I looked out the window at the big Mesquite bush growing there, probably a hundred or more years old. The folks who built the house didn't disturb it, so it has been there forever. I thought how dull and boring it must be to just be a plant, even a Mesquite, just stuck in one place. Then the Mesquite somehow objected to that line of thought, and started to talk to me about its life – and I started writing, intrigued, and it gave me a new look at life. From the Mesquite -

I am rooted. I am here, where I am, and I'm not going anywhere.
I am clearly of the ground, of the earth
I live and die right here, with the things that come to me
I am more than you see. My branches reach out over my area
My roots extend over a similar space, wide and deep into the ground

I am like other life forms, but different
I have senses, a few, but they are strictly utilitarian
They help me to know of the changes in seasons, the weather
They help me adjust to the presence of water or food
They alert me to the presence of my animal friends
I have no needs that are not met right here, every day
My needs exactly match what I have and what I get
There is no overhang of unfulfilled wants - I don't even have the concept
Can people understand that?
I don't get hungry - I just consume what is available as I need it
Sometimes I could use more if there was more, but whatever is
Sometimes there is more than I can use, but I don't use more
It is all perfectly right - what is, is right
From a people viewpoint, could I wish for anything to be different?
No, but what if I did?
Can I make it rain? Can I make the sun shine more?
Can I relocate to another area which looks better, to me?
Since I don't have either the ability to change things or
The ability to hold the concept of things being different
Perhaps a person would say I am happy the way things are
That brings us to the point of having happiness on the one hand
And acceptance on the other
To understand this, it is necessary to find a description which clearly has only one version
If it is Happiness, then it is the other side of Unhappiness
If it is Acceptance, then it is the other side of Rejection
It is neither because, at least in part, there is no Other Side
It just IS, and that's all there is to it, or ever will be
We have to work with the concept of a one-sided coin
And that's good for life
There's no feeling good about it, No feeling bad about it
No wishing it would change or stay this way forever
It just IS

For people, it might be something like living with "The Sky is UP There"
It isn't sometimes Down Here It is just UP There
People don't often spend time wishing the sky were somewhere else
After all, where would it BE if it weren't Up There?
So they don't worry about it. They don't wish it were different
They don't even think about it being different, or how it is
It just IS It's the Sky, that's how it IS
For a Mesquite bush, that same situation covers every aspect of life

That simplifies things a LOT compared with human life
No alternatives, No choices, No worries about how things are going
Things don't go WELL or BADLY or HAPPILY or SADLY
They just GO
It's very simple, but very powerful
As a Mesquite bush, I live a life much as defined by many philosophers
I have no desires - life is as it is in all respects
I have no need for recognition, honors, awards, appreciation
My life is fully contained and goes on
I have no problems with any aspect of my existence
I didn't say Happy - just no problems
In fact, I don't even understand what "Problem" means
I live peacefully and cooperatively with my neighbors, and they with me
We are, after all, parts of one another's lives
My life began as a seed that sprouted in a place that would sustain my life
Here I am, many seasons later
(Note, I measure time in seasons, the only thing I notice)
I will continue until something happens
I have no concept of what this might be
Or when or how
It will just occur as part of what IS and we move on

Some look at Mesquite bushes out in the desert and think their existences are isolated
In fact, there is a lot going on
And although I don't have anything to worry about, I do have things to do
Like humans, plants have duties, too
And we know Mother Nature and are directly in touch with Her
As part of the totality of my life, let's consider that for a minute

I watch people now and then and get the feeling that
<u>People are trapped by their freedom and senses</u>

Mother Nature comes to see me now and then when She feels like a visit
And any time I ask Her to drop around -
I may be "Just a dumb plant" but She and I are good friends
In part, perhaps, because it is so relaxing for Her to visit here
None of that jumping around all over the place that people do

And this is a more complex life than many appreciate from just looking in

There is me - the Mesquite bush

I am the hub of activity in this immediate area

I am the largest, most stable living thing around

All of my nourishment and water and sunlight are from right here

Most of my life sustenance is from the ground and the sun

There isn't a lot for me to do on a daily basis

Most of the things are taken care of automatically

My systems are simply designed and tuned to get along with what IS

Not much chance of getting along with What ISN'T, is there?

