

PLUS: Ray Kurzweil Andrei Codrescu Cheri Huber Ken Wilber Pierre Teilhard de Chardin



what is

# enlightenment

redefining spirituality for an evolving world

do you want to

# LIVE FOREVER?

*Grappling with the science & ethics of immortality*



Issue 30 Sept-Nov 2005

US \$7.50 CAN \$9.50 UK £4.95

EUR €8.95 AUS \$13.75 Incl. GST



[www.wie.org](http://www.wie.org)

# We're Saving

404

trees

188,584

gallons of  
water

317

million btu's  
of energy

23,841

pounds of  
solid waste

46,822

pounds of  
greenhouse  
gases

 what is  
**enlightenment**

is printed on 100%  
recycled paper

supplied by New Leaf Paper



 what is  
**enlightenment** magazine

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Andrew Cohen

**Managing Editor**  
Craig Hamilton

**Senior Editors**  
Carter Phipps  
Jessica Roemischer  
Elizabeth Debold

**Associate Editors**  
Ross Robertson  
Maura R. O'Connor  
Tom Huston

**Copy Editor**  
Ellen Daly

**Creative Director**  
Will Rogers

**Art Director**  
Mary Herrmann

**Associate Designers**  
Paul Bloch  
James Conrad  
Nathan Del Signore  
Nancy Hoffmeier  
Jennifer Olmstead  
James B. Re

**General Manager**  
Wren Bernstein

**Administrative Asst.**  
Jan Stewart

**Production Associates**  
Judy Fox  
Jorin Hawley

**Research Associates**  
Amy Edelstein  
Debbie Wilson

**Proofreaders**  
Dana Pasila  
Jeff Bellsey  
Brad Roth

**Publisher**  
Robert Heinzman

**Marketing Director**  
Sridhar Pingali

**Advertising Director**  
Elisa Mishory

**Advertising Sales**  
Rob Sidon

**Media Relations**  
Hope Cohen

**Volunteers**  
Brian Rittenhouse  
Laura Mae Jackson  
Aniko Szocs

*What Is Enlightenment?* is dedicated to a revolution in human consciousness and human culture. Guided by the evolving vision of founder Andrew Cohen, we are in search of a radical new moral and philosophical architecture for twenty-first-century society. We believe that finding this framework for transformation—rooted in the timeless revelation of enlightenment, reaching toward a truly coherent ethics for the postmodern world—is imperative, not only for the evolution of our species, but for our very survival. By asking the hard questions of the new science and the ancient traditions, of art and culture, of business and politics, *What Is Enlightenment?* seeks to create a dynamic context for conscious engagement with the greatest challenges of our times, a groundwork for the ongoing liberation of human potential.

*What Is Enlightenment?* is published quarterly by What Is Enlightenment? Press, the publishing house of EnlightenNext, a nonprofit organization.

For general inquiries call 413.637.6000 or email [wie@wie.org](mailto:wie@wie.org)

## Subscription inquiries or address changes:

*What Is Enlightenment?*

PO Box 9010, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9710, USA

Tel: 888.837.7739, 413.637.6000, Europe: +44.207.288.7000

email: [subscriptions@wie.org](mailto:subscriptions@wie.org)

**Subscribe and renew online:** [www.wie.org](http://www.wie.org)

## Advertising:

To advertise in *What Is Enlightenment?* call: 413.637.6003 or email: [advertising@wie.org](mailto:advertising@wie.org)

Printed in the USA on recycled paper.

©2005 EnlightenNext Media. All rights reserved.



*What Is Enlightenment?* Issue 30, Sept-Nov 2005 (ISSN 1080-3432) is published quarterly for \$24 per year by EnlightenNext, PO Box 2360, Lenox, MA 01240 USA. Periodicals postage paid at Lenox, MA and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

*What Is Enlightenment?*

PO Box 2360, Lenox, MA 01240

**Image Credits:** Cover and p.57 by Ogden Gigli; pp.5, 58-59, Ray Kurzweil, by Michael Lutch, courtesy of Kurzweil Technologies, Inc; pp.5, 82-83, Future City, courtesy of I Dream Stock; pp.5, 114, 117, 124, Peter Ragnar, by Tony Balistreri; p.43, painting entitled "Kissing," by Alex Grey; p.16, painting entitled "Exorcism," © Archivo Iconografico, S.A./Corbis; p.18, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (#850042); p.20, Salman Ahmed of Junoon performing in Dubai, courtesy of VivekMEHTAphotos@avant-consulting.com; p.21, Salman with Tanzil and friends, courtesy of October Films; p. 22, Salman signs autographs for Tanzil and others, courtesy of October Films; p. 22, Salman with electricity man, courtesy of October Films; p.23, man listening with headphones, © Randy Faris/Corbis; p.24, Osho, © Associated Press AP/Jack Smith; p.24, Osho Shailendra, Osho Priya, Osho Siddhartha, courtesy of Oshodhara; p.25, Sri Aurobindo, courtesy of Sri Aurobindo Ashram; p.25, Matthew Fox, courtesy of Matthew Fox; p.30, Cheri Huber, courtesy of Cheri Huber; p.42, Barbara Marx Hubbard, courtesy of Barbara Marx Hubbard; pp.6, 100, Ken Wilber, courtesy of Ken Wilber.

**Editorial Credits:** p.12, Deepak Chopra quotes in Andrew Cohen editorial, from *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire* by Deepak Chopra, Harmony Books, 2003; Codrescu article: p.75, quotes on twins studies, Ruth Levy Guyer, from "Mind's Eye: Into the Mirror," *Potomac Review*, Fall 1999; p.77, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*, Mary Shelley, 1818; p.74, William Zink poem, *Riffs from a New Id*, Sugar Loaf Press, 2004.



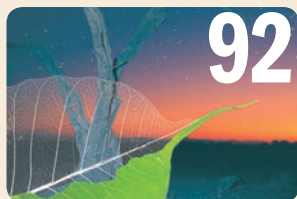
# contents

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Do You Want to Live Forever?

#### Exploring the new science of immortality

As scientists race to unlock the secrets of aging, the once-esoteric quest for immortality has suddenly gone mainstream. But are human beings actually ready to step into the uncharted waters of everlasting life? *WIE* investigates the promises and perils of the emerging technology of radical life extension.



**Ray Kurzweil**

#### 58 **Chasing Immortality: The Technology of Eternal Life**

One of the world's most respected futurists and inventors explains why he's convinced he'll be around to see the 22nd century . . . and the 23rd . . .  
*Interview by Craig Hamilton*

**Andrei Codrescu**

#### 72 **Against Immortality**

This renowned poet, NPR commentator, and filmmaker confronts the ethical and philosophical implications of science's bold quest to achieve power over life and death.

**Robert J. Sawyer**

#### 82 **"We Will Be the Lords of Creation"**

Who better than a science fiction writer to imagine the unimaginable? Join this acclaimed author for a wild look at the extraordinary potentials available to a society freed from death.  
*Interview by Tom Huston*

**Connie Barlow**

#### 92 **Even the Heavens Are Not Immortal: An Alluring Vision of Death**

If we manage to do away with death, what will become of life? An evolutionary biologist makes a plea for embracing our mortality as a natural part of the evolutionary process.  
*Interview by Craig Hamilton*

## FEATURES

### 50 **Politics as if the Future Mattered**

Can European activist Jakob von Uexkull create the most influential global political entity in history?  
*by Carter Phipps*

#### THE GURU AND THE PANDIT

### 100 **A Vow to Live Forever**

Embracing the tension between the finite and the infinite

*Andrew Cohen and Ken Wilber*

In their tenth dialogue, Cohen and Wilber deconstruct the "immortality projects" of the human ego and present a striking new vision of eternal life.

#### BEYOND LIMITS

### 114 **If You're Conscious, How Can You Die?** **Peter Ragnar**

Whether it's breaking world records, talking with animals, or even cheating death, no task seems insurmountable to this modern-day Taoist wizard.

*Interview by Andrew Cohen*



# contents

## DEPARTMENTS

### 9 Letters

### 12 Editorial

#### Sky to Street

*news from an emerging culture*



#### 14 Step Inside the Digital Universe

Entrepreneur Joe Firmage has a cosmic plan for the future of the internet.

*by Tom Huston*

#### 16 Exorcism Makes a Comeback

From the silver screen to the Vatican, these days demonic possession is all the rage.

*by Maura R. O'Connor*

#### 18 An Indestructible Spirit

A poignant celebration of the life of evolutionary pioneer Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

*by Joe Orso*

#### 20 A Musical Mission from Allah

Can a Pakistani rock star strike a new chord in the hearts of Islamic fundamentalists?

*by Carter Phipps*

#### 24 PULSE: Catching the buzz from global leaders, thinkers, teachers, and mystics

The clan of Rajneesh; Matthew Fox and other heretics; the theosophy of Blondie; communal time travel; and more.

*by Carter Phipps*

#### 30 Pulpit: Cheri Huber

Enlightenment Is the Easiest Way in the World to Live  
A Zen teacher explains the tried-and-true requirements for ego death.

*An excerpt from an interview by Jessica Roemischer*

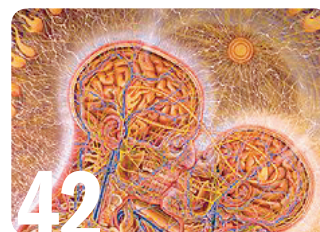
#### Voices from the Edge

*presenting the visions and values of a new global culture*

#### 34 Elizabeth Debold

##### Toward a New Women's Liberation

In her second article on the absence of women at the leading edge of cultural change, this pioneering gender researcher calls for an evolutionary elite to continue the work of women's liberation.

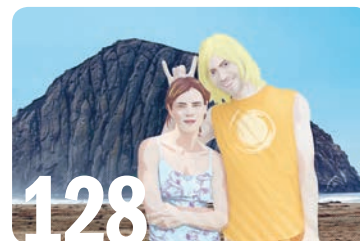


#### 42 Barbara Marx Hubbard

##### Sex, Immortality, and the Future of Women

Could sex be the key to a miraculous new stage in women's development? The grand dame of the "conscious evolution" movement reveals that pleasure and procreation are nothing compared to the *real* potential inherent in human beings' favorite pastime.

*Interview by Jessica Roemischer*



#### 128 Evan & Ella: A 21st Century Love Story

We interrupt our regularly scheduled installment for a special news report.

#### 130 Natural Selection

Reviews of books, film, and other media

#### 144 Enlightenment for the 21st Century

##### The Eternal Declaration

*by Andrew Cohen*





Issue 29  
June-August 2005

## MAGNIFICENTLY MATERIAL CREATURES

In "Is God All in Your Head?" Craig Hamilton writes, "The great specter of brain science is that it will demonstrate that we are merely conscious organic machines, that all our experience and behavior originate in the brain." To escape the threat of mechanism, Hamilton argues that the reductionist explanations of mainstream science are inherently flawed, since they deny the mystical intuition that higher consciousness exists beyond the material realm.

But any good scientific explanation of experience and behavior will show precisely how higher-level capacities for consciousness, choice, and the sense of self emerge from lower-level, materially instantiated mechanisms. That such capacities are built entirely on insensate matter doesn't threaten their existence or worth. Rather, it shows that matter isn't so "mere" after all: properly organized, it's all we need for consciousness, amazingly enough.

The New Age "frontier science" that Hamilton cites in defense of psi phenomena can never specify how the brain's supposedly paranormal powers work, for if it did, it would show the transcranial mechanisms involved. This would inevitably reveal the brain and

universe to be parts of a *single* system, not divided up into categorically material and spiritual realms. Since the driving motive behind New Age philosophy is to protect the mysteries of mind from the "specter" of mechanism, it can never succeed as science, which connects, never divides.

Ironically, it is the mainstream science that Hamilton attacks which best grounds the spiritual quest, conceived nondualistically. By showing we are of a single, physical nature, it heals the ontological split between matter and mind, and reveals our full organic connection with the universe. The mystical intuition of unity is an empirical fact. And by showing how consciousness, choice, and self arise from the complex organization of purely physical processes, science demonstrates that we are indeed magnificently material creatures.

**Thomas W. Clark**  
Somerville, MA

## DID CONSCIOUSNESS PRECEDE THE BIG BANG?

Craig Hamilton's "Is God All in Your Head?" is an amazingly comprehensive and lucid summary of the mind-body issue and the problematic nature of consciousness (although it does seem to overlook the experimental contributions of the Gestalt psychologists). I myself have for years speculated that the fundamental formulation of the universe may be a network of interactive energy, perhaps of a kind still unknown to us . . . and that our emergently complex brains are growing towards more and more effective management of that energy. (I cannot claim originality on this, of course.)

But as I continue to examine all of this from my agnostic viewpoint, the concept of such a "network" as a satisfying explanation seems to come a cropper in its assumption of ultimate origins in the Big Bang as the beginning

of the known universe and, fundamentally, of consciousness. I think we are still stuck with the old question: What preceded the Big Bang? If we propose a God or gods as the answer, we still have to ask who or what created them . . . and back we go ad infinitum.

Andrew Cohen's assumption in "We, the Unbelievers . . ." that the "evolution of consciousness" is "a miraculous process that was born many billions of years ago in a flash of light and energy" runs into the same barrier. Perhaps consciousness (still indefinable) is the ultimate reality and has simply existed forever. Is there really any other possible explanation?

Consciousness reels at the thought.

**Gerald Albert**  
Long Island University

## SPLIT-BRAIN MIND TWISTER

I enjoyed Craig Hamilton's article "Is God All in Your Head?" but was disappointed that it failed to mention one of the most theologically charged reports of the split-brain phenomena I have ever come across. Dr. Ramachandran informs us in *A Brief Tour of Human Consciousness* of patient "LB" who, after having his corpus callosum severed, finds himself with a left hemisphere that believes in God and a right hemisphere that claims to be an atheist. As Dr. Ramachandran playfully quips, "When a patient like this eventually dies, will one hemisphere end up in hell and the other in heaven?"

**Brad Goslee**  
via email

## JOURNALISM WITH HEART

Thanks so much for that super article on consciousness by Craig Hamilton. I love how you guys pierce your own hearts as a fundamental part of your investigations. What a great topic, and what an exciting time to be alive!

**Joel Jewitt**  
via email

Send your letters to [letters@wie.org](mailto:letters@wie.org) or  
PO Box 2360, Lenox, MA 01240 USA

### WALKING THE WALK

Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the latest issue. The dialogues between Wilber and Cohen are always fascinating—and revealing. I have read almost all of Wilber's works plus dozens of other books on integral philosophy and psychology, and I have a master's in psychology. I have a relatively firm intellectual grasp of the integral approach, but this month's dialogue reminded me that as much as I talk the talk, I often don't walk the walk. I have been a meditator for almost fifteen years now, and still the ego intrudes, although I'm getting much more aware of when that is happening and sometimes am able to shut it down.

**Ron Shafer**

*Decatur, Illinois*

### WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Thank you for your call in *WIE*. We do need women initiators, indeed. My

experience in the Netherlands is that women have difficulty leaving their psychological comfort zone to really look deep within together. We are either unable or unwilling to bear a high level of vulnerability. We (postmodern Boomers) are so afraid of losing our personal freedom, but we are finding out that personal freedom doesn't bring us real happiness and fulfillment. We don't want to be victims any longer, but the deep, mostly unconscious need to feel safe is still strong. We are becoming aware that our compulsive personalization of every experience needs to be investigated and transformed together. It is a thrilling time we live in.

**Edda van der Hoeven-Nieuwhart**

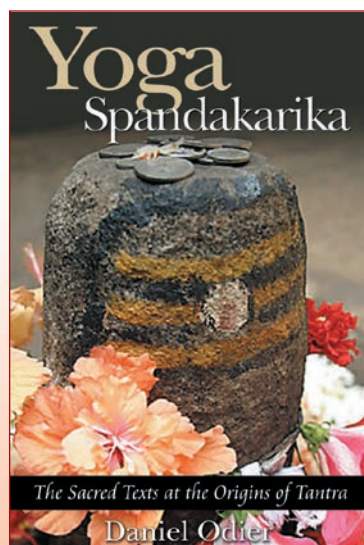
*The Netherlands*

### TRUE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE SEXES

I think the evolutionary urge is pulling us toward a true partnership between masculine and feminine that will need

to be discovered by men and women together. Women's hard-won autonomy, economic independence, and ability to participate in public and private life are incredible strides forward. But like all growth endeavors, the tools for one stage of growth become the fetters on the next. While women are participating in the world, at least in some cultures, in ways never seen in the past, our understanding of authentic powerful femininity is woefully inadequate. On the other hand, the effort to prove men and women are equally competent and valuable lacks an understanding of the very real, and wonderful, differences between the sexes.

Over thirty years together, my husband and I have observed that the conversation that develops a true understanding of masculine and feminine is a conversation that neither men nor women can carry out on their



## Yoga Spandakarika

The Sacred Texts at the Origins of Tantra  
DANIEL ODIER

In *Yoga Spandakarika* Daniel Odier passes on vanishing teachings as he received them from his Tibetan master, Kalu Rinpoche, and Kashmiri yogi Lalita Devi. The *Spandakarika*, the "Tantric Song of the Divine Pulsation," is said to have been transmitted directly to the sage Vasugupta from the hands of Shiva on Mount Kailas.

\$16.95, paper, 192 pgs., 6 x 9  
ISBN 1-59477-051-4



own. We've made a few attempts to have this conversation with others, and it's hard to find people who are even willing to talk about it. The idea, for example, that men and women aren't the same, or that women may actually prefer something other than being in charge, isn't a conversation politically enlightened women are comfortable with. On top of that, it borders on illegal to have this kind of dialogue in a business setting—you could be charged with sexual harassment. I believe that true partnership between the sexes has to happen, and that awareness of the divine explodes in deep union. Our conscious understanding of what that means is only just emerging, and it's hard to see how we'll develop it further until we can have an honest discussion of how it really works.

**Kathryn Ehnebuske**

*via email*

#### IRAQ: THE GOOD FIGHT?

With your recent shift from thought-provoking to hip and the attempt to relate to a mainstream audience, *WIE* is gradually transforming into an opinion magazine. Unfortunately, the editors' opinions are not always as well-informed as they should be. For instance, when Carter Phipps (in his article "Become All That You Can Become") refers to the United States' invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq as "the good fight in the sands of Iraq," what exactly is he implying? Surely not that he condones the use of military force in order to secure the interests of the American petroleum industry? As Martin Luther King, Jr., said in 1967, "My government is the world's leading purveyor of violence." Whether in Panama, Bolivia, or Haiti, the United States government has structurally installed and financially supported dictatorships, simply

because democracies provide less long-term trade security.

Should Mr. Phipps be interested, there are many impeccable sources which could enlighten him about the past of his country—for example, the work of professor Noam Chomsky. In the meantime, I would advise him to refrain from romanticizing any acts of armed aggression in which his government partakes. Unless, of course, the editor also subscribes to the opinion that the Vietnam War was similarly "the good fight in the forests of Southeast Asia."

Please don't forget to question everything, even patriotism. After all, the authentic self exists beyond nationality, government, and even opinion.

**Lee Mason**

*Amsterdam*

*continued on page 142*

J O H N F . K E N N E D Y U N I V E R S I T Y

# School of Holistic Studies

W H E R E I N N E R T R U T H M E E T S O U T E R R E A L I T Y

In times when everything seems to be changing so quickly, it's important to know who you really are, and how to share your special talents with the world. The programs at JFK University School of Holistic Studies provide the environment for you to explore personal and social transformation.

**For more information, call  
800.696.5358 or visit our  
website at [www.jfku.edu](http://www.jfku.edu)**

\*Meets the educational requirements for the  
California Marriage and Therapist (MFT) license.

