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Nature & Spirit

1. Introduction. – Trust and confidence in our society – in commerce, science, religion, and politics – is understandably close to collapse. We live in a dramatic time of radical change and brutal rationalization. The danger of becoming enmeshed in this chaos and of descending into panic or misery is great. It is all the more important to recognize the innate laws of spirit throughout all existence. For this, we do not need to adhere to any particular school of thought, nor be masters of far-eastern or esoteric techniques. Nature itself shows us on a daily basis how life in balance is possible. We need only listen quietly and observe attentively, to discern the plan of our own soul in the mirror of life.



Dandelion: Poetry of effortlessness

2. The End of Materialism. – For a long time, the majority of influential scientists believed our world to be purely a mechanical product of chance – without purpose or deeper significance. Although this viewpoint is gradually shifting, for deeply dyed-in-the-wool materialists even today, soul and spirit are nothing more than products of biochemical and neurological processes. The possibility that anything involving spirit might stand behind physically experienceable reality is categorically rejected.

The material world-view, with all its aberrations and crises, is drawing to a dramatic end. Materialism is neither a philosophy nor a viable social system. Materialism is a decomposition product of a sick,

uprooted society alienated from Nature. Its key problem is that no values, either human or spiritual, can be inferred from identification only with matter.

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Viewed philosophically, materialism leads inevitably to meaninglessness. What point is there in searching for meaning if life is just an accidental by-product of carbon chemistry? Why follow ethical guidelines if people are not enduring and ensouled beings, but merely bio-mechanical machines? Why concern oneself with others if love serves only the goal of reproduction? A materialist society, founded on egotism, greed, and exploitation, violates a key natural law: the law of oneness. Oneness means balance through exchange and cooperation.

Postmodern materialism is like a dark, cancerous sore that has infested the skin of the Earth. If we are to survive as a species, a paradigm shift is urgently needed. It is a matter of connecting external and inner knowledge with one another. It is a matter of reconciling science and spirituality with one another, and of renewing what is human in us. It is a matter of questioning every form of material, religious, and ideological doctrine, and of developing for coming generations an enduring system of values that is compatible with Nature.

The global crisis is not an environmental crisis or an energy crisis. The global crisis is also not an economic crisis or a crisis of culture. The present crisis is solely a crisis of consciousness.

3. Matter versus Spirit. – Spirit is not the opposite of matter, but an active principle that manifests on the material level. To understand spirit, we first have to understand the nature of matter. Astonishingly, the truth is that matter – in and of itself – simply does not exist! At least, not in the sense that we experience it in everyday life: as solid, liquid, or gaseous substance. Modern physics has shown that the smallest building blocks of matter are nothing other than forms of condensed energy. Matter and light can be transmuted

SENSIGNS

into one another, because both are manifestations of electromagnetic vibrations. If we penetrate deeply enough into the micro- and macrocosmos, then we can discern that everything – really everything in the universe – is based on vibrations and waves. In other words, all known phenomena are ultimately nothing other than interchanging forms of energy and consciousness in flux. In this process, matter is thus only one possible expression of this universal energy. Likewise, the human body is only one possible expression of the creating principle.

»The present crisis is solely a crisis of consciousness.«

The question of the nature of spirit duly presents itself. Seen purely scientifically, that question cannot be answered unambiguously. The reason for this is that we cannot examine ourselves objectively. It would be rather like a computer having to find out why it is a computer. Even were we able to observe and record all the cells of the body and their interactions simultaneously and in detailed physical and biochemical fashion, we would get hardly any closer to the nature of spirit. We would indeed see an unbelievably complex and intelligent network of exceptional beauty. Nonetheless, it would still be a manifestation of something much greater.

The fact is: Nobody at the moment understands what consciousness really is or how feelings work. Certainly, we can measure electrical impulses in the brain and determine hormones and physiological reactions. But these have nothing to do with consciousness or soul. Spirit is immaterial. Spirit is also not the same as intellect. Spirit is the universal creative principle, manifesting throughout the entire cosmos. If we accept such a principle, then it is clear that the brain is not the seat of consciousness, but an intelligent interface between body and spirit.

