

Destiny (to Carlos)

“Predetermined state; condition foreordained by the divine will or by human will; fate; unavoidable lot; doom; as, to be reconciled to one’s destiny.” Websters Dictionary

Michael J. Shea, Ph.D., 2025

“only one koan matters, you” – Ikkyu, Fifteenth Century Zen Master

Part 1

Destiny is a consolidation of numerous identities that we establish in a lifetime starting at, but not limited to, conception, and ending at, but not limited to, the moment of death. Our death is foreordained. Each identity is an ignition, a beginning and an ending, an addition or a subtraction that shapes our destiny to become a full human being or something less than. Our very first identity with a physical form is when light is encapsulated by matter in the five elements at conception. Light called a zinc spark is embedded with our biological story of the embryo and fetus. Our embryonic morphology and it’s four stages are identity imprints of a particular physical process of growth and development that becomes sequential. These four steps of compression, expansion, centering and unfolding each manifest a broad spectrum of metabolic possibilities of constant flow. All cells within the same lineage unfolding in each of these four metabolic identities are not the same. In some cells, the cell nucleus carries remnants of ancestral diseases while other cells not at all, especially in the first week of compression. Our embryonic metabolic identities conveniently fit into four categories yet the spectrum of expression in the unfolding construction of a human being is vast. Even identical twins do not develop in lockstep with each other, nor do they die from the same disease. Several years ago, it was very popular on the Internet to see that the chance of reaching a healthy old age was 1 in 400 trillion. Reaching old age is not a special destiny given the suffering associated with the aging process. It is a precarious metabolic fate.

Every human being expresses these four biological identities differently because the timing of each differentiation is unique for everyone. Unique differentiations are also based on the milieu of each embryo in terms of its relationship with the placenta and with the mother, and with the mother and the universe she lives in. There are some common patterns and stories that allow us to organize into like-minded tribes during life. We are a tribal species behaviorally and each of us expresses bio-individuality. The truth is we are all different and life is about you managing your identities that shape your destiny. At the end of the embryonic period we enter a prolonged phase of unfolding. Humans do not manifest a specialty for survival at the end of the embryonic period. Our specialty is the constancy of unfolding during all phases of growth

and development. Midwives and mothers will hold newborn babies that allows the baby to unfold its growth potential. Every client we have in our biodynamic practice we hold in this potential for their unfolding a destiny shaped by divine will, the light inside of us. And it is only a potential as numerous identities can create obstacles that shape of very different destiny.

Biological identities gained in utero achieve additional identities, Add-ons like grafts in the lifespan, during and after birth. Social identities continue development perinatally. Caregivers shape our social identity as the body’s anatomy and physiology undergoes a radical transmutation with even greater encapsulation of the light. These social identities are conditioned by family, friends, culture, environment, education, religion, and our own personal relationship with our conceptual mind as we grow. We collect so many identities and stories to get through each phase of life. We also collect habits. More recently there is the phenomena of *identity theft*. Our basic identities are rooted in our prenatal biology and then our perinatal anatomy and physiology after birth. All these identities are conditioned or imprinted by a constant flow of dynamic and kinetic information. There is also, however, a spiritual identity present from the beginning. It is light. The spiritual identity initially exists at the subtle level and persists from conception and before depending on your religious and philosophical beliefs. As the Dalai Lama said, there are over a thousand spiritual aptitudes generated by beliefs and views of how the universe functions. Our unique spiritual identity is an aptitude for how much light we can directly experience without outside interference. That doesn’t mean that we need to collect more religions and spiritual practices, it ultimately means that every human being can gain direct access to the sacred, the luminosity of the **Breath of Life**. It is innate and always present. Accessibility to the Breath of Life is available every moment of every day we live. It is the conditioning factors, the Add-ons to our personality and various identities wrapped inside our personality that distract us from the open skylight.