So I make sure all the bits and pieces are in good shape for the seasons

Spring the leaves come out to harvest the sunlight

They make energy to generate the seeds

After the leaves come the flowers to start the seed work

The flowers bring the bees to carry the pollen around

(I have no idea where the bees come from or where they live, but they always show up when it is time for them to show up)

The work of the bees starts the seeds growing

At the same time, a couple of bird types show up to build nests

I am able to provide them safe, strong places to build

The cactus wrens are the most common and we get along well

The seeds grow out in long pods with 10 or 20 seeds in each one

The birds build their nests like deep tunnels

And they lay their eggs and start sitting on them

For myself, the main bush, as the spring goes along, I grow a bit

Not a lot - the desert is a slow-going place

But I extend my branches a bit here and there

If something broke off during a winter storm, I start to replace it

Things are set to reach a size then maintain that size

I can reach just a certain amount of food and water and sun

That helps to get established with what IS ought to be,

And then to stick with what IS

It might be a useful note of comparison again that this is a difference from people, at least in some areas of their existence and development

I live here – I don't have any real Freedom to change any of that

I am rooted, I don't move around

I depend for my existence on the food and water available to me here

I depend on my little area remaining fertile and friendly to me forever

I take care of my area and it takes care of me - we are ONE and the same

Strictly speaking, I am a lot of the "Life" in my area

Some think otherwise - it is just rocks and sand and chemicals

But in fact the area is teeming with other life

Other plants, from just smaller to single cells

Some fascinating micro-cacti and such

Many animal types from tiny ants to cattle

Bunnies, birds, snakes, rats, mice, coyotes, squirrels, worms
It's a busy place
And for every single one of us, from smallest to hugest, it just IS

To understand the lives of every living thing in this area, we need to start with the clock
Every living thing has a clock which keeps time on some basis that matters to that being
The clock has a degree of regularity or accuracy
It has a standard that is its basis, rooted in nature
It has a set size of time increments that it divides up into
It can stay the same over years and years
The importance of the clock to us is that our internal functions have to be in synch with the actions of Nature, so we all work together
It wouldn't do for the bunnies to give birth in the heat of the summer or for me to produce a crop of seeds when those who eat them have gone into winter hibernation
The critters and plants in my area have a clock, or various clocks
But none of them are gadgets like people have

For most of us, our clocks "tick" in seasons
Using people terms, the "tick" of the clock is the smallest unit of time
Our clocks are all based entirely and exactly on the coming and going of the seasons
TICK and it's Spring
TICK and it's Summer
TICK and it's Fall
TICK and it's Winter
TICK and it's Spring again
The seasons could be amassed into years, perhaps, as people do
But there is no purpose to that, for us
The years are all pretty much the same, so we let that go
Each tick of the clock is determined by the length of the days, the temperature, the amount of sunlight - just what's going on
People count seconds and up to days and months
They force the time to be what they say it is
Independent of the conditions of nature
They say "It's the 1st of April - is it Spring, yet?"
I say "It's Spring - I wonder what day people think it is"
When my clock ticks to a season each time around, it IS that season
Because that's what makes my clock tick
What year, month, day, and hour it is, by a people clock or calendar just doesn't matter in the least
I think the key to the differences is that the way we measure time is directly related to what matters to us
What matters to me - to all of us in my area - is What IS
Our measure of time measures the seasons - What season it IS
That is the key to the rhythm of our lives, so that is what we measure
And since that is directly part of the larger structure of Nature

And since we are directly embedded in that Nature structure
We just measure to track our rhythms
What if we look and see we have the wrong time?
That can't happen - the time is what IS not what we decide
What if we think it should be some other time?
Again, we are just keeping track of Mother Nature
What do we DO in response to what time we measure?
Nothing. We are overdoing things by concentrating so much on the idea of time in our lives
I meant to introduce the concept only as a way of comparing the speed or precision or control of the passage of time on our lives
And to contrast the human way of tracking time as independent from Nature and important to impossibly small increments and accuracies, and unimaginable large collections of years and eras and eons -
With our gentle awareness of seasons, as Nature brings them to us, as they set the rhythms of our lives,
And that's all.