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4. Inner Knowledge. – Spirit is beyond any direct observation through intellect. Intellect is programmed by analysis and memory. It functions only within the narrow boundaries of sensory perception and those data that the brain has stored over the course of its lifetime. This explains why many people see themselves as identical with their bodies: their inner, spiritual knowledge is blocked by the dominance of their intellect. Consumption, stress, and excess also ensure that many lose contact with their souls. The result is an existential vacuum and precisely that crisis that confronts us on all levels today. It is all the more important that we become able to make contact with our true essence, and reconnect with our inner knowledge.



Frog, at one with itself

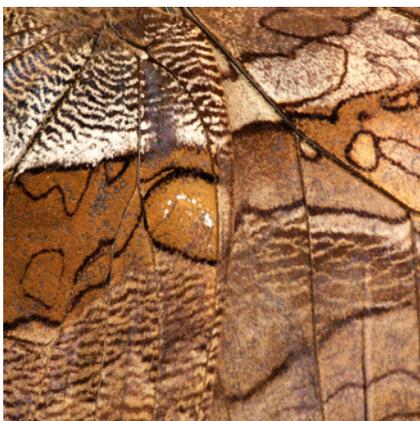
In principle, there are two possible ways to reconnect with inner knowledge. The first method is based on guiding the intellect to its rightful place through meditation, to achieve inner peace. This is the path of the ascetics. The second is based on observation, abstraction, and intuition. This is the path of the researcher. Instead of closing our eyes and voyaging inwards, we can open them wide and recognize the oneness of all that is spiritual, especially in Nature. In this, it is important to proceed not primarily analytically, but holistically and with use of criteria of analogy. Time to begin searching for evidence.

5. Signs of Spirit. – In the spiritual tradition, the immaterial essence underlying all existence has been known for millennia. This knowledge is expressed in many philosophical discourses and teachings. As Plato puts it: *To know is to remember*. Similarly, hermetic

writings state that all manifestations have spiritual counterparts, essentially archetypes, that unfold according to the plan of creation. As it is stated, simply but profoundly, in the saying attributed to Hermes Trismegistos: *As above, so below*.

Spirit, as a universal creative principle, leaves its traces everywhere and produces a permanent representation of itself throughout the entire cosmos. Just as we see ourselves reflected in our opposites, the divine scheme is reflected in material being. Even if we cannot know spirit directly, because it itself is not manifest, we can nevertheless experience much about it indirectly, by following the trail of life.

6. Principles of Spirit in Nature. – When we engage with Nature, we automatically engage with the creative principle. To contemplate Nature is a form of meditation. What is important is that we do not use our intellect to analyze and to categorize, but that we join all the pieces of the puzzle together intuitively. Only then do we discern the greater spirit behind all manifest phenomena.



*Wing section of an Owl Butterfly:
Nature as a map*

In the course of my own search, seven fundamental principles have become clear to me, together with several sub-principles. These principles permeate all animate and inanimate matter. Their associated laws can be known by anyone who opens themselves to the external and listens within. They involve: 1) Creation, 2) Causality, 3) Intelligence, 4) Love, 5) Oneness, 6) Harmony, and 7) Consciousness. Below, we shall

examine these principles more closely, together with some mechanisms and manifestations based on them.

»To contemplate Nature is a form of meditation.«

CREATION – 1st Principle

The entire cosmos is permeated by a single, purpose-driven creative force. We do not know where this force comes from, nor why it exists at all. It is simply there. Christians call it *God*, Jews *Yahweh*, Muslims *Allah*, Hindus *Brahma*, and Taoists *Qi*. This force does not appear only in innumerable creation myths, it is also to be encountered behind scientific concepts of convenience such as the big-bang or evolution theory.

We have the creative principle of Nature to thank for the unbelievable abundance of manifestations of life on this planet. Over the last three billion years of Earth's history, over 50 billion lifeforms have developed, some 99% of which have then died out again. At present, on Earth there exist at least half a million different plant species alone, together with over one million types of insects.

