

A Heavenly Podcast

Sanford Baran: These are exciting and exhilarating days. What we are about is nothing less than the complete unification of humankind in alignment with universal cause. We're talking about the restoration of Man, the collective body, female and male, that is the rightful and trusted point of focus of the divine here on earth.

And how does this happen? Well to start with, spirit needs to put in an appearance through individuals. This requires sufficient spiritual maturity on the part of each of us to take full responsibility in expressing the tone in every moment of our day-to-day living. Full responsibility, by the way, means no excuses. And we hold ourselves accountable in this regard.

I think we see that it's not just a matter of understanding the principles of reality. And we're not here to ride on anyone else's coat tails. It pretty much gets down to what we each *do* in every moment. It's useful to ask, "Are my thoughts, words, and deeds of noble quality and do they carry the authority and character of our Lord and King, backed up by rich substance consistently generated in the course of my living?"

So yes, it all starts with the individual. And this is something presumably that we all are already involved in and have been for some time. But tonal manifestation solely at the level of the individual, is sort of like table stakes, the price of entry. It gets you inside the door but now the real work begins.

When we speak of Man, we're talking about a unified collective body, where the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. It's not just an assemblage of separate, spiritually noble individuals. The individual cells rightly start to come together to form higher cohesive structures having distinct and specific spiritual qualities and characteristics that transcend what a single individual can do.

But just as at the individual level, where there is the need for day-in-day-out practice and deliberateness to allow a consistent level of noble individual expression, so it is also when we start to work together. Practically speaking it's good to start small and build from there. (And by small, I mean groupings of maybe 2, 3, 4 people.) When we start working together it's not just a matter of being polite to one another and making sure that we're not stepping on each other's toes. What's key is discovering how we can develop a working relationship one with another so that as a small grouping we can begin to create together—synthesizing and

blending our varying ways of looking at things, our diverse talents, and myriad gifts that each one brings to the table.

I've been calling these smallish groupings *pods of collaboration*. Of course, we're already included in many such pods. For example, there are our immediate family pods, maybe extended family pods, work pods, social pods, volunteering pods, and of course pods on the basis of our spiritual associations of various sorts.

Now regardless of which pods we happen to be a part of, it's important to recognize that participation in any of these has tremendous creative potential. In fact, I'd be hesitant to say that one is any more important than another.

I've found that working in smallish groups has been a wonderful way to build real hands-on experience in the art of generating group substance. The fact is, it takes practice to work together, and in the process, things do come up. No surprise. In all of us there are remnants of ego, sharp elbows and past histories. It's easy to get hung up on this or that, to feel disrespected, to feel that you're not being understood. But as these things are recognized as minor distractions and are put into proper perspective, there is absolute delight in the experience of collaborating together, in creating together, in coming up with things that you never could have done on your own. Let's face it, building relationships takes time and work. It's definitely worth it though because what we're talking about is discovering how to work together in the flow, an essential skillset that is required as Man is restored.

Just this week I've been in the middle of some lively creative activity in one of my volunteering pods. Besides being a DJ at our local community radio station, I also sit on its Board of Directors. Truth be told, the Chair of our Board and I didn't particularly hit it off all that well at first. But gradually over time we grew to trust and respect one another, building a decent working relationship. It turns out that the station has been knee-deep this week in the process of trying to sell our existing building while buying another building tailor-made to our needs as well as being ideally situated in downtown Boulder. You can imagine that these types of commercial real estate transactions are quite complicated, with lots of moving parts, and can be a little unnerving as we try to gauge the risks involved in taking on such a major expenditure of funds. Fortunately, the relationships that the Board has forged one with another have proven to be indispensable in getting us this far in the process. And I have no doubt that our collective group substance will continue to be useful as we allow the right outworking to materialize, whatever that ends up being.

