

BOOK SUMMARY

The Purpose-Guided Universe

by **Bernard Haisch**

Is there a purpose behind the Universe? Is there a grand purpose for our lives? I address this head-on from the perspective of a well-credentialed astrophysicist not affiliated with any dogmatic religion but with a keen interest in and respect for non-sectarian spirituality.

Of course many of the criticisms of religion are valid. Preaching a hateful, anthropomorphic, intolerant God is an abomination that we would do well to outgrow. But there is a vision of God and the Universe that is highly credible and totally consistent with science. I called this vision "The God Theory" in my first book. I go into greater depth in this book and discuss recent observations and experiments in science which while not proving that this vision is correct, nonetheless point in that direction. I also present summaries of mystical experiences by a medical doctor, a physicist and a young hermit and propose that these be taken seriously as data. There are six major themes.

1. There does exist a coherent belief system that is common to the inner, esoteric parts of all the world's major religions. It is called the Perennial Philosophy. It is as old as religion itself and was brought to modern audiences by Aldous Huxley in the 1940s
2. It is now a well established fact in astrophysics that our Universe is amazingly fine-tuned for the origin and evolution of life. There are two possible explanations. There exists a multiverse of unseen purposeless universes so that our "special universe" is just an accident of statistics. The alternate view is that there exists an intelligence with a purpose who set our Universe off and running with just-right laws of nature to lead to life in the Universe, presumably on many other planets, not just here. This has nothing to do with Intelligent Design. In fact Darwinian evolution is proposed to be a necessary process for the transcendent intelligence

to achieve its purpose of life-forms arising in which its consciousness can have physical experience (such as us!).

3. A new experiment in quantum physics by a prestigious research group strongly supports the view that consciousness creates reality at the quantum level. As reported in the widely read British magazine *New Scientist*, "Rather than passively observing it, we in fact create reality." Consciousness creating reality is a central concept of the Perennial Philosophy. The Universe is a manifestation of God's thoughts.
4. Physics is rapidly being replaced by Biology as the premier science. This will lead to a very different perspective on what constitutes "real science." Biology is intrinsically not as neat, tidy and reductionist as physics. This will shrink the gap between science and spirituality.
5. Consciousness is the very basis of the Universe. Our own consciousness is a manifestation of the transcendent intelligence who thought the Universe into being which is the meaning of the phrase "Thou art that." As astrophysicist Sir James Jeans wrote in the 1930s: "The Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine."
6. The forced choice between materialist, reductionist science and a belief in a purposeful universe is a bogus one. It is perfectly possible to have faith in Einstein, Darwin and God. In fact, it is arguably the most rational interpretation.