of light's symmetric spatial entropy drive (light's intrinsic spatial motion) to matter's asymmetric historical entropy drive (time's intrinsic motion) is accomplished by gravity (see: ["The Conversion of Space to Time"](#)). The conservation of light's raw energy takes the form of the mass and momentum of particles, and the conservation of light's various symmetries takes the form of charge conservation. *The charges of matter are the symmetry debts of light* ("Noether's Theorem"). The "non-local" distributional symmetry of light's energy is conserved by the gravitational "location" charge - via the conversion of bound to free energy in stars. Gravity also and simultaneously conserves light's symmetric spatial entropy drive (light's intrinsic motion) as matter's asymmetric historical entropy drive (time's intrinsic motion) - via the conversion of space to time. See: ["The Double Conservation Role of Gravitation"](#).

We live in a universe of mixed spatial and temporal entropy domains (historic spacetime). The secondary asymmetric temporal domain of matter is derived from, coexists with, and interacts with the primary spatial domain of light. This intimate co-mixture of conservation domains contributes to our universal intuitive awareness of a generative spiritual domain which stands behind and is antecedent to

the physical domain of matter, and likewise contributes to the universal notion of an "afterlife", including the experience of metaphysical phenomena of many kinds. "Every jot and tittle of the law will be fulfilled"; and "Not a sparrow falls but the Father knows". Biological death is necessary so that biological evolution may occur - but our identity transcends biology, and we have learned that even the least elementary particle (the electron) bears a strictly conserved identity charge (manifesting as the electron neutrino). If even an electron can have an immortal identity or "soul", so can we. We live in a compound conservation domain which will not let us go; we pass from one form to another as the universe evolves and grows - and we with it in an eternal and conserved cycle of the [Information Pathway](#) toward Cosmic Consciousness, the "Omega Point" of [Teilhard de Chardin](#).

Postscript I: Musings on Easter Sunday, 2009

Life is the great miracle of the universe. The spirit of the "Living God" is the Creative Spirit of the universe that brings life in all its forms into existence: life and humanity literally raised from the atoms and dust of the earth. Life is the goal of the information pathway through which the Creative Energy of the universe intends to know and experience itself, including exploring (as through humanity) new forms and avenues of creativity and beauty. The (larger, meta-religious) meaning of the Easter resurrection is the recognition that life is greater than any one personal life experience, and the death of one individual does not terminate the information pathway of the Cosmos. Life goes on everywhere and always, and we, being part of the universal life experience, will always be part of that experience, not only historically, but in future transformations beyond our ken. The Universe wants to understand, experience, and appreciate itself, from many different perspectives, and to explore the full potential of its creative energy and capacity. We are asked to experience, appreciate, understand, and participate in the universe as only intelligent, self-conscious, and creative humans can do. To love the Universe is to secure a continuing role in its agenda of self-exploration, insofar as that is possible; as individuals, we will not pass this way again: change, evolution, and growth is the negentropic law of the Living Universe. But as day follows night, and spring follows winter, so life follows death as the great miracle of the Living Universe constantly renews itself, carrying us along in its inexorable, eternal, creative, and self-interested flow.

Postscript II: Easter, 2010

Regarding the analogy between biology (the creation and destruction of individual humans) and the weak force (the creation and destruction of single elementary particles): See:

[Section IV: Introduction to the Weak Force](#)
[The Weak Force: Identity or Number Charge](#)

At death the individual "quantized" personality retreats from a unique manifestation to a much more general state of information - the species-specific ("closed") gene pool. A human individual begins at conception with one sperm and one egg - together making a single cell and a single double helix of DNA, one strand from each parent. Many combinations and permutations of the information complex contained in human DNA are allowed (are viable), representing the biological analog of the unified-force symmetric energy state of the weak force as gauged by the [Higgs and "W" IVBs](#). Hence while quarks and leptons of different flavors can emerge from the electroweak force-unity state, so also can many new gene combinations and permutations (the "blueprints" for new individuals of the species) emerge from the biological symmetry state of sexual union between male and female. Conservation (in the sense of continuity of life forms from one generation to the next) in this case operates at the level of the closed gene pool of the species, not at the individual level of personality. Humans make other

humans, horses make other horses, etc., but an individual personality does not reproduce itself - at least not in the higher animals. Lower animals and plants, however, do often practice cloning (non-sexual reproduction). In cases of cloning, conservation may indeed be said to occur at the level of the individual "personality" (as in Macintosh apples, for example). Since it may soon be possible to artificially clone humans, we will have to recognize that at least the life experience of every individual is different, and must be accounted part of that individual, no less than the ephemeral cells of which a person is at any single moment composed.