#### Programs offered:

Arts and Consciousness (Berkeley Campus only);  
BFA & MFA Studio Arts; MA Transformative Arts

MA Counseling Psychology\* with specializations in:  
MA Holistic Studies (Campbell Campus only);  
MA Somatic Psychology; MA Transpersonal Psychology

Integral Studies: MA Consciousness Studies;  
MA Holistic Health Education; MA Integral Psychology;  
Certificate in Life Coaching; Certificate in Dream Studies



**JOHN F. KENNEDY UNIVERSITY**

INSPIRING DREAMS, REALIZING POTENTIAL

100 ELLINWOOD WAY, PLEASANT HILL, CA • ACCREDITED BY WASC

***“When you live your life with an appreciation of coincidences and their meanings, you connect with the underlying field of infinite possibilities. This is when the magic begins. This is a state I call synchrodestiny. . . .”***



**Andrew Cohen**  
Founder and  
Editor-in-Chief

There was a time in my life when a statement like the one above, from Deepak Chopra, would have seemed a bit hokey to me. In fact, I can remember speaking to James Redfield less than a year ago and having some difficulty accepting his view that synchronicity plays an important role in the awakened life. But as of late, I must admit that I’m changing my tune! I’m not sure why, but over the last few months, I have indeed experienced the gentle interplay of apparently unrelated events and coincidental happenings occurring with greater frequency than ever before.

About nine months ago, out of the blue, the renowned Romanian poet, NPR commentator, and social critic Andrei Codrescu sent me an article for possible publication called “Against Immortality.” Then six months ago, when I was in Australia on a plane from Perth to Sydney, I was reading a book called *How Long Do You Choose to Live?* by contemporary American sage and self-master Peter Ragnar. In this book, Peter was audaciously declaring that one could live forever through *believing* that it was possible to do so, supported by a raw-food diet and intense exercise. At the same time, a student and friend who was traveling with me happened to be reading futurist Ray Kurzweil’s recent bestseller, *Fantastic Voyage*, about the new emerging potential for physical immortality that will be realized first through biotechnology and, ultimately, through nanotechnology. The fact that Peter and Ray were approaching the question of immortality from such completely different perspectives was intriguing, as was the fact that both of these guys were deadly serious about it! On that plane, at 35,000 feet, for the first time I found myself seriously considering an idea I had always assumed was ludicrous. Then I remembered that Andrei had sent his passionate statement *against* immortality. In that moment, this issue of *What Is Enlightenment?* was born. The next thing I knew, itinerant evolutionary evangelist and science writer Connie Barlow appeared on our doorstep asking if she could give a lecture to our community about why death is *good*. The universe, it seemed, wanted us to be considering these questions . . .

Another remarkable thing happened: in letters we’ve received, and also in a recent survey, a number of our readers have expressed a desire for us to return to a more integral, or theme-based approach. Well, miraculously, that’s exactly what seems to have occurred, and the fun part is that this issue has involved less stress and has been more of a joy to put together than probably any other before it. So I’m a believer!

*Andrew Cohen*

***“Synchrodestiny . . . requires understanding the profound nature of things, recognizing the wellspring of intelligence that endlessly creates our universe, and yet having the intention to pursue specific opportunities for change as they appear.”***



# Step Inside the Digital Universe

Entrepreneur Joe Firmage has a cosmic plan for the future of the internet



**It is the year 2019.** Logging on to the internet through your nanotech implants, you lean back in your chair and close your eyes. Smiling, as always, at the sensation of weightlessness produced by the tiny robots attached to every nerve ending in your body, you find yourself floating in space at your favorite starting point, fifteen million light-years beyond the Milky Way galaxy. This is far enough outside the “local group” of galaxies to enable you to see them in all their awesome splendor—the massive twin spirals of Andromeda and the Milky Way, the smaller spiral of Triangulum, and over twenty-five other clusters of billions of suns scattered before you, brilliantly glowing against the infinite black void. Although most people choose to start their web browsing from a location a lot closer to home, for some reason you’ve always preferred taking the more scenic route . . .

Back in 2005, such a scenario may be difficult to take seriously, but it’s almost equally hard to believe that the world wide web has only been in existence for little over a decade. For many of us, it has become a crucial component of life—a tool that is indispensable to our work, our personal relationships, our shopping, our entertainment, as well as our ongoing education. It has created new communities, networked by common interests across ages, genders, and continents; new linguistic terms (“blogosphere,” “flame war”); and even entirely new forms of social engagement (discussion forums, IM-ing). Yet if internet entrepreneur Joe Firmage has his way, it will soon be the end of the web as we know it.

As the founder and CEO of

ManyOne Networks, Firmage has been working since 2001 to take the internet experience to a new level of sophistication, organization, and most importantly, *presentation*. His goal is to remodel the web “as it was meant to be,” creating a highly attractive, ordered system out of what is presently, for better or worse, a random mess. The key to his plan’s success is his ManyOne browser, a modified version of the popular Mozilla browser with a few unique twists. As a portal to a media-rich environment that Firmage calls the “Digital Universe,” the ManyOne browser will optimize the internet through a graphically immersive experience that Firmage equates to “the kind of ‘Encyclopedia Galactica’ envisioned by Carl Sagan.” Users will be able to enter a virtual reality of sorts, visiting entire 3-D worlds where they can manipulate objects through fully animated models and learn about their various components at the click of a mouse. With its potential to expand consciousness simply through the holistic, multidimensional ways it will present existing information, ManyOne could become to the internet what Technicolor was to cinema—and maybe a whole lot more.

“The possibilities of this Digital Universe are almost limitless,” Firmage explains. “It can transform education by connecting students, teachers, and parents with the best information in existence, presented within multimedia portals rivaling Sony PlayStation games. . . . It can help people of all ages grasp the complex issues of our time, including global conflicts, climate change, national politics, and economics. It can change our world for the better.”

ManyOne’s website ([manyone.net](http://manyone.net)) currently allows visitors to download a prototype version of the browser,

whose 3-D interface is in the form of a hierarchical knowledge tree. Branching out from universal to galactic to planetary to human levels, this menu already encompasses nearly every conceivable branch of human inquiry, interest, and activity. (We found a link to this magazine’s website, [wie.org](http://wie.org), about five steps in from the planetary level.) And while it is clearly in its early stages of development, the so-called Digital Universe is exactly that—a digitized, animated model of the universe that allows you to travel through space, starting outside our galaxy, zooming in to our local group of stars, and then cruising on into everybody’s favorite solar system. You can do a flyby of the rings of Saturn, take a spin around Mars, and watch as Earth whirls

from night to day, all the while zooming in and out, up and around, as near and far from the rotating

heavenly spheres as you like. Although the digital universe is not much more than an entertaining device at present, the future potential of such technology is clear—and astonishingly cool. As Firmage envisions it, this “rich media landscape” will be “as real and as life-like as possible, enhancing both the visual experience and the comprehension of information presented. These landscapes will include a digitally accurate Earth, with city and landscape reliefs wherever possible and becoming ever more detailed over time; a universe dressed with stars, planets, moons, galaxies, and other objects, accurately positioned and rendered based on the latest scientific observations; a digital human body that can be viewed not only up close, but from inside . . . with many

other virtual realities to come.”

Imagine: it’s 2019 again, and you’re careening toward the Milky Way at trillions of times the speed of light. While browsing an animated menu of frequently visited sites, you remember that you haven’t yet bought your spouse a birthday gift, so you extend your virtual hands to the menu and select your favorite bookstore. After a breathtaking excursion through the Orion Nebula, the simulation slows down and your home sun, Sol, begins to come into view as a pinprick of light—a single grain of sand on the beach of infinity. Seconds later, you’re heading toward Earth, plunging through its atmosphere and soaring over fields, forests, mountains, and the vast Pacific Ocean as you

---

### **Users can do a flyby of the rings of Saturn, take a spin around Mars, and watch as Earth whirls from night to day.**

---

approach your final destination: Bodhi Tree Bookstore in West Hollywood, California. After gently touching down on the ground, you hold the door open for some other customers. Knowing that the online version of the store is continually updated to correspond with the real-world version, you try to guess whether or not they’re virtual visitors like yourself. Maybe they, too, just dropped in from the sky? As you browse the latest print-on-demand paperbacks, you smile to yourself, marveling that no matter how many times a day you use the net, you never tire of the humbling thrill that comes from observing your precious home world in its true context: a mere mote of dust in the ever-evolving expanse of Cyberspace.

*Tom Huston*



# Exorcism Makes a Comeback

The Devil—and those who oppose him—is appearing everywhere, from the silver screen to the Vatican to a new book by M. Scott Peck



**Few who have seen** William Peter Blatty's classic film *The Exorcist*, which hit theaters in 1973 and quickly became the highest-grossing movie of its time, have ever forgotten it. Littered with horrific subliminal images, Blatty's shocking portrayal of a little girl possessed by the devil and the human price involved in man's eternal battle against evil captured the public imagination. Even more compelling were the rumors surrounding the movie: it purportedly caused mass hysteria in its original audiences, and Blatty himself claimed that the movie set was cursed by repeated catastrophes that couldn't be written off as coincidence, including three

deaths and an accident in which a gaffer cut off his own fingers. The plot of *The Exorcist* was extrapolated from the true story of a thirteen-year-old boy who, in 1949, experienced a possession by evil spirits so powerful that it took priests four months to expel them. Two sequels and a prequel later, the film maintains its original power to terrify, while forcing us to reckon with some equally terrifying questions. Does the devil have an objective existence? Can evil literally take over our bodies and our minds?

According to M. Scott Peck, M.D., author of the international bestsellers *The Road Less Traveled* (1978) and *People of the Lie* (1982), the answer to both those questions is a definitive "Yes." In his newest book, *Glimpses of the Devil* (2005), Peck divulges his experiences with real-life exorcisms for the first time, describing case studies of two separate women who came to him for psychiatric help. In both instances, Peck was unable to diagnose the patient's condition by conventional psychological criteria and finally came to the conclusion that the problem was of a graver spiritual nature—the women were possessed by multiple demons, and even Satan himself. Under the tutelage of his friend Malachi Martin, a controversial Jesuit priest and author who claimed to have conducted hundreds of exorcisms over the course of his life, Peck organized teams of priests and Catholic friends to aid him in the exorcism of his patients. He outlines the details of the proceedings with a methodical thoroughness, and although some of the descriptions are certainly worthy of a Hollywood script, he isn't seeking any movie options with *Glimpses*. His explicit aim is to aid in establishing a new branch of science—"demonology"—that will become "an incipient subspecialty of psychiatry and psychology." But Peck acknowledges that demonology won't be accepted into the scientific field until

the split between science and religion, or, as Peck describes it, the “350-year-old separation of the world of supposed natural phenomena from the assumed world of supernatural phenomena,” is “revisited and recognized by all concerned as having been a gigantic mistake.”

Peck’s book has quickly attracted critics who balk at his literal interpretation of the devil. One Beliefnet reviewer wrote that Peck is simply resurrecting “macabre medieval ritualism,” and that rather than see a lurking devil behind all insanity, “we need a more subtle way of personifying evil and a more subtle way of dealing with it.” But surprisingly, statistics show that the majority of the public may be sympathetic to Peck’s view of things. A poll taken in 2005 shows that sixty-eight percent of Americans believe in the devil, including fifty-five percent of people with postgraduate degrees. And the Vatican has been receiving an onslaught of global media attention over the last year, ever since one of their most prestigious colleges, the Aethenaeum Pontificum Regina Apostolorum, began offering classes in “Exorcism and the Prayer of Liberation.” According to the course syllabus, students learn about the anthropological, sociological, and scientific aspects of exorcism and study the newly updated *Rituale Romanum*, a pontifical text created in 1614 that both Martin and Peck used during their exorcisms. Perhaps most importantly, students examine the legal aspects of exorcism, an issue that is the subject of a new film coming to theaters in September 2005. Called *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*, the film is based on the true story of a court trial stemming from the exorcism of a German girl named Anneliese Michel.

In 1968, at the age of sixteen, Anneliese began to hear voices and experience what doctors diagnosed as grand mal seizures. The situation grew increasingly severe, and by 1974, Anneliese was violently abusing her

family members, urinating on floors, and mutilating herself. Finally, in 1976, two priests were given permission by their bishop to conduct an exorcism. It lasted for eleven months before abruptly ending with Anneliese’s death—caused, according to autopsy reports, by battery and starvation. Anneliese’s parents and the two priests were brought to trial and found guilty of manslaughter through negligence (had they committed her to a psychiatric institution, they most likely would have been acquitted). Shortly after the trial, dozens of audio recordings of the exorcism proceedings surfaced, in which Anneliese could be heard screaming uncontrollably and speaking in the voices of six different “demons,” including Lucifer, Nero, and . . . Adolf Hitler. Despite this, a commission of the German Bishops’ Conference would

later deny that Anneliese Michel was possessed, perhaps to avoid any legal responsibility for her death. Yet the question of whether she was insane or literally under the control of demons has never been resolved. Analyses of

---

## Does the devil have an objective existence? Can evil literally take over our bodies and our minds?

---

the tapes consistently raise troubling questions—how could a young girl physically produce such *inhuman* sounds and such a wide variety of “personas”? But in this day and age, who wants to admit to believing in supernatural enemies that can’t be seen? One thing is for sure—that’s a reality that would be far scarier than any film.

Maura R. O’Connor

### Presencing: Collective Leadership for Profound Innovation and Change

**Course Dates:** December 12 – 16, 2005, Ashland, Massachusetts, USA

**Facilitators:** C. Otto Scharmer, Beth Jandernoa, and Arawana Hayashi

**Special Guests:** Joseph Jaworski, Adam Kahane, and Peter Senge



Call +1-617-300-9560 for more information or to register. Mention this ad to get the member discount and receive a FREE full-year Connections Membership.

[www.solonline.org](http://www.solonline.org)



# An Indestructible Spirit

In celebration of  
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin  
1881–1955

**“As I looked at this scene of bitter toil,  
I felt completely overcome by the thought  
that I had the honour of standing at one  
of the two or three spots on which, at this  
very moment, the whole life of the universe  
surges and ebbs—places of pain, but it is  
there that a great future (and this I believe  
more and more) is taking shape.”**



Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit scientist, wrote these words during World War I, when he carried stretchers on France's front line. When Teilhard died on Easter Sunday 1955, only a few friends attended his funeral the following day in New York City. Silenced by the Catholic Church, his quiet death was a paradox. His life was over, but his influence was only beginning. His friend would help publish manuscripts, including the seminal *Phenomenon of Man*, which Teilhard wasn't able to publish while alive. In the next decades, his writings would inspire students, scholars, and scientists. When several thousand gathered in New York City last April to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his death, Teilhard's "great future" was still taking shape.

Born in 1881, Teilhard worked as a paleontologist in China after the

war. He studied the geosphere, the earth's layer of nonliving matter, and the biosphere, the earth's layer of living matter, and began using the word "noosphere" to describe the layer of the earth's collective mind. With this development, the idea of human consciousness began to be incorporated into evolutionary theory. "Evolution," Teilhard wrote, "by becoming conscious of itself in the depths of ourselves, only needs to look at itself in the mirror to perceive itself in all its depths."

Reflecting on these words, Lothar Shafer, a chemistry professor at the University of Arkansas who spoke during the April conference, noted that for Teilhard, consciousness was both the foundation of reality and a phenomenon that evolved through history to its advanced state in humans. Like love (Teilhard's "affinity of being with being"), consciousness is present in

all levels of the universe—from atoms to trees to stars—although sometimes in rudimentary form, such as the information gathering of cells.

As is true of many visionaries, Teilhard was not widely accepted in his time, in part because he was ahead of that time. His idea of the noosphere, for example, has only come to be understood within frameworks that had not arrived by 1955. In fact, at the April conference, people were still working to define this concept. Ursula King, a religion professor at Bristol University in England, said that the noosphere is not an isolated function of the mind but is embedded within the biosphere. She said its network-like and participatory nature can be seen in institutions and structures like the United Nations and the internet.

Indeed, the internet, by integrating the panoply of human thought into an easily accessed body, is closely associated with Teilhard's noosphere. By way of example, one conference attendee recounted how she had recently participated in an internet discussion about the Iraq War with people from around the world. Over four days, thirteen thousand people met online in small groups and continued to share thoughts about the war until a collective declaration evolved and was presented at Riverside Church in Manhattan on April 2. "Maybe the noosphere had something to do with that," the woman said.

Other forms of technology were also said to make up the noosphere's connective tissue. Television and radio broadcasts mobilized millions during the tsunami and showed the whole world what was happening in New York City and Washington, DC, on the morning of September 11, 2001.

"Never before in the history of humanity has every human being, regardless of location or identity, been the spectator of the collective adventure of the human species at the very moment at which it is occurring," said Jean Boissonnat, author and founder of the weekly magazine *Expansion*.

But while the noosphere captured the imagination of many Teilhardians, they also spoke of a more disturbing part of the Catholic priest's thought. Although Teilhard saw hope on the front lines of World War I, he was not blind to the accompanying misery and destruction. In his writings, he projected that in two or three generations, as humanity and the world transitioned to an integrated global community, tremors of upheaval would disturb human advancements.

Boissonnat sees these upheavals manifesting themselves today. He compared the mechanics of globalization to the mechanics of acceleration, which causes the distances between groups to widen. This, he noted, is seen in the widening gap between rich and poor nations. Others, led by Thomas Berry, have adapted Teilhard's warnings to the environmental movement. Mary Evelyn Tucker, a religion professor and the vice president of the American Teilhard Association, pointed out that humans are the primary cause of the mass extinction of plants and animals happening across the planet. "The global environmental crisis is clearly the largest challenge to us as a species and a planet as a whole," Tucker said. "We are at a moment in history where we can imagine that our common good as a species rests on our care for our common ground, the earth."

Many scholars consider Teilhard

a visionary who gave humanity new eyes with which to see and contemplate itself. Shafer noted that the goal of evolution, in Teilhardian thought, is the Omega Point, "the keystone in the vault of the noosphere," in which global unity occurs and human consciousness unites with a supreme, super-personal consciousness. For Teilhardians, globalization and the internet are not only advancements in human capabilities but small steps toward meeting the divine.

Tucker pointed to Teilhard's own words to underscore what the noosphere means for future generations: "However unstable life may appear, however impressive its connections with limiting space and forces of disintegration, one thing above all is certain—spirit will always succeed, as it has done till now, in defying risks and determinisms. It is the indestructible part of the universe."

Teilhard's life testified to his notion of the indestructibility of the spirit. As a child, he was entranced by the solidity of rocks. As an adult, he dug into the earth on three continents, finding the culmination of the human journey toward God not in some heavenly realm but in the world itself. He dedicated his book *The Divine Milieu* to those who love the world. If only he could have known that millions would read his words, that his death would be the seed from which his own indestructible spirit would blossom, or that fifty years later, people would fly from as far away as Korea to kneel by his grave and kiss the earth in front of hundreds who love him.

Joe Orso

---

Joe Orso is a freelance writer who lives in New York City.

# A Musical Mission from Allah

Can a Pakistani rock star strike a new chord in the hearts of Islamic fundamentalists?



Salman Ahmed

**The most important battle** in the world right now may not be between radical Islam and the West but between Islam and itself. The fourteen-hundred-year-old religion has hit a crossroads. Moderates and extremists are vying for influence and power in this ancient tradition, and perhaps nowhere is that struggle more evident than in Pakistan. As one of the largest Muslim countries, with a population of 150 million, Pakistan is a test case for a religion that is being pulled apart by the twin tensions of modernity and fundamentalism. In the midst of this maelstrom, fate, with a little help from the BBC, has placed an unlikely champion of a more moderate version of Islam at the center of the debate. His name is Salman Ahmed, and he is the guitarist in the band Junoon. A South Asian trio with members from Pakistan, India, and the United States, Junoon has become a worldwide sensation over the last decade and is now a household name for millions of Pakistanis and Indians. And Ahmed, who has teamed up with award-winning producer Ruhi Hamid to make documentaries exploring Islam, may be the best-known face in what the *New York Times* has called "the U2 of Asia."

