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Discovering Us: The Ecology of God

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Often, nature screams to me that most of our problems result from us normally spending over 95% of our lives indoors. Imagine! Americans average less than one day per lifetime in tune with a natural area. We are closeted, emotionally deprived, language-addicted orphans of nature's perfection. Our overwhelming problems should not surprise us, rather, we should expect them (Cohen, 1993).

Even an untrained observer can recognize that the natural world is illiterate. It best knows and sustains itself through sensory communication, a basic universal property that our inner nature inherits and by which it thrives. Without nature's embrace nurturing this nonverbal attribute of ourselves we suffer the pain of estrangement from our global womb and the true nature of other people and species. Our estrangement from nature restricts us to knowing the natural world within and about us mostly through stories about it rather than through feelingful relationships with it. Our dependencies on our nature-detached experiences and the short sighted stories they produce lead us far astray from nature's perfection and validating our sensory experiences with it. Fortunately, revolutionary means now exist to heal our detachments and genuinely re-connect our awareness with other species and our natural selves (Cohen, 1993B).

Biologically and culturally, humanity evolved in the tropics. There, by consent of the wilderness community, non-linguaged natural sensory connections trained us to survive harmonically with the global life community. Today, from womb to tomb, we learn to deplore that process. Our culture's stories and logic train us to survive by conquering the natural world and its wisdom within and about us. That world is a seamless continuum. As our stories teach us to grind natural areas into indoor, artificial tropics; they teach us to grind our sensory inner nature into existing there. Educated and emotionally assaulted to live within our sterile, nature-alienated confines, we stressfully live out of balance.

The natural world and our inner nature are identical. Our stories say, "In God we trust," but our extreme separation from nature prevents us from contacting, understanding or trusting our God's wisdom power and love in the natural world within and without. Our estrangement from nature often blocks us from even recognizing God in natural areas, no less connecting with His/Her fullness there. Instead, our Bible's story encourages our ungodly crusade to subdue and take dominion over the natural world. But are God's words in the scriptures a true representation of the Godhead, or are they a yet another figment of our bewildered (wilderness-deficient) imagination? What light, if any, can God's words in the scriptures shed on this question? Can new insights from our God's

words help us let God heal us?

Certain passages in Genesis deserve a second thought in light of our present day knowledge of global ethics, morality and ecology. Reconsider the first five days of Creation in Genesis 1, 1-25:

...In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ...And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ...And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself. ...And God created great whales and every living creature that moveth, ...and every winged fowl...And God blessed them saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' ...And God made the beast of the earth..and every thing that creepeth upon the earth ...And God saw that it was good.

According to this Biblical account, these were the first five days of creation. But the scriptures say that on the sixth day, *before people are created*, God speaks with somebody or some things present on that day. That's unlike what he did the first five days, when He/She acted alone. God refers to *us* and *our* in Genesis 1:26 on that sixth day as follows: "...And God said 'Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness:' "

Who or what is this *us* to whom God speaks? Since people have not yet been created, God can't be speaking to humanity. If we truly trust God's words, then we know that all that exists on that sixth day is God and His/Her creation. For this reason, God can only be speaking to "*Earth and everything that creepth upon the earth,*" to the living natural kingdom and spirit God just created. When God speaks to *us*, God speaks to the natural world, to natural life as we know it. Researchers validate this conclusion. They have discovered that the Bible's "*us*" comes from ancient Pantheistic biblical scriptures that worship multiple nature gods.

In support of this biblical account, scientific reasoning offers some overwhelming evidence about *us*, the natural world, our personal biology, our natural and spiritual origins. The evidence asks us to consider the possibility that in Genesis 1:26 the story says that life, the land, you and I, are *Us*, united functions and parts of what we term "God." On this point, Biology, Paleontology, Geology, Physics, Anthropology and Philosophy as well as most cultures and religions converge. They agree upon the general sequence of events conveyed in Genesis. Each recognizes that the human species did not create, but rather arose during or after the natural world was already established. This diverse multitude of inquiry suggests that we are a product of, a likeness of *Us*; we the natural world and God are one, having "one Breath." (Ecclesiastes 3-19). Our God making man out of dust from the soil (Genesis 2:7) to create human being further confirms this.

