

Reflections induced by a visit to the Yellowstone National Park

Prolog

This writing was induced by the experience of a visit to the Grand Teton National Park and the well-known Yellowstone National Park.

For non-American readers who may be unaware, the Grand Teton National Park and the Yellowstone National Park are “nature preserves” that are located near each other in the northwest corner of the state of Wyoming, with tiny portions stretching into Montana and Idaho. Combined, they cover nearly 10,000 square kilometers (approximately 3,900 square miles) of spectacular scenery, including mountains, rivers, waterfalls, canyons, geysers, and hot springs. They are home to hundreds of known species of animals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. The parks are also known for the presence of grizzly bears, cougars, wolves, and free-roaming moose, bison, deer, and elk as well as forests and grasslands populated by a variety of plant species. The geysers and hot springs teem with a vast variety of microorganisms that give them the most vivid colors.

Unfortunately, several creatures in these nature preserves are endangered or threatened, owing to previous and ongoing human activity. For example, visitors who intentionally or unintentionally offer scraps and crumbs to birds and other wildlife, or simply forget to secure their trash endanger the wildlife that eat human food which is not healthy for them. Other human activities threatening life in national parks include the proliferation of invasive species from human transport, damage from visitor pollution, degradation from off-road vehicle use and off-trail hiking that create pollution and which have been linked to triggering accidental wildfires. Nearby industrial and agriculture activity that include building check dams can severely damage the parks aquatic habitats.

However, the endangering examples given above are attributable to only a minority of visitors. The majority of the nearly 6 million people who visit these massive and breathtaking natural wonders respectfully enjoy the parks’ recreational opportunities which include hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, geyser and hot spring tours fishing, boating, horseback riding and scenic drives along the roads that crisscross the parks. Popular pastimes in winter, include skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and snow coach tours. Other activities include attending ranger programs, visiting visitor centers, and backcountry camping.

Those who visit for educational purposes, such as studying the variety of flora, fauna, and geological configurations consider them important nature labs where an astute observer may see/study nature's mechanisms for managing and sustaining an ecosystem. These observations also highlight the critical role of the elemental forces in the formation and maintenance of nature's ecosystems. The major elemental forces being Earth, Water, Wind (Air), and Fire, all of

which are clearly visible in these parks. The mountains and valleys vividly reflect the activities of the forces that operate on and within the Earth. The forces of Air not only help to smooth out the mountains created by the earth's movements but also create the great expanse of sky and clouds. The forces of Water are readily evident in the rivers, lakes, waterfalls, and, of course, geysers, which are both parks' symbolic icons. The action of the forces of Fire is evident in the heat that creates the spectacle of erupting geysers that thrill many visitors. The more astute observers can see how fires maintain growth, development, and help to keep the park's ecology in balance.

Regardless of the purpose of their visit, almost all report feeling exhilarated, awestruck, and profoundly amazed. Many describe their visit as one-of-a-kind, and amazing holiday. Some report feeling at-one with nature, as well as a deep sense of calm and freedom. Others describe the parks as sanctuaries where their Spirit was able to commune closely with Nature, and their visit as a spiritual experience that healed their soul.

Overall, the most common experience reported every year is the inspiring effect of the parks on visitors. Some ascribe this sensation to a bio-physiological process involving the release of endorphins. Others claim to have had an otherworldly spiritual encounter. In between explanations range from simple expressions of emotions to complex psycho-philosophical reasons. That this common feeling is aroused in people from different walks of life and who have very different outlooks on life may make an astute observer wonder why?

First of all, it can be argued that the diverse ways in which this common experience is described may not necessarily address the fundamental nature of the inner experiencing. Rather, they merely reflect the individual's opinion or exposure. If we accept that the Spirit is the real living and experiencing essence of a human being, one can then argue that the above-mentioned explanations given for a common experiencing of inspiration can only reflect the level of Spiritual consciousness of the individual.

This conclusion is corroborated when we look at how ancient societies interacted with and perceived nature. We will see that all of them attributed all phenomena occurring in nature to the activity of the forces of Nature. And this framework was used to understand and explain their experiences with nature. Since the same forces operate universally, the same occurrences in nature, e.g., thunder, crop production, rivers, etc. were understood and explained in the same way across all societies, regardless of the name given by the society to the particular force of nature responsible.

For example, although the elemental force of Earth had different names, Gaia (Greek), Terra (Roman), Ani or Ana (Igbos of West Africa), Prithvi (Sanskrit/Hindu), Pachamama (Inca), Ki (Sumerian), Geb (Egyptian), Tonantzin (Aztec), and Mat Zemlya (Slavic), each of these societies acknowledged that all activities associated with the Earth were attributable to this fundamental elemental force, and would have recognized and experienced it in the same way despite differences in assigned name. This would apply to things like mountains, valleys, and the soil itself.