*"Who are the Mullahs who say that [music is forbidden]?" demands Ahmed, sitting calm and relaxed in a circle of students at a Pakistani madrassa, or religious school. What unfolds next in*





Ahmed visits a Pakistani madrassa, or religious school, and challenges the students and teachers to explain why music is forbidden in their version of Islam.

*the BBC documentary The Rock Star and the Mullahs is a rare glimpse into a world few Westerners have ever seen. Ahmed asks the students of this fundamentalist Islamic school to tell him why they believe that music is haram, or forbidden, in the teachings of Islam. As he presses them and they respond, the young Muslim students are torn between their fascination with this cultural icon, who represents rock and roll and twenty-first-century values, and their adherence to a form of increasingly extremist Islam taught by their local mullahs. Eventually, Ahmed reaches for his guitar, and as the students sit around him, their expressions a mixture of shock and intrigue, he defies the ban on music and sings—a verse from the Qur'an. The teacher of this small group studies his famous visitor. "You can decide whether you want to go to heaven or hell," he finally declares.*

It is encounters such as these that are turning Ahmed, who is a practicing Muslim in the Sufi tradition, into much more than a celebrated musician. With his rock-star looks, down-to-earth approachability, and disarming cha-

risma, he has a unique ability to speak to extremists and directly challenge their views even while respecting the essence of their faith. The result makes for an unusual window into the real human struggles that are shaping contemporary Islam. And it also makes for great television, as producer Hamid was thrilled to discover.

Originally trained as a doctor, Ahmed finished medical school in Pakistan in the early 1990s but decided to test the waters of the musician's life for a year before starting a medical practice. Against all conventional wisdom, he stayed in Pakistan, a country where a local rock-and-roll band was simply an oxymoron.

"Up until the eighties, all the pop culture we had in Pakistan was Indian Bollywood music or Western music," he explains. "I was thinking, 'There's such a huge history of music on the subcontinent, why don't we have our own?' I had a spiritual connection with music, and I wanted to

express it. So I decided that I would try it for one year." Ten years later, Junoon has made history with its homegrown blend of rock and roll and spirituality. Indeed, a healthy dose of Islam is often mixed into the lyrics. And Ahmed doesn't hesitate to give his own views on where his religion should be headed in the twenty-first century. "If you look at Islamic history, the Prophet Muhammad lived a really

---

**"One who is not moved by music is unsound of mind and intemperate; is far from spirituality and is denser than birds and beasts: because everyone is affected by melodious sounds." —Al-Ghazali, 1058–1111 CE**

---

tolerant life," he explained at a screening of the documentary last winter. "He married a woman who was fifteen years older and a divorcée. He imbibed information from Christianity, from Judaism. He was a very open man."

Such is the message that this pied piper of Asia is spreading to youth

## Create Shelter for Your Soul



9780738705859 • \$12.95 • 264 pp.

"To help wellness thrive at home, take cues from designer Laurine Morrison Meyer's *Sacred Home*. Blending Western European rituals with classic design principles, Meyer shows that style doesn't have to be Eastern to be soulful."

—*Body & Soul Magazine*

"[C]ounsels readers on using interior design to nourish the inner spirit."

—*Publishers Weekly*



9780738706405 • \$14.95 • 240 pp.

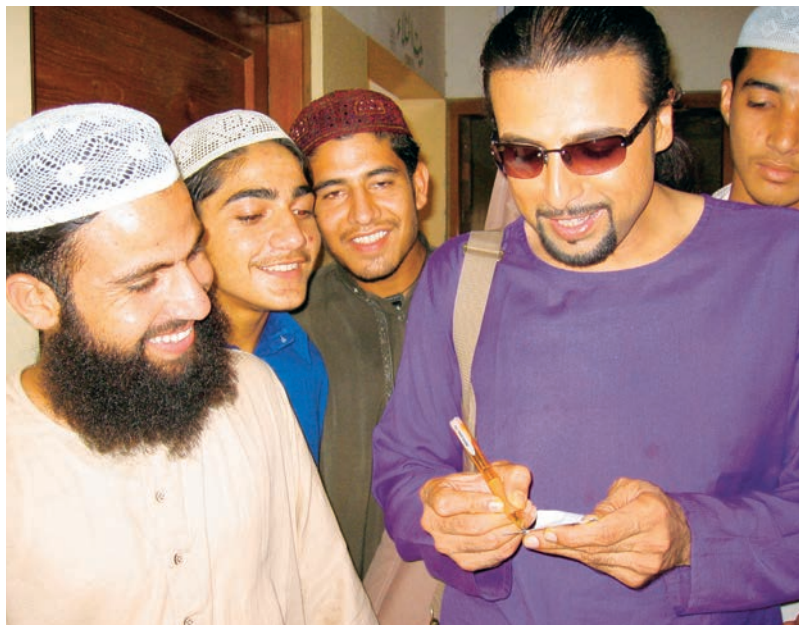
"Nancy Mramor advocates a program involving prayer, visualization, meditation, and other spiritual awareness exercises as the path to building a strong connection with the Divine . . . readers will learn to listen to their inner voice, identify their life's purpose, and move toward it."

—*ForeWord Magazine*

1-877-NEW-WRLD  
(1-877-639-9753) toll-free within the U.S.  
[www.llewellyn.com](http://www.llewellyn.com)



WIE 0505



Ahmed meets with one of the most provocative and radical sheikhs in Pakistan, known as the "Electric Mullah," a reference to his incendiary sermons that are broadcast over the PA system in the city of Peshawar.

How much impact can Junoon and its idealistic guitarist have? It's easy to

underestimate the powerful combination of spirituality, music, pop culture, and a message that resonates with youthful dreams of a brighter, freer future. And in a time when somewhere in the mountains of North Pakistan a local folk hero named Osama bin Laden is hard at work selling young people a violent version of reactionary Islam, it is heartening to know that another kind of hero is eliciting a different kind of passion in that same generation. They are the ones who will ultimately shape Pakistan's future, and perhaps the rest of the world's as well.

Carter Phipps

# pulse

by Carter Phipps

catching the buzz from global leaders, thinkers, teachers, and mystics

## All in the Family

**Acharya Rajneesh**

was his name when he was born. **Osho** was his name when he died. In between, **Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh**, as he was called for much of his life, created spiritual storms and controversies throughout India and America unmatched by just about any other guru of the 1960s generation. Today, fifteen years after he “left his body,” Rajneesh has a successor—sort of. His younger brother is now teaching in India, unofficially carrying on the family legacy, saying that he represents the path that Rajneesh pioneered. Claiming that Osho’s primary ashram in Pune has devolved into little more than a resort, he and two other “enlightened” teachers have formed Oshodhara, a “live mystery school.” And here’s the strange part. He’s teaching celibacy—kind of like Gandhi’s successor teaching armed revolution.

Rajneesh’s brother also appears to be quite fond of popular American business guru and practicing Mormon



Osho



Osho Shailendra



Osho Priya



Osho Siddhartha

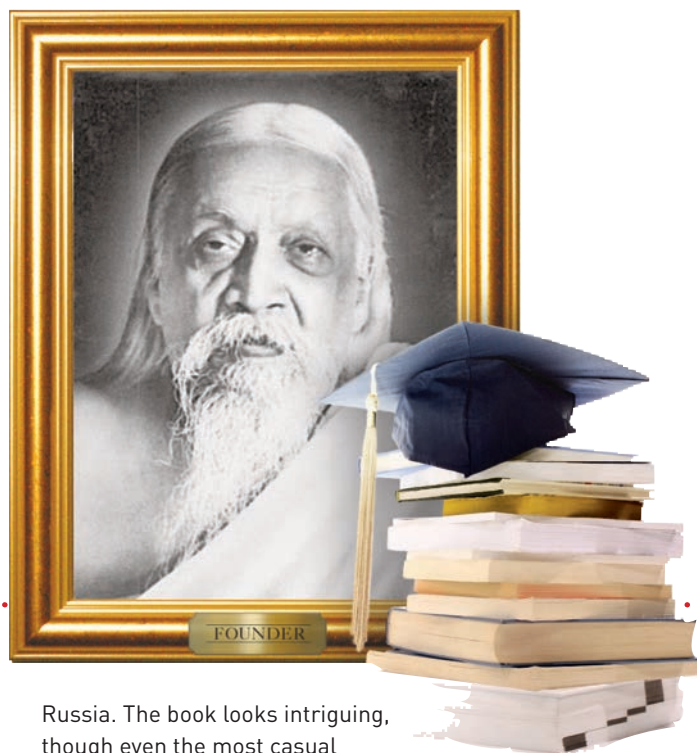
**Stephen Covey**, often referring to him in his lectures. And we in the West can watch this Eastern guru teaching Mormon wisdom to his Hindu students on the AASTHA “faith channel,” an Indian station available now in North America on international satellite TV in Hindi, Gujarati and English. Globalization, what hath thou wrought?

## The Passion of the Peaceful Warrior

**For spiritual seekers growing up**

in the 1980s, Socrates wasn’t just the white-bearded guy in *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure*—he was the wonderfully wise metaphysical hero of *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*. In fact, Dan Millman’s classic book helped inspire many (this writer included) to take up the path of personal transformation. Socrates was the archetypal spiritual mentor every young seeker longed to have. And while Millman’s novel may never be confused with a Penguin classic, it is a classic in its own way—and a damn good story about the student-teacher relationship. Now Millman is hoping it will make an even better movie. Filming recently wrapped on the Hollywood version of *The Way the Peaceful Warrior*, and the part of Socrates is being played by none other than rough and tough leading man **Nick Nolte**. Expect to see the movie in 2006. Millman himself never had a teacher, though it is hardly a secret that he flirted some with the guru formerly known as **Da Free John**, back when the now-reclusive teacher was all the rage. Much of Millman’s post-*Peaceful Warrior* work has been spun off from the peaceful warrior theme, including his just-released book, *The Journey of Socrates*, which follows the character’s early life in the





Russia. The book looks intriguing, though even the most casual moviegoer knows that sequels and prequels rarely bottle lightning a second time. Here's hoping Hollywood, and Nick Nolte's star power, can translate Millman's original magic to the silver screen.

## A Higher Context for Higher Education

The recent move to bring a higher context into higher education continues to pick up steam. Of course, there are some established institutions in the field like Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, and the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco. What some may not know, however, is that CIIS was actually founded by **Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri**, a student of the great Indian philosopher and sage **Sri Aurobindo**, the first philosopher to emphasize the now ubiquitous word "integral." Current president **Joseph Subbindo** has recently forged a new partnership with Auroville, the intentional community in South India founded by The Mother, Sri Aurobindo's partner in teaching. And this year, several new collaborations have started between these twin children of the same spiritual lineage. For example, **Mariana Caplan**, author of *Do You Need*

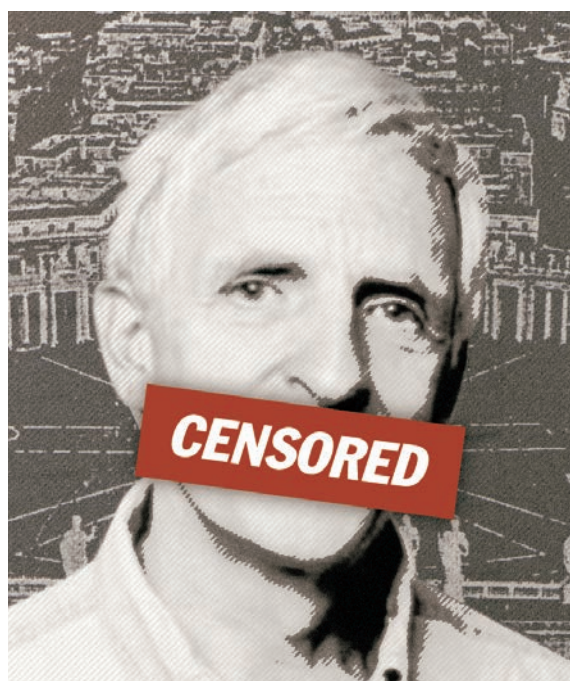
*a Guru?* and *Halfway Up the Mountain*, led a course on integral spirituality last winter for CIIS at Auroville. And she claims it was the best experience she has ever had teaching. "It just showed you what spiritual education could be," she told *WIE*.

## Silenced by the Pope . . .

Across the Bay Bridge in Oakland lies another institution with designs on the future of spiritual education, Wisdom University (formerly the

University of Creation Spirituality), a school founded by Benedictine monk turned independent religious teacher **Matthew Fox**. Fox has the unusual distinction of being one of the American priests silenced as "heretical" in 1988 by then-Cardinal Ratzinger, now **Pope Benedict XVI**—a distinction he shares with legendary interfaith theologian **Hans Kung**, a former colleague of the new Pope. Last May, Fox was more than a little perturbed by the installation of Ratzinger in the top spot at the Vatican, and he's not one to repress his feelings. In fact, he immediately

wrote a manifesto on the future of the Catholic Church, entitled "The New Reformation: Toward a Mature Christianity," and headed off to Germany to post the proclamation on the doors of the monastery in Wittenberg where Martin Luther posted his disagreements all those years ago. Then it was on to Rome to challenge our new Pope to a debate. (No response so far from Pope Benedict.) The essence of his beef: Fox feels the Church needs to embrace a more open-minded, mystical, and feminine-oriented version of Christianity. Who could



# pulse

## Last May, Fox was more than a little perturbed by the installation of Ratzinger in the top spot at the Vatican, and he's not one to repress his feelings.

argue with that? Kung has been taking a more wait-and-see attitude to the new power in the Vatican, perhaps hoping that Ratzinger's once-liberal views (he was a reformer in his youth) will somehow resurface in his papacy. Hard to imagine, but the new Pope (whose nickname in progressive circles is "God's Rottweiler") did have a few pointed things to say about moral relativism right before the vote. "We are moving," he declared, toward a "dictatorship of relativism . . . that recognizes nothing definite and leaves only one's own ego and one's own

churches are currently best served, claimed Beck in an email to *WIE*, by having a conservative Catholic Church leadership, because liberal Western religious values simply don't go over well in African parishes. And right now, much of Africa needs strong, conservative religious institutions to help ease its transition out of tribalism. Moreover, he wrote, a conservative Pope will help spur greater reform in Europe and America, inspiring Catholics like Fox to take more radical steps. I don't know if that's a big


desires as the final measure." At least we agree on something.

Spiral Dynamics expert **Don Beck** also has an interesting take on the new Holy Father. African

perspective or *too* big a perspective, but it sure isn't politically correct—sort of like saying it's good that Bush was elected because it will help Democrats become stronger and evolve. Come to think of it, our favorite spiral wizard said that too.

## New Leadership at Wisdom U . . .


**Getting back to education,** major changes are afoot at Wisdom University. Matthew Fox recently convinced State of the World Forum cofounder and political philosopher **Jim Garrison** to take the helm of his institution. And the new president has plans to turn Wisdom University into a cutting-edge forum for educating global leaders. We look forward to




New Products from

# Now & Zen®

- Our new Zen Timepiece's 6 inch brass bowl-gong produces a series of rich, long-resonating acoustic gongs that wake you gently and with grace.
- The Zen Timepiece also serves as an aesthetically sophisticated timer for yoga, meditation, bodywork, or any practice activity.
- Our new glossy black lacquer Zen Alarm Clock works like the Zen Timepiece, but features an long-resonating acoustic chime set in a hardwood box.
- Once you begin your day with the beautiful sounds of a Zen Clock, you'll never want to wake up any other way.





Front view of Zen Timepiece showing bowl-gong



Back view of Zen Timepiece showing clock display



Glossy black lacquer Digital Zen Alarm Clock

(800) 779-6383

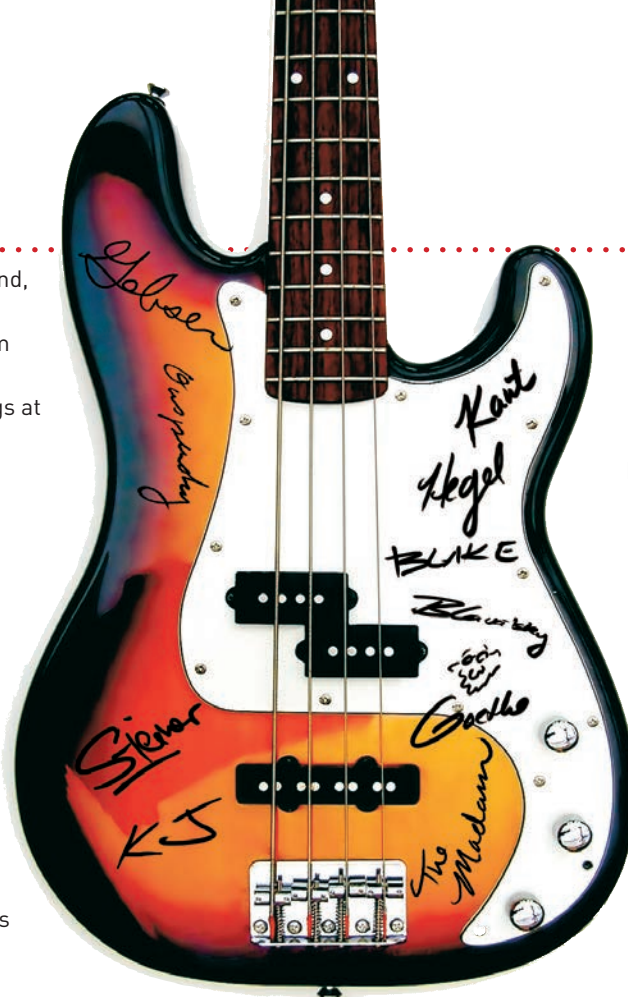
www.now-zen.com



seeing how Garrison's brilliant mind, remarkable organizational ability, and voluminous Rolodex transform this quiet East Bay institution. You heard it here first: expect big things at Wisdom U.

## The Rhythm of Consciousness

**Gary Lachman** was the bass player for the eighties pop band Blondie—not exactly the usual life path for aspiring scholars. But Lachman is making quite a second career for himself as a respected author and expert in the history of Western esotericism. His work is tracking the development of consciousness through **Blake**, **Blavatsky**,



**Krishnamurti**, **Gurdjieff**, **Ouspensky**, **Gebser**, the Fourth Way, Theosophy, the sixties, and on into a new century. Having turned out five works in just the last three years, Lachman is now busy with a biography of **Rudolph Steiner**, the brilliant German founder of Anthroposophy. Steiner mixed the ideas of **Goethe**, **Kant**, **Hegel**, and Theosophy, offering one of the first comprehensive integral maps of the evolution of human consciousness. After Lachman completes his survey of Steiner's life, he is threatening to tackle the biography of yet another underappreciated and brilliant mystic/scientist—Emanuel Swedenborg.