Life oscillates between a generalized (gene pool) and a specific (individual) manifestation. Before my birth, "I" existed in the human gene pool only as a potential combination and permutation of DNA genes; at birth, the specific genetic combination I now experience as "me" is actualized in the world. During life, the potential of this specific genetic combination, for better or worse, is realized within some environmental context. "I" may also engender new genetic combinations (children) with various mates during this life period. At death, the specific genetic experiment that was "me" ends, but my human life continues in its generalized form (as it was before conception/birth) within the closed gene pool of humanity, which will give rise to many more individual humans, all of whom will have their own "me" experience of personal identity. Conservation therefore exists at the level of the human gene pool (generalized), and in historic spacetime (specific for each individual). We have no memory of previous lives because each unique "I" is separated by the generalized existence of human life in the gene pool, in which "memory" is carried in the molecular form of genes, not as the abstract, higher mental function of a human brain.

The creation of a new human being requires extracting a specific DNA combination from the generalized gene pool, which is accomplished by the completion of a symmetry cycle via the sexual union of male and female, which in themselves represent asymmetric halves of a single organism. The completion of this reproductively whole organism results in an energy release ("orgasm"), the inevitable consequence of the completion of a symmetry cycle. Due to the loss of energy and the partial fusion of identities, a "pair bond" between the mating individuals results, just as in chemical, nuclear, or gravitational fusion. Note that in the biological creation of new life, the organism is reduced to a single cell and a single strand of DNA, one from each partner. Thus life begins from the "bottom up" each time, that is, from a single cell and molecule, just as it did in the beginning, a process which is analogous to the weak force creation of single elementary particles: the weak force must also reconstitute the original conditions of creation in the "Big Bang" via the massive Higgs boson and "W" IVBs. Only genetic "memory" can survive this constriction and restructuring between life experiences, each of which is a unique and delimited ("quantized") experience.

A transcendental or "spiritual" interpretation of this process is readily derived as an abstraction based upon the physical, genetic model (the transformation of an individual identity or "soul" from a generalized immaterial source to a specific physical state and back again).

Personal "karma" in the afterlife is thus reduced to a generalized karma of the gene pool. If you invent electricity, your descendants and other relatives will benefit thereby, along with the rest of humanity. If you make war, your descendants and other relatives will suffer the consequences, as will the entire species. In this conception, afterlife karma is largely restricted to the closed gene pool of one's own species, which accords reasonably well with what we might expect from simple cause-and-effect physics (the major effects are closer to hand). However, as we have ruefully come to realize with regard to human affairs, we must also take into account a larger sphere of influence that includes other aspects of our environment, both biotic and abiotic. In a similar vein, if life is a single force throughout the universe - a unified matrix of information and cosmic self-knowledge - then we may be entirely unaware

of the vaster extent of our karmic influence throughout this Universe or even beyond, in either spiritual or physical terms, as certain interpretations of the "Multiverse" would have it.

Growth, evolution, and change must be accommodated by our biological model, as well as conservation. We want to be "saved", but we also want to become better people in a better world! Our individual, quantized, personal identity is conserved in historical spacetime, while our potential for evolution remains in the generalized human gene pool and in life taken as a whole - on this planet and throughout the Universe. Our sense of individual immortality is a consequence of the self-awareness of the Universe caught knowingly in the act of looking at itself through human eyes. I am how the Universe becomes self-aware and looks at itself. The immortality of the Universe is therefore quite naturally intuited to be my own. If the Universe is immortal, I am immortal, because I am part of the universe. The Universe is a conservation domain: all parts of the Universe are either immortal or otherwise conserved. We are naturally unaware of our previous generalized existence in the gene pool of humanity, or of our potential existence in the information content of the Universe. Our true immortality is the eternal nature of the Universe itself - including its capacity to evolve and create information, life, and self-knowledge - extending even to the "Multiverse" and the Godhead beyond.

Postscript III: June, 2011

Our physical bodies are the summation or culmination of countless earlier lives, as recorded in the DNA of our genome. We may not remember these lives, but we certainly embody them, and we recapitulate much of our evolutionary history during our embryonic development, right from the single cell stage on up to the human. Our body and our DNA remembers, even if our minds don't. But obviously, this is a price we pay for evolution: we must change if we are to evolve, and this means the memory must be carried in the molecules rather than the mind - at least until we have evolved enough to carry memory in history books. So it's not true that we don't remember earlier lives, it's just that the memory is molecular rather than mental, and this arrangement seems to be necessary to allow for evolutionary change of form and ability through time. In the same way, we doubt the butterfly remembers that it was a larva, but its DNA certainly does, and will recapitulate that stage in the next generation.

Secondly, we learn from physics that the universe is a wholly conserved domain, not only with respect to energy, but also with respect to other more esoteric phenomena such as information, identity, symmetry, and activity (the latter recorded in historic spacetime and in propagating "karmic" or reactionary consequences). These are all basic physical "textbook" laws which I also emphasize in various papers on my [website](#).

Finally, from the principle of symmetry conservation (as per Noether's Theorem), we discover, with Plato, that the physical universe is simply an alternative, asymmetric form of an ideal state of energy: matter is an asymmetric, alternative form of light. Charge conservation = symmetry conservation. *The charges of matter are the symmetry debts of light*. Life is the information parameter of the Cosmos seeking self-awareness and self-knowledge. We are, as Carl Sagan said, "star-stuff contemplating the stars". We embody the information parameter of the universe, and so as we come to know the universe, we come to know ourselves. The universe values me because I am the means whereby the universe experiences itself; it has made me for that purpose. I represent a goal (or at least an evolutionary stage toward the goal) of universal self-awareness - Chardin's "Omega Point" in which ([as my father observed](#)) the "All shall know and experience the All".

Postscript IV: March 2012

Falling In Love

I believe that in considering such esoteric matters as "life after death" we should take into account the opinions expressed in all the world's religions, both ancient and modern. However, in what follows I will simply embed my discussion in the principles of symmetry conservation as expounded on my [website](#), especially in such papers as: "[Noether's Theorem](#)" and the "[Tetrahedron Model](#)".

The experience of "falling in love" involves a merger of identities between two individuals, which is officially recognized and sanctioned by the marriage ceremony in which they (traditionally) take the same name and share their worldly possessions. Legally they become "one flesh". This love/marriage state (biologically the "pair bond"), is analogous to a state of higher symmetry in physics involving the "superposition" of two particles (such as the "nucleon"), or better, the merger of two forces into a unified-force symmetric energy state, such as the "electroweak" state of the weak force transformation process. From such a state of higher energy, symmetry, and union, new elementary particles may be created, and in the biological analog, new life engendered - in both cases going right back to the elemental origins of particles and the molecular beginnings of life.

Note also that it is in the state of love that the muse so often visits the artist, the scientist, and the inventor, so that it is from this state of higher energy and symmetry that human genius creates "children" of the mind and spirit, transforming a thought into a material object like mathematics, the Periodic Table of the Elements, or the airplane, which may someday change the world. Similarly, in Zen meditation, the goal is to achieve a state of higher mental/spiritual symmetry by erasing the division between the self and the universe, reaching the ultimate realization that we and the universe are one and the same entity - an experience, it is said, of intense joy and happiness ("bliss"). Finally, let us understand that death is a transformation into a state of higher symmetry with the universe, a "falling asleep" in the Lord, or a "falling in love" with God Himself, a merger or dissolving of our individual spirit with the universal spirit of the Cosmos, a state of higher symmetry in which our individuality is subsumed, overshadowed, and overwhelmed, much as a raindrop falls again into the ocean from which it came. Death is the great symmetry state in which all beings are equal, the universal "atonement" in the universal "love of God". It is not for nothing that sexual orgasm is often referred to as "the little death", as it presages the final ecstasy of the union between the individual and the Divine, of the return of the soul to its origin and home. "Death and Transfiguration": In this universal symmetry state transformations of the individual soul to new life expressions and experiences become possible - just as in the electroweak force-unity state new elementary particles and identities may be created and destroyed, subsumed and produced.

