

Chutzpah Galleries

Presents

Given

by

Welles B Goodrich

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Given

On a daily basis I've been walking a loop of small rural roads for exercise and meditation. There's one particular bend a bit less than half way through at which I experience bursts of illumination on a fairly regular basis. They induce upwellings of gratitude, an emotional uplift that I beam back toward the Creator. I can't figure out why that rather nondescript spot seems to affect me so.

My latest realization could only be labeled 'given'. I've been given my very being, my personality. I've been given a splinter of God to reside in my heart as a guide. My parents were co-creators in my emergence on this planet as I began my long journey from the fringes toward the center of Creation. The Universe itself is a gift. The spiritual, intellectual and material efforts of all those who have preceded me are humanity's collective gift from which I have taken at need. Everything has been given to me. I did nothing at all to deserve all that. Now it is my turn to add a tiny bit to the sum total.

These ideas were sort of mental screen captures illuminated as that brief light of inspiration percolated through my being. I had intellectually recognized the validity of the concepts before their moment of realization but they became an actual part of my being during that brief spiritual experience. To wax slightly poetic, you could say the Light of Truth etched the reality of the ideas into my soul.

There was a secondary emotional reaction to the event. I felt a profound feeling of thankfulness for becoming slightly more real. On this particular occasion, the process of transformation was vividly recognizable as well. The metamorphosis of ideas into values was galvanized by inspiration. That is religion. The rest of my walk was given over to contemplating the difference between a religion of ideas and one of experience.

The substances of most institutionalized religions are the ideals offered by people who had personally experienced the conversion of ideas into truths by inspiration. Their stories are usually remembered from long ago so the satisfaction of emotional attachment to beings of mythic stature can be invoked. Around those historical resonances are built frameworks of custom and authority to preserve the kernels of truth for posterity. Unfortunately, protection of the organization tends to become the primary activity of socialized religions. The reality of experiential revelation becomes subordinate to the perceived needs of institutional continuance.

There's currently a popular sentiment among people who fancy themselves intelligent: religion is disavowed. Many only look at the outward forms and discount any conceivable reality while viewing practitioners with condescension. If you see religions as a bunch of guys in big funny hats (our hats are holy whereas yours are just weird) or as ritual hokey-pokey-like traditions, they will seem pretty silly. They will be repellent if you look at the ugliness of the prejudice-based religious fear mongers. You will, however, be missing a more subtle truth. In spite of all the humanity exhibited in religions there is great benefit from seeking the Divine. You don't need any group. You just need to undertake a sincere exploration. Don't knock it if you haven't tried it.