Enough except to say that there are some plants in my area that have rhythms that are not strictly seasonal.
The major cycle of life for a plant coming out of winter is -
Sprout leaves
Sprout flowers
Form seeds and spread them
Drop leaves and flowers, ready to start over
For most plants, this cycle repeats with a step each season
We count on the weather and such being right on time
Others like the Ocotillo, go through this cycle very quickly
They can do one in what people would call about 3 weeks
Then they are ready to do another
The next one will be set off by the next rain
And on they go
Just an illustration of the variations even in basic rhythms that we do have - but still driven by Nature, not the clock

Back to the comparison of us, the plants and animals in my area, and me, the Mesquite, and people with respect to time, maybe we can think of -
We don't really have time, and passage of time, we just have what IS
We think of time in a sense in terms of seasons
Like a person asking "What time is it" and the answer is "It's spring"
That works fine for us
If we had a calendar to track the days and months
And we decided what season it was according to the calendar
We could get terribly messed up
Spring is NOT a time - it is a condition

A stretch between winter and summer when the general temperature is in a certain range and the days are of a certain length and we get a general amount of rain - in other words, Spring is when Nature is acting like Spring
If we had a calendar, sometimes spring as set by Nature would come at one place on it, sometimes at another
In fact, people know that sometimes you hear "Spring is early this year" or "Winter is late, don't you think?"
That's how people think, and the way they arrange their lives
By the clock, by the calendar
NOT by Nature - they just observe how well Nature sticks to their schedule - or not
For us, Nature is all that matters - that's what IS

Now people have lives to lead, like we all do
But they set their schedules in their own way
We go strictly by Nature because that's the schedule that determines when we get our food and water and do reproduction and rest
We don't control when those things happen - they happen when Nature says
We don't have to be concerned with schedules and making things happen
They just DO They are just what IS
That's about as relaxed as you can get
If I were to think it was somehow time for summer
But Nature hadn't brought summer around
I would never get worked up about that and try to figure how to make it summer
I have no control over that whatsoever - It's not my job
I just stay relaxed until Nature works it out and summer arrives
And then my summer activities get rolling
Not sooner, not later, not according to some calendar
Not according to what some other person wanted to happen
Do you begin to see how these differences get to the very root of how we are?
And how we are different?
And since all the critters and plants in my area run the same way - by Nature's clock - we stay all in synch.
When the birds are ready to build nests in my branches, my sap is running and the branches are supple and we are all ready to go
If we were not together I might have leaves and flowers all over the place, and the birds couldn't get in to build
When the bunnies are hungry and have little ones to feed and need my seeds to eat, my seeds are ready - ripe and falling on the ground.
If we were not in synch, my seeds might not be ready for eating when the bunnies needed them, their babies would go hungry and my seeds would not get spread around to be the next Mesquite bushes.
We gotta stay together, and if we just go ahead and let Nature call the shots, there's no way we're going to wander off schedule

But people have things happen when they want them to

Some go by Nature, and wait around for Nature to get them going
But most go by the calendar or the clock
People disconnect from Nature
They set their own schedules
They take a lot of their lives out of the hands of Nature
People want to set their own schedules
I will just keep this short for now by observing that -
People put themselves in situations that make themselves NUTS by demanding that they, not Nature, take over all the scheduling
Then trying to keep everything ON schedule
And having to figure out what all the schedules are and how they relate and overlap
And then they keep time in these teeny tiny increments
For them it's
When shall we do this? April 10, 9:15 am. Please be on time
For us it's
When shall we do this? It will happen in Summer

For us, living a life regulated by Nature - by what IS - makes having things at the very center of our lives go in rhythm in the most relaxing and carefree way.
It sets a tone and way of life for everything else that is just fine