The same was true for activities associated with Water, Air, and Fire.

Also, these elemental forces were revered as gods or goddesses because pre-modern man recognized his limits in controlling natural forces, compared to what they observed of the energy that the entities associated with Nature wielded.

With man's scientific advancement, we have learned to control and use narrow bands of these elemental energies. Unfortunately, with this, modern man believes he has conquered nature and has mastered these forces. However, every now and again, we are quickly brought to realize what ancient societies simply knew and accepted, i.e., the limitations of our ability vis-à-vis Nature. The instances of what we describe as natural disasters demonstrate this point: i.e.; the helplessness we experience with earthquakes, wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, or volcanic eruptions.

Another limitation imposed by the scientific track pursued by modern man is the classification of everything into two categories: Living or Inert. Living being that which fits into modern science's definition of being alive, while all else is classified as Inert. This classification has succeeded in destroying, for many, a holistic way of viewing life. That is, the view in which everything is acknowledged as having an underlying living essence and form, even if the essence is not visible to the physical eyes. The ancients recognized this, and understood that visible natural effects, like movements of the earth, thunder, fires, etc. are the result of the activities of living entities that possess a form that is invisible to the physical eyes.

Unfortunately, while buried in our contemporary cocoon, an increasing number of people are living their lives separated from everyday exposure to natural activity, except in our gardens and public parks. But even the time spent in these places shown them to have a calming or relaxing effect, versus the sensations typically associated with the pleasures and conveniences of our modern cocoons. This feeling multiplies exponentially when we are engaged in pure and unadulterated nature. Which no doubt accounts for the experiences of many who visit Nature Reserves or wander deep into Nature.

With this as background, we can now discuss, from a Spiritual perspective, the inspirational sensation of visitors to such places.

First, let us begin by reflecting on what distinguishes being in unadulterated nature versus simply being outside, or visiting a lovely human-designed and constructed park.

One undeniable difference is that the unadulterated outdoors is how nature's elemental forces created them. As a result, these forces are more active in supporting and preserving their handy work. By contrast, human-made structures, such as gardens, parks, settlements, or cities rarely consider or adhere to the design template of nature. Therefore, the presence and activity of the natural forces are more limited here, compared to the pristine and unadulterated natural environment where one engages or communes more directly with unfiltered elemental energies. This, according to Knowing Ones, is what creates the more powerfully invigorating and

exhilarating sensation reported by many in such pure settings; although most people are unaware of this interaction.

What this empirical evidence demonstrates is that whether contemporary man realizes it or not, we are still a part of nature's ecosystem. The ancients, and a few who are still Spiritually aware today, recognize that each living essence that manifest in the forces of nature is inextricably linked to the physical and psychological wellbeing of human existence and experience on earth.

This expanded recognition can be understood using the following as framework:

Earth (Mother Earth), in this framework, is the source of life for all who live on her. She embodies stability, grounding, and longevity. As a result, connecting with the earth, through wandering in nature or interacting with items rooted in the earth, can elicit a sense of grounding—that is, being supported and "held" by something much larger than oneself. For example, the majesty of mountains, massive trees, and deep vast valleys compel a sense of recognition and spontaneous subjection to the power that created such grand and majestic results. This, for many, can lead to a deeper sense of humility, especially when they compare their life within the cocoon of their modern-day existence to the grandeur and longevity so clearly displayed by Nature. This feeling is reflected in the stated experience of smallness when visiting such huge and pure natural environments.

Water, in this framework, represents the flow of life. For the ancients, water's free-flowing movement represented purity. This is demonstrated by the fact that a moving body of water - ocean, lake, stream, or river - remains fresh and supports life, whereas a static pool becomes fetid and only supports decay and decomposition. Even the sound of running water (in rivers, streams, fountains, or the waves of oceans, rivers, as well as waterfalls) have a peaceful and stimulating effect.

This calming effect of water can be attributed to a type of psychic purification. It is as if observing or immersing oneself in flowing water removes negative emotional forces and tensions. Even modern man still feels the "psychological effect" of swimming in a river or lake or going to the beach. Also sitting and watching the river flow by or the rolling waves is known to have a calming effect on the emotions. This is something that many have felt, even if they are unable to explain why.

To the Ancients. Water was viewed as more than for cooking and bathing. It was seen as an essential medium for transmitting the vital power of life throughout the body and eliminating negative forces, for recycling. Modern Psycho-scientific thinking theorizes that the energizing connection between water in our bodies and the powerful vibration of the water elements in pristine nature is responsible for the feelings we experience when we are immersed, swimming or bathing in water, or even when standing next to a large body of moving water or simply watching a waterfall.

Unfortunately, many people today view water solely for its physical use or recreational worth, with little or no conscious knowledge of its emotional and psychic values, despite the fact that we feel it regularly, as is widely reported.