Our spiritual identity is timeless and takes form at conception. That is one of the manifestations of light, the Breath of Life. In Tibetan Medicine and Tibetan Buddhism in general, the heart chakra (spiritual center of the body) is the fertilized egg or zygote. This single-celled human being that we are

for a day or so after fertilization is the heart chakra, the spiritual template and scaffolding upon which our physical heart is built. Embryos, fetuses and newborn babies have one thing in common, they are all breathtakingly beautiful. They are adored by any onlooker even viewing human embryos under a microscope. Raymond Gasser, Eric Blechschmidt's co-author of *Biokinetics and Biodynamics of Human Differentiation* said this when I interviewed him and published it in my Volume 5 *Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy* (p 17): "Watching the one-cell, fertilized ovum give rise in eight short weeks to nearly 95 percent of the named structures in the adult body is probably the most fascinating single event in my life. Witnessing this miracle take place has convinced me that only a higher power could bring this about. Rather than viewing development regionally or systemically in isolation from the rest of the embryo, as heretofore has been traditional, it is now possible to view developing structures as part of the whole embryo (i.e. wholistically)."

Embryos are divine as stated in Psalm 139:
 You guided my creation into this world
 You placed me in the waters of my mother's womb
 And I am humbled because of the exquisite way
 you shaped me
 I do not doubt your power!
 And this I know in the stillness of my heart
 Where your presence dwells.
 You saw my body being formed
 From elements deep in the earth
 Weaving together a splendid fabric
 Before I was born you knew everything I would
 become.

In depth psychology, the newborn child is always considered a Christ child, every human being has a potential to manifest the mind of Jesus in their own heart. That is what is witnessed when looking at a newborn baby; that heart felt level of possibility and potential. There is a lot of anatomy and physiology that must ignite properly to more fully manifest such a destiny. Thus, we graft more identities in the life process that are cultural, familial, economic, and so forth that filter or obscure our spiritual identity. And although our destiny might not look divine in its making for example when going through a divorce, however the manifestation appears, is under the guidance of a higher or deeper power as suggested by Raymond Gasser. The embryo is movement and flow constantly adapting to its environment. There is no better answer other than giving yourself to your own life and to be completely engaged in your destiny from the inside and outside. The Zen master Kodo Sawaki says in his book *To You* (2021): "Everything has its own identity, which is unsurpassable in the whole universe."

We lose all of our identities at death except the one we began with, the heart chakra, our spiritual identity. The heart chakra is consciously available at the moment of death through concentration on the clear light of the Breath of Life located in the physical heart and brain. However, death occurs in a social context, there are bereavement identities with observers and those participating in your dying process. The grieving process is a powerful identity and a lonely one. It is an expression of more differentiated identities that can manifest over time by an observer that include sadness, sorrow and depression. Compassion fatigue is one such common identity. And then there is the identity of those who are closest to the dead person. There is an identity called *unbearable sorrow*. Unbearable sorrow is one of the Seven Sorrows of Mary in the Catholic tradition. Anyone who has seen Michelangelo's *Pieta* and studied it can only grasp a fraction of what unbearable sorrow must be like.

These are profound psychospiritual and psychophysiological states. Research into broken heart syndrome is clear that the left ventricle of the heart is the part of the heart that's most greatly affected by the mourning process in the context of Western medicine. In the mystical traditions of Eastern religions, the chambers of the heart are given spiritual names. Individual structures of the heart, vascular system, and blood are also given spiritual names and spiritual identities that are attributes of God or Buddha or the Tao. The Muslim tradition has 99 names for God all around the heart. These traditions see the human heart literally as the domain, a palace and residence of God, of Jesus, of Buddha nature, of Shen. That's completely amazing! It is possible to realize, participate in, and revere our heart in the life journey. Heaven on earth could be blissful, and that destiny is promised in many traditions in the East by adoration of the divine and care of the heart with its sacred essence.

Our potential destiny then becomes how these accumulated identities have shaped our life path for achieving direct experience of the divine. Knowing that the divine is already located inside the human heart and such divinity is distributed by the blood to every cell in the human body means it is always close by. And all other sentient beings by the trillions are included that live in our body helping our cells, tissues, organs, and systems. This is a heroic journey to achieve such a destiny knowing that any time this destiny can be thwarted and our fate becomes a prolonged illness or sudden death. Kodo Sawaki says: "Hey! What are you looking at? Don't you see its about you?"

Part 2

With such a spiritual identity there are many protocols and antidotes to assist in the achievement of lasting happiness. They all require a turn inward with contemplative lifestyle. Everyone is expressing it differently through the mixture of their own developmental identities decade after decade. We all know the ups and the downs of emotional expression and personality styles linked to strong emotions such as anger. I've always felt from one of the first teachings I received in Buddhism probably 25 years ago, that forgiveness is a critical virtue for clearing some roadblocks to the clear light of the Breath of Life in the heart. I've been working very hard since learning that to seek forgiveness from those I've offended or betrayed. I have a 100% service-related PTSD disability with the Veteran Administration (VA). I work hard on healing this PTSD and know that forgiveness must be concurrent with healing one's trauma. Even if I get rebuffed, I make the effort and then I can go through the process of forgiving myself. Forgiveness must be turned inward upon oneself. That includes all the regrets that we picked up along the way based on our behavior and habitual patterns. Healing trauma and expressing forgiveness are life-long endeavors.