The word *Human* has its roots in *humus*, a fertile forest soil. Just one teaspoon of soil consists of water, minerals and many other species: five million bacteria, twenty million fungi, one million protozoa and two hundred thousand algae. This coincides with our bodies containing water, minerals and ten times as many cells of non-human species as human cells. Over half our body weight consists of the weight of "foreign" microorganism species; over 115 different species live on our skin alone. In addition, the natural world, *Us*, flows through us. Every 5-7 years every molecule in our body is replaced, atom by atom, by new molecules attracted in from the environment. The natural environment becomes us, we become it. We and nature are *Us* because we are each other. Converging evidence suggests that the Genesis sequence and its statement ".....And God said 'Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness,'" spiritually and scientifically makes each of us a seamless continuum of the natural world. We and it are *Us*.

Apathy, dysfunction, disease, violence and immorality result from stress. Stress disrupts our natural spirituality, morality and ethics. Most stress is caused by us abusing and disconnecting from what I now call, and perhaps God calls, *Us*. *Us* is our own and every

other person's true inner nature sentiently, spiritually and physically bound into, supported and flowing with the whole of the natural world through natural attractions.

I and others gain a special wisdom from more fully knowing and embracing *Us*. It results in us living more harmoniously with *Us*, the living land, waters and life-spirit within and about us. By culturing an attractive connectedness with *Us*, we enjoy the spirit and peace of the whole (Holy) of nature found in ourselves, others and the landscape. We feel upset when we hurt any part of *Us*, for we feel that hurt. Because we recognize the validity of *Us*, we validate our hurt feeling and their message. In that way our inner pain guides us to live bio-harmonically, for it not only subsides as our trespasses subside, it is replaced by joy.

Because I and *Us* are physically and spiritually one, created and sustained by the sensory wisdom of *Us*, I don't experience natural areas and beings differently than I do myself. People(s) who similarly validate *Us* neither sustain, suffer from nor create many of the problems of those who live in separation or abuse of *Us* and its creatures. New nature connecting activities have shown to unleash this potential in those of us that commit to using them (Cohen, 1993A).

The Law of Us

"The beginning of wisdom is calling things by their right name," said Confucius. In living outdoors and using sensory nature-connecting activities for thirty years, I have discovered a Law of *Us*. The Law gives the right name to our *Us*-estranged lives. Apply it to places or people, and things change for the better. The Law incorporates and respects the wholeness of *Us* and every aspect of 14 billion years of evolving life process and spirit which we and Earth manifest.

Uniquely, the Law of *Us* holds true for all members of the plant, animal and mineral kingdom; sub-atomic particles, redwood forests, oceans, the atmosphere and people. It states, that at any given moment:

- - Everything desires to be.
- - Natural attractions interconnect everything.
- - Natural attraction relationships build stability.

Everything desires to be: Translation: everything is a being. According to modern physics, in the beginning of this universe, an annihilating struggle (the Big Bang?), took place between matter (material existence) and anti-matter. "The desire *to be* of a small amount of matter won its fight to be as matter. That small amount of matter is all the matter that makes up our material universe," noted Albert Einstein and biologist George Wald (Wald, 1985). A vast majority, if not all, of the universe is non-material attraction relationships... natural marriages, if you will. The material world as we know it, including people, expresses and is an ongoing desire to be itself, its process of being. One need only attempt to change any aspect of *Us* to discover the existence of stabilizing attraction forces that, in congress, intelligently, organize, preserve and regenerate *Us*.

Scientifically describing the physical world as an expression of a *desire to be*, makes the physical universe a drive, a sense, a verb, an immediate motivated action. Survival is not just accidental, random chance, mechanical or physical forces; rather, existence and growth at every level have a direction, meaning and purpose. The purpose is *to be* with more diversity and thereby more stability and security. This *desire to be* is our universe's underlying energy. It fuels *Us*.

Often when it comes to understanding such speculative matters we say, "Only God

knows." Interestingly, in 1700 BC, as nature-gods and idols became taboo, our civilization's original One-God was called YHWH (Yahweh) which means The One Who Is. Language experts say the sound YHWH identifies "The non-languaged one," "The one who has no name." YHWH is a form of the ancient Sanskrit verb *to be*. Yahweh not only was, or expressed the original desire *to be*, Yahweh is also the source of the exclamation "Yahoo!" God is the essence of life and the word *essence* means "to be more fully."

In support of Yahweh being the desire *to be*, the early bible says in Exodus 3-14 that Moses asked God /Yahweh to identify him or herself, and God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM...Tell the children of Israel "I AM" sent you to them." *. am* is the verb *To Be*. Suzuki Roshi says, "God is being itself, to let ourselves be is to enter into union with God." You see, it is not simply by chance that we call ourselves human *being*. And, as is demonstrated by the global life community seldom using language, natural being is mostly a non-language experience. The universe is and knows itself without using stories - words, concepts and explanations. *Us* manifests itself through natural attraction relationships, through sensory non-verbal communication and wisdom that we naturally inherit and feel but culturally demean and violate.

Natural attractions interconnect everything: Translation: every being is naturally attracted to continually form supportive relationships with its surroundings. In reality, all things are actually *beings*. Every being is a multiplicity of natural attraction relationships, an event that exists in the present moment. Each being sustains itself and/or grows through attractions, through "mutual consent marriages" into more complex and diverse beings in order *to be* with more stability (Young, 1985). This natural attraction process sustains mineral compounds as well as organic relationships. As matter establishes additional stabilizing attraction relationships, *Us* harmoniously becomes more secure, diverse, complex and attractive.

Since its birth some 14 billion years ago, the original universe has continually diversified. Its attractions have fused into amalgamations we call sub-atomic particles, atoms, molecules, atmosphere, oceans, trees, mountains, species, people, weather systems, etc. All things are beings consisting mostly, if not entirely, of atomic space filled with attraction energies. For example, physicists claim that if you squeezed the attraction energy forces out of a mountain range, you would reduce the entire range to the size of a neutron. Each "thing" consists largely of attractions and is sensitive to new attractions. Each thing grows, diversifies, vibrates and guides the universe. The flutter of a mosquito's wing in Africa could trigger a tornado in Kansas, killing a microbe may disturb a mountain.

Natural attraction relationships build stability: Translation: Every being, including any mineral, is always attracted directly, or by attraction chains, to every other being. The greater the number and diversity of supportive attraction relationships a being has, the more stable and secure is its being, and the greater is its ability to cope with stresses that might dissolve its being. Without having some form of attractive connections, beings can't consent to grow or relate to each other. *What we call natural repulsions, or negatives, are actually natural attractions to more stable, supportive Us relationships.* Our alienated stories about *Us* prevent us from recognizing this anti-entropy process.

Us is. The Law of *Us* identifies the origins and workings of *Us*. It says that *Us* is Yahweh's love and desire to be as *Us*. That is the true nature of each of us and everything else too.

A substantiation of the Law of *Us* is that on a macro level, the natural world thrives without producing garbage, war or insanity. This is no accident. Rather, it's because everything grows from attractions to everything else. Everything is naturally attractive including each of us. In the world of *Us*, nothing is rejected, unwanted, negative, unattractive or unnecessary, so there's no such thing as garbage, pollution or excessive

stress. Obviously *Us* is unconditional love in action. Another substantiation of the Law of *Us* is that when you make a value judgment story about *Us* and remove what appears to be a detrimental part of *Us*, - for example, a predator, - the total community in time deteriorates rather than improves. Again, this insinuates that everything is attractive, wanted and needed and that *Us* is unconditional love in action.

Obeying the Law of Us

Let us now apply the Law of *Us* to people. Every person is naturally that part of the universal desire to be, which, through natural attractions, has over the eons evolved and materialized itself as a person. We each naturally personify the desire to be. We are each naturally attractive because we consist totally of attraction forces. But our dependence upon surviving through disconnective stories that predict about and control *Us* creates mechanistic, Newtonian words, logic and reasoning. Through them we perceive the unconditional love process of *Us* as *chaos*. because unpredictably, *Us* adapts its totality to every newly formed attraction relationship and change. In contrast, our sentient inner nature, senses understands and celebrates the life-giving process of *Us* feelingly. Our inner nature reasons through desires for "Yahoos," through attractive sensory "psychologic," relationships in order to enjoy the good feelings, wisdom and power of unconditional love. However, most of our mechanistic indoor stories and reasoning prevent us from feelingly connecting to *Us*. The stress from this conflict generates our most urgent problems.

In summary, our desire *to be* is a trustable natural feeling or emotion we sometimes call *survival*. We each fulfill it by forming unique stabilizing, supportive relationships through our natural attractions to other beings, human and/or non-human. Every natural attraction helps support, stabilize and secure our being. That's why satisfying our natural attractions feels good to us. Good diverse natural feelings working in congress, are *Us* showing us our personal trail to harmonic survival. This attractive sensory relationship and growth process, on some level, is the same process used by every other species. We only interrupt the process when we create, believe or act off of stories that refute it and disconnect us from *Us*.