Did you know that the body of a pupating butterfly caterpillar almost completely dissolves, and that up to 98% of its cells die before a new butterfly is born? [1]

All lifeforms are not only creatures, but also creators. In principle, the potential for creation lies not only in sex, but generally in every impulse. This also applies for thoughts, feelings, and actions. Once set in train, each one of these life impulses, whether material or immaterial, is the trigger for a journey to an unknown destination. Overall, the unrestrained will of spirit to manifest and to change everywhere and in everything appears in the creative evolutionary principle. Heraclites' famous saying, *panta rhei* (everything flows), testifies to it.

CAUSALITY – 2nd Principle

Creation is neither, as so often postulated, coincidental nor aimless, but is strictly causal. It develops according to definite rules and towards a greater goal, sometimes

SENSIGNS

steadily, sometimes precipitously. This evolutionary goal and its associated rules of play are not always easy to recognize, because our intellect can assimilate only a tiny section of reality within space and time.



Rice-paper Butterfly, one of the world's approximately 200,000 species of butterflies and moths

The creative-evolutionary principle, like everything in Nature, is based on inviolable laws. Without exception, all of these laws are causal in nature and mutually validate themselves. Causality here does not only mean the direct interplay of cause and effect, or of action and reaction. Causality is a description of the sum total of all forces and mechanisms in mutual interaction. More-complex, intertwined phenomena such as construction and destruction, order and chaos, or resonance and dissonance are also included. Only the simplest of these laws are linear. Most operate on many levels down to the smallest, invisible structures and can often manifest themselves very unexpectedly and asynchronously.

Did you know that sand from the Sahara blown over the Atlantic by the winds is vital for the tropical forests of Amazonia? [2]

The necessary causality of creation is most clearly evident in the laws of Nature. Natural laws determine not only the structure and fate of matter, from atoms to galaxies, but also the whole of morphogenesis. The laws on which physics, chemistry, and biology are based upon are simple in their essence, but complex in their manifestation. Central, for example, are the laws of attraction and repulsion (polarity), the laws of energy conservation, of thermodynamics and efficiency, and,

furthermore, the laws of growth, symmetry, and self-organization. Subtle laws also exist on the social level and on that of spirit.

In a world governed by law, chance in the sense of randomness cannot possibly exist. Randomness is incompatible either with natural laws or with laws of spirit. Coincidence can at best in passing be understood as two events not being directly connected to one another and so taking place more or less independently of one another. Coincidence can also be an expression of our inability to interpret a complex system. This does not mean, though, that this system does not obey any rules. In our approximately 70 trillion (7×10^{13}) body cells, over 100,000 chemical reactions take place every second. If these biochemical processes were not strictly regulated and mutually balanced, chaos would break out in an instance. Even in the world of inanimate material, though, where pure chaos appears to reign almost everywhere, everything functions according to strict rules. Some may be formulated mathematically with the aid of nonlinear dynamics.

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To go into all of these laws in detail would be going too far. What is important is the acknowledgement that our universe functions in a way that is anything but random. Rather, structure, sense, and purpose are everywhere to be seen, but never randomness. Some rules seem unjust or cruel to us. In truth, though, all laws are part of a higher principle of spirit, the meaningfulness of which we are only slowly beginning to understand.



Ladybird: symbol of luck

INTELLIGENCE – 3rd Principle

The whole of Nature just teems with intelligence and knowledge. This knowledge is based both on material substance and on spirit, or instinct. The most obvious example is unquestionably the coding of the material of heredity – DNA. The fact that information is stored and inherited in the form of DNA allows a maximum of diversity, or variety, at the material level. As well as material records, however, there are far subtler forms of knowledge. It is, thus, still unclear how some animals can migrate thousands of kilometers after their birth, to arrive precisely at a given location at exactly the right point in time, without having learned it from their parents. This phenomenon can be observed in sea creatures such as tortoises, salmon, or herring, but also in land creatures such as butterflies, pigeons, or elephants. Nature seems to be connected as a single collective organism to a higher, intelligent consciousness field. Rupert Sheldrake refers in this context to morphogenetic fields. [3]

Did you know that many plants emit signaling substances (pheromones) to neighboring plants as a warning of the presence of predators? [4]

All forms of life are programmed functionally, structurally, and highly intelligently. Nonetheless, they are not absolutely predestined, but remain able to learn and to develop – each at its individual level, according to its status and hierarchy. The capability to learn is a superordinate form of intelligence, and is not intrinsically inheritable: it is ultimately an expression of a spirit quality.