Forgiveness is connected to the quality of letting go. And we let go with the exhalation of our breath. That tunes the Vagus nerve in the heart and improves its heart rate variability (HRV) quality. This especially improves the heart's ability to experience deep joy and extreme pleasure. We let go with the exhale just as we do at the moment of death, the ultimate surrender. There is a gap in between exhale and inhale where the clear light can be seen and sensed.

Letting go is carried into practices of letting go of irritations and uncomfortable emotions that are inconsequential or unnecessary to continue in that moment especially at death. There are many more of those daily brief irritations than the ones requiring a sit down and talk with somebody. So, the letting go process is also mental; having to do with thought patterns that generate emotions. From the thoughts come emotions and then concepts, the figuring out of "who shot John" and why they did it. More stories and identities are easily fabricated on the spot. This is completely unnecessary unless you're a highly paid lawyer working in the legal system. Letting go requires the ability to stop. To pause and zero out thoughts, feelings, emotions, and concepts is a divine rite. We need help expressing a full optimal human destiny that is already inside us and readily available with refined attention skills that allow us to stop and let go, preparing for death.

It's normal for us humans to harbor tremendous amounts of grief and sorrow inside of ourselves which we have been saving over a lifetime. It takes tremendous effort to start chipping away at this cache as soon as possible. As Zen master Norman Fischer says in his book *Sailing Home* (p.40), "No matter our circumstances, life is inevitably a series of sudden or gradual losses punctuated by periods of respite that are actually just staging areas for the losses still to come." Our minds keep interpreting change as conceptual such as good and bad, right and wrong and so forth. Letting go is letting go of duality where there is no reference point of good or bad. There is just open awareness of constant flow inside of us and simultaneously the constant flow of change externally in all that appears to our senses. It is now called **Awe**. Our senses can perceive awe at any time. And with such awe comes gratitude. The science of gratitude says it will help us live longer with a better quality of life. Is that interesting to you? Is less suffering good? It is up to you to decide and no one else.

Life involves the pruning of life biologically. The first precept in Zen is the contemplation: *the support of all life involves the taking of life*. The human embryo generates a vast amount of cells to use as building materials for the body in the first 8-10 weeks and a majority of those cells aren't used. They are simply pruned or let go of into the metabolic waste removal system or the nutrient delivery system. When they break down, they also contain vital nutrients that are flowing within the pre-vascular system of canalization zones delivering nutrients. Everything has the capacity of being recycled in the human body. **Autophagy** is the process of recycling waste products or removing them from the body because of their toxicity. At the molecular level, waste removal is a much longer process than the nutrient delivery to every cell in the body. It's hard to get the waste products out and it is time-consuming. Autophagy requires a pause from eating for longer periods of time. It involves a minimum of 12 hours between dinner and breakfast. Managing up to four or five days of fasting optimizes the waste removal systems in our human biology. These are biological identity nuances mentioned earlier. Constipation is a difficult biological identity. Thus, our spiritual identity has always been supported by taking care of our biology in Eastern medical systems.

It means we know how to self-heal metabolic wounds and trauma in our body. As a result of the absolute depletion and degradation of soil and human nutrition in the past five decades, a lot of help is needed to affect a repair and the adaptation necessary to sustain a change in lifestyle overtime. Preventing death is impossible. There is the possibility of avoiding or reducing excruciating and

invasive medical procedures used at the end of life to prevent it from happening in Western medicine. It's a noble aspiration and barbaric beyond belief in so many cases as well as a leading cause of death itself. We can build another identity, a story, a different a narrative about detoxification lifestyle. We've been told over and over that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Then take care of it as naturally and with as much kindness as possible. Build respect for the irony life presents.

