

Why are we here and where do we go?

I have always envied those people who exhibit strong religious faith. They have very reasonable answers to those questions and don't worry about them. We are here because God has put us here to lead lives of dignity and compassion and ultimately to join with Him again after death. I have never been lucky enough to have this type of unshakable faith and so I have looked for other answers.

I can remember as a child in Sunday school asking if God made us then who made Him? The answer that He always 'was' is difficult for me to understand. I think I wanted proof of some kind and simply could not comprehend the concept of just believing, of just having faith.

Well I'm almost fifty now and I still think about it. What is my purpose for being here and where indeed, will I end up when it is "over"? Being a veterinarian and having my share of scientific training I have, over the years, deduced some possibilities based not on fact but on a set of circumstantial observations.

One possible explanation is that you are just an organism that evolved from the primordial muck by accident and when you die the lights simply go out and you (your body at least) eventually gets recycled. End of story. There are a few facts though that make me wonder about that scenario.

If, indeed, we are just organisms then why are we aware? I think that is one big condition that separates us from the rest of the evolutionary process and perhaps gives us special status. If we are just supposed to live and then die then why should we be troubled with the knowledge of our existence? Now I am sure my dog is aware of his immediate surroundings and the fact he may be hungry or sleepy or excited, but I question if he perceives the concept of tomorrow. Does he think about the sun coming up tomorrow or is that something that just happens and is accepted at face value? Does he know there will even be a tomorrow and does that mean anything to him? Does he just accept that he is now here and that's the way it is until he is not? And even then does he have any concept of "not" (death)? I don't mean to belabor the point but what is the evolutionary advantage of knowing that you exist and are alive. What special adaptation does wondering how and when you will cease to exist give to the perpetuation of the species. A lot of other species have done a marvelous and much more successful job of living long and well than we have and not been encumbered with these nagging questions and thought processes.

The truth is that we are saddled with these cosmic questions and they serve no real purpose for our ultimate survival in an evolutionary sense. The fact that we do have them gives me the sense to ask "why"? Which leads me one step further to think that there must be a reason. Agreeably, a reason I have not been able to puzzle out, but a reason none the less. Perhaps a reason exists that will only manifest itself much later up the evolutionary ladder so to speak. And our current task is not necessarily to figure it out but rather to give it time to come to fruition without blowing ourselves up prematurely.

I think the human species is destined for much better things than just developing a better can opener. If not, then why are our brains so big and why do we only knowingly use such a small part of it? What is the evolutionary prize for that? Our brains have potentials that are totally unknown to us. Some of the functions of this organ that we only see a glimpse of now and then include those "paranormal" activities of reading minds, seeing the future, having a photographic memory, possessing clairvoyance and moving objects with our minds. Have people who possess these traits inadvertently tapped into one of these unused parts of our minds and displayed a shadowed whisper of what may be possible?

Matter and energy are linked in an Einsteinian pas de deux that we don't fully fathom. Our minds are matter and energy. When we die, where does that energy go? Heaven? Or does it become one with the Cosmic All in some manner? Or do we in some manner, at the moment of death, with powers beyond are present understanding, create a version of our own Heaven..or Hell? If we believe in a wonderful afterlife where we once again see all of our loved ones, will we, by our own desire, simply make it so? And if we have led a life of bitterness and evil and that is all we ever see, will that become our new afterlife Hell?

I don't know. What I do know is that I believe in the far future man has the potential to become something wonderful. I think my job is to help the species along by living a good life and striving to be happy. This must in the long run serve to propel the lumbering behemoth of human evolution one small step closer to fulfillment.