For people, living a life regulated by artificial measures of time, NOT by Nature, means a constant requirement to stay on top of things, keep things on track, be on time
It sets a tone and way of life that causes people to lose track of what's important and to spend resources in the wrong places
Seems likely to me that a lot of the troubles people have is due to their insisting that they take the role of Nature in setting the way things happen

An observation -

Water runs downhill.
That's what water does
Just leave water alone, anywhere, any time, and it will run downhill if it can
If you don't want water to run downhill, and it's on a hill, you gotta stop it
If you want water to run uphill, you gotta force it to

If your job is to get water to run downhill
You got an easy job
Just lead the water to the hill and get out of the way
Come back in a few days or weeks to check on things
In between, take it easy - not to worry

If your job is to get water to run uphill
You got a hard job
You need channels and pumps and dams and pipes

You need energy and power and motors and engines
You need to pay constant attention because the water is fighting you all the way
You get no rest - you can never relax

In a similar way, for setting up the way things run -

If your life runs according to Nature's schedule
You got it easy
Relax and let it roll
Just look at the sky to see "what time it is"
If you want the clock to tick over, come back in a while

If you want your life to run according to YOUR schedule
You got it tough from the git-go
You can never relax
You got to always watch the clock
You can never take it easy

If you can take it easy about the rhythm of your life
You can take it easy about your life

If you are going nuts trying to force the rhythm of your life
You will be having problems in ALL parts of your life

It's relaxing to be a Mesquite, or one of the inhabitants of our area

<u>It's gotta be nuts to try to do things like people.</u>

(It occurred to me – Bob – later that the Mesquite must be bored to tears; but the Mesquite looks at my People life and thinks I must be going crazy with all the maddening activity.). Back to the Mesquite -

We have no concept of ownership of any of the things in the area
And "the area" changes according to the one of us looking at it
For me it is just where my roots are and the spread of my branches
(The "area" and "ecological system" etc came later to be "the Creation")

Do we live each for himself or
Do we live for all of us together

We out in the desert have no concept of one being better or having more than another
All the bunnies have the same, are the same, live the same
All the Mesquites, coyotes, worms, gamma grasses, quail
Some of us battle for safety and security of our families
We do make territory there
But we all know we depend on one another

We cannot afford to contend with one another in a harmful way

If I, as a member of this area, start thinking "This is Mine"
Then we need to figure out "Who am I"
If I "own" something, how would that work?
I'm just a bush, a tree
How would I take possession?
And, to be sure, this is all in terms of possession for the sake of possession
You can watch a family of quail gathering seeds under my branches
The Father will chase any potential predators away right now
He is very protective of his family
But "Protective" is the right word - not "Possessive"
That Father feels "I am responsible for the safety of those chicks"
In a more basic sense, "I must see that those chicks grow up to replace me and make sure there are more quail"
But NOT "Those chicks are MINE and no one else can have them"
Nor does he attempt to take the chicks of another family to add to his
It would be a way to amass a larger family, but that is not what is going on

Back to basics, we each have our duty to do
And sometimes it involves the protection of some of our flock
Almost always as part of the entire reproduction cycle
Just to keep our type going and growing
In my case, I share everything because I must or I cannot live
I depend on the renewal of the resources in my immediate area
I draw my food and water from the same ground for my lifetime
If that ground was not renewed, the nutrition I need would become used up and could not support me within a few cycles of the seasons
I would deplete the nutritional chemicals and organics
I would not have the water increased
I must draw the animals in to the ecosystem I help create and maintain
They spend part of their lives here, under my branches
And we both prosper as a result
It all goes in cycles, mostly in the rhythm of the seasons
The bunnies come in the spring to get my seeds
They eat the seed pods and are nourished
They carry the seeds to their baby bunnies just growing at that time
They pass some of the seeds through their systems and bury them in their burrows
Those seeds are well planted and set to grow into new Mesquites
Not many make it, but that's how I reproduce
My cycle depends on bunnies - and birds and others to carry and spread and plant my seeds to grow more Mesquites
They dig burrows into the ground that later lead the rainwater to my roots rather than having it run off to somewhere else
Then the seed pods that are left, and my leaves that drop, decay around my area
That makes a rich soil for other seeds to grow