Air is an even less dense elemental force that, in this framework, provides life-sustaining energies and has a purifying function. Everyone understands that breathing is necessary for survival. There is also solid evidence that intentional and regulated inhalation and exhalation of air (popular techniques for yoga and meditation) improve mental clarity, focus, concentration, and can lead to increased consciousness or connectedness. *(However, one must be cognizant of the form of nonmaterial consciousness to which they thereby open themselves. The repercussions can be severe and devastating. Ignorance of the Spiritual laws at work here is not a reason to avoid repercussions.)*

The sensation of liberation and being energized, which is often associated with inhaling fresh air especially in pristine Nature is quite different from that experienced in other open spaces or even from being attached to an oxygen mask. This suggests that the reported feeling may be due to more than breathing clean air and must be due to something else.

As stated earlier, while Air cleanses the body and mind, it can also sharpen awareness and awaken the psyche through inspiration. Inspiration could, in this framework, also be defined as *the infusion or breathing-in of spiritual (energy) into an individual*. Thus, Air, as the lightest of the elements, acts as a reminder and connection to the finer, or less dense materiality of the human being and the environment. Therefore, it is understandable if the more powerful experiencing of Air in a nature reserve conveys the frequently reported sense of lightness and inspiration.

Conclusion

This brief expose has hopefully shown that the reported sentiments by many people, after visiting unadulterated nature, are actually the same when viewed from a psychic/Spiritual perspective, even if only expressed in terms of bodily or emotional thrills. As explained, the inner experience that causes the fundamental sensation can be traced to the interaction of the external forces of nature with elements of the same forces that are also functioning deep within the structure of our bodies. And these elemental components within us are merely resonating with the stronger presence of the same elemental elements in nature. The stronger the presence of the elements in the environment, the stronger the psychic connection that we feel. For many, all of this takes place unconsciously, being felt in the brain, or subconsciously in the emotions. A few experience this consciously in the Spirit. It is the differences in the levels of perception that account for the variety of experiences reported. That is, whether the feeling is expressed as being aligned with nature, a part of a larger order, or simply as a bio-physiological phenomenon.

Regardless, the sensation is known to prompt some to reevaluate what they previously regarded as most important in their life. If done consistently, such thinking can eventually lead to a desire to shift from a self-centered existence to one that aligns and fits into a much bigger totality.

Unfortunately, this introspection is often fleeting and dissipates for many as soon as they leave the park and especially when they return to their everyday routine. At best, some may look forward to their escape from the monotony of everyday life. However, for such people, the primary motivation for their holiday is usually excitement and distraction. So, even if they visit another nature preserve, and have a similar experience, the chances are that the outcome will be the same, and any spiritual takeaways will be quickly forgotten.

However, those who can allow the experience of nature's elemental forces to permeate deep within themselves enough to generate genuine conscious reflection may find this a crucial steppingstone to a far deeper inner awakening. Hopefully, the feeling of humility engendered by their experience at the park, as well as their awakening sensing of their interconnectedness with nature, may arouse a desire for deeper knowledge, which can then lead to a truly transformational and vitalizing regeneration of body, mind, and most especially Spirit. However, they need to be aware that if not careful, an awakening can also be channeled into more adventurous and extreme thrill seeking which is sometimes mistaken for developing expanded consciousness.

Hopefully, this brief excerpt from Abdrushin's **Grail Message** will shed some light about the existence and essence of the forces of nature. A deeper knowledge of this can then form the only path that will direct an awakening one to true Spiritual awareness and development.

"He who looks around attentively can frequently plainly see this fundamental image of all that is going on in Creation in his immediate surroundings, because the most minute is always mirrored by a reflection of the grandest.

Following this Paradise of Spiritual Substantiality is the Sphere of All Animistic Substantiality. This sphere is further divided into two sections. The first conscious animistic substantiality consists of the elementals and nature-beings, which include the elves, gnomes, nixies, and so on. These elementals and nature-beings were the necessary precursors to the eventual genesis of matter, which could only exist in tandem with animistic substantiality.

The elementals and nature-beings had to collaborate creatively in the growing World of Matter, just as they do now!"

"Matter was created as a result of the development procedure. This is separated into two categories: ethereal substance, which has countless subdivisions, and gross material substance, which, beginning with the finest nebulae, is visible to the naked eye."

From the lecture. – The Evolution of Creation (Vol. II)
In The Light of Truth (*The Grail Message*),
Abdrushin

This quotation confirms the wisdom and truth in the knowledge of the ancients. Also, the fate of the static pool of water that is separated from the moving body of water serves as illustration and warning against the fate of our modern cocooned lifestyle, which in many ways can be seen as rapidly cutting itself off from the free-flowing stream of natural life.