

A very unseasonable north wind was blowing as I sat by the pond this morning, and my eye caught the leaf of a water plant. Though there were several leaves on this particular plant, only one was flapping at a very excited rate. The others were fairly calm. It struck me this was a direct answer to my plea around dawn, to understand the times.

The ostensible reason that only one leaf was oscillating so fast was its orientation to the buffeting of the north wind. Its edge was towards the wind, whereas the others were oriented with their ends away from the wind. In other words, the flapping depended on the location of the leaf in relation to the wind. A south wind would have changed the behavior of it as well as the other leaves.

Our behavior is oft-times dependant upon our “orientation” to outside events. Our orientation is dependant on many things; one can be the current of our life’s direction. Another is our state of mind; yet others are our physical season, age, learning, aptitude, geographical place, and so on.

These are nearly always in a state of flux, fluid, changing in intensity, azimuth and speed, and a host of other variables.

To illustrate, we may be young, middle aged or old; I may be in good health or bedridden; I may be a truck driver, college teacher, tool pusher on a drilling rig, managing a flight simulator for fighter jets, at home taking care of toddlers, flying medical supplies from place to place, managing state waterways, taking care of an aging mother, being legal counsel for a company, and so forth.

These are the variables in occupation; there are also variables in training, learning, spiritual awareness, individual bents, talents, etc. Suffice to say, there are many expressions within the overall “habitation” within which we all live and breathe. Our habitation’s boundaries may have all sorts of shapes and dimensions.

To draw a mental picture of this habitation, imagine the shape of a UFO, thick in the middle and tapering in all directions; or a manta ray, better said, thick in the middle, tapering to thinner extremities aft, port and starboard, with a trailing tail. Let us imagine our habitation, in which we live and have our being, is *shaped* like the manta ray, but where its limits and boundaries are not visible, nor physically defined. Simply imagine the boundaries of our habitation having invisible limits, but limits nonetheless. As stated above, these limits are in a state of flux, fluid and ever-changing. Call it our space.

So, as we go forward along the path of our life, encased in this imaginary manta ray-shaped sphere, we have within the thick central portion all of the above variables, constituting the majority of our activities. Away from this central portion towards the thinner extremities are the more or less “incidental” events that affect us from time to time. They are things out of the blue, out of left field, strange types of events having very little duration, but often equally intense in their effects.

As we progress, we in our imaginary sphere are obviously headed in some direction or another, and it is usually horizontal and more or less forward. So here we go, headed forward in this 'sphere', with concentrated activities in the center, with occasional 'left field' events bumping up against us from the sides, and equally infrequent vertical interactions (hopefully upward from the Most High).

OK; now that we have a picture, let me move on to the gist of my thoughts.

More often than not, as we move forward in this gossamer sphere, at times we feel we are not making much progress; we are in a still-stand as it were. But, like the Doppler effect of a train's whistle, it is only an illusion. Some of our central portion's activities concentrate our energies, such as screaming babies, dying parents, personal maladies, high school, war and the like, in which time seems to stand still. At other times, the motions seem to be in fast forward, such as an overly demanding job, or on the other end of the spectrum, trying to die and being unable to speed the process.

Regardless of the situation, there is this element of time-warp in both extremes, slow and fast. Dealing with the extremes as we should, becomes an experience thing, waxing in wisdom. But, all that is fairly well-known.

*It is the concept that we are in a moving, dynamic, fluid sphere that does have, after all, purpose and meaning.*

The three phases of our lives generally coincide in effect with growing, maturing and dying. As time passes from one to the other, (strength to mental to spiritual), one wanes while the succeeding one waxes, overlapping one another. Strength and prowess were once my focus; in middle age, learning and application of mental apprehension took center stage. (Eventually I had to quit racquetball.) Now at 68, I am in excellent physical shape, and know more or less what I am doing; but Things above are coming more and more into focus.

That which plagues us is the ability to gracefully move from one phase to the other. The ability to recognize when it is time to move on is at times more important. In other words, we should be able to discern when it is "time to hold 'em, and when it is time to fold 'em." Equally, it is crucial to be able to discern the nature of these side events coming from left field. As I grow older, these become more and more vivid to my being.

Both of these seemingly disparate things, discerning the nature of side events and when to fold 'em, are in reality one and the same. As I see it, they both occur within this sphere called the "habitation of our being."

Our habitation is addressed in Acts 1:26, where it is made plain that our state of being and the limits of our habitation are not accidents, nor spurious events with no name tag. No less than the planets headed a certain direction, so we too are headed in a specific direction, and with a specific purpose designed by God.

If we are not yielded and walking by the Spirit, the recognizing of same will evoke our resistance, and upset the apple cart of our minds. Isaiah 30:1-3 plainly illuminates this Divine plan, purpose, and design laid out for each of us since time immemorial. In this passage is the warning of impending woe if we depart from His plans and designs, heading our own way.

In the face of old wives' tales, ignorant traditions and fancifulness, there are no such things as happenstance, coincidence nor luck. No less than the planets being designed, guided, and finely tuned to be as they are, so are we aimed, designed and finely tuned. Bank on it.

Our pre-ordained habitations have many more physical and eternal effects than we realize. Equally, trying to get out of them has disastrous consequences. But somehow these truths escape us where the rubber hits the road. In the sequel that follows (Center of Gravity), perhaps we can come to an insight that will heal our wounds and give light to our paths.

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