The Galactic Ecumenical Council

*A talk presented by an inter-space Ambassador to a select audience dedicated to furthering religious understanding, 1998*

Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring you a report from the first galactic Ecumenical conference, which was organized by the Council of Galactic Elders on the planet Escielle, a planet chosen for this event because of its proximity to the centre of the galaxy.

Present there were representatives of all the worlds of the galaxy whose religious Life had grown to the point where they could acknowledge one Lord for all, the King with No Name (May He be praised in all the worlds).

The chamber where the diverse company assembled was vast, tall enough to accommodate the Freens who reached thirteen feet in height, a man and woman so thin their fingers were like drinking-straws, but so hard that never had Freen broken a limb even in a greater gravity to which they were unaccustomed. By some quirk of chance or organizational humour, next to them were seated the Dorante representatives, broad and only three feet high, with an enormous nose dominating their faces, counterbalanced by extended development on the back of the head which drooped over their shoulders. These people were dark with the hue of ripe plums, and acutely sensitive to the currents of atmosphere which wafted through the room. Beside them the Freens looked like walking spider-webs, and the humour of this juxtaposition had not escaped the tiny dancing eyes of the people whom a heavy gravity had flattened into anthropoid plum puddings.

Of special interest to you will be the presence at this conference of the so-called Nine Thousandth Adam and his counterpart Eve, whose report on the Adamite religion of Earth I will relate in this account.

The proceedings began when the Galactic Elders rose. One stepped forward and lifted his hands to encircle the room. Silence entered the space, and the Temple at the centre of the Galaxy was established

"We will begin by evoking the Lord."

Immediately He was present, His vast wings filled the chamber, and all the dragons outside who had transported the representatives across Space, and in some cases Time, folded their wings in a gesture of obeisance

A tremendous awe touched the hearts of all beings present, and a sense of  1ove, for each one knew Him as the father of their race, and His gaze was  tender, almost humorous, though His form so great and strange.

Then He was gone, and the envoys of three hundred worlds were quiet, startled by the immediacy and power of this meeting with One whom some of them had but very recently come to perceive and acknowledge.

  And so the Elder continued;

"The purpose of this first Galactic Ecumenical Conference is twofold, firstly  communication, and secondly to establish a basis for developing the theology  and practice of a religion which would al1ow all conscious beings within the  Galaxy to worship in a common frame of reference.

 Our business here is religion, and we are particularly concerned with its social dimension, and with imagery and statements about the Divine which act as pointers to that which is eternally beyond them. Whatever statements or symbols we may agree upon will serve to encourage a new perspective. In time, on the galactic foundation we create, further new perspectives may be needed, fresh expressions of the religious impulse in the life of the galaxy. This pattern may be familiar to you from your individual worlds.

 To begin, would each representative please present a summary of the history of religion on his and her planet.”

This task took some time, as you can imagine. Roughly three-quarters of the way through the presentations, Adam rose and addressed the multitude thus :

 "On Earth we too have tried many different forms and grown many different branches on our central tree.

We explored duality and perceived our cosmos as a war between good and evil, a battle in which the Light would always triumph over the Dark.

We rejoiced in multiplicity and saw creation fi1led with gods, but all resting in oneness which was the reality behind the illusion.

We focused on change, and saw the impermanence of all created forms, even of the self.

We made our god a judge and law-giver, and set ourselves to argue with him, challenging his decrees even as we accepted them and felt secure under his mantle.

We took comfort from his mercy, enshrining his forgiveness of our sins as a way of striving and making ever fresh beginnings.

We set a godly rule over every detail of our lives, trying to unify every aspect under one will, to which every individual equally should submit.

“Eventually, continued Adam, “we learned to see all these religions as branches of a common tree:  the religion of Man on earth, the religion of Adam. We turned back to the original tradition from which all these explorations had arisen, and found it big enough for a space age, deep enough to guide us through all the conflicts and dilemmas into which our technology was precipitating us, and broad enough to give us a foundation in a bigger religious universe.

 “The emphasis in this tradition was on the individual’s responsibility to pursue wisdom. It was an individual quest which required effort, and the discarding of all comfortable images: the Idols we love to erect between ourselves and the Great one (May He be honoured through all the worlds). Wisdom has no hierarchy, requires no intercessor, and demands the fullness of living. The service of wisdom is not a specialized life-sty1e. It is a common life: the interaction of Homo sapiens with whatever environment his faculties create.

