

## More about the nature of reality and of love

A while back, after contemplating the extent of sin, suffering and evil in this world, both natural and man-made, I got a bit frustrated, as do we all when thinking about these things. Why would God permit these things to happen? Perhaps they are not actually happening, I reasoned. We are in a sense only living in a “simulated” reality, simulated in the sense that it is non-physical, only vibrating strings of potential energy that continually blink into and out of existence, according quantum physics. The world we live in is only real in the sense that a dream is real. A dream is a genuine “experience,” but there is no actual “substance” to it. Our life on earth is “real” only in the sense that a dream is real. Because there is no substance to it, we could say that it is “finite” (ie. temporary), while the observers who experience this simulated reality are “infinite” beings who don’t physically reside in this universe (ie. the dream).

Our real home is an infinite domain that some call heaven or the heavens. We are viewing our lives in this earthly realm through the artificial lens of quasi-physical bodies by means of our five quasi-physical senses. The analogy I like to use is that of a family, or soul group, putting on their virtual reality helmets and sharing together a dream-like experience that seems very real. There is no actual “substance” to the events and objects in the dream, but the shared “experience” is very real indeed, and also very useful. By temporarily immersing themselves in a “fake” reality, full on challenges, hardships, sin and evil, they are able to learn many lessons that can only be learned in a challenging environment. They are never in any danger. They only think they are at the time.

Interestingly, I believe that the virtually realities we “co-create” with our collective spiritual minds also exist in heaven after we die. When we die, we merely “transition” from one virtual reality to another. There is substantial evidence, especially in the thousands of documented Near Death Experiences, that the heavenly realms exist on several different levels and are also “simulated” realities. NDE Accounts share many common features, such as beautiful landscapes, a life-review, meeting loved ones, and experiencing the presence of an omnipotent, loving, omnipresent being viewed sometimes as Jesus or God. Many experience a “oneness” with God and all humanity, and all of existence. These experiences are, at the same time, unique to each individual. The landscapes, buildings and spiritual beings they encounter vary greatly. Some even find themselves in “hellish” realms, from which they are rescued. Some NDE experiencers talk about past lives and reincarnation. All of them are only given a glimpse of what might come afterwards

and they are sent back to their physical bodies. It is obvious to me that life goes on, after death, in simulated heavenly realms and perhaps additional earthly realities, as well, via reincarnation.

Do these virtual experiences go on indefinitely, or do they eventually come to an end? Do our souls continue to evolve until we reach a state of ultimate perfection, or does the process continue throughout eternity? For the answer to this, I take my clues from Scripture. Everyone would agree that Jesus is an extremely evolved spiritual being, actually God Himself, yet as recently as two thousand years ago, he incarnated into the earthly plane of existence, suffered and died for benefit of humanity. He continues to watch over fallen humanity and continues to “draw all humanity” back to himself. It is impossible to achieve such a high state of perfection that one ceases to participate in the cycle of birth, death, and resurrection, if not for one’s own sake, then certainly for the sake of others.

The purpose of co-creating and participating in all of these simulated realities goes far beyond just becoming a better person or evolving spiritually. The highest form of love is “*Agape*” love, described in the Bible as continuously active, self-sacrificing, and focused on the needs of others. It is “other-centered,” not “self-centered.” It never ends. Everything else eventually fails. Love never fails. It goes on for all eternity. God is love and everyone who loves is of God. In order for love to actually be love, it must be expressed. In order for it to be expressed, there must be a need for it. Love continually seeks ways to express itself. It is ironic and counterintuitive that suffering, sin and evil are necessary for the development and expression of love.

Suffering, sin and evil ultimately serve a good purpose. Undeniably, God is good, and also omnipotent. Therefore, if God permits the existence of suffering, sin and evil, there must be a good and loving purpose behind it all.

Although I don’t like the suffering, sin and evil in this world, I refuse to think less of God because of it. The antidote for my frustration is to do my best to love others as much as possible and seek the love, joy and peace that God offers to those who do.