**"Wakefield is hell-bent comic poetry and the best kind of fun: the sort that changes the way you look at the world, from picayune details to the meaning of life."** —ELIZABETH MCCracken



**"One of [Codrescu's] wisest, most engaging books."**  
—Kirkus Reviews

**"With the sophisticated, philosophical wit we've come to expect from his NPR commentaries, Codrescu weaves a fantastical, post-modern tale in which plastic surgery, architecture, and technology are metaphors for the human condition."**  
—Entertainment Weekly

**"A brilliantly inventive cathedral of a book. No one . . . is more deeply in touch with the zeitgeist of this obsessive, lunatic age than Andrei Codrescu. In our culture, in our literature, he is essential."**  
—ROBERT OLEN BUTLER

**"A satirical three-ring circus. . . . Diabolically funny."**  
—New York Newsday

**ALGONQUIN BOOKS**

a division of Workman Publishing • [www.algonquin.com](http://www.algonquin.com)

Andrei  
Codrescu

WAKEFIELD

"Wakefield zigzags across the wheels of comic brilliance, totally flattening a lot of useless architecture—physical and psychological—along the way."  
—TOM ROBBINS



**WAKEFIELD: A Novel**  
by Andrei Codrescu

*At your favorite bookstore*





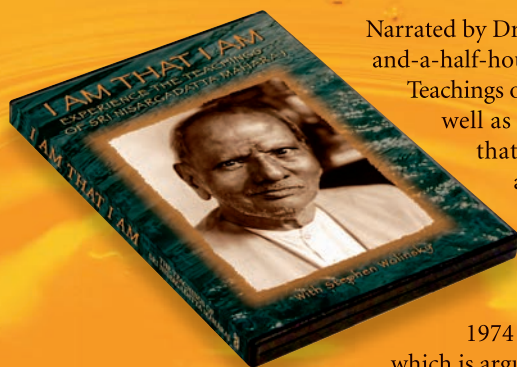
## Time isn't What it Used to Be

**The marketing genius of the year** award should go to **Ramtha**. For a 35,000-year-old warrior, he/she sure knows a thing or two about modern culture. The movie *What the Bleep Do We Know!?*, written and produced by students of **J.Z. Knight** (who channels Ramtha), is everywhere these days and has become an international industry in and of itself, with study groups and conferences based on the film being held in the U.S., Italy, Canada, and Sweden. Yes, it's a "what the bleep" world; we just live in it. And fans of the movie are more emboldened than ever, claiming all kinds of things about quantum physics and "creating their own reality" at a quantum level. If you want someone to blame, or thank, look no further than **Fred Alan Wolf**, one of several physicists who appear in the movie. Wolf is no stranger to strange ideas about reality. His last book, *The Yoga of Time Travel: How the Mind Can Defeat Time*, takes on the physics of time travel, a subject that historically hasn't been treated seriously outside of Hollywood. What is Wolf's secret to time travel? Surrendering the ego. "Time is a projection of mind," he explains, "and by changing our ego-structures we can defeat our ego-conditioning and become aware of our ability to time travel."

Now it should be said that Wolf, for the most part, is talking about the stuff of traditional mysticism, with some physics theory added into the mix. But he's not the only one taking the matter seriously these days. Templeton prize-winner and physicist **Paul Davies** has added his scientific

## I AM THAT I AM

Featuring never-seen-before footage of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj!



Narrated by Dr. Stephen Wolinsky, this two-and-a-half-hour DVD contains The Complete Teachings of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, as well as "experiential meditations" that lead the viewer into the I AM, and beyond, into That One Substance from which all phenomena appear to arise. Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj remained little known until 1974 when the book *I Am That*, which is arguably the most profound spiritual text of a generation, appeared.

Since Nisargadatta Maharaj's death in 1981, he has become renowned throughout the world. He is considered by many, along with Ramana Maharshi, to be the strongest voice of Advaita Vedanta to appear in the 20th century.

DVD 157 minutes

Including extremely rare footage of a 30-minute Q&A session with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Visit [www.netinetifilms.com](http://www.netinetifilms.com) to purchase

thoughts to the subject in a book entitled *How to Build a Time Machine*. Einstein's theory of relativity opened the theoretical door, and even **Stephen Hawking** is said to be convinced of at least the possibility. Students at MIT recently held the first-ever time travel conference. A few months ago, the new book *Breaking the Time Barrier: The Race to Build the First Time Machine* passed across our desks. It delves into the hard science that will empower tomorrow's "chrononauts." And *WIE* recently discovered an entire spiritual community quite dedicated to the idea. North of Turin, Italy, there is an unusual experimental village named the **Federation of Damanhur**, which—with over 800 inhabitants and thousands of supporters—is famous around the world as a highly successful model of communal living. Residents work, meditate, and study; they dance, sing, and raise children; and yes, they time travel—from a gigantic underground temple the size of an eleven-story building, which they refer to as a giant capacitor! Dubbing themselves "temponauts," the time travelers of Damanhur have set up a website to chronicle their experiences—some of which are in "subtle bodies" and some of which, they claim, are actually physical. Are they for real? The truth, as they say, may be out there—or in this case, under there—but the real question when it comes to time travel is: If it's possible, where are tomorrow's temponauts today?

If you have any information that would be appropriate for Pulse, please send it to [pulse@wie.org](mailto:pulse@wie.org)

"Saniel Bonder is one in whom the Conscious Principle is awake — and Linda Groves is a brilliant teacher in her own right."  
— Ken Wilber

enter  
the heart  
of the Mystery,  
21st century-style, with  
the Extraordinary Empowerments™  
of Saniel Bonder & Linda Groves-Bonder

*Our greatest passion is helping you become the most conscious, sane, and co-creative human you can be. We serve your direct embodiment of liberated consciousness and your evolutionary integration of soul, body, and relationships. Come explore our whole-being technologies — Gazing Transmission, Quantum Wakefulness, Six-Step Recognition Yoga, Matter Magic™ manifestation, and more—and our awakened network. Enter the Mystery of divinely human enlightenment. Find and fulfill your unique destiny... in this lifetime.*

[extraordinaryempowerments.com](http://extraordinaryempowerments.com)  
toll-free 888.657.7020 voice-mail



- Books & media that catalyze your transformations
- Waking Down in Mutuality counseling by the founders
- Workshops, retreats, extended and customized programs

See and hear Saniel and Linda at [integralnaked.org](http://integralnaked.org)!

Contact us now! **Special Offer for WIE Readers**, good thru November 2005.

© S. Bonder 2005. All rights reserved.



**Cheri Huber  
on the tried-and-true  
requirements  
for enlightenment**

*Renunciation? Authentic discipleship? Ego death? In a spiritual marketplace that caters to our postmodern lives, it can seem that these traditional requirements for enlightenment have become obsolete. For this reason, Zen Buddhist teacher Cheri Huber stands out. Cheri unapologetically decries the mediocrity and superficiality of the postmodern spiritual world and reaffirms that ego is, in fact, the perennial adversary on the path to realizing the glorious and transcendent reality that is our own true Self.*

– Jessica Roemischer

## Enlightenment is the Easiest Way in the World to Live

**Many people see renunciation** as having to do primarily with sex. But the only thing in spiritual life that we are really required to approach with an attitude of renunciation is *ego*. The ego wants this and doesn't want that. It is always in pursuit of something—that's what keeps it at the center of the universe. For some people, sex is a really big deal and so that's what they need to renounce. For some people, it's power. For some, it's money. But for all of us, in whatever form it takes, it comes down to ego. And the whole point of a spiritual life is to recognize the ego and then dismantle it, to put it out of commission.

Spirituality is a big business in this country, and it has become easy for people to participate superficially in it. It's as if you're obese and this supposedly "alternative" spirituality is like having all the high-fat, high-sugar food you want. You're going to stay obese! We are so used to everything being *easy*, but it's not easy to give up the ego. It takes sincerity for transformation to occur.

In fact, people don't even know what ego is; they can't tell when it's in charge. They really believe they *are* their ego. So we need a structure

that enables us to begin to see ego for what it is and to differentiate between ego—that which believes itself to be continuous and real and living outside of life—and the *Self*—that which was here before we were and will be here after we are not. I don't think it's possible to achieve that awareness without a structure that requires us to *not* go with ego. And that's where renunciation comes in. The heart and soul of renunciation, or awareness practice, is a structure—without a monastic structure and someone to guide it, it's almost impossible

---

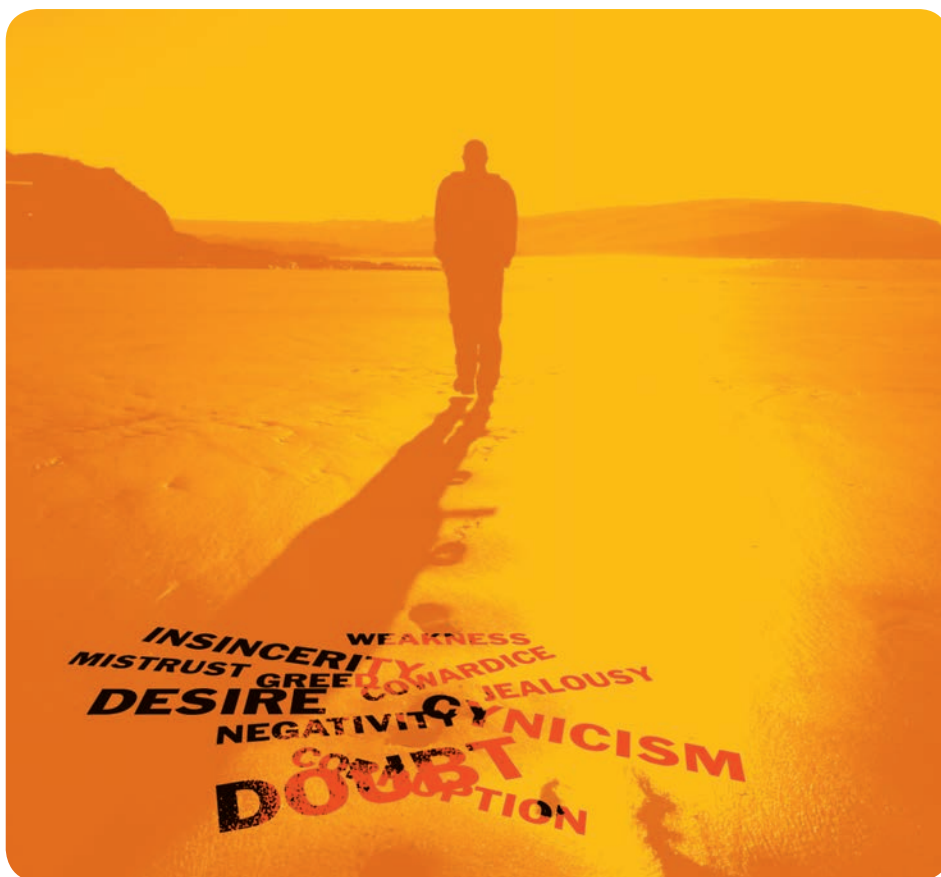
**For some people, sex is a really big deal and that's what they have to renounce. For some people, it's power. For some, it's money. But for all of us, it comes down to ego.**

---

for a person to make that essential differentiation between the ego and the Self.

But it's a rare person who will actually give up their worldly life in order to live a monastic existence, and it's rare because of the ego. I frequently talk to people who desperately want the monastic life, but their ego goes into overdrive about it: "Well, then I couldn't have





this, and I couldn't have that . . ." It is the rare person who recognizes, "I already have all those things, and I'm miserable." One of the things I tell people is that I have never given up anything I wanted. When I got to a point in my life where all I wanted was peace and quiet, all I wanted was time and space to focus on awareness and to see how things work, I didn't have to give up family, sex, money, ambition. *I didn't want them.*

In Buddhism, we say that when you have suffered enough, you are going to get yourself to that which will make the difference. Everybody gets there when they want to. It's perfect. You can suffer for as long as you wish, and when you no longer want to suffer, you can stop. *That's* a very good thing! And being a renunciate, being a monastic, being a religious

person is actually *easy*! Living from center is easy. Enlightenment is the easiest way in the world to live. What's hard, grim, grisly, depressing, miserable, and oppressive is ego. And when we're identified with that little illusion of a separate self, we don't realize that the whole universe is behind us. That little ego is, in fact, an illusion, and everything that is true and authentic—all of the love, the awareness, the gratitude, the expansiveness, the generosity, the kindness—*that's* who we are. That spirit is who we are and it's calling us home. But the ego's onslaught, which tries to keep us in its grip, is awe-inspiring. So anything that gives us a little lift up and offers us a clearer view, anything that reveals ego for what it is, is helpful. That's the real value of renunciation. ■

## PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

### *As I Knew Him*

Experiences, Observations  
and Reflections of a Disciple

## PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

### *As I Knew Him*



Experiences, Observations, and Reflections  
of a Disciple

ROY EUGENE DAVIS

Mr. Davis studied and practiced meditation under the personal guidance of his guru and was ordained by him in 1951. It is rare that a direct disciple and successor of a master of yoga shares an intimate account of that relationship and describes the psychological and spiritual transformations that can occur.

0-87707-293-0 **Hardcover**  
**Photos 160 pages \$12.00**  
**Add \$2.00 postage in the U.S.**  
**Other countries, add \$4.00**  
**for airmail.**

Checks, Visa, MasterCard,  
Discover, and AmEx accepted

CSA Press • P.O. Box 7  
Lakemont, Georgia 30552  
706-782-4723 Fax 706-782-4560  
e-mail [csainc@csa-davis.org](mailto:csainc@csa-davis.org)  
web site: [www.csa-davis.org](http://www.csa-davis.org)  
*Free literature available.*

Also distributed by  
DeVorss & Co. & New Leaf



## WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

# Toward a New Wom



Elizabeth Debold

In her second article addressing the absence of women at the leading edge of cultural change, Elizabeth Debold calls for an evolutionary elite to continue the work of women's liberation.

**"HOW ODD IT SEEMS,"** WRITES NAOMI WOLF, "that women, the majority of the human species, have not, over the course of so many centuries, intervened successfully once and for all on their own behalf." Really odd, in fact. Take the failed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as one small example. This proposed amendment to the Constitution is a straightforward guarantee that women and men will be treated equally under the law. But women haven't posed enough of a collective political threat to get it passed. When I was in my mid-twenties, I was part of the efforts to rally support for the ERA. With another young woman who became a close friend, I went from house to house in a flat, featureless suburban neighborhood of West Palm Beach, Florida, to speak with women about it. I'll never forget the response of one woman, her Southern-tinged twang edged with indignation: "I'm raising my son to be a soldier and my daughter to be a lady." This woman, whose name I don't know and whose face I cannot recall, stood in her driveway, chatting with a neighbor as her young son sped around her on his orange plastic Big Wheel trike. We faced each other briefly—me and my friend, this woman and hers—wordlessly threatening each other with our different assumptions about life. To me, she was one of the too many women who were unaware of their own oppression and so were blocking our collective progress, our ability to reach for success in the world. To her, I may well have seemed irresponsible in questioning what was natural between women and men, the security that we find in traditional roles.

The potential of a "once and for all" intervention such as Wolf is advocating, one that could actually shift women's status across the board, is momentous. Even though the women's movement itself has already created an enormous transformation in Western culture, the notion that all women will unite to make a further, irrevocable shift happen seems far-fetched. Indeed, fundamental tensions within and among women—like those felt on that suburban driveway in Florida, between the drive for success and the pull to security—make such

# en's Liberation

a shift almost unimaginable. Now that we have the freedom to choose our politics and passions, women have spread across the political spectrum, developing positions that either straddle or try to force together the often contradictory aspects of our lives—our competing desires for success in the world and for security in relationship.

Is there a way to move toward Wolf's "once and for all" shift in women's status? Perhaps. But it is not going to come from all women uniting in the shared pursuit of this goal. The idea that there would ever be a monovocal movement that includes every woman is absurd. Men don't speak with one voice, and neither do women. The last phase of the women's movement started with a radical fringe—leftist women in the civil rights/Vietnam War era—whose efforts to raise consciousness and demand equality between women and men sent shock waves through the culture. Change, as evolutionary theory tells us, never comes from the center, from the status quo, but only from the edges. So an intervention that would shift the whole will have to start, again, at the radical edge. Transformation is an elitist process: not necessarily elitist in terms of social or economic privilege (although that can help to free one's energy for something more than mere survival) but elitist in terms of urgency and perspective.

For womankind to move forward, for the possibility of an intervention "once and for all" to become a reality, a significant minority of women have to push the edge and develop a higher perspective that meets the often conflicting demands of our chaotic world.

Where are the women who are willing to push this edge? Even to recognize the need for an evolutionary elite goes completely against the grain of egalitarian postmodern culture. The liberation movements that ushered in postmodernism back in the sixties—like feminism and civil rights—opened Western culture to the value of diversity and difference and

the recognition of a plurality of views. Hence, postmodernism is both radically egalitarian and individualistic. The notion of universal truth—that there is one right way to think—became outdated, which freed each of us to seek our own truth. In this postmodern world of liberated individuals, what feels right by me is my angle on truth, no better or worse than yours. Of course, no one *really* believes this. We each righteously hold on to "my truth" and look askance at perspectives that are different from our own. In that Florida driveway, I assumed that the other woman was expressing false consciousness—a dupe of the oppressive forces in a culture that wants to keep women sweeping the hearth. But her consciousness was not "false." It was based on a different set of core assumptions. Her assumption that it is right for men and women to have specific

Ironically, choice,  
the mantra of the feminist movement,  
has proven to be a double-edged sword.

and different roles is core to the *modern* worldview that has been ascendant in Western culture since the late seventeenth century. I was standing in her driveway to change that worldview—to bring in a *postmodern* perspective that values a plurality of options and choices. Today postmodernism is the dominant perspective of the culturally liberal, educated class. But now, for womankind to move forward, postmodernism is the edge that we need to reach beyond.

In a world where we are exposed to so many different perspectives, it is hard to distinguish where that postmodern edge is. Each significant cultural shift of the last millennium—



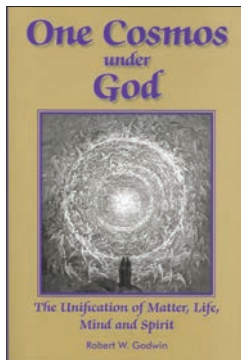


Gloria Steinem and Jane Fonda

from the traditional feudal societies to the modern world of industrial capitalism and, most recently, to egalitarian post-modernism—was triggered by a shift in the consciousness of a relatively small number of people. Forty years ago, the efforts

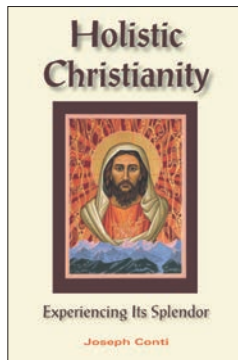
of a very small minority of activists started a larger movement that catapulted the culture from the modern to the postmodern. While the resulting changes have had some effect on everyone in Western society, there are still large numbers of women who embody and express cultural perspectives that predate the postmodern. Many, in fact, still hold a traditional premodern religious worldview. And many more hold the perspective of the modern world, a world divided by gender, in which men occupy the public sphere of success and women, the secure domestic sphere. However, the snug and secure modern home was a microcosm of the *feudal* system—that's the significance of the adage "a man's home is his castle." Thus, the leap that women made over the span of a few decades through the feminist movement is enormous: a jump from semi-feudal subser-  
vience in a man's castle to self-determination in a diverse and globalizing postmodern world. And frankly, not all of us—nor even most of us—have fully made this leap, which makes finding the edge from which to move forward even more difficult.

## Spirituality and Enlightenment



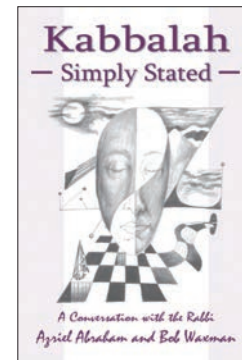
**ONE COSMOS UNDER GOD**  
The Unification of Matter, Life, Mind and Spirit  
Robert W. Godwin  
328 pages, ISBN 1557788367, \$19.95

Both serious and entertaining, this book is like an intellectual amusement park ride through the whole of creation. It ventures where language cannot go, into the "mind of God" prior to creation, through to the "mind of the saint" who transcends the culturally conditioned ego, escapes history, and merges with the divine.



**HOLISTIC CHRISTIANITY**  
Experiencing Its Splendor  
Joseph Conti  
400 pages, ISBN 1557788308, \$19.95

*Holistic Christianity* uncovers hidden "holisms" of Christian faith. These holisms span earth and heaven, the seen and the unseen, and yet are intensely personal, poetic, immediate, soul-centering. Conti braids these into a luminous, mystical unity. You will never think the same about Christianity, or your life, again.



**KABBALAH SIMPLY STATED**  
A Conversation with the Rabbi  
Azriel Abraham and Bob Waxman  
134 pages, ISBN 1557788421, \$12.95

"Waxman has that rare quality of making a complex subject accessible to everyone!"

—Edwin Harkness Spina, author of *Mystic Warrior*

"Highly informative, and extremely entertaining! Well written, authoritative and thoroughly enjoyable!"

—Dr. L. Cantrell, Ph.D., International Center for Kabbalistic Studies

Available through your bookstore or online at:



PARAGON HOUSE

1-800-447-3709

www.paragonhouse.com

Women of all stripes are now offering profoundly different suggestions about what should rightfully be our next step.

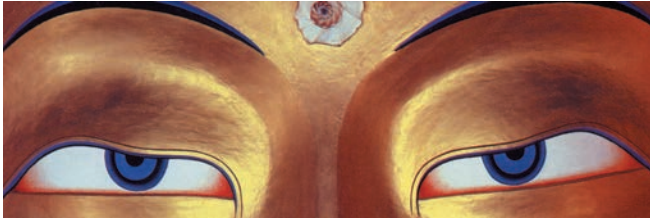
How do we recognize the real voices from the edge? I'll offer one clue: those who argue that there is no longer any need for an intervention "once and for all" are pretty sure not to be

## Postmodern feminism, regardless of its guise, is what we need to move beyond.

expressing something new. Ironically, such voices come from both ends of the existing political spectrum. Conservative writer Kay S. Hymowitz declares that "we are all feminists now," citing a poll that shows that over ninety percent of adolescent girls surveyed support equal rights for women and almost as many don't believe that it's necessary to have a man in order to be a success. But before victory is declared, Hymowitz unequivocally states that the organized movement of women called "Feminism" (with a capital F) is dead: "It's over. As in finished." Why? Because she doesn't believe that most or even many women want "to transcend both biology and ordinary bourgeois longings [for material comfort and emotional security]." She declares that "after the revolution, women want husbands and children as much as they want anything in life." This is undoubtedly true—but Hymowitz uses the fact that the majority of women want a family life to argue that there is no further to go. While she acknowledges that it's inevitable that there will continue to be "a deep tension between . . . female ambition [and the desire for children] that will spark many years of cultural debate," Hymowitz doesn't see any reason to question our cultural arrangements and seems resigned to the fact that women will not reach parity with men in worldly power. Because our fast-paced economy is rooted in these gender divisions, it will always punish women who want to divide their time between success at work and security at home. As she puts it, "The very economy that stirs the imaginations and ambitions of young people . . . is the same economy that will never be particularly family-friendly and that often leaves ambitious working mothers behind." But if we accept modernity's gender-based division of success and security as a given, then Hymowitz is right: the majority of women will end up choosing to have children and stay at home, if they can afford to. However, using this fact to argue that nothing more needs to change is misguided. If cultural

transformation were left up to the majority, very little would ever change. The status quo will never fight for radical evolution—it never has.

Interestingly, a look to the left reveals a similar disavowal of the need for collective change. Karen Lehrman, a liberal feminist, concurs with Hymowitz that "the contemporary women's movement [has] outlived its usefulness." Lehrman's reasoning is that feminist ideology has become too restrictive. Because women have been freed from the code of femininity that kept us in the kitchen, she believes that we are now each making our own individual conscious choices. She, along with other feminist writers, claims that women are no longer victims of society, no longer held down. In fact, she argues that a monolithic feminism—that sees women's oppression everywhere—is now oppressive to women's full and varied expression of who we are. As she writes in *The Lipstick Proviso*, "Women don't have to sacrifice



**NINE GATES MYSTERY SCHOOL**

The Nine Gates Mystery School is a year-long experience. It includes two nine day retreats, with over 200 hours of instruction from nine master teachers, delving deeply into the wisdom of the Celtic, tribal African, Native American, Sufi, esoteric Christian, Hindu, Taoist, Hawaiian Huna, and Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

WE INVITE YOU TO EXPERIENCE THIS INCREDIBLE JOURNEY.

FALL 2005

PART 1: SEPTEMBER 9 - 18, 2005 • LUCERNE VALLEY, CA

PART 2: MARCH 2006 • TBA

call 707-779-8236

OR visit our website at [WWW.NINEGATES.ORG](http://WWW.NINEGATES.ORG)

their individuality, or even their femininity—whatever that means to each of them—in order to be equal.” While Lehrman believes feminism is critical for women’s lives, she asserts that any collective movement that claims to represent the good of women as a whole is obsolete. She upholds each woman’s right to seek success and security as she sees fit. Lehrman

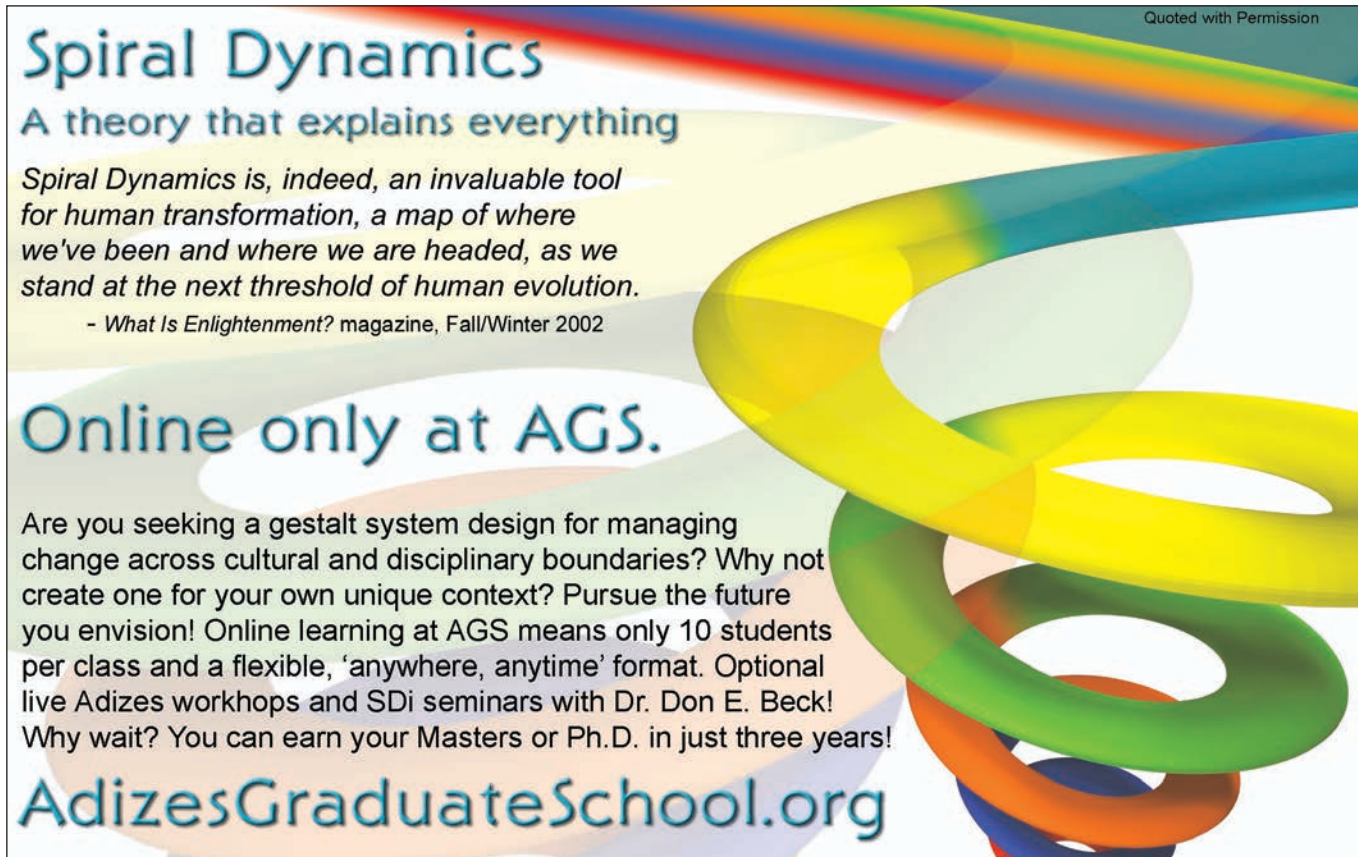
## Why don’t we abandon feminism as a postmodern ideology and instead embrace women’s liberation as an evolutionary process?

does suggest that the fact that so many women still seem to be freely choosing the security of home life means that we need to question more deeply what it truly means to make autonomous choices. For Lehrman, this deeper questioning will not come from participation in an organized movement but only through

personal choice. In essence, she argues that it is now up to each individual woman to work out her own relationship with a divided world. Ironically, choice, the mantra of the feminist movement, has proven to be a double-edged sword—at first cutting through rigid restrictions on what women can do and now, through an emphasis on individualism, cutting off continued collective change.

It’s the emphasis on personal choice without any larger context that marks the new postmodern, liberal status quo expressed by Lehrman and other Gen-X and Gen-Y feminists. “Do what you want, when you want” is the motto of a glitzy packaged feminism

that attempts to move beyond victimization to a celebration of power. In *Manifesta*, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards deplore the fact that the feminist slogan “the personal is political” has been “misinterpreted to mean that what an individual woman *does* in her personal life (like watching porn,



**Spiral Dynamics**  
A theory that explains everything

*Spiral Dynamics is, indeed, an invaluable tool for human transformation, a map of where we've been and where we are headed, as we stand at the next threshold of human evolution.*

- *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine, Fall/Winter 2002

Online only at AGS.

Are you seeking a gestalt system design for managing change across cultural and disciplinary boundaries? Why not create one for your own unique context? Pursue the future you envision! Online learning at AGS means only 10 students per class and a flexible, 'anywhere, anytime' format. Optional live Adizes workshops and SDi seminars with Dr. Don E. Beck! Why wait? You can earn your Masters or Ph.D. in just three years!

**AdizesGraduateSchool.org**

Quoted with Permission



wearing garter belts, dyeing her hair, having an affair, earning money, shaving her legs) undermines her feminist credibility.” In other words, because personal choice has become the core liberal feminist value, *what* those choices are don’t matter. All is fair and feminist as long as you feel free and powerful. Lehrman goes so far as to suggest that it doesn’t really matter what motivates a woman to exercise power as long as the choice is in her hands: “While . . . some women may not want too much power in the public sphere . . . many women want a great deal of it. And many women want power for reasons that don’t always suit everyone’s tastes. Some women want power solely to be able to buy expensive clothes, big houses, and elegant cars. Others want power to make political decisions that don’t exactly chime with the reigning politically correct agenda. And many women (even some outspoken feminists) don’t always acquire power or wield it in the nicest way.” The new feminist freedom simply comes down to doing—and getting—what you want.

These statements express no sense of right or wrong, better or worse—no moral claims—just a sense of entitlement to do as one pleases. Thus, while feminism has been harshly critiqued for creating an ideal of woman-as-victim, continually entitled to redress and special treatment, these recent approaches to feminism, ironically enough, express the entitlement of the postmodern narcissist that is the victim’s alter ego. Both the position of victimization and the position of narcissistic entitlement are liberated from any sense of responsibility to anything other than the self. Moreover, doing what you want when you want it may not be freedom at all, but simply bondage to compulsively narcissistic cravings for sex, affirmation, pleasure, and power. In fact, the avowed amorality of postmodernism (which, for example, may sound like, “I have no right to judge anyone else’s truth” or even “Before you say anything judgmental, walk a mile in that person’s shoes”) is part of the reason that there has been such an extreme backlash against organized feminism from classic conservatives and fundamentalists. Feminism—as one aspect of postmodernity—is condemned for having led to the dissolution of the family, irresponsible parenting, and self-destructive promiscuity among girls. This is only true if one equates “feminism” with the entirety of the pluralist postmodernism that has eroded the moral consensus of the culture, which would be a vast oversimplification.

Postmodern feminism, regardless of its guise, is what we need to move beyond. The Janus-faced woman—simultaneously victimized and entitled—has trapped us in a narcissism that keeps us from working for the collective evolution of woman. And I would agree with many critics, such as Hymowitz and Lehrman, that feminism as an ideology

has become strange—and estranged from women’s lives. (The oft-cited, albeit distorted, position of the late pioneer Andrea Dworkin, who declared that all heterosexual sex is rape, is but one example.)

I have a suggestion: Why don’t we abandon feminism as a postmodern ideology and instead embrace women’s liberation as an evolutionary process? This could be the place from which to move forward. The willingness of the sixties activist women to open their own minds and evolve their own consciousness was considered extreme and even crazy, but today even conservatives can calmly note that the movement is over because it has succeeded so well in giving women options in life. This capacity to make real choices has been a true gift of feminism, specifically, and of postmodernity, in general. The next task is far more overwhelming: to move beyond the mere recognition and acceptance of pluralism’s many perspectives and attempt to bring a higher integration to our fractured world. And whether or not we can reach that goal will depend on our ability to liberate ourselves from the deeper conditioning that rules our choices, the conditioning that compels us toward safety and self-satisfaction. Gaining freedom of choice is only the first step to becoming a conscious moral agent. After that, the nature of the choices that we make is critical—we can either support the status quo or we can reach for a higher perspective, a new moral ground, an evolution in women’s consciousness.

There are some women who have pointed beyond the endless self-seeking of postmodernism. Interestingly (at the risk of alienating my younger sisters), they come from the old guard of the women’s liberation movement. Their insights, taken together, call for us to move in a very different direction and, perhaps, can provide starting principles for the next phase of women’s liberation.

1. *We have to judge—starting with a good look in the mirror.* In a poignant reckoning with the actions of Pfc. Lynndie England in Abu Ghraib prison, author Barbara Ehrenreich acknowledges that simply allowing women to have choices—to be in the military, for example—will not change the world. Why? Because “women can do the unthinkable,” the morally repugnant and down-right evil. Her response pulls on us to give up the nineteenth-century belief that we women have less violence and more care in our hearts than men and to reckon with the reality of what we are truly capable of. Even as Ehrenreich appreciates England’s predicament, her willing-

ness to judge the young woman's actions invites us to make the critical distinction between, on the one hand, supporting the status quo and, on the other, transforming ourselves and society. All choices are not equal.

2. *We need to create a higher moral ground beyond the self.* Moral choices are the basis of our relationships with each other, and they cannot simply be based on what feels good or right to the individual. Nor can we move back to the rule-based personal morality of the religious traditions. Those moral codes were created for an ordered feudal society, not for an individualistic consumer culture. Carol Gilligan, in her groundbreaking work, *In a Different Voice*, discovered that men and women often use very different criteria for making moral choices—which is to be expected, given that both traditional and modern societies place men and women in very different roles. Yet, at the end of her book, she suggests that the next stage in moral evolution will demand that we move beyond this polarity of masculine and feminine ways of thinking and being. “In . . . maturity,” she says, “both perspectives converge.”
3. *We have to reach beyond gender.* To find our way to a new moral ground, we need to question our compulsive choices—the desire for sexual power, the pull toward security—and to seek something new beyond woman as we have known her. Gloria Steinem has been speaking for a few years about moving “beyond gender,” yet what that means remains vague. No wonder. It demands an extraordinary effort to find out who we are, beyond the victim, the entitled narcissist, the sexual provocateur, or any of the many faces of Eve. The transformation of consciousness that would be unleashed by women making choices for something beyond either personal success/power or the security of the hearth could transform society “once and for all” in ways we cannot imagine now.
4. *Hierarchy is essential.* Riane Eisler, author of *The Chalice and the Blade*, argues against the postmodern credo that disavows vertical hierarchy in human relationship. “There is so much unreality about what we should move towards,” she observes. “People need structure. The issue is what kind of structure. We do need hierarchy. Hierarchy is

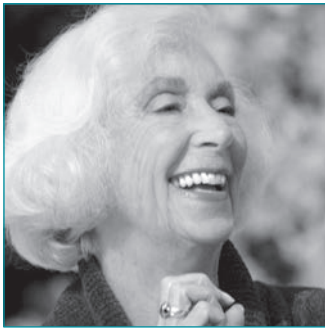
an actualization where accountability doesn't just flow from the bottom up, it also flows from the top down.” If we place a value on the development of consciousness, we automatically create a hierarchy: those with a more evolved and inclusive perspective have a greater responsibility to work for the development of the whole. That means that we privileged postmoderns have to take the responsibility of being the elite to push the leading edge further.

What I hear in these women's voices is a call for a new kind of elite. The continuing liberation of the consciousness of woman will only come from those at the edge who feel an urgent need to move forward for the sake of humankind. The success of women's liberation thus far did not come about through simply seeking *what I want*. It came about through reaching for change far beyond the individual. As Susan Estrich, in her latest book, *Sex and Power*, asks the generations who have chosen postmodern self-satisfaction, “What about the sense of power and possibility that comes with the realization that *what is* is not inevitable, that the struggle is larger than you, that change is possible?” Right, what about that? Isn't women's liberation about the transformation of the world *as ourselves*? This is perhaps the most critical step toward something new. No longer can the context for our lives be the postmodern pursuit of pleasure and power or even the modernist desire for worldly success and homebound security. Without our eyes on something far greater than ourselves, we will never intervene “once and for all” on our own behalf. And if we don't, as Wolf warns us, “the future is ours to lose.” ■

**Elizabeth Debold** is a senior editor of *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine. Author of the bestselling book *Mother Daughter Revolution*, she holds a doctorate in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University. She was a founding member of the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development that was directed by Carol Gilligan. She is working on a new book with the tentative title, “The Evolution of Love: Men, Women, and the Possibility of Transformation,” to be published by Pantheon.

**ONLINE EXTRAS:** For more on the work of Dr. Elizabeth Debold, visit [wie.org/bios/debold](http://wie.org/bios/debold)

# Sex, Immortality, and the Future of Women



Barbara Marx Hubbard

## AN INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA MARX HUBBARD

by Jessica Roemischer

**IS SEX EVOLVING?** **BARBARA MARX HUBBARD**, the grand dame of the “conscious evolution” movement, emphatically states, “Yes!” As an author, a futurist, and the president of the Foundation for Conscious Evolution, Hubbard has been at the forefront of an emerging worldview positing that

humans are at the threshold of a new phase in the evolutionary process. And this, as she reveals here, has great implications for our favorite pastime.

A wonderfully spry and energetic seventy-five-year-old, Hubbard freely admits to “not being that sexually oriented” and says that sex had never been primary in her relationship with her eighty-one-year-old partner, Sidney. While that would, under most circumstances, consign the sexual dimension of a marriage to the back burner, in Barbara’s case, she has characteristically used it as an opportunity to discover a deeper evolutionary significance and possibility. “Wanting to be responsive to Sidney,” she says, “I began to ask myself, ‘What is my heart’s true desire? If recreational sex is not what motivates me, what *would* motivate me at the deepest part of my being?’” That question led Hubbard and her partner into a dynamic exploration of the *evolutionary* significance of sex. And as she explains in the following interview, when two people come together with the conscious intention to evolve, sex becomes a “regenerative”

experience that can ignite passion—the passion to become a new expression of man and woman, co-creative partners with the evolutionary process itself.

**WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT:** *Barbara, you have recently been speaking about a new form of sexuality called “co-creational” or “regenerative” sex. Could you begin by describing how co-creational sex is different from procreational and recreational sex?*

**BARBARA MARX HUBBARD:** In procreative sex, there’s a higher purpose, which is to create life. The fact that the woman’s body is capable of receiving a fertilized egg and creating another being is mysterious, miraculous, and sacred. That is its most profound purpose, the extraordinary miracle of the biological imperative. So there is a sacred meaning to sexuality, which is to reproduce the entities that are engaging in sex, no matter what those two entities think they’re doing! Recreational sex, on the other hand, is for intimacy and pleasure. It’s enhancing

## While nature’s purpose

is to reproduce the species through procreation, in co-creational sex, we are using the sexual impulse to evolve the species for the highest purpose.

in many ways, but it doesn’t have the higher sacred purpose of procreational sex.

In evolutionary sexuality, or what I call “co-creational sex,” rather than reproducing the couple or engaging in intimacy



and sexual pleasure for recreation, the sacredness of the intimacy is compelled by a vision of the couple *evolving* through their union. In that sense, evolutionary sexuality is comparable in its sacredness to procreational sex. While nature's purpose is to reproduce the species through procreation, in co-creational sex, we are using the sexual impulse to evolve the species for the highest purpose.

**WIE:** *How did you begin to discern a higher evolutionary purpose for sex beyond that of reproduction?*

**MARX HUBBARD:** I began to observe a fundamental inequality between men and women in their later years and sought its significance. As we live longer and longer lives, more and more women are entering menopause. They are no longer producing eggs, and yet men continue to produce sperm until they die. So I began to ask myself, "Is there a higher purpose for the sperm, since the man continues to produce so many of them? And if he loves a postmenopausal woman and she has no eggs, is it possible, through intentionality, to unlock a higher purpose within the coding of the sperm? What if the woman desires, above all else, not a new baby, but a new body and a *new being*—sensitive to spirit, capable of self-healing, self-generating, and self-evolving?"

Currently, males inseminate women to conceive babies, and as men get older, they have recreational sex. But what if the woman's desire brings forth from the male sperm its true fulfillment and noble purpose? What if the male inseminates the woman with the evolving potential inherent in the sperm, triggered by the woman's desire to give birth to her *self*? What if he is consciously inseminating and co-creating with the woman the new being who is required for the evolution of life on earth? The woman has the biological capacity for self-reproduction through sexuality, and she may also have the capacity for *self-evolution* through sexuality. Now this exploration is occurring only in the realm of intention and imagination—in the *imaginal* realm. But men find it very empowering when the woman says, "I feel that the sperm has a higher purpose." It's very arousing to the man, that's for sure! It really would be shocking if I became the Dr. Ruth of "evolutionary sexuality."

**WIE:** *If there was demonstrable proof of this, something unprecedented would happen in the elder generation in this country, and in the world. It would definitely start a revolution!*



**MARX HUBBARD:** It would! Sexuality is not just a small aspect of life; it is an expression of the life force of evolution. And that life force in the postmenopausal couple has a higher purpose that hasn't been fully experienced yet. The intention, the love, and the intimacy this idea generates in my partner and me is itself vitalizing—even if it hasn't actually changed my DNA. I've projected this forward into the future, imagining that if we really *are* going to be able to extend our life span to a radical degree, then sexuality would have to assume a higher purpose beyond recreation in order for it to take on the sacred dimension of procreational sex and express the dynamism inherent in the life pulse. We are a self-evolving species now, and consciousness evolution is not only about our psyches and our social action but also about our own bodies. To raise sexuality to the possibility of regeneration and self-evolution is a wonderful exploration.

**WIE:** You have coined the term “regenopause” to represent this new perspective on the postmenopausal years.

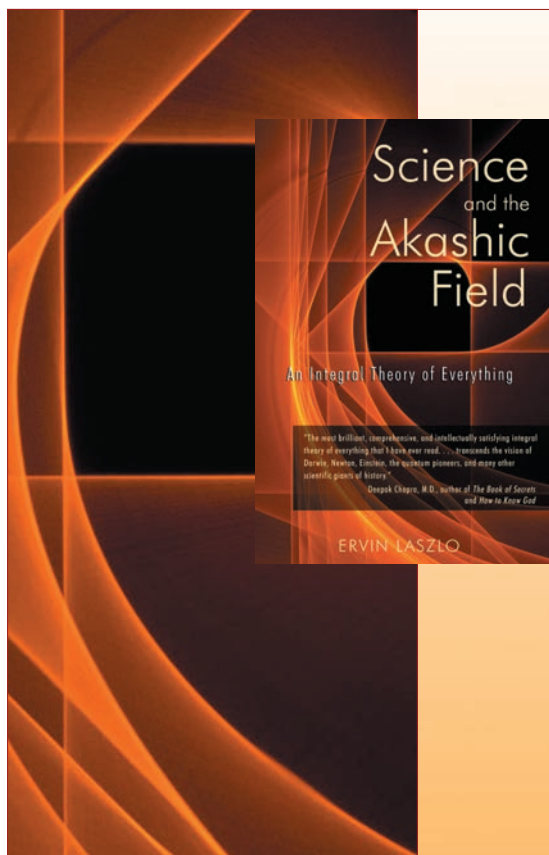
**MARX HUBBARD:** Yes. When I was fifty, I was diagnosed with a form of chronic cancer, and I began to search for the deeper plan of my being. I heard an inner voice that asked, “Would you like to regenerate or would you like to die?” I had no idea I had such a choice! And this inner voice said, “Cancer is the body’s panicked effort to grow without a plan; regeneration occurs when you say yes to the deeper plan of your being.” I realized that this deeper plan involved tuning in to the evolutionary process and becoming an embodiment of that. When a woman in her menopausal years is overcome by a profound impulse to co-create and to self-evolve, this signals a next phase in the life cycle of the feminine. I asked for a word that would describe what I was going through in my postmenopausal years—the internal liberation, as well as the desire for co-creation—and the word just flashed: *regenopause*.

Regenopause happens when the woman gets so turned on to her creativity and her life purpose that it starts to activate her at the cellular level. When an increased spiritual desire to participate in evolution crosses over into the aging process, it

## Sexuality is not just a small aspect of life; it is an expression of the life force of evolution.

sends a signal that says, “We’re not finished, folks. We’re not ready to go yet. It would be a waste of evolutionary time to die now because look what it took to get us here!”

Our species is being asked to self-evolve, or we will devolve and die. And I think that the regenopausal woman who is activated by this life purpose is, perhaps, the missing link in the story. So many women are entering menopause, so



### Science and the Akashic Field

An Integral Theory of Everything  
ERVIN LASZLO

Mystics and sages have long maintained that there exists an interconnecting cosmic field at the roots of reality that conserves and conveys information, a field known as the Akashic record. This field holds the record of all that ever happened in life, on Earth, and in the cosmos and relates it to all that is yet to happen. Scientist and philosopher Ervin Laszlo lends credence to our deepest intuitions of the oneness of life and the whole of creation.

\$14.95, paper, 224, 6 x 9, ISBN 1-59477-042-5

INNER TRADITIONS  
BEAR & COMPANY

800•246•8648

InnerTraditions.com

many women are turned on, and our culture is finally open enough to call us forth without trying to destroy us. It's the first time in modern history that we can even begin to see the potential of the "feminine co-creator." We haven't seen this full-scale woman until now because, in our culture, women haven't been allowed to pursue this except in a very narrow way. So regenopause transforms menopause into a new and open-ended life cycle, which doesn't have an existing lid, or an existing label, or a social image of itself.

**WIE:** *You seem to be observing that women in their later years are awakening to an evolutionary or developmental context for their lives—that they are thinking about what it would mean to evolve and to be free in ways they hadn't even begun to consider when they were younger.*

**MARX HUBBARD:** That is exactly right, and I was one of those women. I got married in 1951 at the age of twenty-one, and I was of the generation that Betty Friedan wrote about in *The Feminine Mystique*. Through interviewing hundreds and

hundreds of women, she discovered that we had no self-image after the age of twenty-one, and that that was accompanied by a kind of malaise and sadness. Then in the sixties, we burst out with the women's movement. But I think that there is a third phase to the women's movement in the third millennium, because over the last fifty years, the evolutionary perspective has taken hold. This new phase is about the drive to self-evolve and self-express, which is different from wanting equal rights in the masculine world. It's deeper, and it's motivated by a passionate love of our potential.

**WIE:** *This next step is the most exciting aspect of what you're talking about because it would mean transcending many of the premodern, modern, and postmodern notions of what it means to be a man and a woman. It seems that you're pointing to a natural, unpremeditated, and spontaneous expression of a liberated masculinity and a liberated femininity.*

**MARX HUBBARD:** This is the new Adam and the new Eve—whole being with whole being at the Tree of Life. In the story of Genesis, Eve was not only going for the Tree of Knowledge, she was heading for the Tree of Life, which is the tree of the gods. And it seems to me that the human species is heading for the Tree of Life. We have the power to destroy worlds and build worlds, to change our own bodies, and perhaps, eventually, to have ever-evolving life. Now, when the woman has become whole, so that her own masculine and feminine are joined, and the man too has become whole, they can come together beyond domination and submission in such a way that will bring forth the greater potential of each. So we see the couple as a very powerful arena of self-evolution. And when you add sexuality—from procreation to recreation to regeneration—you begin to see the New Man and the New Woman gaining the wisdom to guide the new powers of humanity forward. ■



## SANTA MONICA ZEN CENTER

*Restoring the warrior spirit of Zen  
through worldcentric  
training and practice*

<http://smzen.org>

**Dr. Barbara Marx Hubbard**, public speaker, author, social innovator, and teacher, is president and executive director of the Foundation for Conscious Evolution. Her most recent book is entitled *Emergence: The Shift from Ego to Essence: 10 Steps to the Universal Human*.



[illegible]

## Can a European activist create the most influential global political entity in history?

by Carter Phipps

**“It’s an unlikely place to start a revolution,”** I think to myself as I stop in front of the nondescript office building at Eleven Waterloo Place, just down from London’s Piccadily Circus.

September-November 2005 51

# Von Uexkull's hope is to create an unprecedented **X factor** in global politics.

one hundred global leaders—heroes of our own age—and turn them into a political force like no other in history. He calls it the World Future Council: an international body of carefully selected and deeply respected individuals, formed at this critical period in human development to help mobilize the conscience of the world on behalf of our common future.

This council, as von Uexkull envisions it, would consist of one hundred of the most capable and courageous men and women alive today. Their specific task would be to look beyond the interests of nations, governments, corporations, and ideologies to the broader interests of the planet itself and to the well-being of its six billion citizens. They would seek to influence world governments, lobby world leaders, and add their collective weight to issues of planetary import—political, economic, ecological, religious, and humanitarian. Von Uexkull's hope is to create an unprecedented X factor in global politics, with the moral authority to be heard and the political legitimacy to promote more enlightened policy. And the guiding principle of this council would be the quality of our common future and the legacy we leave to those who will inherit this ever-smaller planet we all share. It is a bold vision and I'm curious to meet the visionary.

Von Uexkull seems an unlikely if affable hero, as he warmly greets me at the elevator door and ushers me into his small office. Tall and lanky, with an accent that betrays his Scandinavian origins, he might easily pass for a college professor, his graying beard, glasses, and reserved demeanor giving off an intellectual aesthetic. But as we begin to speak about his vision for changing the world, his voice takes on a quiet passion and moral authority that seems more in keeping with his activist reputation.

"Politicians today are timid," he declares. "They lack courage; they are short-sighted and in many cases corrupt. Winston Churchill once said that the politician thinks of the next election and the statesman thinks of the next generation. But there are very few statesmen or stateswomen around today."

It was concern about the legacy we are leaving future generations that inspired this soft-spoken Swede to take up a

project as ambitious as the World Future Council promises to be. As a former Green Party member of the European Parliament and founder of the highly respected Right Livelihood Awards (often referred to in the press as the alternative Nobel Prizes), von Uexkull is no stranger to the unforgiving complexity of international politics. He has firsthand experience observing the interactions of short-sighted governments, powerful corporate interests, well-intentioned NGOs, and passionate activists as they struggle to respond to the burgeoning array of issues affecting our global village—north and south, east and west. Good ideas, he tells me, are not in short supply, but they often languish for years in reports or commissions or nonbinding declarations and are rarely implemented. And therefore, many of the fundamental changes that we desperately need to ensure a thriving human future seem to get further and further away, even as they grow more and more urgent. Sometime in the late 1990s, von Uexkull's frustrations came to a head.

"In 1998, I sat on a UNESCO commission to draft what was called 'The Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities,'" he remembers. "I realized that here was this very positive event that had been called together by UNESCO, but in the end, it was still just a short-term meeting with a nonbinding resolution. And so I began to think about how to build on all the good work and idealism that are out there and bridge this growing implementation gap."

The seeds of what would become the World Future Council Initiative (WFCI) were first planted in the public mind during a German radio interview later that year, when von Uexkull began to speak extemporaneously about a vision that had been slowly forming in his mind. On that radio show, he called for a global council of "wise elders, thinkers, pioneers, and young leaders" that could influence and lobby parliamentarians around the world. He suggested that such a celebrated assembly could act as a sort of high-profile, carefully coordinated, globally oriented special interest group that could focus the world's attention on the truly important issues facing humanity. It was a far-reaching proposal, and von Uexkull knew even then that bringing it to life would require a long-term commitment and deep-pocketed funders. It would mean finding the best and brightest leaders, individuals who had the moral weight to represent the world's collective aspirations for a brighter future. And someone would have to organize the whole venture. "I was already responsible for one underfunded global project named the Right Livelihood Awards," he explains. "This was obviously much larger, so I thought there was no way that I could take it on."

Whatever von Uexkull's hesitations, fate was one step



ahead of him. The response to his proposal was immediate. Television stations began talking to him about broadcasting the sessions of the council, people approached him with names of philanthropists, and he was showered with positive feedback. And the resistance he expected to find in the often-entrenched and territorial world of activists, nonprofits, and NGOs simply never materialized.

"We thought that the high officials in the UN would say, 'The UN is already doing this,' remembers von Uexkull. "Instead, we got an enthusiastic endorsement from Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former UN Secretary-General. Then I thought that futurists were going to say, 'Why are you trying to create a new futurist organization?' Instead, we got letters from heads of major futurist organizations asking, 'When can we start working with the council?' Then I thought the NGOs would tell us that the idea was too top-heavy. Instead, I was invited to speak at one of their conferences, and the response was very positive. There's a feeling that this is something that is missing in the international global governance structure, which we need to build up as soon as possible."

Victor Hugo once observed that nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come. The WFCI, it seemed, was one of those rare visions whose arrival in this world somehow included an already passionate constituency. And von Uexkull realized that he had an obligation to respond. Without knowing it, he had sealed his own fate that day on the radio. For a globally minded activist with a deep concern about the state of the world, who had for too long watched the inefficiency and impotence of so many of the better angels of world politics, there was nothing left to do but sign up for the revolution he had set in motion.

## PLANNING A GLOBAL NETWORK

If the World Future Council revolution is indeed imminent, then today at Eleven Waterloo Place, it must be the calm before the storm. Von Uexkull is alone in the office, as his primary London partner in the initiative, Herbert Girardet, director of research for the WFCI, is working from home. Lois Barber, director of the American grassroots environmental lobbying organization EarthAction, is working for the WFCI in the U.S., and in Germany and Brussels, where von Uexkull's name is better known, a few others are seeding the ground. The initiative was officially launched in the autumn of 2004 at a swanky London gathering, and much work has gone into preparing the basic plans for the council. Von Uexkull has been in touch with European cities about hosting commissions,

media attention in Germany is starting to grow, a briefing book has been written, an impressive list of well-known figures have endorsed the project, and a quiet buzz is rising in Europe.

The plan is to start with a "founding council" of twenty-five members. Those twenty-five will choose the next twenty-five, and those fifty will choose the final fifty. But, like national

**Good ideas  
are not in short  
supply, but they  
often languish for  
years in reports  
or nonbinding  
declarations and are  
rarely implemented.**

legislators, the council will do much more than merely comment on existing policy. Its members will also be the leaders and representatives of a much larger organization. In fact, the hope is to supplement the basic council by creating a large international network of citizens, activists, lobbyists, legislators, and parliamentarians that will have its tendrils running through government bodies around the world. As von Uexkull describes it to me, I get the sense of a massive subterranean organism connected to institutions everywhere, a global nonideological network whose grassroots influence could be accessible at the touch of a button.

This global network will also be supported by the work of a series of commissions, each one located in a different city around the world. As the research and development arm of the project, these commissions will act as specialized think tanks, exploring ideas, publishing reports, and preparing specific proposals for the council to consider. Much of the real action will take place here, as experts debate the ins and outs

of policy—security concerns, energy needs, world water issues, etcetera. An initial list of twenty-four such commissions has been established.

So imagine the scenario: a World Future Council made up of one hundred of the most respected and trusted members of our planetary community meeting regularly in London to consider the global issues of the day, issuing public statements of support and condemnation, applying its collective leverage to world governments. WFCI commissions dot the rest of the globe. Hosted in cities from Taipei to Singapore to San Francisco, each is linked with relevant universities as well as public and private think tanks. All of their knowledge and work are fed into the main council, where priorities are set and agendas announced. The international press and the full power of a global network of thousands of supportive parliamentarians

## PROPOSED COMMISSIONS OF THE WORLD FUTURE COUNCIL:

1. GOOD WORK FOR ALL
2. MONETARY AND TAX REFORM
3. RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
4. OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITS OF COMMERCE
5. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY VALUES
6. INTELLIGENT AND SENSITIVE BUILDING
7. SUSTAINABLE AND LIVABLE CITIES
8. SAFE ENERGY FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET
9. "CLOSED LOOP" PRODUCTION
10. CLIMATE
11. SUSTAINABLE USES OF FORESTS AND OCEANS
12. NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
13. BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, AND CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT
14. CONFLICT HEALING
15. HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL
16. CLEAN WATER FOR ALL
17. HEALTH AND MEDICINE
18. REVITALIZING DEMOCRACY
19. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
20. BIO-CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE MEDIA
21. EDUCATION
22. SPIRITUALITY AND SCIENCE
23. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
24. HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

and legislators are lobbied and engaged. And it's all done not for an ideology or a nation or a religion or a political party but for one thing only—our common future. Such is the daring vision of this unassuming Swede.

## THE COST OF A REVOLUTION

What's it going to take to bring the WFCI to fruition? Von Uexkull is determined to move one step at a time, and the agenda of the moment is money. A generous gift of a couple of hundred thousand euros has allowed the idea to get off the ground, but turning this dream into reality is going to require much more.

"Ideally we need ten million euros but, at an absolute minimum, five million euros [6.5 million dollars] has to be committed before we'll do this. We now have so many endorsements from such a variety of people that we can look potential donors in the eye and ask, 'Do you want to enter history as one of the founding donors? Do you want to become a Bernard Baruch?' Baruch was the Jewish financier who helped bring the United Nations to New York after the Second World War. We need a few people like that."

Of course, a few people like that don't just fall out of trees, but von Uexkull's success with the Right Livelihood Awards has given him a proven track record, and as he describes the challenges of his project, he transmits a quiet confidence that makes it almost impossible to doubt his capacity to deliver. And that's crucial, not just for potential donors, but to give the council that aura of inevitability that can open doors and overcome the voices of cynicism ("Can it really make a difference?"). His years working with the Awards have convinced him to ignore one of the major criticisms of the WFCI, and something I had questions about myself, namely, that the council members won't be able to agree on anything—that, coming from different parts of the world, their values will be too varied and distinct. "I've been working with the Right Livelihood Awards for years on quite controversial issues," he declares, "and there is remarkable agreement about human values, and even on value priorities. In my experience, with the vast majority of people, if you challenge them to think in the long term, to think as parents and grandparents and not as corporate leaders or politicians, they will agree."

As our conversation jumps between the WFCI, European politics, spirituality, globalization, evolution, moral values, the United Nations, Tony Blair, the media, and global warming, I start to get a sense of how well life has prepared von Uexkull to play the hero in this particular drama. "I'm a generalist," he tells me. "That's my strength. And I have the connections." That's certainly part of it. But it also seems that he is one of those

unusual individuals who just thrives in bucking convention and breaking new ground.

In fact, it's a trait that runs in the family. Von Uexkull's grandfather was a radical biologist, who fought against Darwin and mainstream science in his own day. And his father was also an independent thinker, a pacifist, and a peace activist who inspired his young son to follow an unconventional path even at an early age. As a boy, Jakob, with his father's encouragement, traded in his prized toy pistols ("even my water pistols," he says)

# I get the sense of a massive subterranean organism connected to institutions everywhere, a global nonideological network whose grassroots influence could be accessible at the touch of a button.

for a stamp collection. And as a young man, Jakob developed a reputation for taking risks and breaking out on his own. In 1980, he famously challenged the Swedish Nobel committee to start awarding a new type of Nobel Prize for ecological concerns and activism in the developing world. And he offered them over a million dollars to use as prize money. Where did he get a million dollars? From over two decades of meticulous stamp collecting. The Nobel committee rejected his overture, and so von Uexkull cashed in his stamps and used the money to found the Right Livelihood Awards.

Von Uexkull's spiritual life has also followed an unconventional route. While studying at Oxford in the early seventies, he became a student of Transcendental Meditation (TM) teacher Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (best known as the Beatles' guru) for a period of time. He even spent six months as the Maharishi's press secretary, an early crash course in public relations. Life in this famous teacher's inner circle was not to von Uexkull's liking, however, and soon he moved on. But he is appreciative of what he learned, and TM is a discipline he continues to practice to this day. "It helps me to cope," he explains. "It takes away a roughness, develops my sense of inner peace. And it has given me a conviction that we are part of a larger whole."

Whether collecting stamps, studying with spiritual teachers, pushing the Nobel committee, founding the Right Livelihood Awards, or envisioning the World Future Council, von Uexkull has always courted unique challenges, and more often than not, he has had great success doing so. While he

does not strike me as a rebel, he clearly thrives on a carefully cultivated autonomy. He has had the courage to follow an inner sense of rightness, the determination to overcome obstacles, and, perhaps most important, the savvy to get things done.

He'll need every bit of that savvy in the weeks and months ahead as he tries to pull off an international political coup d'état the likes of which has never really been attempted. From raising money to choosing the right council members, and from managing perceptions of the WFCI to finding appropriate

partners to overcoming organizational challenges, the potential pitfalls loom large. But as I leave the office and step out into the midday sun, dodging the double-decker London buses, it's hard not to feel optimistic. It's not because I'm sure that the WFCI is destined for greatness or that it's the most appropriate means to supplant bro-

ken institutions and right the tilted world order. It's simply that von Uexkull's fascinating vision of a new type of global political institution has convinced me of something equally significant—that changes *are* coming. Who's to say what match will ultimately start the fire? But when ideas like the WFCI have such an impact in so little time, I do believe it means something significant about the tinder of the world's body politic.

Crossing Trafalgar Square to the Underground station, I take one last glance at Lord Nelson's imposing profile, a symbol of Britain's once-colossal empire. There was a time when it must have seemed like it would last forever. But when the conditions are ripe, change happens quickly. Nothing can stop an idea whose time has come. "The walls of Jericho looked just as mighty forty seconds before they collapsed as forty days before they collapsed; you never know when the time is ripe." Von Uexkull's words came back to me as I boarded the busy train across town. "When the Greek dictators realized in 1974 that their time was over and Turkey was about to invade, they panicked. They called up the old prime minister, Karamanlis, whom they had deposed, in Paris in the middle of the night and said, 'We're resigning tomorrow morning. We decided you're the best person to take over.' And he just said, 'I've been waiting for your call.' So I always ask people, 'Are you ready?'" ■

**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Listen to Jakob von Uexkull recorded live at his *Voices from the Edge* presentation in London. [wieunbound.org/jakob](http://wieunbound.org/jakob)



do you want to

# LIVE FOREVER?

*Grappling with the science & ethics of immortality*

**Chasing Immortality:** Ray Kurzweil p. 58

**Against Immortality:** Andrei Codrescu p. 72

**We Will Be the Lords of Creation:** Robert Sawyer p. 82

**Even the Heavens Are Not Immortal:** Connie Barlow p. 92





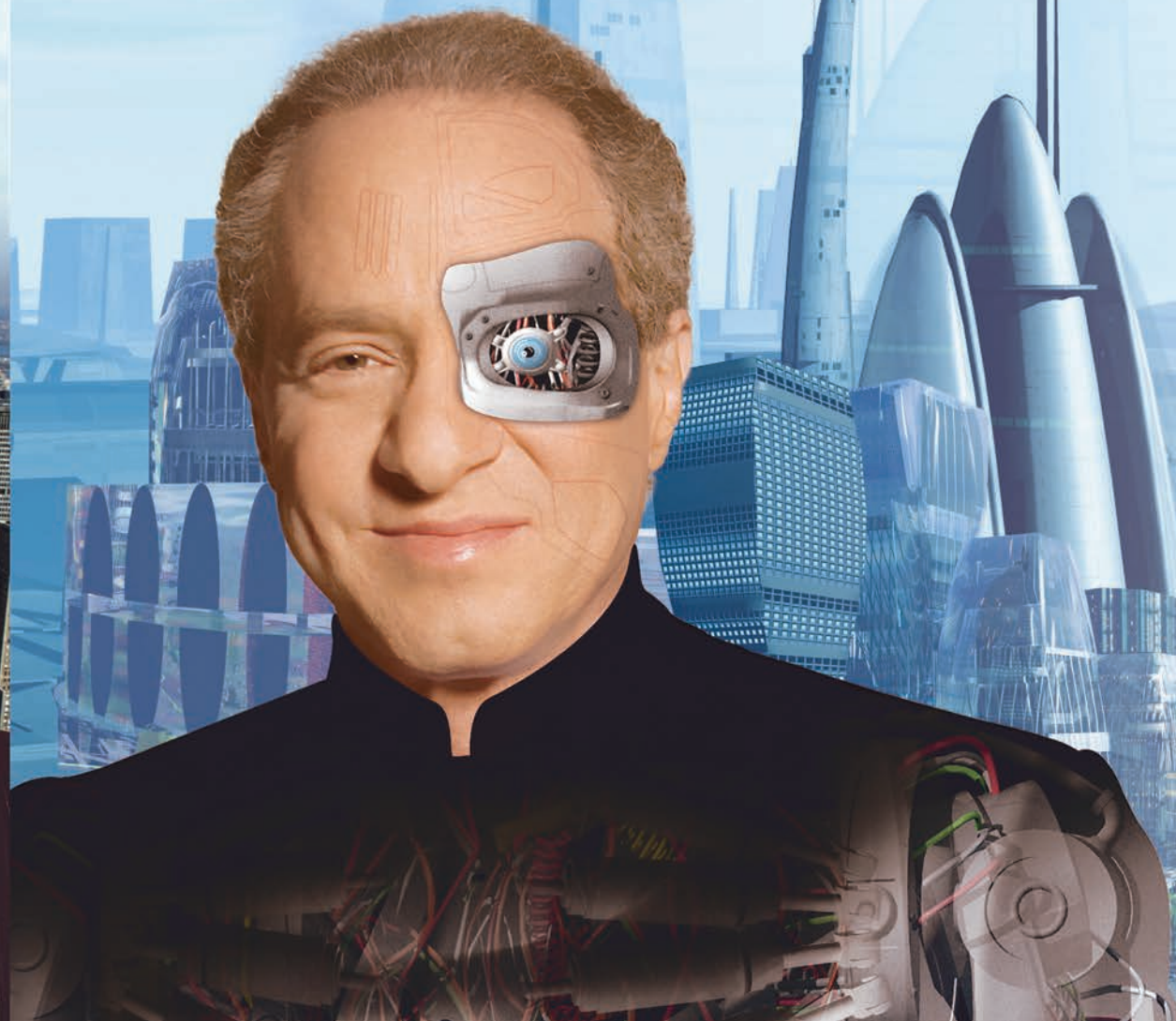
# *Chasing*



***The Technology of***

DO YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?

# Immortality



***Eternal Life:*** An Interview with Ray Kurzweil by Craig Hamilton



# The allure of eternal life has been tugging at the human imagination since we first began to contemplate our finitude. From the Epic of Gilgamesh, the oldest known literary work on earth to the Taoist cult of immortality to Ponce de Leon's quest

for the elixir of unending youth, the desire to free ourselves from the Grim Reaper's grasp has proven as persistent as the force it aspires to counter. But although we may have been inspired to hear of Himalayan yogis who have been alive for centuries and although our collective obsession with health, fitness, and increased longevity seems to be at an all-time high, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, even the most optimistic among us have probably never seriously considered the possibility that death could become optional. Indeed, in an increasingly chaotic and unpredictable world, it sometimes seems like our mortality is one of the few things that we can still be sure of.

Ray Kurzweil is determined to change all that. In the book he recently coauthored with Terry Grossman, *Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough to Live Forever*, the award-winning inventor and futurist lays out a vision of "the science behind radical life extension" that makes most science fiction writers seem short on imagination. And he's not alone. Over the past few decades, a growing body of research into the aging process has been accumulating in laboratories around the world. And among the more ambitious of the scientists involved, there is, believe it or not, an increasing optimism about the potential of actually bringing the seemingly irreversible mechanisms of degen-

eration and decay that have haunted humanity for millennia to a screeching halt. Soon.

How soon? According to Kurzweil, two or three decades looks like the magic number. And for him, and other aging boomers, the million-dollar question is: Will he be around and in good health when the fountain of youth finally starts flowing? This is where the subtitle of his book comes in. Living "long enough to live forever," it turns out, may require a bit more than simply eating your vegetables and not smoking (although that's definitely a start). For Kurzweil, building the "first bridge" to radical life extension means a radical shift in diet, a heavy supplementation regimen (he takes 250 supplements a day), and regular checkups and rejuvenation treatments to slow the aging process as much as possible using today's technology (and, of course, regular exercise and low-stress living). But even Kurzweil's "longevity program" is, he admits, only a modest stay against the inevitable. With a little luck, though, it will be enough to keep him kicking until the "second and third bridges"—biotechnology and nanotechnology, respectively—emerge to secure him his place in eternity.

Are human beings really ready to live forever? Do we have the psychological and spiritual resources to deal with such a profound shift in the very fundamentals of our existence?

What would a person be without the confrontation with mortality that has defined life and culture as we know it? And as much as we all run from death, are we sure that doing away with it would be a good thing? What would become of the first species to break the death barrier? When confronted with a prospect as radical as immortality, questions like these start to beg for answers. And given the possibility that we might actually be the first generation in history with the luxury of having to ask them, there are many who feel that we might do well to give them some thought before we proceed much further down the road to Shangri-la.

But that isn't stopping Kurzweil. Nor does it appear to be slowing him down. Widely regarded as one of today's leading futurists and innovators (winner of the prestigious National Medal of Technology, his inventions include the first reading machine for the blind and the first synthesizer to duplicate the sound of a grand piano), his unbridled enthusiasm for the omnipotence of technology to surmount any obstacle it confronts has him ready to embrace whatever the future may bring. If even one-tenth of what he predicts comes true, it will be the end of life—and death—as we've known it.

## Our aim is

**WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT:** In your new book, you assert that in the not-too-distant future, we'll have the capacity to extend the human life span indefinitely. How long do you think we can expect to live?

**RAY KURZWEIL:** One analogy that life extension researcher Aubrey de Grey uses is, "How long does a house last? If you take care of the house diligently, and quickly address any problem that comes up, the house can last indefinitely. If you don't take care of it, it won't last very long." The reason that analogy fails in regard to our own bodies is that we don't yet understand all the methods and we don't have all the maintenance tools for our bodies like we do for houses. We fully understand how a house works, because we engineered the concept of a house. We don't yet have all that information about our bodies and brains, and we don't have all the tools. But we will have them within twenty to twenty-five years, so we will be able to indefinitely maintain our bodies—and even anticipate, before they occur, the kinds of issues that now cause us to age and die. We're talking about putting your life into your own hands rather than leaving it in the metaphorical hands of fate.

**WIE:** How is science going to bring this about?

**KURZWEIL:** Terry Grossman and I have described what we call the "three bridges" to radical life extension. Bridge one has to do with taking full advantage of today's knowledge of biology in order to dramatically slow down aging and disease processes. This will enable us to stay in as good a shape as possible for when bridge-two technologies become available. Bridge two is the biotechnology revolution, which will give us the tools to reprogram our biology and the biochemical information processes underlying our biology. We're in

nanotechnology revolutions come to fruition. Our aim is to live long enough to live forever.

**WIE:** You've been following your own "bridge-one longevity program" for several years now. Do you have any indications that it's working?

**KURZWEIL:** When I was forty, I took these biological aging tests that measure forty or fifty different biochemical indicators, and I came out with a biological age of about thirty-eight. I'm now fifty-seven, and last year I came out at forty, so I've only aged a couple of years in the last sixteen years. That does reflect how I feel and look. I've overcome a major predisposition to diabetes—I was actually diagnosed with it twenty-two years ago, but as a result of using basically natural methods to reprogram my biochemistry, I now have no indication of it. I also had a predisposition to heart disease. My father died at fifty-eight of that disease, but I've never had it. So I have a completely different biochemistry than I would otherwise have.

**WIE:** Can you give an example of what you mean by bridge one, of how we can extend the life span using our current medical knowledge?

**KURZWEIL:** One aging process that we can control right now has to do with the loss of phosphatidylcholine in our cell membranes. The cell membrane is typically sixty percent or more phosphatidylcholine in a young person, but it can be down to ten percent in the elderly, in whom it gets replaced by useless substances like hard fats and cholesterol. It's one of the reasons that the skin of an elderly person is not supple

# to live long enough to *live forever.*

the early stages of that revolution already, but in fifteen years we will have, to a large extent, mastery over our biology. That will take us to the third bridge, the nanotechnology revolution, where we can rebuild our bodies and brains at the molecular level. This will enable us to fix the remaining problems that are difficult to address within the confines of biology and ultimately allow us to go beyond the limitations of biology altogether. So the idea is to get on bridge one now, so we can be alive and healthy when the biotechnology and

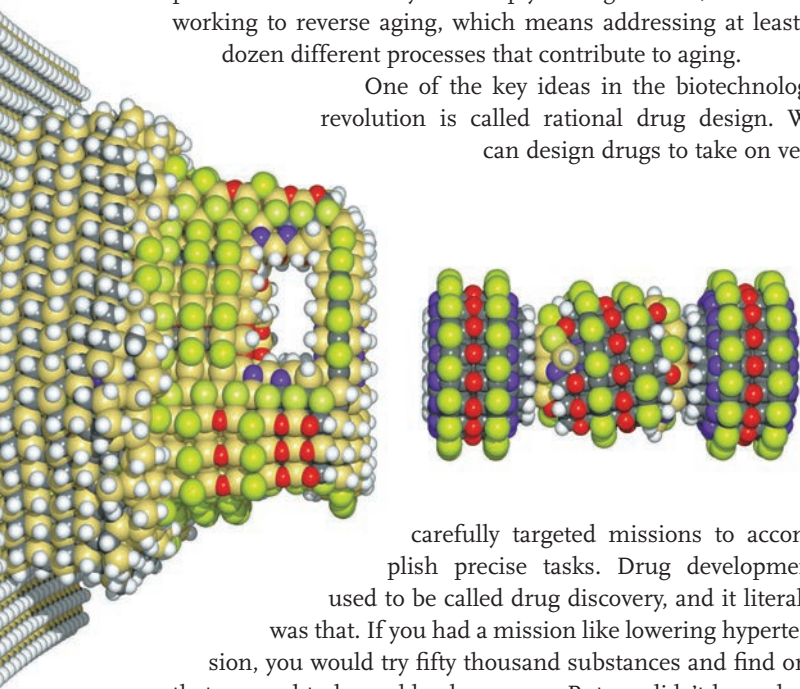
and their organs don't work as efficiently. The body makes phosphatidylcholine, but it does so very inefficiently, so gradually over the decades, our cell membranes are depleted of that vital substance. You can reverse that by supplementing with phosphatidylcholine; that's one of the 250 supplements I take. The objective is to use these bridge-one methods, which is applying today's knowledge aggressively so that

we can be in good shape as the new technologies in bridge two, the biotechnology revolution, become available in another fifteen years.

**WIE:** How is biotechnology going to aid in life extension?

**KURZWEIL:** Through biotech, we're developing the tools to reprogram our biology at the most fundamental level—the level of biochemical information processing. We're not far from being able to overcome diseases like heart disease and cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke—the major diseases that kill ninety-five percent of us. And beyond simply curing disease, we're also working to reverse aging, which means addressing at least a dozen different processes that contribute to aging.

One of the key ideas in the biotechnology revolution is called rational drug design. We can design drugs to take on very



carefully targeted missions to accomplish precise tasks. Drug development used to be called drug discovery, and it literally was that. If you had a mission like lowering hypertension, you would try fifty thousand substances and find one that seemed to lower blood pressure. But we didn't know how it worked or why it worked, and invariably, because it was really a very crude application, it would have all kinds of side effects. Whereas now, we can actually understand these processes very precisely in biochemical terms—for instance, the whole sequence of information processes that occur in the development of something like atherosclerosis, the source of heart disease—and we can attack them at specific vulnerable points. For example, there's one enzyme in the body that destroys HDL, the good cholesterol. If you inhibit that enzyme, people's HDL levels soar and it stops atherosclerosis. There's a drug now in phase-three FDA trials, torcetrapib, that does exactly that, and it looks very promising. I wouldn't hang my hat on any one specific development, but there are thousands of these.

We also have the means now to inhibit gene expression.

That's very important because every major disease—heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and, of course, viral diseases—uses gene expression, and if we can inhibit certain carefully selected genes, we can stop disease. There's a new methodology, RNA interference, where we put small RNA fragments into a medication that goes into the cell and blocks the messenger RNA expressing a gene and then blocks the expression of that gene. It works very well.

There are lots of genes we'd like to inhibit. One exciting example is the fat insulin receptor gene, which basically says "hold on to every calorie, because the next hunting season may not work out so well." You have to remember that our genes evolved tens of thousands of years ago, when conditions were very different than they are today. There wasn't any evolutionary reason for people to live very long, because once you were done with child rearing, which was generally maybe age thirty, you were using up the limited resources of the clan. And so longevity was not selected for. But there were genes that were appropriate for the time, like holding on to every calorie, because calories were few and far between—unlike today, with our super-sized

## We're talking about putting

meals. Now when scientists inhibited that gene in mice, those mice ate ravenously and remained slim—and they got the health benefits of being slim. They didn't get diabetes; they didn't get heart disease; they lived twenty percent longer. A number of pharmaceutical companies took notice and are now pursuing inhibiting the fat insulin receptor gene in fat cells, which would be quite a blockbuster concept. And that's just one of our twenty-three thousand genes.

So bridge two is already under construction, but in ten or fifteen years, we'll have the full fruition of that revolution, where we can really reprogram these information processes underlying our biology. And then twenty-five years from now, bridge three, the nanotechnology revolution, will enable us to go far beyond the limitations of our biology.

**WIE:** So even with all of the biotechnological innovation you're predicting, are there some limitations inherent in our biology that we won't be able to overcome without going beyond it?

**KURZWEIL:** Biology, while remarkably intricate, clever, and complex, is far from optimal, because biological evolution made various early design decisions that everything else has to be based on. For example, everything is built out of proteins, and



although proteins are three-dimensional molecules, they're a very limited class of materials with very limited properties. And we find time and again, as we actually reverse-engineer the methods of biology, that we can reengineer biological processes to be far more capable. For instance, our thinking takes place in the interneuronal connections in our brains. We have a hundred trillion of them, and they process information at chemical switching speeds of a few hundred feet per second, which is a million times slower than contemporary electronics. And that's based on the current speeds of today, when chips are still flat. Once electronics goes into the third dimension, they will be *far more* powerful. For instance, a one-inch cube of nanotube circuitry would be a million times more powerful than the human brain.

