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Symbiotic Panentheism: A Perceptual Shift for Humankind

Abstract

'being' *being* 'Being' - symbiotic panentheism establishes a metaphysical model that accepts, while at the same time dismantles, the paradoxes of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. In addition, it is a model that circumvents the state of permanent equilibrium we have assigned to 'Being', a state we often refer to as stagnation. The foundation of panentheism, defining the location of reality in terms of 'Being's' location, doesn't seem to be immensely significant, but the subtlety leads to the initiation of enormous perceptual and behavioral shifts for our specie, society, the environment, and the individual. Panentheism addresses the paradox of omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience through accepting the concepts of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience while at the same time acknowledging the full significance of these concepts by recognizing 'Being's' ability to become even more so. Under the symbiotic portion of symbiotic panentheism, the significance of the human specie - the significance of the individual - is placed at the level of 'Being' and given an importance to 'Being'; thus emerges the rationality for the respect due to the individual. Symbiotic panentheism places the soul, 'being', in a symbiotic relationship with 'Being'. Under the model of 'being' *being* 'Being', nothing, not even annihilation of our reality's physical mechanism, can diminish our purpose for existence. Nothing, not even total annihilation of our reality itself, can destroy our accomplishments as souls, for they transcend reality itself and embrace - fuse - with the very essence of God. Symbiotic panentheism displays its full impact by placing the responsibility for individual actions where it belongs - with the individual. Symbiotic panentheism also provides the logic needed to dismantle all hierarchical systems and perceptions of relative worth. 'being' *being* 'Being' eliminates the most fundamental hierarchical system created by humankind for humankind - the hierarchy system between God and humans. It eliminates status levels between beings. 'being' *being* 'Being' does not destroy what humanity has; it adds to what humanity has. 'being' *being* 'Being' accepts the significance of 'Being' to the individual and to the species. At the same time, it adds the significance of the individual and of the species to 'Being'. God is significant to humanity. Humanity has significance to God.

Synopsis

Simply put, "symbiotic panentheism" follows the basic, most widely accepted concepts of present day science, religion, and philosophy. The following is the general flow symbiotic panentheism takes when inte-grated with the most generally accepted concepts held by today's sciences, religions or philosophies. Some items are embraced as basic components by only one of the three fields, some by two, some by all. The bold face concepts are what symbiotic panentheism adds to the general logic flow to cause a perceptual shift for the future of our species, society, and the individual.

God and Panentheism

1. Reality exists
2. The initiating force - causative factor - of reality is "God."
3. God is omnipresent; as such, **all things are in God, including our known reality.**
4. God is bigger than reality.
5. God is omnipotent; **It has the power to create new, original knowledge.**
6. God is omniscient; **It knows how to create more knowledge. It cannot create new, creative, untainted knowledge within Itself.**
7. God is omnipresent; **It cannot create outside Itself.**

Symbiotic panentheism fully addresses the paradox of numbers five, six, and seven. Panentheism accepts the concepts of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience while at the same time acknowledging the full significance of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience by recognizing God's ability to become even more so.

The Soul and Symbiosis

1. Humankind exists.
2. Humankind exists in the universe, in "reality."
3. The essence of the individual is not the body nor the brain.
4. The essence of the individual is the soul.
5. **The soul, *being* within reality, which in turn is within God, is a part of God.**
6. **The** individual is not God.
7. **The individual is a part of God.**
8. Reality separates the individual from God and lies between the individual and God.
9. Humankind, souls, are creative and can experience.
10. Soul separated from direct contact with God can create and experience untainted by God's knowledge.
11. Souls can learn and grow.
12. God **can learn through the journey of souls.**

Under the "symbiotic" portion of symbiotic panentheism, the significance of the human species, the significance of the individual, is placed at the level of God and given an importance to God. Thus emerges the rationality for respect due to the individual. Symbiotic panentheism places the soul in a symbiotic relationship - a mutually beneficial, close association - with God.