Intelligence is only in a qualified sense an achievement of intellect. It is not sufficient to analyze, to control, and to manipulate a system. Most of all it is a matter of recognizing our place within the natural oneness, and of accepting the responsibility associated with this. True intelligence reveals itself in the form not of technological achievements, but in that of exchange, consideration, and cooperation.

»Intelligence is only in a qualified sense an achievement of intellect.«



Yellow-spotted emerald dragonfly

Billions of lifeforms have existed on Earth in perfect equilibrium with one another for millions of years. We, however, have in the shortest time disturbed this balance to such a degree that a dramatic mass-extinction event is now in progress. Every day, over 100 animal and plant species are now dying out. War, exploitation, and plundering of Nature can hardly be presented as particularly intelligent achievements of our civilization. We should learn from Nature rather than wanting to master it, since we are clearly sitting at the shorter end of the lever.

LOVE – 4th Principle

At first glance, Nature might appear to us to be cruel and merciless, populated by parasites, scavengers, and savage predators. The struggle for survival, for sufficient food, for attractive partners, and for the best territory is undeniable fact. Nonetheless, all this is not an expression of brutality, but part of a greater whole. In Nature, life and death are inseparably bound up with one another. Natural balance can only be ensured if both constructive and destructive forces are in balance. Only in this way are diversity and development on the material level possible.

»Sadly, love is readily overlooked as a spiritual principle in Nature.«

Sadly, love is readily overlooked as a spiritual principle in Nature. Let us consider the whole from a different perspective, though. Is not every organism an important member of the food chain, beginning with bacteria,

SENSIGNS

through plant, up to mammals? Every organism that dies not only makes room for the next generation, but at the same time nourishes many other organisms with its body (i.e., with its energy). Looked at in this way, Nature functions in concert with the sun as one single, self-nourishing organism. For me, this principle is an expression of love.

Did you know that emperor penguins undertake dives to depths of over 500 m and then walk up to 200 km over pack ice to feed their life partners and their young? [5]

As well as the food chain, there are other forms of love in Nature. Worthy of special mention are the parental nurturing and brood care shown by many animals, which far exceed our concept of sacrifice. Some animals, birds and mammals especially, remain together their whole lives, sometimes 30 years or more. If one partner dies, the other often remains alone until the end of its life, even if the creature is still capable of breeding. Innumerable forms of symbiosis, cooperation, and group behavior should also be mentioned in this context, because convenience can also be viewed as a form of love.

ONENESS – 5th Principle

Evolutionary biology has shown that all of the lifeforms on Earth have evolved from one single-celled prototype. All living beings are therefore representatives of a four-billion-year-development history and form, in the truest sense of the word, a single large family. As individuals join together in pairs, pairs into groups, and groups into herds and swarms, so all life on Earth is closely interconnected. Species diversity and natural hierarchy should not distract from the fact that Nature is a single gigantic network. This network is at the same time an expression of the oneness of the creative spirit.

Did you know that starlings fly in flocks of up to one million individuals, and react to attack like one single superorganism, by making pulsating wave-formed patterns? [6]

HARMONY – 6th Principle

Harmony is a state of complete resonance with being. Harmony is an expression of highest lawfulness. Harmony is the feeling of timeless and unconditional oneness.