 “At this stage temples sprang up all over Earth involving doctrines, but which offered space for individuals to discover manhood and womanhood, and the Divine within.

“And so Homo sapiens encountered through wisdom the God of Humanity, and at the same time realized that this God was an aspect of a greater Lord, as humanity itself is part of a greater community.

Hence, brothers and sisters of the Galaxy, I am here.”

 A rustle and sigh greeted this testimony, as it did at the conclusion of each speech. It resembled the out-breath of a single being, delighted to have uncovered yet another part of itself.

Although many did, not all planetary races revealed such variety in their religious growth. Some races had specialized in the faculties with which they came to consciousness of their natures, possibly in response to the planetary conditions which dictated their physical forms. Their religious history reflected this in certain uniformity, even over thousands of years.  However, the creative and non-specialized nature of consciousness decreed that, once full consciousness of the race and the creative principle within it was achieved, consciousness of other expressions of the creative in other races came with it. Whereupon it became possible to attend this conference.

When every representative had spoken, the first part was over, and a ritual banquet was held to facilitate personal communication between delegates. And Ritual it was. Each person found him or herself eating food which was a little strange, as befits an extraordinary occasion, but basically familiar and pleasant. Only the more mischievous spirits, like the Greckos, entertained themselves by studying their neighbours' cuisine, which was invariably shocking, shocking, that is, to Grecko sensibilities!

 When the working session recommenced in the great chamber, another of the galactic elders opened proceedings:

  "On your various earths, you have reached the point of unifying, to some degree, expression of the religious impulse. This is based on awareness in the general psyche of your people of your planetary identity and of your planetary “God”. Along with this has awoken the need to reach out to that which is greater, your place within a larger identity, and the religious awareness which will give meaning to it.

 Now, you who are able to attend this gathering by the means possible to you, must return to your world and work to develop the awareness of your fellow  beings by more concrete methods.

You will need to set up practices to invoke the presence of the One whose dwelling place is that Centre round which all the worlds of this galaxy turn. You will need to develop a morality and code of conduct based upon it, especially relating to inter-stellar travel and the powers His technology is  granting you, the powers to choose and manipulate your environment consciously.

 Of course, what forms all these take will reflect the natures of your various peoples and the conditions of the environment. Each earth will develop methods appropriate to it.  But, you should establish now a symbolism which can be common to all of you; a symbolism which will provide a point of reference for all galactic beings, and which will set the aspiration for each culture. It will also provide a common ground on which diverse beings can meet and understand each other. Such symbolism could be seen as the basic furniture of our temple.

I suggest you take a little time to consider this, and to observe your fellows from this perspective.”

 Silence fell, and deepened, as the delegates tried to extract some ordering principles from the diversity they saw around them, and also to perceive the essence of each being. The latter was difficult at first, but became easier with practice.

The Adamites later gave their account of the way they approached this task. The first perception was of something the same in every individual present.

"We were all self-aware beings. The ability to know ourselves and acknowledge the self of others was a power we all shared. However, each of those selves was different and particular.   Following the thread of difference, we arrived at something very strange and alien in each. It was their fundamental make-up, the level at which their instincts were programmed to maintain and reproduce their species.

“Next we observed that all had an array of sensors or sensory organs, that is, ways of interacting with their environment and with others. The range of sensing varied, and so did the senses which were most prominent, as they had evolved to meet different planetary conditions. However, all were greater or lesser developments of the same basic set, the tools of the non-specialist, self-reflective consciousness of Homo Galacticus.

“We could only speculate as to whether the consciousness of Galactic Human as expressed through other galaxies than our own would be of like nature,  reflecting perhaps the basic organization of conscious beings in this Universe.

“The planetary conditioning which had influenced the evolutionary course of a race had also produced a tremendous diversity of custom, social organization and personality. As our attention rested on the sheer variety before us, our powers of analysis were very nearly overcome by the hubbub of creative expression in shape, size, colour, features, dress, gesture and temperament.  ‘My God,’ muttered Eve, pushing back her long curly hair with a manicured hand, ‘How to make sense of this lot?’

“Adam rose to the challenge. ‘Like us,’ he said,’ each individual here has the ability to put order upon the chaos by abstracting general principles. What is more, we can each stand back from ourselves and look upon our own self-ness, that which is "I". This is the link between us, and we are back where we started our observation: realizing that we share a common consciousness.’