Human Significance

1. Humanity's perceptions of itself as a species and as individuals determine its behavior.
2. The higher the level of significance we have of ourselves, the higher the level of our behavior.
3. Predestination relieves us of responsibility.
4. Free will raises our level of responsibility.
5. **The level of perception we can assign to ourselves is to be able to have the free will to assist God in the one thing God cannot do as God - grow.**
6. **The soul *being* God but separated from God (being non-omnipresent, non-omniscient, non-omnipotent) has the ability to learn, experience, and create isolated from God.**
7. **The highest level of significance we can assign to ourselves is to help God, ourselves, become even more omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.**

Human significance now becomes something it has never before been. Human significance now becomes defined. Not only does it become defined, it now becomes defined as significant for it becomes significant beyond human needs. Human significance now becomes significant to God Itself.

Social Ramifications

1. **The** essence of all individuals is the soul.
2. **The essence of all individuals is a part of God, a piece of God.**
3. **All** individuals are important to God and deserve to be treated as such.
4. **The soul, a piece of God, is important to and needed by God.**
5. The individual, a piece of God, deserves to be treated with the respect due to God.
6. **All** individuals are equally important.
7. **The individual, God, is not in a hierarchical relationship to itself.**

Symbiotic pantheism provides the logic needed to dismantle all hierarchical systems and perceptions of relative worth. Symbiotic pantheism eliminates the most fundamental hierarchical system created by humankind for humankind - the hierarchy system created between God and humans. It eliminates the status levels between beings. Symbiotic pantheism does not destroy what humanity has; it adds to what humanity has. Symbiotic pantheism accepts the significance of God to the individual and to the species. It also adds the significance of the individual and of the species to this one way concept of God.

Through the fusion of pantheism and symbiosis, we form symbiotic pantheism, a philosophical, perceptual shift for the new millennium that actually defines a purpose for humanity, for the individual, for the environment, and for our relationship to God. Under symbiotic pantheism, it is our job to see that God grows. We have the free will to determine the direction God grows. This is truly an awesome responsibility, an awesome task for humankind and for the individual.

However, just as children rise to the level of expectations we place upon them, humanity will rise to the level of expectations it places upon itself. There is little doubt that society, families, and individuals could use more human, humane, godly compassion in their journeys. To begin to understand this logic, one must examine the four forms of theism and their treatment of the three most universally accepted characteristics of God: omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence.

Omniscience

Atheism assigns the least knowledgeable form to God. According to atheism, God does not exist and God as an entity has no knowledge. Pantheism enlarges God's knowledge base over atheism. Under pantheism, God and reality are one and the same size. God has size and God has knowledge. However, the knowledge has limits. God is limited to the knowledge found within the universe, whatever that size may be. Classical or traditional theism enlarges God's knowledge base over pantheism. Classical and traditional theism, however, hold that God knows everything that has been known, is known or could be known. This places limits on God. Since God knows everything, it closes the door on the possibility of knowing what could be, but isn't, for all things.

Pantheism is in sync with classical or traditional theism in terms of what God knows. But whereas classical and traditional theism puts an end to the concept of omniscience and leaves God in a state of permanent equilibrium, pantheism goes on to expand God's possible knowledge base through accepting the scientific principle that permanent equilibrium is an unnatural state - even for God. Pantheism applies the concept of the growth of knowledge to God. Of the four theisms, only pantheism assigns the complete characteristic of omniscience to God, for it is the only theism to assign the knowledge of how God gains more knowledge to grow.

Omnipotence

Atheism basically purports the concept that there is no God. Since God has no size, It has no power. God is powerless. Pantheism magnifies God's power over the perception of atheism. Within pantheism, God and reality are one. God has all the power of our universe and no more, for that is all there is. With the concept that God is greater in size than reality, it follows that God's power is greater than in the case of pantheism.

Classical or traditional theism again increases God's power by stating that God is all-powerful; however, it limits God's power to that of Its total power. Under classical and traditional theism, God is all-powerful but is limited, for It is not powerful enough to become more so.

Pantheism magnifies God's power above all theistic perceptions through incorporating the concept that if God is truly all powerful, then God has the power to use Its knowledge to become even more so. This is not a factor tied to a location in time, for time most probably is a factor of universes and realities - not God. Time is

the factor allowing the existence of the beginning-end concepts built into universes. On the other hand, God, by definition, has no characteristic concept of beginning-end. Of the four theisms, only pantheism assigns the complete characteristic of omnipotence to God, for it assigns the ability and power of God to gain more knowledge.

Omnipresence

Again, atheism basically purports the concepts that there is no God, God is omnipresent, God is infinitely small, and its nothingness can be found everywhere. God's absence is everywhere. This is clearly the smallest form of God. Pantheism enlarges God over atheism by believing there is one God and that God and reality are one and the same size. God has size and is limited to the size of reality, whatever that size may turn out to be. Classical or traditional theism enlarges God over pantheism by stating that there is one God and God is greater in size than reality. Classical and traditional theism imply, however, that God and reality are separate items from each other. God transcends reality. God is everything except reality.

Pantheism enlarges God over classical or traditional theism. Pantheism purports that God is omnipresent. God incorporates everything; therefore, God is everything and thus, there is no place for reality to be other than within God Itself. Of the four theisms, only pantheism assigns the complete characteristic of omnipresence to God, for it assigns not only an omnipresence incorporating all of our universe, our reality, but all realities that may exist and what lies beyond and between them.

Even more significantly, only symbiotic pantheism proceeds to allow for the expansion of the very characteristics of omnipotence and omniscience of God that, in turn, through increased awareness, expands omnipresence itself by definition.

Omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience are three characteristics humanity, in general, wants or appears to want to affix to God. Of the four theisms, only pantheism manages to do so in total. Pantheism is the foundation for symbiotic pantheism, for without the "pantheism" the "symbiosis" becomes illogical. Symbiotic pantheism establishes a metaphysical model that accepts, while at the same time dismantles, the paradoxes of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. In addition, it is a model that circumvents the state of permanent equilibrium we have assigned to God, a state we often refer to as stagnation.

Pantheism, defined as the location of reality in terms of God's location, is seemingly insignificant, but the subtlety leads to the initiation of enormous perceptual and behavioral shifts for our species, society, the environment, and the individual. Understanding the differences between the four basic perceptions of a causative force (atheism, pantheism, classical or traditional theism, and pantheism) allows us to move forward and begin the examination of symbiotic pantheism in particular.

God

Whatever one professes, humans have always oriented their philosophical discussions around God or god. Whatever one's belief, the fact remains that humans have, to our knowledge, always conceptualized God or a form of God in some sense and, therefore, perhaps this small seed, this nugget of the universality of humans, is true. Is God the originator of reality? The original force? The source of the beginning? Whatever one's belief, there are only two premises with which to identify: either there is a God, an originator, an original force, a source of a beginning, or there is not. In all of our observations within reality, there is only one observation at this point in time that we cannot directly tie to having a beginning, an origination, and that is reality.

There are two options to consider. The first option is the premise that if all things, except reality, appear to have an identifiable beginning, then reality must also have an identifiable beginning and thus, an originator, Creator, God. Another way of saying this is that all things in reality appear to be affected by time and thus, it is most probable that reality itself is affected by time or, in essence, most probably has a beginning and an end.

The other option is to reject the logic of option one and embrace option two. The second option is the premise that reality itself is different from everything within it and has no origination; in other words, it has no beginning. Thus, one would accept the concept that God, an originator, is illogical. This thought process would allow one to reject the inference to which all of our observations point. It would allow one to conclude and embrace the direct opposite inference that there is no God or originator of reality. Reality has always existed.

The premise that reality had a beginning, that there is a creative originating force, that there is a God to reality is supported by an almost infinite amount of direct observations and logic. The premise that reality had no beginning, that there is no creative originating force, that there is no God, is supported by nothing we have observed before - no observations and no logic. Is the concept of reality having no beginning possible? Certainly anything we conjure up in our minds is "possible" but not probable.

Assuming we accept the premise of the existence of an originator of reality, an original force, a source of the beginning, we can then move on to examine the concept of reality, where reality fits into consciousness, and where humanity, as well as other forms of consciously aware beings, fit into all of this. In other words, where you and where I fit into the grand scheme of "it all." The picture we have of God is still out of focus. As time passes and our knowledge expands, we will gain greater resolution regarding our observations. In the meantime, keep in mind that the Creator of reality is the Creator of reality and will remain so regardless of what we do or wish to believe.

We cannot create a creator. We cannot insist that a creator is whom we have, through time and custom, drawn it to be, but rather, we must understand that whom we have drawn the Creator to be, through time and custom, was what we needed it to be in order to define our niche in reality. The Creator is what the Creator is to

ourselves because we needed It to be such in order to find comfort in our lack of knowledge and to assuage our fears of what we perceive to be mortality.

Religion and science orient around one universe. Science and religion still have not fully accepted the concept of other life forms and have not done so because they do not know how to fuse them into their doctrines of classical or traditional theism. Symbiotic panentheism can help them with that very problem without destroying their essence, identity or uniqueness. It is only under classical or traditional theism that we could assign a greater significance to ourselves, to our home, and to our planet over other entities and their homes or planets.

With increased knowledge (omniscience) comes increased power (omnipotence) and as knowledge grows, so grows awareness (omnipresence). Growth, equilibrium, decline - three choices we can comprehend for the state of God. Scientifically speaking, permanent equilibrium appears to be an unnatural state of being. Religiously speaking, an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God appears to be a contradiction unless it is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent enough to become even more so. Therefore, permanent equilibrium is not an option. Being tied to a God that exists in a state of decline is not a preferable or advantageous choice to bestow upon our Creator. The only state of being we can comprehend for God is that of a growing God.

Thus develops the symbiotic relationship aspect - a mutually beneficial relationship between us and our Creator. We hope it is mutually beneficial, for it could just as well be a mutually destructive relationship depending upon the actions we take under free will. This is precisely where our responsibility lies. We, along with others, have the responsibility to develop the type of God that exists.

In a symbiotic relationship, beneficial or detrimental contributions are two possibilities that could exist between two identities. Understanding our significance in reality and to its Creator would definitely help us understand what actions we, humans with freewill, should take while functioning within reality. Our actions affect not only God but, in essence, ourselves. Under the model of symbiotic panentheism, nothing, not even the annihilation of our reality's physical mechanism, can diminish our purpose for existence. Nothing, not even total annihilation of our reality itself, can destroy our accomplishments as souls, for they transcend reality and embrace - fuse - with the very essence of God.

Three Ultimate Paradoxes

1. Being omnipotent - all-powerful - but not having the power to become more so
2. Being omnipresent - everywhere - but limited within the confines that already exist
3. Being omniscient - knowing everything - but not knowing how to learn more

The Creator of reality did not create these paradoxes. We, humanity, defined these paradoxes ourselves.

We, humanity, give them a life of their own. And then, we, humanity, perpetuate our irrationality into absolutisms. Eliminating the paradoxes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience does not alter or call for the elimination of our rich history of traditions or beliefs. Eliminating these three paradoxes expands our view of our place in the universe, our purpose in the scheme of things, and our tolerance for uniqueness. Expansion of our present concepts of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience into a concept that can become even more so does not bring down the foundations of our society; rather, it provides a foundation to our foundation. Omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are paradoxes only because we have made them so and continue to perpetuate these concepts.

Panentheism, the picture grows:

A-theism: Our universe, reality, is alone.

Pan-theism: Our universe, reality, is not alone; something else exists within it.

Pan-en-theism: Our universe, reality, is part of a greater Reality.

Are classical and traditional theisms complete theisms? No, they are just theisms waiting for a prefix.

"Symbiotic" is the portion that provides the significance. It provides the other half to, "God is significant to humanity." The other half is, "Intelligences within realities, humanity, the individual, is significant to God."

We have the free will to recognize our power - our significance - and dismantle the hierarchical and, therefore, oppressive systems we have created. We are all a part of God and continually contribute to God's knowledge and awareness. We create what we choose to create. Indeed, we all have an awesome responsibility.

