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“A Cosmology of Christmas”

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Let me explain to you what a hologram is. A hologram is a picture, a picture taken on a special kind of film and when that holographic film is projected it creates a three-dimensional picture. Let's imagine a picture of something appropriate for San Diego at this time of year, a picture of Frosty the Snowman. So, you have a holographic image of Frosty the Snowman, three-dimensional. That's pretty amazing in and of itself, but if you take that holographic plate and you shatter it, and you take a little tiny piece of that holographic plate and you project that, you won't just get frosty the snowman's head or his corn cob pipe, you will get the whole snowman in three dimensions. That is amazing to me. Every tiny piece of that holographic plate contains the whole image. It doesn't matter which of the pieces you pick up and project. The whole three-dimensional snowman is projected. It simply is not as distinct, it's a little simpler, but the whole snowman is there.

According to the British physicist, David Bohm, we live in a holographic universe. What does that mean? Bohm says that there are two orders of reality according to physics. One is the explicate order, that's the order we are in right now. As you look around you see people, piano, greenery, pulpit, pews—distinct, separate things. The explicate order. But Bohm says there is also such a thing as the implicate order. That is hard to explain in English. You have to remember that the language of physics, I understand, is math and it's difficult to translate that math into English. Here is his attempt: “The implicate order is the order that contains everything, everything that now exists and everything that could exist to an infinite degree. It is the seed of all that is.” As the Buddhists say, “the void pregnant with form.” Everything that is, was, will be, or possibly could be exists is the implicate order. That's pretty wild. But consider this, the implicate order in its entirety exists in every tiniest particle of the explicate universe. In other words, the totality of existence and potential existence is in every single grain of sand, is in every single human face, is in every single subatomic particle. All of it is everywhere, everything that is, everything that could be, everything that will be. There isn't any way to express it, the wonder of that and yet we feel it; in those moments when we have let go of the burden of our existence as tiny separate creatures and have become one with the awe-inspiring creation that we're part of. We somehow sense this. Human beings have always been groping for ways to express it. I think that another word for the implicate order that is easier to spell, that people have used for years is “God.” God is contained completely in every single particle of the universe. If you look at the ancient scriptures of humanity and if you can let go of any sense that this might be a literal interpretation and see it for a groping of mystical insight into the wonder and infinitude (infinitude is too small a word for this) infinitude of creation, you can see that the ancient mystics and modern science are groping to express the same reality.

So what does that all have to do with Christmas? Well, there's a scripture. Some say that it's the most un-Unitarian scripture in the Bible because it is the one that has been

used most frequently to point to as a justification for the doctrine of the trinity, which we don't believe in. But I think it's actually a description of the oneness of all. It's been part of the Christmas liturgy since the beginning. It's the first part of the chapter of John's gospel. Jim read those to you and in it the deep insight of these mystics long ago and the very cutting edge of modern physics seem to me to be saying the same thing. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was with God from the beginning. Through the Word all things came to be. Not one thing had its beginning but through the Word." This is the time of year when Christians all over the earth celebrate the birth of Christ. In communion services this evening people will be taking in the body of Christ, participating in the body of Christ. The whole universe is the body of Christ. In each tiny acorn or DNA molecule is the body of Christ. It goes on in John's gospel: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth and we have beheld his glory." God is being born in every instance. The whole universe is the body of Christ. Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans that "the whole of creation has been groaning together in one great act of giving birth." In every moment the universe is giving birth to all of us and everything. Creation isn't something that happened once long ago, it is happening right now again and again.

Then there's the story of one homeless young woman who gave birth to a son, because there was nowhere else to do it, among the straw and animal droppings of a stable in the dead of winter. The child that it was said would come to save the world was born under these circumstances and the first to recognize this were the poorest of the poor, the shepherds. When they did, they heard the music of the universe described as a chorus of angels. How else, the music of the spheres, the wonder of each moment? They left their entire livelihoods behind, their sheep, that was all they had, to see the miracle of this baby. And then there were some wise men who saw a star and because they were wise they left everything behind and they followed the star to see this baby. God spoke through him, this unpromising child, in his life and in his death.

I think that we must heed his message of love and forgiveness if we are to be saved. I'm not speaking here in any kind of sectarian sense at all. I think it is very wrong to say that if you don't believe some dogmas about Jesus, you will be lost. But I think it is right to say that we could all be lost, if we don't learn to forgive each other across our sectarian lines, and our cultural lines, and our national boundaries, and our tiny little egos. We will all be lost if we don't learn to feed the hungry, release the prisoner, or clothe the naked as Jesus taught. This world will blow up in a ball of fire if we don't learn to welcome the stranger as us, the way that Jesus taught, to love our neighbor as ourselves, to see that the kingdom of God, the highest thing we can imagine and beyond, that we can only sense in the most unguarded and honest moments of our lives, the kingdom of God is in our own souls and in the eyes of our neighbor. Not failing to subscribe to some beliefs about Jesus, is what will get us lost, but not heeding the essential teachings of Jesus and all the other great teachers of human life will get us lost. This was a dark time in the Judea of two thousand years ago for those people. There was a lot of violence and hopelessness, but the hope in that child and the hope in his life, and the hope in his teachings have set the world on fire with the light of truth.

As in every instance, the world was made flesh and dwelt among us full of light and truth and that act of creation continues and Jesus is born again and again and again. Somewhere, right now, one of the children, a girl, a boy, is being born that will help us save ourselves. When we following these universal teachings of Jesus and of humanity's other great masters, then we too participate in this act of creation, in this act of salvation, and we become what we are meant to be and we bring to birth from within us the divine being.

Merry Christmas.