I have all sort of grasses and other small plants taking root under my branches
They thrive for their short life cycle
Partly feeding other animals who come in
Partly making more seeds to expand their presence in the area
The bunnies come in the hot summer to rest under the shade of my branches
They dig a bit into the cooler earth and get respite from the heat
It's not a big thing, but important to them
If not for me - and other leafy bushes like me - they would be very uncomfortable, maybe even in trouble with the heat

The coyotes come in to catch an occasional bunny for food
The bunnies understand
And they leave their spoor as fertilizer
And they clean up the carcasses of animals which die naturally
The predators - the coyotes and foxes and snakes and hawks all are part of the population control which we depend on so no one group overruns the whole territory

The cattle come along
They are not here naturally - people have brought them but turn them loose
Over time they find their place in the area, in the system of things
They like to rest in my shade and graze on the grasses that grow in my coverage
When they come around they are so large they stir the ground which helps the composting of the many kinds of organic matter
And they add their own manure to the mix - a welcome addition
Remember that all becomes food for me
For the next turn of the seasons or after that, but eventually
And without it, eventually there would be no more food for me

As the composting material progresses, it attracts others
Beetles, flies, worms, and bacteria that all help the material break down
I don't know where they come from - they just appear
I don't have to call them or schedule them or give them a ride
But they are certainly welcome
They all prosper by being able to exist in the richness of the composting soil
And they help my future - and the future of all of us

Going through all of this - the structure of the whole thing takes shape
No one owns anything here
There is no concept of "mine"
There is no concept even of "My" or "Me"
I am telling this story using "I" as though I were a person
But that is just so I can relate this to people, in their terms
There is not really a Mesquite bush named "Me" in this area
Just a leafy, branchy part of the totality of life
When we go back, really, to this area there is only one way to think about it
It is all one thing and includes every living thing in it

Or that wanders through it
Or flies over it
Or swims through it
It is an area with very fluid borders
Placed next to other similar areas with similar outlines
It is an ecosystem where every resident has a part, a duty
Every part must work together for the good of all
But there is nothing else that we CAN do
We just ARE in the midst of what IS

The area or ecosystem is centered around a large feature
Like a bush or tree that contributes to and depends on the area
I have attributes that feed the area and keep it functioning
Because I cannot move and must depend on the viability of the area for my life
For many many turnings of the seasons
Instead of me, it might be centered on a spring where water is always available
Or a creek or arroyo which has water in it on regular occasions

The vital concept is that this whole area of ecosystem is a Creation
It belongs to no one
None of the plants or animals that live in it or around own any part of it
They don't even have that concept
But each of them understands in a built-in way their duty to keeping it going and their ability to depend on it to keep themselves going
This Creation is directly responsible for the continued lives of the plants and animals that live within it, contribute to it, and depend upon it
IF any one of those parts of the Creation got the notion that
THIS PART IS MINE - No One Else Can Have Any
The whole thing would come apart and fail
Perhaps in just a few turnings of the seasons
IF any of those parts of the Creation got the notion that
I CAN HAVE MORE THAN I NEED of anything
IF there isn't enough for others, too bad

It must be understood that the Creation is based on Balance
Everything depends on everything else
And the ratios and processes and natural order are set up as part of the whole thing to make just the right amounts of everything and at the right times
It runs along magically, maintaining balance, so long as every part does its part
If some part of the Creation upsets the balance
By taking or using more than its share or more than it needs, for instance
Others will not be able to get their share
And balance will be disrupted
Once the balance is disrupted in any part, it spreads to all parts
The whole of the Creation becomes threatened and may die
You can find places around the desert where areas of Creation have died

For unknown reasons, they lost balance and could not maintain

The first way for this to happen is for the concept of "ME" or "MINE" becomes part of the behavior in the Creation
Which goes with ownership and putting things out of balance

How can it happen?