“Now, as to the potential of this consciousness, its growth, extent or ultimate nature, well, when we considered this, we began to remember why we were all here. Our awareness of similarity grew as we realized that our galactic brothers and sisters were moved by emotion just as we were, and probably knew the same intensity of grief and joy. Certainly, the emotion which had swept through the gathering in the presence of the Lord seemed common to us all.

“We were able to communicate in some strange fashion which defied the kaleidoscope of sensory repressions and sonar signals which characterized the extraordinary gathering.   We knew that each being was unique in him and herself, and each a true expression of the race from which he sprang.

“As Homo Sapiens, we contemplated the essence of each race and found it beautiful, beautiful because each was the product of a gleam in the eye of the Great One. And He seemed to smile as we discovered this, a chuckle which began in the bowels of eternity and spread into the assembled faces.

“We came to ourselves, as from a dream, and looked with affection upon the now familiar crowd. It rustled and scratched with a new energy, eager to tackle the task of arriving at some symbols to cement our communal fee1ing. The round faces of the almost spherical Humpeticus Dumptoids beamed on the multitude. The cavernous, cracked landscape which served as a countenance for the delegates from the most barren planet in the galaxy, seemed a little less parched;  somewhere in them a dew had fallen."

"Address the following question," one of the elders was speaking, "Let us suppose you build temples on each of your worlds, dedicated to a galactic-wide religion. What will you put in them?"

As reporter of these proceedings I must summarize the next stage quite considerably. It took some time to sort through the possibilities, refining them to a few single concepts which would be meaningful to all races.

All had a notion of Temple, the physical representation of that space where communion with, worship or knowledge of God takes place. It was agreed that no physical image of the Divine was appropriate. An important duty of the messengers on their return home would be to stress that the Divine itself is beyond form or representation. The galactic God they would promote was but an aspect within the totality, a focus for aspiration which ultimately must be transcended.

An image had certainly formed within the minds of those present, but none wished to speak of it. "He has no proper name," they said,” and His manifestation will be solely for those who encounter it. We shall speak only of His dwelling- place at the centre of the galaxy, at the creative point which is without and within, and of the Gates which are before His throne."

 ‘Gates’ found favour with all, because every culture had some way of demarcating one space from another, and of allowing or baring passage through. From a gate you could look in or out, reflecting a primary duality which was fundamental to the perception of all the conscious beings in our galaxy.

The role of duality was further expressed in the decision to furnish each temple only with tiny nuclear-fusion units. Every race had achieved the technology necessary to command and miniaturize this power, the finest physical symbol of Divine Creativity so far replicated. Each unit reproduced on a small-scale the planet's sun, the source of its life and energy,

However, the placement of one such tiny star would act as a focus, and draw aspiration only to the level of the solar system. Two would immediately polarize with each other. So it was decided to have three, which would establish the polarity as between the stars themselves and the space in which they were set. The bright and the dark, matter and space, these were meaningful to every being.  Threeness also turned out to be a principle which all recognized, and had enshrined in various ways in their previous cosmologies.

 The question of rites and rituals was dealt with quickly. If conditions which evoked the true galactic Presence were correctly established, rituals or ceremonies consonant with it and appropriate also to the particular nature of the inhabitants would be devised. Some shared ones, which were so simple they could be used meaningfully by all, would be worked out at a later date.

The discussion on morality, also a subject which would need to occupy individual religious leaders at great length, resolved itself here into one simple tenet:  Respect all other sentient beings. This was vital to space-faring peoples, and would cover most situations on their home planets as well. The implications of genuine respect were so far-reaching that they demanded detailed commentary, each delegate was recommended to work towards producing a treatise as guidance manual upon returning to his Home, and to use it as a basis for teaching the laws of conscious growth.

The conference was drawing to a close. A degree of weariness etched itself onto the multitudinous faces. Strange how each visage, smooth or craggy, with filaments or without, revealed the onset of the same condition. A droop here, a fading radiance there, and erstwhile vigour settled into an atmosphere as mellow as the golden light from the binary suns which were setting in orderly sequence over the planet’s rim.

"Summon the Servants of the King!"

The dragon-ships stirred, they who travel the Ways, who inhabit the space between the stars and do the bidding of His messengers,

They rose within each being, and sped them down the ways, until every corner of the Galaxy received its own.

And the Elders turned out the lights.

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