The spiritual principle of harmony also includes many further aspects, first among them beauty, purity, order, symmetry, balance, resonance, unison, rhythm, and cycle. Some of these terms might, at first glance, appear subjective or arbitrary. Nevertheless, they allow beauty and order not only to be felt, but also to be mathematically or geometrically described. A few examples to this:

- The number of petals of the common daisy and other flowers follows the Fibonacci sequence (3, 5, 8, 13 ...), which, in turn, is associated with the Golden Section.
- Self-similar structures, so-called fractals, in, e.g., tree branching, certain brassicas, or crystals (notably ice crystals in snowflakes) can be described with the aid of a single, simple algorithm.
- Musical harmonies are based on whole-number tone ratios such as the octave (2:1) or perfect fifth (3:2).
- The energy of an electron is strictly quantized and can only be whole-number multiples of a ground value.
- Patterns and structures of selected symmetries dominate throughout the entire cosmos. Spirals thus arise from a combination of rotation and translation. They are to be found everywhere in micro- and macro-cosmos: in the structure of DNA, in the protein casings of viruses, in the structures of sunflowers, in the shells of snails, up to the structures of galaxies.



The beauty of flowers and plants as an expression of natural harmony.

CONSCIOUSNESS – 7th Principle

Consciousness expresses itself in Nature in the form of intelligence, complexity, ability to communicate, sexuality, care, and cooperation. More highly developed lifeforms usually show more highly differentiated consciousness and behavior than less highly developed ones. Highly intelligent animals such as primates, dolphins, and elephants seem to possess a form of self-awareness similar to that in humans. Most higher animals also display the capability to experience strong and differentiated emotions.

Did you know that the back of a turtle shell bears a detailed resemblance to wave patterns of water? [7]

Consciousness can be understood not only as a principle of biology, but also as one of spirit. In a holistic view, the entire cosmos is filled with pure consciousness: that of the creative spirit. This superordinate consciousness manifests itself in the form of will on completely different levels. We may speak of mineral, vegetable, animal, human, and higher forms of consciousness. As well as different grades of individuality, each level and each group also possesses a collective consciousness. This is, as it were, a spiritual correspondence of genetic or structural programming.

Did you know that billions of glow-worms flash completely synchronously, in step to the second, even when separated and unable to see one another? [8]

When group consciousness changes evolutionarily, habits and behavior patterns also change, and often abruptly. If some "critical mass" in consciousness is achieved, the collective reacts directly to the altered mental programming and adapts. This type of spirit evolution is responsible for the fact that all lifeforms, humans included, also develop further on a spiritual level. Nobody would claim that our new ecological consciousness is a product of changes in our genetics or the structures of our brains during the last 40 years. It is much more the case that in our everyday engagement with Nature we have experienced a progressive

sensitization that has established itself in the form of a completely new group consciousness that, for our children, is already self-evident.

Consciousness also has a deeply mystical component. The oneness of the universal spirit cannot know itself as such because as a oneness it is indivisibly bound to itself. Awareness is based on reflection and resonance in the opposite. Oneness has no opposite, however, but only itself. To make a form of self-aware consciousness from this, the spiritual has to split into two dual aspects, which are subject to the law of polarity. Dual halves do not cancel one another out, but complement each other once more to oneness. Only in the dual nature of its own creation, the spiritual can express and experience itself.

While duality is an expression of universal oneness, polarity represents the evolutionary driving force and law of creation. If two dual halves encounter each other and unite according to the law of polarity, life arises and consciousness manifests. The obvious example of this principle is sexual union of female and male: Yin & Yang.

7. Integration of Spiritual Principles in our Value System. – Natural principles as an expression of the universal spirit say something not only about creation, but also about us humans. The special thing about humans is that we act both as reasoning and as feeling and empathic beings, having enormous potential for development. This brings with itself both joy and responsibility, but risks, above all, the dangers of one-sidedness, arrogance, and material obsession. Such societal wrong turns are the consequences of splits through intellectual, dogmatic, or religious doctrines. In a time of reorientation, timeless, neutral values reflected in Nature itself are all the more important. These could help us find the way back to ourselves.

