

New Gods, New Gravity

By Peter Kornis

“The punishment of God, the Creator, is upon us!” thundered the Preacher from his pulpit. “You have sinned! You have neglected your duties towards HIM! Therefore, you are now feeling HIS power! He can make your burden much heavier or much lighter! Repent now before it is too late!”

Marfa was listening to this sermon with fear in her heart. She was frightened because the Preacher was right. His words were almost law throughout the whole COMMON section. It happened a few days ago. Everything got heavier during the day while getting lighter during the night. The work in the hydroponic farm and the house was getting excruciatingly hard. Even the primary element of her weight was varying. In the past, during ‘normal’ times her weight used to be ninety pounds. Now during these hard times, she weighed at noon one hundred and thirty pounds, and at midnight she weighed only forty-five. Even before the ‘punishment’ it had been very challenging to make her lazy teenage children work. Now it was almost impossible. She only was puzzled by one fact: God’s punishment was hard upon the working people during the day while favoring the sinful entertainments of the night. Both her son Alex and her daughter Sandra were up all night going to the dancing club. They told her that they could almost fly on the dancing ring with their reduced weight. There was another aspect to this phenomenon. Marfa blushed when she thought about this. Sex at midnight got more exciting than usual because of the reduced gravity. Her chubby husband found new positions during which he lifted her up in the air. Was God’s message that they should conceive more children? Did he revoke his command of having only two children per person? Should she consult privately with the Preacher on this issue? Finally, the sermon ended. Everybody got up from their seats while doing with their fingers the holy sign of the circle. Marfa left the house of prayer, remembering her first visit fondly there as a little girl. It was her first Religion class when she raised her tiny hand to ask the Religion teacher a question.

“Why do we have to make the sign of the circle?”

“We do this so that God will protect and bless us.” the teacher answered patiently.

“This is also what my parents said. But why the sign of circle and not something else? Like a thumb up for instance?” the little girl insisted.

“We do the sign of circle because our world is shaped like a wheel. This is how God created it.”

“A wheel? I heard stories about the world being shaped like a ball.”

“Those are ancient stories from before time was recorded. It is obvious that they are not true” the teacher explained further.

“Why?” insisted the little Marfa stubbornly.

“Did your mom show you that huge column in the middle of our sector?”

“Yes, of course.

“Did you see its upper end?”

“No. It is impossible to see it. During daylight you cannot see it because the glare of the sun and at night it is too dark.” little Marfa answered.

“That column my dear is one of the many spokes that connect our world to its center which is the sun,” the religion teacher said”

“I was told that the sun is scorching,” the girl insisted. “Why does it not melt down the spoke?”

“That my dear is a miracle of the Creator. We should accept and enjoy the Creator’s miracles” the religion teacher said in an intonation which implied the end of the discussion.

“I understand.” Little Marfa acknowledged.

Since that discussion, Marfa never questioned her religion again.

When she reached her family’s cabin, she found her daughter Sandra in a bad mood which was very unusual. Sandra was always cheerful in the mornings and with a positive outlook on life. In her mother’s opinion, the Creator has been generous with Sandra. She was a good looking athletic teenage girl with natural blonde hair and beautiful green eyes. In addition to that, she was also brilliant. Her school record was off the charts of the COMMON sector.

“I broke off with my boyfriend, Greg! He is so stupid!” Sandra told her mom.

“Why do you say that? You used to like him. He is quite a good looking boy.” Marfa tried to placate her.

“His only ambition is to be a supervisor at the hydroponic farm like his dad and raise a family,” Sandra answered.

“What is wrong with that?” intervened her dad Eugene who just entered the room.

“You are as limited as he is!” Sandra snapped at her dad.

“Why are you talking like this?” her mother asked.

“I want MORE!!” yelled Sandra “I want more from life than working like my dad on a bloody farm! I want to study and see more!”

“Darling! Almost everybody here in our sector works at farms or with livestock!” Marfa argued

“Mom! There are also other sectors! In those other sectors, people must do different and smarter things than farming! My mind will shrink with only farming, cooking, and childcare! I want to see other sectors in the world and study more before I settle down!”

“Thank you for calling us all stupid!” Her dad retorted.

“Sweetheart! Our daughter is very clever. This is what all her teachers have always said since she was only a toddler.” Her mom intervened. “Let us see what we can do for her! We can petition our Sector Director. I am sure that her school headmistress will endorse it.”

“All right!” answered her dad fondling his beard thoughtfully. “It will not be easy. Do you recall what they told us in high school?”

“What are you talking about?”

“I am talking about the “Global Balance.” It is about balance on two levels. The first level is about our total world population. Given that the fact that our wheel world is limited, nobody is allowed to have more than two children and they have to be one male and one female. Only if some individuals die without having had any offspring, then some couples get special permission for a third child.”

“So what?” replied Marfa “That is also one of the Creator’s Teachings. What has that to do with our daughter?”

“As I was saying, there is also a second level balance, and that is the balance between the sectors of our world. Each sector must maintain its demographic level. Ours is a farming sector. If its population decreases, who will feed the rest of the world? If the “Engineering and Technical” declines, who will maintain and produce our machinery and comms necessary which we use every day?”

“Dad, I heard that there is also a “Defense” sector. What are they for and what do you need them for? Nobody is attacking us.” Sandra asked.

“They maintain an Army for unexpected attacks from Outside,” Eugen answered.

“Outside of what?” Sandra insisted “No sector is attacking us?”

“The Creator’s teachings mention that our world is not the only world HE created,” Marfa answered this time.

“Are these worlds ‘OUTSIDE’? And where is this ‘OUTSIDE’?” Sandra insisted.

“We don’t know.” Both her parents admitted in unison.

“Interesting ...” Sandra mumbled

“We should exercise more and harder! It seems to me that during the last period we all turned soft.” General Siegfried said.

“What makes you say that?” colonel Helga, his second in command, asked “I had the troops running through the whole DEFENSE section all day long! We also had fighting contests during the night!”

“I do not question, your resolve, Helga. However, the hint from the god of Valhalla is clear. They want more. How else would you explain the fact that we are heavier during the day?” Sigfried replied.

“That is true. But we also are lighter during the night. How do you explain that?”

“There is a time for work and exercise, and there is a time for rest and fun. Work hard! Party hard! This is the message of Valhalla as I understand it. If you fight for during the day, then you can have fun at night! At night, one should go and party with the opposite sex and drink wine!” Sigfried concluded.

Tim was tired but content. After a hard day of running and fighting, he could finally settle down and do some reading on his tablet which he downloaded the day before from the library. His pals from his battalion used to ridicule his preference for reading alone to drinking with them at the pub. However, they kept their jokes light and friendly because they all respected his strength and his speed. What his comrades did not know, was that most of his reading was about math, physics, and philosophy. He enjoyed a lot the abstract side of Sciences because his work and training were very physical and materialistic. This day, however, he encountered an unexpected obstacle. When he tried to download the first volume of ‘Introduction to Relativity,’ his cabin terminal printed the message below: