

The Way of Heaven

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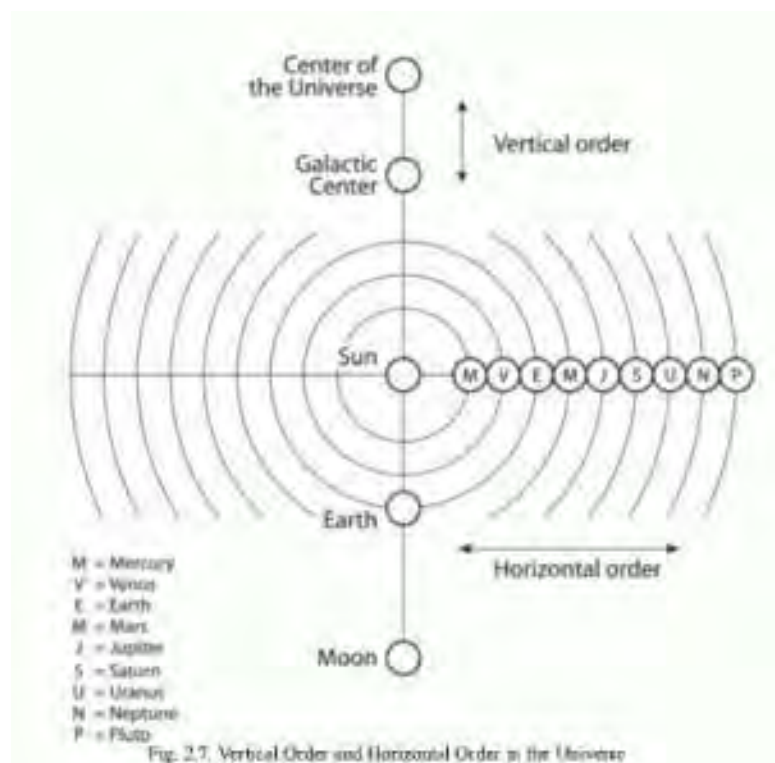


In the preceding article, I had introduced the concept of the “Way of Heaven” and that — for Unification Thought — it is exemplified in natural law, specifically in the observable vertical and horizontal structures in the universe.

Although the term “Way of Heaven” originates in Confucianism, and it sets the standard for human behavior, its meaning in Unification Thought is more explicit and precise. In the former, the term refers in a very general sense to a right way of living[1],

whereas in the latter, it refers specifically to the observable pattern of organization and relationship in nature, as expressed in the diagram on the right.

Harmony of the Universe



Unification Thought points out that the existence and harmony of the universe depends upon this underlying, invisible organizing structure, expressed through measurable laws of nature. Each heavenly body revolves around a higher center, and each of these centers in turn has its own higher center. This defines the “vertical” order within the universe. At the same time, in our solar system we observe that all our planets’ orbits share a common solar center, expressing a “horizontal” relationship between them — they are as companions to one another in the family of planets.

In the words of Unification Thought:

“Just as we can find in the universe vertical order (e.g., the moon > the earth > the sun > the center of the

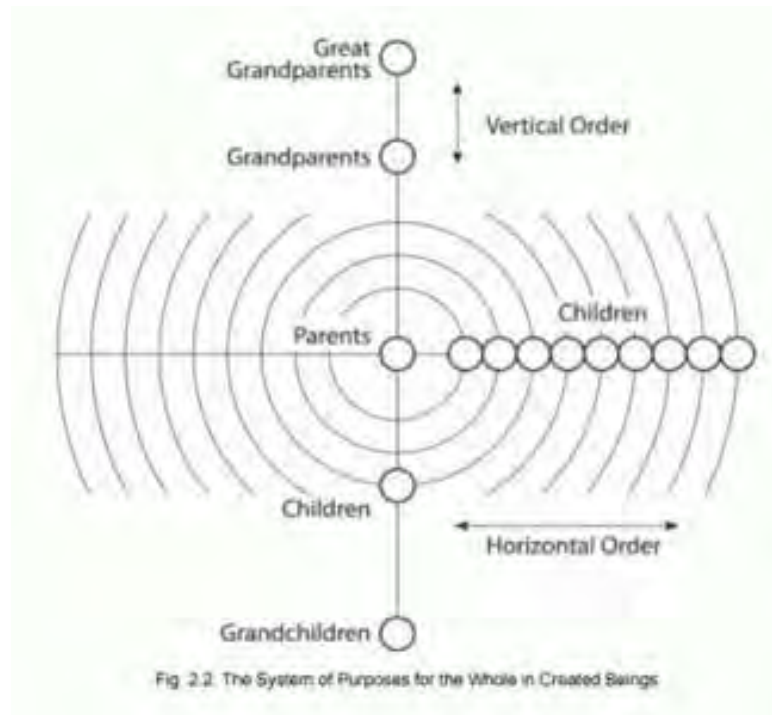
galaxy > the center of the universe) and horizontal order (e.g., Mercury > Venus > Earth > Mars > Jupiter > Saturn > Uranus > Neptune > Pluto), so too, in the family we can find vertical order (e.g., grandchildren > children > parents > grandparents > great grandparents) and horizontal order (e.g., husband and wife, brothers and sisters).”

Unification Thought then posits something quite remarkable: that the vertical and horizontal order within the universe is in fact derived from the original order within a human family. So that it is not that the order of a human family is based upon the organizing laws within the universe, but in fact it is just the opposite: the human family originates the pattern of organization for everything else that exists. As fantastic as this position might sound, it is in fact the logical extension of one fundamental position in Unification Thought: that the first created being in the mind of God before the creation was not the vast universe, but rather human beings and the family that they would form:

“...the conception that came to God’s mind was not that of a man and a woman in the abstract, but rather that of a specific man (Adam) and a specific woman (Eve), with their concrete individual images.... Next, God subtracted, or abstracted out, certain pertinent qualities and elements...whereby He could create the conceptions of the various animals. In like fashion, He subtracted certain qualities and elements from the conception of animals and transformed them, whereby He could create the conceptions of the various plants. Subsequently, He subtracted

certain qualities and elements from the conception of plants and again transformed them, whereby He developed the conceptions of the various heavenly bodies and minerals.”
New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 115–116

Order Expresses Love



Returning to the ideas of vertical and horizontal order, they form the necessary structure within the family for the many kinds of virtue; and each of these expresses a unique nuance of God’s love:

“The various ethical virtues corresponding to such ordering are vertical virtues, such as the benevolence of grandparents and parents, and the filial piety of children, and horizontal virtues, such as the conjugal love between husband and wife, brothers and sisters’ love between brothers, between sisters, and between brother and sister.”
New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 284

There is one last kind of “order” in the Way of Heaven that our star and its

planets embody: *individual* order. Simply put, our earth rotates on its own axis, a behavior which allows it to sustain itself and all the life it contains. In the same manner, an individual person maintains their own inner integrity by observing moral law and practicing moral virtue. Unification Thought states:

“...harmonious give and receive action must be made between the spirit mind and the physical mind.... The norm of behavior in forming this... is morality. Therefore, morality is also in accord with the Way of Heaven.... Moral virtues include such virtues as purity, honesty, righteousness, temperance, courage, wisdom, self-control, endurance, independence, self-help, fairness, diligence, innocence, and so on.”
New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 285

Heaven leads “the way”

In conclusion, Unification Thought brings a new and needed clarity to the Asian concept of the “Way of Heaven” — it extends it and also reflects the scientific understanding of the present age. We can look at the breathtaking images from astronomical observatories, or from the Hubble telescope, and appreciate that an underlying order permeates the universe. And we can then contemplate that this beautiful order was derived from the concept of the human family. It makes me think Lao Tzu was indeed on to something when he said that we needed to return to the Way (the *Tao*); and that Confucius also was correct in his assertion that humanity needed to grasp the Way of Heaven (*Tien*).