

3. Wellbeing
July 13, 2005

From: Observer 3A10Z
Re: 3rd Planet, Star B6W739E2, Cluster D51M6F, Arm 4, Galaxy C2NGI05L825G
Date: Sixty-six billion local stellar axial rotations
To: Planetary Lifeforms Archivist, Mothership 6M3K2X

Subject: Wealth and Wellbeing

Earthlings distinguish between their own, or their environment's wellbeing, and wealth. Wellbeing to them consists minimally of immediate essentials: food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, meaningful work and the secure prospects of those being available as needed in the future. Wealth consists principally of the ability to procure non-essential luxury items presently and the confidence that ability will persist into the future.

The distribution of wellbeing and wealth among various segments of this species is grossly disparate: over half of the population has no wealth to speak of and very little well-being. The majority are or are near starving, inadequately clothed or sheltered, ignorant and/or in dire need of medical care; where work is available, it is often utterly repetitive, meaningless and non-productive. The bulk of this species' wellbeing is concentrated in the hands of a tiny fraction whose attitudes toward the deprived majority range from obliviousness through benign, ineffectual concern to a sense of entitlement to far more than an equitable share of almost everything. The only thing the privileged seem not to covet is meaningful work.

Earthlings term the study of the production, distribution and consumption of wealth and wellbeing, and the consequences thereof, economics. Some 'economists' deem economics a 'science' with universal laws of validity akin to those of physics, but the only fundamental principle seems to be the prevalence and predominance of greed. A few splinter groups of this species have experimented with cooperative organization focusing on assuring that the wellbeing of all is equitably distributed. These experiments have generally proved temporary and ineffectual, failing to endure owing to the development of excessive acquisitiveness on the part of successive generations in the experimental group or to being overrun and absorbed by other, more acquisitive groups.

Unable or unwilling to provide for the equitable distribution of wellbeing, Earthlings pursue formal tokens of wealth, termed money, other physical objects and symbols denoting their ability to acquire non-essentials at the expense of others' wellbeing. The pursuit of wealth, rather than general wellbeing, means that production is geared to the tastes of the few well-to-do, not to the desperate needs of the majority of the species thereby exacerbating the cycle of inequity.

With so little regard for the wellbeing of members of its own, this species exhibits utter disregard for the wellbeing of other lifeforms on this planet. Whether animate or vegetative, other species are regarded as fodder, fuel, entertainment, nuisance or of no consequence. As a result, wholesale extinction of other species is proceeding apace with drastic reductions in biological diversity. The wellbeing of the planet's entire biosphere, not just the Earthlings' immediate environs,

is seriously compromised. They seem to have little awareness of the connection between their wellbeing and their planet's.

A rational species, capable of sustaining itself would pursue wellbeing for its environment as well as for all members of its group. Indeed some few splinter segments of this population have attempted such in the past without permanent effect. But the vast majority of this species pursue wealth, not wellbeing, acquiring ever more of the means for obtaining non-essential luxury items, relief from meaningful work, and hoarding their acquisitions from other members of the group. While a few have experimented with communal sharing, the prevailing focus of acquisition is 'property', the concept that 'ownership' entitles the 'owner' to control physical entities, to prevent their use by others, even what otherwise lies uselessly idle. One would imagine that laying claim to and hoarding would only be practiced with respect to physically scarce items, but latterly these concepts have been extended to intangibles such as ideas, thoughts, uttered song or writings.

In a harshly competitive environment, survival of only the most ruthless was the norm for this species and competitive advantage, the survival kit. The URGE to seek one's own self-interests, and those of genetically related others, is likely hardwired into Earthlings' neurology even as it is in our own. Ruthless competitiveness got them thus far; but it now has run its useful course. If Earthlings cannot learn to live symbiotically with their and fellow lifeforms on this planet, they will surely suffer the extinction previous species have experienced.

The message of all of Earthing's leading moralists and ethicists is that they must TRANSCEND their neurological urges or succumb to their hyper-competitive ability to destroy all lifeforms on this, their only planet. Those competitive urges, like the male's urge to copulate with any and every thing that moves and the female's urge to have as many offspring as she can carry to term, are residues from their recent evolutionary past. They are part of their neurological heritage, but are no longer useful survival strategies to give in to. Earthlings will either learn to control their competitive urges or extinguish themselves.

Self-destruction is written into their neurology: nature's way of cleaning the lint trap. Just as cells are genetically programmed to die -

apoptosis - primitive lifeforms, species and cultures, all have in them the seeds of their own destruction. Else, like cancers on the rest of the universe, they would spread uncontrollably. If Earthlings are to survive, they will HAVE to learn to live sustainably with the other species on this planet - sustainably, not self-indulgently.

They have choices and those choices have consequences. Their difficulty is that the connection between their thinking and acting is exceedingly tenuous compared to the connection between rationalization, wish-fulfilling fantasy and impulsive behavior. In their recent evolutionary past most Earthlings were chronically on the brink of starvation, as indeed many are still. Presently in those segments of the species where nutrition is abundant, there is an epidemic of obesity as their behaviors respond not to present nutritional needs but to urges that are no longer adaptive. Similarly they seem as a species unable to resist the urge to indulge in self-centered, competitive, acquisitive behaviors instead of cooperating for the wellbeing of all.

Earthlings believe they are unique and under special the protection of the universe. They are oblivious to the fact they are but one of many similar experiments on the scale of the cosmos. It is unlikely they are, as a species, sufficiently socially conscious or self-disciplined to recover or return from the blind alley they are headed into. They are just too blindly self-serving, despite the wisdom of their moral, ethical and religious sages. Intellectually their most enlightened KNOW what needs to be done; emotionally they are still infants, squalling and grabbing for the things they want right now. It will likely be necessary to write this planet off as a failed attempt, a sterile dead-end, and quarantine it to make sure the contagion its principal lifeform represents does not spread and infect more promising primitive lifeforms elsewhere.

Knowledgeably aware,
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