Updating Creation

For the many of us who, at least in part, experience the natural world spiritually, the Law of *Us* suggests an updated creation story. The story amalgamates spirit, science and psychology. Because it supports multi-sensory holism, it neither assaults, exploits nor engineers us or anything else. It says:

About 14 billion years ago, Yahweh, the attractive desire To Be, desired a universe. Because Yahweh the Creation Force desired it to be, it materialized. That's how and why it is. Being of, by and from an attractive God, an all-knowing Higher Power, our universe wisely, attractively, creates, expresses and stabilizes through natural attractions. Its very nature and attractiveness is both the Great Spirit's wisdom and His/Her unconditional love for this universe to be.

George Wald notes that Mind has always existed as a source and condition of physical reality. Every day, eclectic caring minds gather evidence which converges to confirm this creation story. For example, physicists now demonstrate that differing basic attraction forces are unified into a single force (Yahweh?) when placed in environments that simulate the conditions of 14 billion years ago, the date of this universe's origin. Researchers find that most of the material world actually consists of vibrating attraction energies which hold matter together. Some suggest that all the material matter that makes up this universe could be put into a space smaller than a house, that what we call materials are actually strong attraction marriages. The material world we so idolize,

including ourselves, consists of throbbing attractions *to be*.

To our cost, our culture's "conquer nature" survival stories seldom recognize or validate our natural attractions, the sensory substance of *Us*, our natural feelings. Whenever our stories, labels or "conquer nature" logic block us from feelingfull contact with *Us*, our troubles increase.

My 33 years living in natural areas throughout the seasons caution me to avoid the words that attempt to define God. Too often, those words are conflicting, disintegrating traps rather than unifying forces. If God is "The One who has no name" "I am" or "The felt desire to be," He/She can neither be known as a noun nor definition. We can, however, safely know God by validating *Us*, our attractions to nature that we feel but which defy description. "By His work the Master is known." That's why our greatest leaders spent much time in the wilderness and met God there, not downtown. That's why we should recognize Saint John of Yosemite, Saint Henry of Walden, Saint Aldo of the Wildland, Saint Edward of the Desert and many others. That's why it is immoral for us to ignore or violate our natural senses and feelings.

Connecting With Us

During my years in the natural world I have produced nature-connecting techniques that enable anyone to purposely re-connect *Us* in themselves to *Us* in the natural world. The results are phenomenal. In natural areas, backyard to back country, the activities create space for thoughtful, nature-connected moments. In these safe, non-language moments as many as 53 natural attraction senses vibrantly awaken, play and intensify. Additional resonating, trusting and celebrating activities immediately culturally validate, and strengthen each sentient *Us-Us* connection. This attractive process fills us with nature's beauty, wisdom and peace. We feel renewed, more colorful and thankful. As supportive natural attraction feelings reduce our stress, our destructive wants and their accompanying dysfunction and greed wane. They are replaced by attractive nature connected ideas, stories and understandings that imbue us. We revere natural sharing, community and a greater sensitivity to nature within ourselves, others and natural areas. We become more environmentally and socially responsible. We feel better.

Nature-separated, jaundiced eyes view suspiciously the use of free-of-charge nature-connecting activities. However, not surprisingly, the activities reduce the stress related disorders that plague over 75% of the public. As they transform our disconnected non-sense into the common sense of *Us*, they dissipate headaches, anxiety, low self esteem, divorce, suicide, violence and chemical dependencies. The activities enhance the fields of counseling, education and science teaching as well as spirituality, peace and environmental studies. Caring professionals in education, recovery programs and mental health use them to great advantage. Some Native Americans call the process "indigenous people's science."

Ingenuity

Only recently did I discover that my experiences with *Us* in natural areas substantiate Albert Einstein's observations. He sensed that we experience an optical delusion of consciousness that restrictively separates us from the whole, noting: "The foundation for inner security is...to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion, to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty." Significantly, Dr. Einstein never learned to talk until he was age three; that means that he spent several extra non-languaged years with *Us*. In addition, ongoing studies already suggest that strong contact with *Us* is a factor held in common by most geniuses. Today, sensory nature-connecting activities foster such contact and our integrity. They enable our culture to nurture the genius of *Us* that lies dormant in each of us. Therein lies hope.

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