Part 2 Soul: The Question of the Existence of Moral Instincts in Humans—and The Human Condition

The following synopsis outlines the subject matter of Part 2 of the documentary. The views of biologists, primatologists and psychologists familiar with the role of nurturing in mammalian development, in particular the maturation of humans, will be particularly relevant for this segment. Opinions from anthropologists would also be sought, as would the views of philosophers familiar with the mythology of the human race.

SYNOPSIS

(Note to reader: All underlinings have been added for emphasis.)

Few can deny humans have a capacity for brutality, hatred and aggression, yet it is also true to say we have an exceptional capacity for love, kindness and compassion. It can also be said with certainty that humans have an in-built awareness that kind, caring behaviour is good and to be aspired to; after all, how could we have a sense of guilt, shame and recrimination about unkind thoughts or actions unless some deeper intrinsic part of ourselves felt at odds with such behaviour? Surely this personal experience offers irrefutable evidence that there is within us something opposing, and calling us to account for, such behaviour.

It is this issue of the existence of moral instincts in humans that forms the subject of this proposed part of the documentary series. Central to this enquiry is the question; if humans do indeed have an innate sense of morality, as it seems self-evident that we do, then how did we acquire it? What are its biological origins?

Considering biology's traditional emphasis on genetics as being a selfish, 'survival of the fittest' process, the biological origins of a sense of morality in humans has been an especially perplexing problem. How could a species selfishly driven only by the need to survive create notions of selfless morality? How does the 'selfish gene' theory reconcile with evidence of good in humans? How could a selfish motor create within us a sense of caring, selfless concern for others?

To address this question we need to reconsider our entire view of biology in light of what was explained in Part 1, namely the meaning of existence being to develop the order of matter on Earth, and humans' need to live in denial of any human condition-confronting truths. In fact we need to put aside our insecurity about our human condition-afflicted state and re-describe the entire biological process from a denial-free position that accepts there is a direction and purpose to existence, which is to develop the order of matter on Earth.

We need to assume integrative meaning, examine the fundamental ingredients in our world and see where the process of the integration of matter takes us.

To begin: our world consists of three fundamental ingredients—time, space, and energy, with energy taking the form of the 91 naturally occurring elements of matter. These ingredients are subject to the laws of physics. As was explained in Part 1, when subjected to the laws of physics, particularly the law of Negative Entropy, the matter in space and time became ordered or integrated. It formed ever larger (in space) and more stable or enduring (in time) arrangements.

This development of order of matter involved the initial mixture of the 91 elements and their gradual formation into stable arrangements called molecules. In time these became

organised or integrated into macro molecules. These macro molecules eventually became very complex, involving many different elements. The problem for the development of order was that the more complex these macro molecules became the more unstable they tended to be. Extremely complex macro molecules would only occasionally form and when they did, they didn't tend to hold together for long before again breaking down into separate parts. Eventually an impasse was reached where instability set a limit on how complex macro molecules could become. When this instability limit was reached it appeared Negative Entropy, or 'God' if we were to personify the process, could not develop any more order on Earth.

However one day in the primal soup a complex macro molecule occurred with an unusual property—DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid or, more accurately, its prototype RNA. What was unusual about DNA was that it could replicate. It could split and form two DNA molecules. The significance of this replication was that it meant DNA could defy breakdown. It could turn a relatively brief lifetime for a complex macro molecule into a relatively indefinite one. DNA's ability to replicate meant that even though some of the replicates disintegrated into smaller parts, others would survive and go on to replicate further. With slight variations called mutations occurring from the effects of solar radiation, replicates were 'found' that were even more enduring and complex. The process of natural selection of more ordered (more stable or enduring in time) and complex (larger in space) matter—and the origin of an indefinite lifetime, or 'life' as we call it—appeared.

From there, Negative Entropy (or God) was able to develop all the variety of life we see on Earth. From DNA, virus-like organisms developed, then from virus-like organisms developed single-celled organisms, and from single-celled organisms developed multi-cellular organisms. The next level of order to be developed or integrated by Negative Entropy (or God) was societies or colonies or ordered arrangements of multicellular organisms. It was at this point that another impasse occurred.

The DNA unit of inheritance is called a gene and the study of the process of change that genes undergo has been labelled genetics. This genetic tool for Negative Entropy, or God's development or refinement of the order of matter on Earth, was very powerful—it was able to develop the great variety of ordered matter we call life. Yet for all its effectiveness in integrating matter it had a particular limitation—it couldn't develop unconditional selflessness in individuals. If an unconditionally selfless or altruistic trait appears, such as the inclination to sacrifice yourself in defence of your group, then that trait doesn't tend to survive. Selflessly behaving and even self-sacrificing individuals don't tend to reproduce their genes. Unconditional selflessness disadvantages the individual that practises it and advantages the recipients of the selfless treatment—such is the meaning of selflessness. It follows that only selfish traits carry on from generation to generation and become established in a species.

This inability to develop unconditional selflessness posed a serious limitation for the genetic information processing ('information' because each individual represents a unit of information) or learning system (the system is 'learning' how to integrate) because in the process of developing larger and more stable wholes the parts of the developing whole must be able to develop the capacity for unconditional selflessness if the fully integrated whole is to form. As mentioned in Part 1, Arthur Koestler said that in terms of behaviour, **'the integrative tendency'** requires **'coordination'**. It requires that the parts of the new whole cooperate, which means behave selflessly, place the maintenance of the whole above maintenance of self. Put simply, selfishness is divisive or disintegrative while selflessness is integrative. Unconditional selflessness is the glue that holds parts of a whole together. For instance, the reason our body functions so well is because all the parts have subordinated their individuality to work for the good of the whole body. Similarly, many

trees survive the winter because their leaves are prepared to be dropped, sacrificed, throughout autumn. The old Christian word for love is **'caritas'** (see the *Bible*, Col. 3:14, 1 Cor. 13:1–13, 10:24 & John 15:13), meaning charity or giving or selflessness, therefore **'God is love'** (1 John 4:8,16), or unconditional selflessness, or commitment to integration. Selflessness or love is the theme of existence, the essence of integration, the meaning of life.

True selflessness, namely unconditional selflessness or altruism, where the welfare of the group is placed above your own, can't under normal circumstances be developed genetically. In this situation where each individual can't become a fully integrated part of a whole and has to carry on as a separate individual fighting selfishly for its own reproduction, the most cooperation that can develop is that of reciprocity, where one individual helps another on the proviso that they are helped in return.

The result of this selfish individualism is that members of a multicellular animal species end up competing relentlessly for food, territory, shelter and a mate. The more social or integrated those members become, the more that competition develops, until it reaches a point where no further integration can take place.

The question to be raised then is could Negative Entropy, or God, find a way to overcome this impasse to developing fully integrated multicellular animals—or had the limit to the amount of order that could be developed on Earth finally been reached?

The Selfish Gene 'Excuse'

It will be proposed that there have been two ways in which multicellular animals have been able to become fully integrated. However, before presenting these explanations it is necessary to re-examine humanity's need to live in denial of the condemning truth of integrative meaning, and all other human condition-confronting truth.

The main point argued thus far is that while genes behave selfishly, the genetic learning system is primarily concerned with developing the order of matter on Earth. In fact, as has been emphasised, genetic refinement gave rise to the great variety of ordered matter we call life. However, as a tool for developing order genetic refinement has a particular limitation, in that it requires traits to always be selfish since unconditionally selfless traits tend to self-eliminate.

Although genetic refinement is dedicated to integrating matter, humans' need to find an excuse for our divisive behaviour has been so great that we chose to ignore this greater truth and focus only on the fact that genes are selfish as a means to justify our own competitive, selfish and aggressive behaviour. Indeed an entire industry of denial has developed around the 'selfish gene' excuse. (If we could be honest with ourselves we would admit that our competitiveness and aggression is psychologically derived, as will be explained in the synopsis of Part 4 of this proposed series.)

The history of humans' misrepresentation of the gene-based learning system had its origins with the excuse that argued competitive and aggressive behaviour 'is only natural because, after all, we are only animals and animals are always competing with each other, fighting and killing one another. Animals are "red in tooth and claw"—so that's why we are.'

With the development of science this original misrepresentation of what is going on in nature, namely the integration of matter, was given an equally erroneous biological basis. It was referred to as Social Darwinism, the corruption of Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection as being concerned with 'the survival of the fittest'. As emphasised, the real concern or objective of genetic refinement, or 'natural selection' as Darwin originally termed the concept in his 1859 book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, was the integration or development of order of matter on Earth. Order is what