Postscript V: Jan 2013

We must always remember that when the sun sets, the stars come out - a greater and more general dimension of reality is revealed. In the words of Thomas Wolfe *You Can't go Home Again* (last page):

"Something has spoken to me in the night, burning the tapers of the waning year; something has spoken in the night, and told me I shall die, I know not where. Saying:

"To lose the earth you know, for greater knowing; to lose the life you have, for greater life; to leave the friends you loved, for greater loving; to find a land more kind than home, more large than earth -

"whereon the pillars of this earth are founded, toward which the conscience of the world is tending - a wind is rising, and the rivers flow."

(added Jan., 2013)

Religion and Spiritual Awareness

If it makes sense to worship the Sun as a symbol of God (as the ancients did), it also makes sense to worship a human as a symbol of God (as the Christians do) - especially if one accepts the Biblical notion that humanity is created in God's image. The sun is only a source of energy and heavy elements, and although both are necessary for life, certainly the sun by itself does not create life. Life is the great miracle of the universe, the characteristic or attribute that gives the universe meaning and that gives the information content of the universe - originating in its various atoms and elements - an expanded significance and dimension in terms of consciousness, self-awareness, experience, creativity, comprehension, appreciation, joy, love, beauty, etc., and of course, spiritual intuition or awareness itself. It is life we worship and life that allows us to worship. We stand in awe of the ability of the universe to bring forth life - the combination of information and energy and evolutionary purpose that is the life force of the Cosmos. It therefore makes more sense to worship a living being than an inanimate one, however glorious and powerful the latter may be.

The purpose of the life force is to provide a means (via the information content of the Cosmos) for the universe to know itself and to explore new modes of creativity - to achieve self-awareness and create new forms of beauty. Since humans are the highest expression of this cosmic drive (at least locally, on planet Earth), we can call them (all of them) sons and daughters of God, and worship them as symbolic representations of the cosmic Deity, the Life Force, God, the essential meaning, purpose, and miracle of the Universe. The "Trinity" in this case might be energy, information, and evolution. Entropy and symmetry are subsets of the energy term; causality is part of the energy and information term; creativity, purpose, and direction are part of the evolution term. Life is an emergent property of all terms working together toward a fractal iteration and conscious expression of the creative or life-force of the Universe. Life is the ultimate manifestation of the creative force of the Universe and the evidence of God in his manifestation, working to bring forth a fractal expression of Himself - beautiful, creative, intelligent, active, and self-aware.

Religion is the social expression of our native spiritual awareness, and although it is not necessary to a personal "enlightenment", nevertheless, because we are highly social creatures, it is probably here to stay, despite its many and obvious institutional flaws and failings. Nevertheless, one of the successes of organized religion is to call attention to the immortal character of life itself, in its general if not its individual form. Life is a product of the creative drive inherent in the information content of the Cosmos, and as such is as immortal and various and extensive as the Universe itself. We are all individually immortal in history; and we are all generally immortal in the information content of the Cosmos. We are, and always have been, part and parcel of the Cosmos, and while it endures, so do we. (added Jan., 2013)

To deny the immortality of humans (in the spiritual sense) is to deny the immortality of the information content of the Cosmos, and the failure of the causal (karmic) term as it applies to humanity. Such a failure would vastly diminish the value of individual human life and hence, in turn, the significance of the universe itself: why go to all the trouble to create such a huge cosmos, which, lacking a complete karmic term, lacks full conservation, and hence can hardly have a purpose or meaning? Life is the opportunity for the universe to achieve not only self-awareness, but also significance and meaning, including creativity and achievement beyond the mere existence of the a-biotic realm. But this opportunity can be realized only in a fully conserved system. Human legal systems of "criminal justice"

and social law are noteworthy in this regard since they represent a conscious attempt to repair, shore-up, or substitute for a perceived weakness/failure in the cosmic causal or "karmic" linkage in human affairs. Medical intervention in sickness is perhaps a parallel example of humans stepping into the realm of Natural Law once thought to be exclusively Divine. These may also be seen as further examples of humans evolving into the role of co-creator, a fractal iteration of God, created in his own image and likeness (at least functionally).

(added Jan., 2017)

Postscript VI (added May 2014) A great poem that says it all!

Sonnet by Joseph Blanco White (1775-1841)

To Night

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew
 Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
 Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
 This glorious canopy of light and blue?
 Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
 Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
 Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
 And lo! Creation widened in man's view.
 Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
 Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
 Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
 That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind!
 Why do we then shun death with anxious strife?
 If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?

Dedicated to Coleridge (who thought this the finest sonnet in the English language).

First publication date: 1828

Do not worry about the afterlife: pay attention to this life and the next will take care of itself.
 (Added Oct. 2014)

Does the Universe/Nature Have a "Purpose"?

John A. Gowan April, 2015

This is a deep philosophical question which has religious/spiritual overtones. Although I am not a religious person in the traditional sense (I think of myself instead as "spiritually" inclined), I think the answer must be "yes".

The universe viewed from the perspective of thermodynamics, mechanics, physics, and chemistry may indeed seem without purpose or meaning, although even in this "sterile" case we must admit that the atoms contain the mysterious parameter of "information" which impels them to spontaneously fuse into

the 92 natural elements of the periodic table, creating stars, galaxies, and black holes, and eventually return (via "Hawking radiation") to the simple and symmetric form of the light which originally created them (in the "Big Bang" or "Creation Event").

In addition to the information parameter, we must acknowledge that these simple atoms are governed/regulated by certain rules, laws, and principles in their existence and interactions, such as the conservation of energy and symmetry, entropy, causality, etc. One might suggest in this simple ("inorganic") case that the "purpose" of the universe was evident in its spontaneous drive to return its material component to its original symmetric state, light (electromagnetic radiation) - illustrating conservation of the symmetry of energy as well as the quantity of energy (in terms of "Noether's Theorem"). We can, in fact, attribute the origin of the information content of matter to the conservation laws requiring and facilitating asymmetric matter's return to the perfect symmetry of light.

But of course we live in a vastly more complex universe which contains life - the biological parameter of information which spontaneously grows, reproduces, perceives, defends itself, feeds itself, knows and feels, and eventually, through evolutionary time and transformation, achieves self-consciousness, self awareness, and in its human form, abstract thought, society and civilization, language, art, science, religion, technology, etc.

When we add the biological and evolutionary parameter to the physical base of the universe, it becomes almost impossible to imagine that the cosmos does not have a purpose. Clearly, the universe exists to produce life - life is the crowning glory and "purpose" of the universe. Life is the information pathway through which the universe experiences itself, explores and fulfills itself, enlarging its creative potential and productions, for example through the arts and sciences of humanity. The "purpose" of the universe is to know and grow itself, especially through creatures like humans, who have the capacity for abstract thought and technological creativity, which can materially aid the growth and self-exploration of the universe - as through our telescopes and microscopes, space programs, etc. When I look through the microscope, the universe looks with me. I am an instrument of the universe. When I create art, the universe gains a new mode of creativity and a new form of beauty; when I create science, the universe gains a new form of power and knowledge, enlarging its information parameter and its capacity for action.

And returning to the mysterious "information parameter" (a notion beloved of Teilhard de Chardin), apparently contained "within" the atoms and expressed through the periodic table and its manifold chemical and physical elaborations - what is its source and origin? The "information parameter", along with the several physical laws and principles which govern and regulate its productions, elaborations, and manifestations, are the scientific equivalent of the "spiritual realm" of human imagination, mythology, and abstract thought. Against every reasonable expectation, the information parameter brought forth upon our planet life and humanity. While it may take a village to raise a child, it certainly requires a universe to create one. Does this information parameter have a purpose? Look in a mirror, look at a flower, and look through a telescope. You are the purpose of a universe that wants to know and explore and evolve itself - including its creative potential.

What does all this say about religion and our notion of "God"? In my personal view, nobody has the slightest idea who or what "God" is; it appears we have created "Him" in our image and likeness. Religion is a mythological/allegorical/intuitive attempt to explain/comprehend the universe (and to gain some control over it); science must eventually replace it. In the most general "scientific/rational" terms as I try to frame this issue, "God" is the Universe (Multiverse?) entire, including the creative and

regulatory principles that bring it into existence, maintain it, and motivate/control its activity (God is self-contained - there is nothing "outside" God). God's laws are the physical laws and principles of the universe, and they are primarily conservation laws (energy, symmetry, causality, entropy). "God" as a "Trinity" is: 1) energy in all its forms (matter, light, spacetime, etc.); 2) conservation law, physical constants, and regulatory principles; 3) information and creativity. The information parameter contains God's "will" or "purpose" for the universe - to give the universe life and self-understanding, even to evolve a co-creator (humans) capable of abstract thought, language, art, science, and technology, a self-interested "agency" and fractal iteration which may itself eventually create life, beauty, information, control evolution, and travel the Cosmos.

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