Another really fun pod has been the one John and I have been working in together over the last year and a half, our audio series entitled, *Time for a Story*, a blending of John's spoken stories with music. This has been a most creative endeavor and has required an ease and willingness in me

to loosen my grip—to let go of musical choices that maybe I was attracted to but really weren't working all that well. Yet by doing this, being totally easy about it, it opened up space for the exact *right* music to put in an appearance, that really did “nail it.” Boy, has that made a dramatic difference in the overall quality of what we've been able to produce!

Ultimately, it's not the physical things being worked on within a pod that are of primary importance. What really matters is how those in the pod work together, their ability to form creative working relationships, their ability to collaborate one with another, their willingness to be open to others' ideas and approaches, their ability to gracefully bring into the pod those unique factors that only they could bring. In other words, cultivating the exact skills needed to allow the organic formation of a larger spiritual body to thrive and flourish.

Well, now for something fun, at least we think it will be fun, but also slightly experimental. What happens when spiritually conscious people find themselves thrust together into smallish groupings, pods of collaboration? Want to find out? Well, how about we all divide up into Zoom breakout rooms, maybe four to a room for the express purpose of temporarily forming such pods? You'll only be together in these breakout rooms for twelve minutes, just enough time to exchange contact information. The real work begins at the end of today's teleconference, at which point you and your pod-mates are free to collaborate in whatever way you want. I'm thinking we let this go on for at least a month, and it's up to each pod to decide what they want to do together, write a collective poem, work up a piece of music, give a presentation, or maybe just simply get to know folks better who we're accustomed to only seeing as tiny Zoom postage stamps every two weeks.

And maybe sometime in a month or so, the various pods could check back in and we'll see what people's experience of these were. Could be interesting.

The really intriguing part of such an experiment is that on the surface the composition of these pods might seem rather arbitrary, determined by the “god of Zoom” so to speak, whose decisions are based in the way its algorithms happen to work. But I bet we'll find once we start working together in the pods, we'll discover very good reasons for being thrust into a particular configuration of folks.

I should mention that participation in this experiment is totally optional. Some of you are already quite busy, or there might be concern about email privacy, although I should emphasize that you'll only be exchanging email addresses with your pod-mates and will not be given anyone else's email address. Feel free to participate only if you really want to and have the time to do it.

So go forth now into your breakout rooms. You'll have twelve minutes. Join a pod if you wish and have fun with it. Upon your return to our main session, John will continue our consideration.

John Gray: Having returned from “Pod Land,” let’s swing back to our main theme.

We're all no doubt aware in a variety of ways that at every level of creation there are both integrative and disintegrative aspects to the creative process—substance coming together in new forms and substance being released from being held in forms—all the time. The cosmos recycles! Our responsibility as Eminent Ones in our human forms is to facilitate the creative process, to accommodate it, to enfold it, to love it, ultimately to have dominion over it in this realm of things—but not to identify with it. Anyone who holds onto what's passing away will go with it. It's right to welcome and support what's coming together—after all, there's a new earth taking form according to a new heavenly design—but even then, these long-awaited wonders are not who I am.

We recognize that what's happening, and wanting to happen more, is more than an individual thing, as Sanford emphasized. We say it's collective. But how do we get to an all-inclusive collective from here? Most of us and lots of others have lived most of our lifespans coming clear of a limited unnatural personal identity and have come to know ourselves as spiritual beings having an earthly experience. But I don't think we can somehow jump from this singular experience to a global whole, however. As hopefully demonstrated in our little experiment today, we first learn to function gracefully in small collectives—combinations of Eminent Ones in expression—in what Sanford called “pods of collaboration.” And we have many of these, as noted, from the personal/internal to the smallest, most intimate collectives, to somewhat larger pods of family and friends and social connections and work pods and on and on. We are each individually at the center point of these concentric spheres—none of them are separate and all are important. For each of us, I am the unifier of them; they are all one in me.

