

SEARCHING FOR WHAT?

Our lives find their meaning in our searching for something unknown to us, but which we know we shall recognize when at last it is found.

Is it meaningful to search without knowing for what one is searching? Traditionally there are four kinds of searches. One to retrieve a definite item, usually something that has been lost or mis-filed. Second, to retrieve an item only generically or incompletely defined. Third, to try to find something that has been but briefly glimpsed, believed to exist but almost totally unknown. And lastly the search for that which may not exist, but which may be created by the search itself.

Search for the definite refers to something not immediately present but whose description is stored in personal or cultural memory. The second and third searches are a mix of a part that may be in memory and a whole that substitutes image for memory. The fourth has no component in memory but is nonetheless recognized when it is found. What is the Holy Grail? A definite chalice or a symbol that may take many forms? What is enlightenment? What is happiness? What is salvation? Are these definite and definable or something only glimpsed to which we might wish to return? And how do you know it if you find it? Would you recognize it? While in most cases the only clue for the object of our search is a brief glimpse, we seem to know that we possess something called recognition that both affirms our search and confirms what is found. Recognition goes beyond hunch or intuition and is independent of what is stored in memory. Recognition is a trans-rational guide that enables us to both discover and to find meaning in what we discover.

While most of us are searching for the definite: -- security, wealth, position, power, pleasure, success; the few are searching for the indefinite: -- understanding, meaning, oneness, enlightenment. And in between the definite and indefinite there are those searching for: justice, peace, love, and happiness. But in addition to these three groups, there are a very few who are search for something beyond all of this yet including all of this. These "meta-searchers" are searching for a different vantage point, for a new and different way of viewing the world. And they quickly learn that to do this they must free themselves from their present vantage point, THE vantage point that has been used by all for millennia. They must go from THE, assuming it to be but one special case. A view of but one facet of reality, to ALL, searching for as many alternative vantage points as

possible. They must launch out into unknown space and dimensions, and levels of crafting new vehicles of perception and conception, gaining access to thoughts never before encountered by humankind.

But we are all meta-searchers. We are grasped by something that pulls us toward itself. We avoid it, we ignore it, but ultimately, we turn to it. This is not only in our individual lives, but is so collectively, culturally. And is not life itself engaged in a meta-search through the process we call evolution. It is a search of type four, searching by creating. And we might surmise that even Brahma as creator of the world is also conducting a meta-search.

Paul Tillich felt that religion derived from “a state of being grasped by an ultimate concern.” Certainly, human meaning is centered around concerns. What are our concerns? There are many. Justice, Peace, Understanding, Freedom, Wholeness... But something tells us that none of these are the ultimate concern which is ever pulling us. Hence the search. The search is forever open yet must be supported by specific concerns to which we subscribe along the way. It is finding or building a step on which to stand in order to find or build the next step. This metasearch is an antiphonal dialectic like doing and being, exploring and creating, injunction and liberation, and symbolically like bread and wine.

But is this search at all possible? Does our biological hardware permit this? Is our ingrained software sufficiently alterable? Is it all only an illusion whose use is just another episode of Star Trek? We here must ask, why do we humans again and again seek to challenge the gods? Do we wish to join Prometheus chained to the rock without livers devoured by vultures? What is it in us that tells us we are more than we have ever become, that drives us to find this unrealized essence that we carry? If we end alone side Prometheus, so be it, but we long ago made a commitment to such a search and there is no turning back. We have dallied with digressions for too long. It is the time to boldly face our destiny. We are Searchers. We are the part of the cosmos that the cosmos has set aside to explore, to know, and to recreate itself.