

Cosmic Consciousness

by Max B. Skousen

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A Blessing Hitherto Unknown, Book II, Finding the Mark)

THE DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

[**Author's introductory note:** Joseph Smith declared that we would learn more *by gazing into heaven five minutes* than we could be reading and comprehending all the books that have ever been written since the days of Adam on the subject of who we are and our relationship with God. The excerpt follows:]

TO GAZE INTO HEAVEN – IS TO KNOW YOURSELF

What is this gift of *the pure love of God* that is shed abroad into the hearts of the children of men? How is it different from such things as glorious visions and the ministering of angels, all of which are still a part of the preparatory gospel? It is simply that to be shown ABOUT Heaven supports our separateness from Heaven, but "gazing into heaven" is to *experience BEING heaven*. That is the difference!

In such an awakening, we directly experience who we really are as infinite spiritual individualizations (children) of an infinite and eternal God. It is to have the veil of the fall removed. This is, simply, the fullness of the gospel. As President Hunter reminded the Church and as we discussed in Chapter XII in *Book I*, **"The gospel...is not the peculiar property of ANY ONE PEOPLE or any one age... It embraces all truth. It circumscribes all wisdom."** (*Ensign*, November 1991, p.19)

Such experiences of enlightenment have been given many names. One that I particularly like is the term, *cosmic consciousness*, because it is both very descriptive and cuts across all cultures.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

We Latter-day Saints may not like the word "cosmic" because it sounds less spiritual and more scientific, at best, and New Age, at the worst. But the word cosmic merely means "pertaining to the universe, as distinct from the earth." But in the sense of relating to *consciousness*, the dictionary says that it means "*infinitely or inconceivably extended*." How do you like that for an appropriate definition for truly "gazing into heaven?" In such a cosmic conscious experience, you would not be in the process of *trying to understand* Heaven, you would literally *become aware that you are heaven*.

Remember, that is the purpose of eating the fruit from the tree of life and drinking the water from the fountain of living waters. We are to become what we eat and what we drink. That is why the pure love of Christ *passeth knowledge*. *When one has discovered the pure love of Christ*, one has discovered *the fullness of God*. (Ephesians 3:19)

A COSMIC CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE

Following is an account written by Richard Bucke, a Canadian psychiatrist who was President of the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association and later, President of the American Medico-Psychological Association.

I was in a state of quiet, almost passive enjoyment, not actually thinking, but letting ideas, images, and emotions flow of themselves, as it were, through my mind. All at once, without warning of any kind, I found myself wrapped in a flame-colored cloud. For an instant I thought of fire, an immense conflagration somewhere close by in that great city. The next, I knew that the fire was *within myself*.

Directly afterward there came upon me a sense of exultation, of *immense joyousness* accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination *impossible to describe*. Among other things, I did not merely come to believe, but I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, *a living Presence*; I became conscious *in myself of eternal life*. It was not a conviction that I would have eternal life, but a consciousness that I *possessed* eternal life then.

I saw that without any peradventure, *all things work together for the good of each and all*; that the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call *love*, and that the *happiness* of each and all is in the *long run absolutely certain*.

The vision lasted a few seconds and was gone; but the memory of it and the *sense of the reality* of what it *taught* has remained during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. *I knew* that what the vision showed was true. I had attained *to a point of view from which I saw that it must be true*. That view, that conviction, I may say that *consciousness, has never, even during periods of the deepest depression, been lost*.
(William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New American Library, 1958, pp. 306-307)

THAT MOMENT TRANSFORMED THE WAY HE EXPERIENCED WHO HE IS

Other than his own account, I do not know much about the late Dr. Bucke. Was he religious? Was he a Christian? I don't know. I suppose he could have been both or neither one. But obviously, being a medical doctor and a psychiatrist, he was a student of life and seemed to have had a healthy respect for living things.

In his case, the cosmic experience lasted but a few moments, yet it became a totally new and supportive framework which stayed with him the rest of his life. Yet, he acknowledged that it did not keep him from becoming discouraged or depressed at times when circumstances turned difficult. He still had to face life full-on. As he said, "**That view, that conviction, I may say that *consciousness, has never, even during periods of the deepest depression, been lost.***"

Notice that he expressed *helplessness* in trying to describe what he experienced. It was an "**illumination impossible to describe.**" But what he could describe is that he went beyond belief to a *state of knowing*, a state beyond our language to describe. "**Among other things, I did not merely come to believe, but I SAW that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, a living Presence.**"

EXPERIENCING BEYOND SEPARATENESS

After reading about many people's experiences, including Dr. Bucke's, and after having had my own, I can assure you that when he experienced that the universe was alive, *a living Presence*, he knew he was not separate from that Presence, but that, in his spiritual being, he was a manifestation, an individualization, of that Presence. And notice, he capitalized the word, for what he was experiencing was Infinite God.

Also notice what he said immediately thereafter. "**I became conscious *IN MYSELF* of eternal life. It was not a conviction that I would have eternal life, but a consciousness that I possessed eternal life then.**"

What he described next has a profound implication as to what it means to discover who we are. Once he saw that he, himself, was eternal life, that in essence, he was an expression of a real spiritual reality, the universe, i.e., all things then he had that unspeakable peace come over him that he was a manifestation of that which was ALL GOOD.

"I saw that without any peradventure, *all things work together for the good of each and all*; that the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call love, and that the *happiness* of each and all is in the *long run absolutely certain*."

THE FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE IS UNION

Notice that the only word Dr. Bucke could use to describe that infinite union, that perfect wholeness in oneness, is the word "love." He almost apologized for using the word, when he says, **"the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call love."** Notice he saw that the entire creation, that **"all things work together for the good of each and all."** That, again, my friend, is what the pure love of Christ is all about.

In such an enlightenment, there is no further need to condemn and complain. As Paul declared, when that which is perfect is come, that which in part is done away, for we:

BEARETH ALL THINGS,
the way they appear in our life;

BELIEVETH ALL THINGS,
the way they are perceived by all,

HOPETH ALL THINGS,
just the way they will work for the good of all,

ENDURETH ALL THINGS,
as loving gifts from Christ for our good.

(I Corinthians 13:7)

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