Let us be quickly suspicious of anything within our own hearts and minds, or seemingly coming to us from others, that attempts to convince us of separateness. This is judgment, we recognize, and it's a destructive habit. Paraphrasing a biblical reference, there is a day when the sons and daughters of God come to present themselves before the Lord—and for us, today is always the day!—and it's said, Satan comes also among us. Satan is not an external entity, or an entity at all. The ancient root of the word Satan means “he who separates” and is described by behavior: adversary, accuser, liar, objector, deceiver, tempter, divider.

As Eminent Ones, God Beings, we each come into the dimensional world through a single point—a crossover point, we say—and first grow and guide our personal faculties of expression, and then continue to emerge through them ever more fully. In the natural courses of things over time we find ourselves in numerous combinations with others—Sanford’s “pods”—some of which are lasting relationships, most others are more fleeting, and all are changing all the time. No matter how far-reaching we perceive our spheres of connection and influence to extend, we are at their

centers. As we come fully into the world our spheres become very large—in fact, nothing that belongs in them is left out. We fill the world with our Presence.

Our means of being present here and now—our human bodies, minds and hearts—have been gradually freed from the clutches and controls of “he who separates,” but this is not complete. In the process, they're tested by circumstances at every step along the way. Things arise in our minds and hearts, masquerading as external factors and forces and people, and every occurrence invites us to meet it as the Eminent Ones we truly are. In this way, and in this way only, we and the world are cleansed and made new from the inside out.

As Sanford emphasized at the beginning, our objective is to complete the creation of Man, female and male. We are here to be part of a work of full spiritual regeneration of humanity. As we know, to accomplish this, a collective body of individual bodies is required. At the finest levels this focal collective is small, but by reason of it the whole living earth may be returned to order and to beauty.

We play our parts in this by how we receive and deal with whatever arises closest in. Mostly through communication media we may look at the larger world of humankind and see global players behaving this way and that. But let us be careful. There are a lot of currents in the world that we have no business being moved by. We don't belong there. We care about the plights of people and delight in every noble act, but the most vital and consequential work is done right here at home, in ourselves, and in our close-in spheres of radiant connection.

We live in an example of this: Our physical forms are factories of creative processes, both ascending and descending. Eat an apple, for instance. For the apple material and its atmosphere, it's a disintegrative process—getting masticated and then acted on by enzymes and acids to break it down into smaller forms that are assimilable by the body. The substance that had been apple is lifted up to become part of my body. Whatever isn't useful is passed through and out of the body, and I do not mourn its passing! I'm happy my digestive system works; it is perfectly, functionally designed, but I am the Lord of my body. I care for it and keep it and love it as the living manifestation of my Presence.

Here in the United States, Election Day is this Tuesday, the day after tomorrow. This year, perhaps especially, emotions run high in all directions for millions of people. Zooming out from the political fray, however, and playing on some of those words, we might inquire of ourselves, “How united is *my* state? How do I *elect* to behave?”

Here we are in this wonderful world, to bless and uplift it, and to be not fooled by that which would deceive.

Following Comments:

John Gray: We can recognize that the body, the true body, the only collective body there is, exists. It's not something that has to be brought together. It is together. It's a matter of it becoming Self-aware. There's a collective Self-consciousness hugely vaster than the personal. How else may the spirit of the Lord Himself be accommodated and in expression on earth?

We experimented a little today in our pod exercise. Maybe it stimulated a bit of a new view of things and helped bring some theory into practice. We get to know the whole through pods of people who are close to us. While it was arbitrary and artificial to let the “god of Zoom,” as Sanford put it, connect us in quartets for a few minutes, for many of us it may be valuable and fun to give these pods a longer life. This is voluntary, of course, but I'm willing to roll with it and see what happens. Essences of the whole are touched in the parts. What we're about is the collective body becoming conscious again of the One whose body it is.

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Pre-Service Music:

Requiem æternam

Composed by Maurice Ravel and performed by The Choir of Royal Holloway

Concluding Music:

Something's Coming (from West Side Story - Original 1957 Broadway Cast Recording)

Music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and sung by Larry Kert