In the Eastern spiritual traditions, there's a reference to the Lord of Death. This is an innate identity we have that observes the process of death and dying of billions of cells happening every moment in our body. It prepares us for the inevitability of our own physical death. We all have the thought when we are stricken with an illness, maybe this illness is the harbinger of death. Maybe this illness is the one we don't come back from. This identity of the Lord of Death is the management of fear. We overcome the fear of death by the practice of letting go with our breath first, then our thoughts, then our body. The Lord of Death is directly related to the instinct for self-transcendence. This consciousness is already present and there is no need to wait to form a relationship with such a powerful instinctual figure inside of us.

Most of the identities that we've established over our life have some doubt and seem only partial. In order to navigate the phases of our life it is necessary oftentimes to build an identity we did not intend to have because it includes a degree of deception which got us from one place to another in life. We have many stories including the true ones but also the doubtful ones and even the false ones. And as Norman Fisher says (p. 47) "We need to tell the truest story we can find for the life we are living now... As long as we are alive our story is always doubtful because it is not over yet." And the Lord of Death is a true identity linked to the destiny of manifestation in our innate being.

One of the chief byproducts of awakening the instinct for self-healing is that sensory pleasure can increase. This is a major identity that we all grapple with. Pleasure has a bad reputation in some spiritual traditions and yet ultimately is linked to an exalted spiritual experience such as Tantra in Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. Pleasure is powerful. It is a powerful motivator of human behavior. It also has the edge of being a moral wasteland. The point here is that our biological metabolic identities, our anatomy and physiology, and a spiritual essence in the heart are present from the beginning. It just makes good sense to me to practice contemplative disciplines and make all

of our life's activities a contemplative practice. As is said, "Jesus is coming, and you better look busy."

The four noble truths, the first teaching of the Buddha, represents the spiritual path for Buddhist practitioners. It is a medical metaphor. The first truth is a diagnosis, there is suffering. Many people interpret this to mean that the Buddha said that all life is suffering. That's incorrect. Just look around, there is suffering. There is also joy and pleasure. It is in balance and certain contemplative practices lend themselves to seeing this seeming paradox as non-dual. God is everything and consequently everything is equal. And just to complete this story of the four noble truths, the second truth is the prognosis. There is a way out of suffering into lasting happiness as a spiritual practice. The third truth is the medicine which is contemplative practice especially meditation. And the fourth truth is the fruition of healing and lasting happiness built on non-conceptuality. This is bliss... heaven on Earth. Kodo Sawaki says: "Originally, everything is empty and clear."

Identity is an adaptation. Between our biology, physiology and heart, life experience causes us to adapt. Human beings are the most adaptable of all species in terms of our biology, physiology, and spirituality. Unfortunately, adaptation sometimes becomes debilitating with habitual patterns that create a sarcophagus, a solid cocoon, burying the light. Our body metabolism is in a constant flow, constant movement under the direction of the human heart in which all three levels of identity come together forming a destiny that is always open-ended. Humans are also the trauma species. We specialize in that. And adaptation is frequently a healing response. We can outgrow a trauma identity. We can make it a good friend and respect it. The burgeoning field of trauma resolution has many antidotes being experimented with. Many antidotes are merely grafts that take or fail once again. Healing is trial and error. Laying on of hands is my ministry and that's where I'm focused with a light, the beginning of unfolding one's destiny.

Our biological identities and spiritual essence present from the beginning form the core of who we are and how we embody our destiny. Social identities from culture, family and so forth are grafted onto our biological and spiritual core. They can either hinder or enhance a destiny of becoming a full human being. To become a full human being in many cases requires a strong prenatal biology. I have many grafted mango trees in my grove, grafts also have to be placed on strong rootstock. And sometimes our biology is weak from the beginning and at the same time the spiritual essence is strong. Those with a weak root stock prenatally frequently have a foot in both worlds, the world they

came from and this earthly realm. They are true healers, avatars and hugely compassionate beings here for a brief time to teach us. I learned this over and over again in my 45 years of pediatric craniosacral therapy. One's destiny can be fulfilled soon after birth.

A contemplative discipline is needed to manifest an integration of our identities, albeit always incomplete, until death and even then. Our truest human destiny has a potential to express deep internal wisdom and a deep external compassion for our planet that is present eternally. As we age, we must gradually let go of unnecessary identities allowing our inner radiance to shine. It is more like coming home to something that was present at the beginning. And death is a coming home. Exhale. Let go. Relax into the light. Kodo Sawaki says: "Some say, 'Zen means having an empty mind, right?' You won't have an empty mind until you're dead."