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More precisely, a simple code of behavior can be derived from the seven spiritual aspects in Nature discussed above. The following seven points correspond to a minimum set of possible guidelines that may be derived:

SENSIGNS

- The principle of CREATION empowers us to act ourselves as creators and to build a world in which all would like to live. – **Thus, let us be creative.**
- The principle of CAUSALITY teaches us that chance in the sense of randomness does not exist, and that there are laws that we should hold to, for our own good. – **Thus, let us keep to the rules of the game.**
- The principle of INTELLIGENCE shows us that we are on a journey with a purpose, and that cooperation and exchange are not only natural, but also highly intelligent and worthwhile. – **Thus, let us cooperate.**
- The principle of LOVE nourishes and embraces us. For this, we should be thankful and show due respect for life, especially to our mother, the Earth. To show respect means to love and to have regard for oneself and others. – **Thus, may love flow through us.**
- The principle of ONENESS connects us to the totality of being, and makes it possible for us to overcome intellectual and religious divides and to experience ourselves as integrated multidimensional human beings. We are a single family. – **Thus, let us act with solidarity.**
- The principle of HARMONY shows us how we should arrange our lives, by standing for beauty, purity, joy, order, and balance. – **Thus, let us be a source of harmony, in and around ourselves.**
- The principle of CONSCIOUSNESS tells us that we experience and rediscover ourselves each day. And that, as intelligent creators and custodians of the Earth, we act responsibly and sustainably, to the best of our knowledge and conscience. – **Thus, let us live conscientiously and consciously.**

8. Summary and Outlook. – It is both sensible and natural to suspect a universal governing principle of spirit underlying all phenomena of Nature. Independently of dogmatic and religious conceptions, it is possible to identify various hallmarks of spirit in matter. Such principles explain not only the meaningfulness of all life, but can serve as pointers for our own transformation.

In recapitulation, it can be stressed that: life is the result of a purpose-driven, causal, and intelligent creation process. The process of evolutionary differentiation and perfection serves the awakening of non-manifest spirit to consciousness in creation, being an expression of

love, beauty, and harmony. If the spiritual in Nature could turn to us in words, it would perhaps say:

»Let us be creative, conscious, and loving each day and manage our lives in harmony with Nature and with our fellow men«.

From such a deepened, not necessarily religious, understanding of creation, we can better recognize not only Nature, but also the oneness of life and death. Conscious awareness that the Earth acts like a single organism helps us in knowing the meaningfulness of all existence and in being aware of our creative responsibility. This does not mean that we have to give up technology and science. It merely means to acknowledge that we are not isolated intellectual beings, but parts of a greater whole, without which we cannot exist and for which we long internally.

Only if we join ourselves in soul and spirit with the natural oneness dwelling within us can we bring about a paradigm shift and solve all the problems that we have ourselves produced and are to answer for. Together we can do it!

9. Misinterpretation of Natural Laws. – Critics will without doubt find arguments against any presence of spirit in Nature. Since this article is neither a purely scientific discourse nor an intellectual or political one, at this point, we shall look at only one possible counter-argument.



*Humanity and Nature are one:
Canary Blue on my left index finger.*

Nature often seems to follow a principle that is being described as *survival of the fittest*, regarded as part of natural selection. The associated savagery would, at first glance, seem incompatible with the spiritual principles of love and harmony. This has been a perpetual source of confusion. The problem, though, lies exclusively in our way of looking at Nature; our fear of the finiteness of our own existence also has something to do with it. Nature itself does not know this fear. It has no awareness of time, but rests in eternal being.

Did you know that some date and lotus seeds can survive for up to 2,000 years before germinating? [9]

The fact is that all higher lifeforms nourish themselves from the energy (or the bodies) of beings hierarchically lower in the food chain. Nonetheless, when we eat, e.g., vegetables, we do not speak of murder, but of food. Survival of the fittest is not a legitimization for exploitation, but serves the preservation and the health of the community. In the oneness of Nature, this natural right

is, therefore, not an expression of brutality, but of intelligence and exchange as a functional principle.

Physical death is less a source of tragedy and ending than of fulfillment and devotion. Life energy is never lost. Like everything, it is in constant flux, at the levels both of matter and of spirit. One does not need to be religious to see this. It is enough to see that becoming and passing give rise to one another, so that natural balance can exist. The evolutionary principle behind it, however, remains eternal and inviolable.

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