A common case has come with the cattle - and not their fault, really
Here is a case that has happened many times -

Some cattle are introduced into an area to graze
They find the shade under my branches welcome relief in the summer
So they take up spending time there
That keeps the bunnies and birds from coming in, as normal
The cattle find they can eat my young branches that are in their reach
But next spring, those branches would have produced leaves and seeds
So the seeds are not as plentiful as they were before
And the bunnies can't get the food they were counting on
And the cattle have spent too much time under my branches
And the ground is packed and there is too much manure for good composting
As a result, the grasses and smaller plants are not able to survive and go through their cycles in the Creation
And the small animals cannot find the food and shelter that used to be there, so they are forced to look elsewhere
And now the imbalance starts to spread
The smaller animals that had to leave the Creation around me look for food and shelter in other Creations
But those Creations are set in balance for the numbers and types of animals and critters that belong there
The strangers coming in disrupt that balance and things are upset all over the place

Our Creation depends on all of us understanding the ideas that
It only works if it stays in balance
It only stays in balance if every part, every plant and animal, every bug and bear, does its part - its duty - together with all the others
Once balance is lost in any part of the whole of Creations, it is threatened everywhere

The only way the Creations can sustain is for there to be no concept of what people call "ownership"
And that means not even a concept of what people would call "individuals" distinct from other "individuals"
Which generates a concept of some individuals being "better" or "more deserving" than others
And individuals wanting and striving to have more than others

Each, every, and all of the members of the Creation must understand that there is nothing but ONE

There is not a bunch of critters and plants, all separate and countable
There is just ONE, with many parts

And all those parts can be seen
But they are all part of the ONE
They all survive together
They all depend on one another for SURVIVAL
Each of them has their duty to perform for the survival of all

There is no concept of Ownership

The Creation does not BELONG to all of its resident parts
It IS all of those parts
It is ALL ONE
That is the only way it can be conceived
It is the only way it can survive

I don't know people

I write this note trying to explain how things are for the critters and the plants in the areas of Creation that we inhabit
I have used the "I" to try to communicate better, but
There is no such concept in our Creations
There is not even a "We" because "We" is a collection of "I"s
There is just the feeling and understanding that there is no separation that comes between any of us

People might not understand the idea of birds being a part of the Mesquite bush - but they are
And the hawks and the bunnies are parts of the same life

The only way we can ever deal with the idea of who or what the living part of the Creation is, is ONE.

One part of ONE can't be hurt without hurting all
One part of ONE can't do well without all benefiting
When the Creation is affected in one place, it is affected everywhere

I believe, further, that this is the correct and only viable way to think of, to regard, the Creation that we live in

It is all, each, every, and totally ONE
There are no parts, nothing of it that can operate independently of the rest of it
It seems to be the way of people to look at Creation a different way

They start with the basic belief that each of them is an independent, self-identified, stand-alone PART of Creation
They continue to believe that each of them is capable of owning and controlling parts of Creation

Without regard for the rest of it
Without understanding how it is all tied together as ONE

But no matter how they work on these beliefs,
IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE TRUTH of the ONE
They can think of it any way they like
They can call it anything they like
They can treat it in any fashion they like
And that doesn't change it
It is still the same as the area around me, the Mesquite, out in the desert
There is not really a me - just ONE bunch of stuff all living together
The whole world is the same

Does it matter, how people think about the Creation?
Sure - and in time it will all work out
The key is - people are going to think about it and mess with it, but they are NOT going to change it
They will eventually come to understand it as it is - just ONE
Remember that time is also a different concept here and there
For me, a tick of the clock is the passing of a season
Years and eons in people time are much shorter for me
It will all work out

I hope that explanation gets at least some of the idea across
Trying to move ideas without underlying concepts is hard
The basis of language is not there to serve us
We need to have shared experience to put names to so we can talk about it
In this case, I am not sure we have the shared experience
We'll see.

Lean back, relax, and give it a try

Best/Bob