

By Cosmic Design, I Confess

BY JOHN P. COCK

By Cosmic Design?*

On the way forward from our past,
this cosmological age
highlights awesome seasons
that birth rituals
and daily sunrises and sunsets
that spiritize existence,
sanctifying early mornings
with meditation
and late evenings
with reverie:

parents reading to and
cuddling with their children,
answering big questions,
rubbing backs and humming
as the little ones slip into
Earth's dark, sacred night.

Are we not spiritual
by cosmic design
and for cosmic reason?

Prescript

We could go out of being as a people
the same way we came in –
by an asteroid crisis.
We could go out of being
by a military-nuclear crisis,
a global warming crisis,
a potable water crisis.

Yet, we'd rather live here than not.
I confess it's a sacred place –
the only one we know.
Grace, love, beauty, meaning, and care
are in this place. Why look for another?
Let us cherish and honor this place
as the good place it is.

How do we know it to be a sacred place?
Consciousness over thousands of years
has testified to it,
beholding the sacredness
of a blade of grass,
a sensual touch,
and the good journey.

With given consciousness
we intercommune with creation
and commune with its heart.

With given consciousness
and with sacred inclination
we come to see and know
and bow to all as thou.

I confess that by cosmic design
mysterious, awesome, transparent,
numinous, eternal, universal, transforming,
gracious power is always present;
and we – past, present, and evolving –
perceive and experience sacred
power at the center of this place.

Our microcosmic reason for being here,
our bounden duty as subjects?
To sense the meaning of the sacred
and serve its power
in the cosmos forever –
or till we are no more
in this wondrous place.

* John P. Cock, April 2001,
from *Our Universal Spirit
Journey: Reflection and Verse
for Creation's Sake*; later
published in *By Cosmic
Design: Spirit Poems* (1974-
2006).

The Teaching

Mircea Eliade, as the prophet, reminded us that our aboriginal ancestors had a sense of the sacred that we do not share, and if we do not recover their depth understanding, and more, there may be no human future— especially if we, to use Eliade’s word, “desacralize” life in this world by rejecting the cosmic dimension that gives meaning.

One of his favorite illustrations of the manifestation of the sacred is Moses taking off his shoes in awe before the burning bush. His holy-ground experience is a paradigm for our journeys. As such happens to us, we too bow and declare any place as sacred. Like Moses, we experience awe: through viewing the rising or setting sun; seeing the universe through a microscope or a telescope; feeling intimacy with a special one; assisting in the birth of a child; being at the graveside of one we love; appraising our earth community’s future; suffering the tragedy of 9/11; watching Katrina. Such events bear out the profound power in the cosmos.

Such power comes as blessing or terror. Through either, we experience the sacred and sometimes even transformation, unity, and centeredness. *Mysterium tremendum* that trembles, thrills, and alters our being is the power that winks at modern attempts to reduce truth to scientific and historical fact. These facts are immensely helpful, but they hardly guide our journey as does primal, cosmic power. Sacred moments of transparent consciousness beckon us to see through to and bow to the power from the heart of the cosmos.

Consciousness is our cosmic antenna. We become aware of what is happening to us by consciously reacting to, reflecting on, and taking a relationship to what was and is really going on. Summing up this total event of consciousness, Kierkegaard wrote that we perceive and experience the power that “posits” or constitutes us as free beings who can choose to embrace our journeys fully. Meaning is the result.

Meaning that comes from cosmic eventfulness through given consciousness and intentional choice nurtures us. Stored up wisdom of the goodness of life deeply sustains us. Through reflection, we come to understand that sacred meaning is always at hand in abundance. We not only perceive and experience meaning, but we also create, express, and engage in meaning – through operating images, worldview, myths, stories, symbols, rituals, art, and language. As meaning-reliant mammals in the cosmos, we come to see that experiencing meaning, creating meaning, and sharing meaning are what we are about as self-conscious beings.

The Confession

I confess cosmic procreation from the initial flaring forth, to stardust, to self-conscious beings who have most recently joined the cosmic journey.

I confess I am a born and bred micro-cosm, as is everyone and everything else.

I confess I trust the cosmos, that has been working well to sustain all in being for umpteen billions of years.

I confess I am fulfilled in the cosmos as I realize my place in it, relate to it, and create with it.

I confess that I am one with the heart of the cosmos amidst the cosmic swirl that was, is, and is becoming.

Postscript

From the cosmic center
we don the style that heals
divisions in our profane relations.
This stance during Earthly crises
keeps our species from going extinct.
‘Tis the sacred way
to live in our sacred place.