Or take our red blood cells, which are actually very simple devices—they just store and release oxygen in a certain fashion. There are already nanorobotic designs for robotic red blood cells that would do that hundreds of times more efficiently. If you replaced ten percent of your red blood cells with these respirocites, as they're

that will be more like twenty to twenty-five years away. Once we have the full fruition of biotech and nanotech, we really will have the means to indefinitely forestall disease, aging, and death.

**WIE:** Leonard Hayflick, one of today's leading authorities on aging, has said that he thinks that people who believe we can engineer our own immortality don't understand what aging really is, that deterioration and decay are universal processes that apply to everything, biological or otherwise.

**KURZWEIL:** What am I? What is a person? I'm a pattern of matter and energy. I'm not this stuff that I'm looking at, because these particular particles were all different six months ago. We know that our cells turn over pretty quickly, and although our neurons persist longer, their constituent parts, the tubules and filaments, actually get turned over in days or weeks. Within a matter of months, all of the cells, or at least all of the systems within the cells, are changed. What persists is a pattern. I'd like

# *your life into your* **OWN hands.**

called, you could do an Olympic sprint for fifteen minutes without taking a breath or sit at the bottom of your pool for four hours. Our biological systems are very sluggish. Take our white blood cells. I actually watched my own white blood cell in a microscope attack and destroy a bacterium, and it showed a measure of intelligence. It was very clever, but very slow; it was a boring thing to watch. It took about an hour and a half to complete that mission. Robert Frietas has nano-engineered designs that are fifteen to twenty years in the future, but once perfected, these designs would be hundreds of times more capable, would be able to download software from the internet that destroys specific pathogens including cancer cells, and would perform their mission in seconds rather than hours.

Now even though nanotechnology is largely in the future, there are already early adopter applications. For example, there's a blood-cell-sized capsule that's nano-engineered with seven animated pores that can successfully cure type 1 diabetes in rats; there are already sensors using nanotechnology that will be used in artificial pancreases to detect glucose levels with tiny computers embedded in the skin and to control the feedback loop. But the golden era of nanotechnology and the ubiquitous use of nanobots to augment the immune system and things like

to compare it to the pattern that water makes in a stream. When it's cascading around a rock, you can see a certain pattern, and that pattern can stay the same for hours or even months or years. But the water molecules that make up the pattern are changing within milliseconds. The pattern itself gradually changes as well—both the pattern of water in a stream and the pattern in our own bodies and brains—but there's a continuity even in this gradual change.

Now, Hayflick is correct that, left to their own devices, complex systems will eventually decay. On the other hand, you can intervene and modify those processes to maintain them. And it's not just a matter of fixing discrete problems, like saying, "Okay, there's a hole here. We'll plug the hole. There's a wound here, we'll plug the wound. There's a disease, we'll fix the disease." We do have to have more pervasive systemic interventions that maintain the integrity of this complex system. But that is something that can be done. We can do it with complex information systems, and we can do it with our bodies and brains.

One example will be DNA errors. If you examine the cells of an elderly person, you'll see there's a very high rate of DNA errors that have occurred. And that is the type of process that

Hayflick is referring to, because over time, those DNA errors cause a lack of integrity in this complex system. However, there are things you can do now to slow down DNA errors, and there will be biotech-based therapies to correct them. For example, I could take my skin cells and convert them into heart cells by manipulating the proteins in the cell body. I would discard those that had DNA errors or correct the DNA errors, extend

base pair of DNA in 2012?” or “What’s the spatial and temporal resolution of noninvasive brain scanning in 2014?” I could give you a figure that will be remarkably accurate. I have a track record of predictions based on these models, because these types of measures of information technology track in very smooth exponential progressions. We’re doubling the price/performance of information technologies each year—a factor

## *Psychologically, we’re not equipped to live*

the telomeres, multiply them in vitro and reinject them, and a good portion would ultimately work their way into my heart. If I did this therapy repeatedly, every day and every week, then after a year, my heart would be ninety-nine percent rejuvenated cells. Even if I was seventy, I’d have the heart of a twenty- or twenty-five-year-old, and I would have corrected the DNA errors.

So there are many ways to restore the integrity of a complex system. And yes, we do notice the sort of gradual blurring of the integrity of the information in a complex system if it’s left to its own chaotic devices. But that’s precisely what we’re going to address.

**WIE:** Our current life expectancy is less than one hundred years. And our current life extension technology is nowhere near being able to do what you’re speaking about. In light of this fact, what you’re predicting sounds like an enormous leap in an extremely short time. What gives you the confidence that things will unfold in the way you predict?

**KURZWEIL:** We don’t have all the tools we need to extend longevity indefinitely at this moment, and if all science and technology were to stop, we wouldn’t be able to do it. But science and technology are not stopping, they’re accelerating. The future is always much more different than people anticipate because it grows not linearly but exponentially.

About thirty years ago, I became an ardent student of technology trends, and I began to gather data in many different fields and build mathematical models to predict future trends. And it turns out that certain things are hard to predict. If you asked me, “Will Google stock be higher or lower than it is today three years from now?” I could give you a guess, but that’s all it would be. If you asked me, “What will the next wireless standard be?” that’s also hard to predict. But if you asked, “What would one MIPS [million instructions per second] of computing cost in 2010?” or “How much will it cost to sequence a

of a thousand in ten years or a million in twenty years, which is really quite daunting. For example, whereas it took us fifteen years to sequence HIV, we sequenced SARS in thirty-one days. It cost twelve dollars to sequence one base pair of DNA in 1990, a penny in 2000, and it’s under a tenth of a cent now.

Another important observation is that we’re now at a point where we have the intersection of information technology and biology. We’re understanding life and death, disease and aging as information processes, and we’re also gaining the tools to change those processes—to reprogram the little software programs called genes that affect our lives.

**WIE:** Though we may fear death, and wish we could avoid it, most people have never taken the idea of immortality seriously. It seems that if such a thing were to become possible, it would be a change far beyond any change that has ever occurred in human history, with almost unimaginable psychological, social, cultural, economic, and spiritual implications. Is humanity ready for this kind of change?

**KURZWEIL:** Psychologically, we’re not equipped to live five hundred years. So if we were talking only about conquering disease and aging, and then just living on as human beings in our current form for hundreds or thousands of years, that would lead to a serious problem. I think we would develop a deep ennui, a sort of profound despair. We would get bored with the level of intelligence we have and the level of experience we have available to us. I think in order to make this viable, we need not only radical life extension but radical life expansion. We need to expand our intelligence and our capacity for experience as well, which is exactly what these new technologies will enable us to do. Then an extended life span would become not only tolerable but a remarkable frontier where we could pursue the real purpose of life, which is the creation and the appreciation of knowledge. And I mean knowledge in the broader sense, including music

and art and literature and science and technology and relationships. We're going to profoundly expand our ability to do that.

My next book, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*, addresses the far-reaching implications for human life of these overlapping revolutions of genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics. For example, there are already

hardware of our brain crashes, the software dies with it. Our whole concept of life and death has those intertwined; they're not separable.

But we have already experienced a different type of reality where they *are* separable, and that's our software files. If you buy a new computer, you don't throw all your files away—your

# five hundred years.

feasibility designs showing that we could develop solar panels and nano-engineered fuel cells that could convert sunlight efficiently enough to meet all of our energy needs. Nanotechnology will also enable us to create any physical product at virtually no cost from very inexpensive raw materials and information. And nanobots are going to be permeating our bodies, brains, and environment—doing our work for us, transforming our environment, cleaning up pollution from earlier eras, and vastly expanding our intelligence. As we merge with our technology, we will have billions or trillions of nanobots in our bloodstreams keeping us healthy, interacting with our biological neurons, and providing, for example, full-immersion virtual reality incorporating all of the senses. If you want to be in real reality, the nanobots will just sit there and do nothing. If you want to be in virtual reality, they'll shut down the signals coming from your real senses, replace them with the signals that you would be experiencing if you were in the virtual environment, and your brain will feel like it's in that virtual environment. You can move your virtual body there and have any kind of encounter you want, incorporating all of the senses.

But most importantly, this intimate merger of our biological intelligence with nonbiological intelligence will vastly expand human intelligence as a whole. I mean, once it gets a foothold in our brains, our thinking will really be a hybrid of the two, and ultimately, the nonbiological portion will be much more powerful, and may give us access to new forms of intelligence that are very different than anything we've experienced.

This also relates to longevity, because the reality of longevity for nonbiological systems is different than for biological systems. Right now, the software of our lives is the information in our brains. I estimate it to be thousands of trillions of bytes, which represents all of our memories and experiences and skills and just the whole state of our brain. So that's software, and it's inextricably tied up with our hardware. When the

files have a longevity that's independent of the hardware. Our lives are also information files, which I call our mind file. So eventually, the information in our brains will be independent of the hardware substrate that it's running on, just like software is today. That's the nature of immortality some decades from now, as our lives increasingly become dominated by the software of our mind file.

In envisioning the future, people frequently will take one change and consider how it would impact today's world as if nothing else is going to change. Most futurist movies are like that. In Spielberg's *Artificial Intelligence*, for example, you have human-level cyborgs, but everything else is the same—the coffee makers, the cars, no virtual reality. But you really have to look at all the different changes. If a very prescient futurist in 1900 had said, "We have a third of the population today working on farms, but I can see that will be less than two percent in a century from now," people would have said, "Oh my god, everybody's going to starve." But not only are we not starving, America's a major food exporter. How did that happen? Because new technologies, largely information-based, have improved productivity not only of food but of everything else.

**WIE:** Given our current struggles with overpopulation, many have pointed out that if such technologies were to become widely available, we would pretty quickly be faced with a choice between having more children and securing our own immortality. Do you agree?

**KURZWEIL:** I don't think it's going to be a problem. Yes, radical life extension will enlarge the population. But soon, all of our products and foods will be manufactured by nanotechnology replicators that can make essentially any physical product at almost no cost. So this will lead to a radical increase in prosperity around the world. And we've seen that as nations



become more prosperous, they lower their population growth. The most advanced countries have negative population growth. Now that will reverse again when we dramatically reduce the death rate. The birth rate will then exceed the death rate once again, and population will grow. But how quickly is it going to grow? It's not going to double every year, it's going to add a few percent every year. So compared to this very slow expansion of the biological population, the wealth creation from nanotechnology is going to expand at explosive rates. We're going to be able to keep up very easily.

**WIE:** One criticism of the life extension movement has been that these technologies are only going to be available to the rich, and therefore, their pursuit will intensify the class gap between the haves and have-nots—those who can afford to live forever and those who can't. Will we end up with a divided world of immortals and mortals?

**KURZWEIL:** That's a misconception also. The law of accelerating returns says that there's fifty percent deflation annually in information technology so that you can buy the same digital camera today for half what it cost to buy it a year ago. The typical cycle is that a product starts out unaffordable and actually

potential perils of these new technologies outweigh any potential benefits, no matter how remarkable they might be. Yet you seem to be advocating a no-holds-barred relationship to these developing technologies. Do you feel the risks have been overblown?

**KURZWEIL:** Technology is a double-edged sword. It empowers both our creative and destructive sides. I had this conversation with Bill Joy in September 1998 and gave him a copy of my book *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, which led him to write the *Wired* cover story "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us" and articulate the downsides of genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics. What was controversial about his article was his call for relinquishment: "Let's keep the good technologies, but there are dangerous ones like nanotechnology and biotechnology—let's just not do those." I pointed out that all technologies are leading, in the end, to those dangerous technologies; that technology is inherently dangerous. And in fact, banning a technology at a broad scale just drives it underground, where it's actually more dangerous, because then the responsible practitioners we're counting on to protect us don't have easy access to the tools. So I think the most dangerous route would be to attempt to relinquish these tech-

## Nanobots are going to permeate **Our**

not working very well—remember when mobile phones barely worked and only the elite could afford them? Then it becomes merely expensive and works better, and then it becomes inexpensive and works very well, and eventually it's almost free and it's really perfected. So it's only at the point where technology doesn't work very well that only the rich can afford it.

Look at the AIDS drugs. They started out costing tens of thousands of dollars per patient and actually didn't work very well. Now, at least in the poorer countries, say, in Africa, it's about a hundred dollars a patient. It's still too much, and yes, we need to do a lot more. But actually, we have the opportunity to save millions of people, because the drugs are only a hundred dollars a person, and they actually work pretty well now. We're not where we need to be, but the technology has moved in the right direction. And that progression is going to accelerate. Ultimately, we'll be able to meet the material needs of the entire population at almost no cost.

**WIE:** Biotechnology and nanotechnology have both borne the brunt of fierce criticism in recent years. Many feel that the

nologies. If one seriously tried to do that, it would require a totalitarian system. And Bill Joy himself has evolved his position. He's now working as a venture capitalist actually investing in nanotechnology to accelerate renewable energy and other environmentally friendly technologies.

However, there are downsides. We talked about some of the tremendous benefits of genetics and the whole biotechnology revolution in terms of overcoming disease and extending longevity, but it also could empower a bioterrorist with tools found in a routine college biotechnology laboratory to create a biological pathogen that could be quite dangerous. It could be spread easily and be stealthy and deadly.

The answer, though, is not to relinquish these tools. In broad strokes, it is to put more stones on the defensive side of the scale. We're close, for example, to broad tools that could combat biological viruses in general. Now if we can get those quickly enough, we don't have to attack each new virus as it comes along. So what we need to do is identify these risks. We need ethical standards, which have worked very well in the genetic community—at least to prevent inadvertent

problems, to prevent intentional abuse or misuse by terrorists, for example. But the fact that there will be risks is just inherent. I mean, technology is power, and it does empower all of our dispositions, creative and destructive.

**WIE:** What would you say to the idea that it's unnatural to want immortality? That this quest for life extension goes against the natural cycles of birth and death, and that if we attained immortality, we would have stepped so far outside the natural order that in some sense, we would no longer be human?

**KURZWEIL:** In my view, we are the species that seeks to go beyond our own boundaries. Fundamentalism is the idea of putting artificial constraints on what humans can be—defining humans in terms of our limitations rather than by our ability to supersede our limitations. We didn't stay on the ground, we didn't stay on the planet, we're not staying within the limitations of our biology, and we're not staying within the limitations of our intelligence. The noblest purpose of human life is the creation, communication, understanding, and appreciation of knowledge in all its forms:

# bodies.

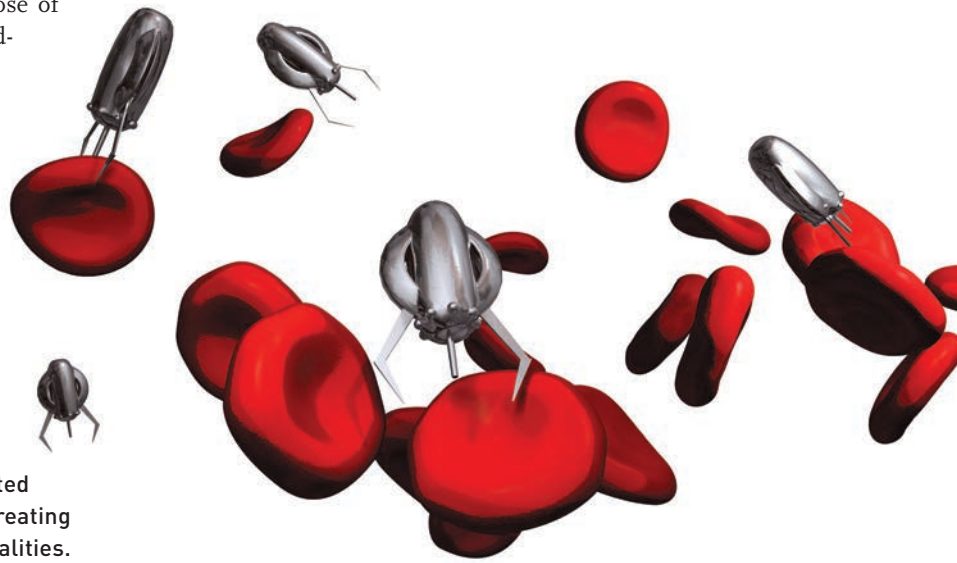
from different art forms to different levels of expression in science and technology.

**WIE:** Some people would say that the meaning of life is, in a sense, defined by our mortality. That our limited life spans push us to spend the time we have wisely, creating a sense of urgency that tends to bring out our best qualities. That such things as courage and heroism, and even creativity, arise from the recognition that "I only have so much time here, and so does everybody else." What would you say to the idea that if we were faced with the opportunity to live forever, we would quickly lose our edge, become lazy, start to take life for granted, and ultimately become more apathetic, self-centered, and indulgent?

**KURZWEIL:** I think defining meaning in terms of death—saying that death gives life meaning—is to define us in terms of our limitations. In my mind, what's noble is the pursuit of knowledge, and that's going to expand through this exponential

process along the law of accelerating returns. That's really the future of human life.

If you see human beings as no different than peaches on a tree that grow old and fall and die, then that view has merit. But there is something unique, after all, about humans. I mean, it's been said many times that science has thrown humanity off our pedestal of uniqueness and centrality. We discovered that the universe didn't revolve around the earth, that human beings were not anointed directly by God, and that we evolved from worms. And so we've continually had our egocentric view of the importance of humans shattered by these scientific insights. But there actually is one really important way in which humans are unique: We are the only species that passes knowledge down from generation to generation, where that knowledge base is growing exponentially, and where we go beyond our limitations. Whereas other animals can be seen statically using tools,



they don't create technology that evolves. You know, the combination of our cognitive capability and our opposable appendage, the thumb, enabled us to change our world. And that's what's ennobling, and gives life meaning.

Up until now, we've had no opportunity to circumvent our mortality. So we had no alternative but to rationalize this tragedy—which is what death is—saying, "Oh, it's really a good thing. And it's ennobling; it gives life meaning." A large part of religion is to rationalize this tragic loss of knowledge and skill and personality as something positive. But really, what's positive about human beings is our pursuit of new frontiers.

**WIE:** It is well known among evolutionary theorists that the chief catalysts for change are stress and challenge. Whether we look at technological innovation, personal transformation, or collective evolution, positive change in any form tends to be driven by external pressures, by challenges that

**KURZWEIL:** Well, already we can see that that's not the case. We are now pushing evolution forward. Biological evolution is not the cutting edge—it's really our technological evolution. We've taken over the driving force of the evolution of complexity from this evolutionary process that created it. And I think that

## *I think that the evolutionary process has its own*

push us to reach further, dig deeper, create, and innovate. Even this rush for life extension is being driven by the stress of imminent death. In the utopian immortal future you envision, what do you see as the catalyst for continuing evolution, development, and change? In securing for ourselves a trouble-free future in eternity, will we inadvertently be ensuring our own stasis and depriving ourselves of the conditions needed for our own continued development?

the evolutionary process has its own urgency because there are still competitive pressures, and time becomes increasingly valuable when things are moving more and more quickly. We're not motivated only by the realization that we're running out of time because we're going to die in a few years.

You see lots of people competing to create new businesses and new knowledge, competing in the academic and artistic arenas. And by and large, they're not propelled by

Now just \$26/year!



Science & Spirit is published bimonthly by Heldref Publications, a division of the nonprofit Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation

## science & spirit

TO BE HUMAN IS TO SEARCH FOR MEANING  
THIS QUEST IS AT THE HEART OF ALL THE WORLD'S GREAT RELIGIONS  
BUT IT IS MORE THAN THAT

- Modern genetics tells us that the quest for meaning and purpose is in our genes, that it has survival value
- Medical research shows that religious people live longer
- Cosmologists tell us that even the universe looks like it has a purpose, but some say that is an illusion

Science & Spirit explores things that matter. Leading scientists, Pulitzer prize-winning writers, compelling topics, and stunning imagery combine to make each issue both intellectually challenging and rewarding.

## Call now or log on to subscribe!

To take advantage of this special offer, mention promotional code **147EN5** when ordering.

To order, call 1-800-365-9753 or visit [www.science-spirit.org](http://www.science-spirit.org)

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND GET A FULL YEAR FOR ONLY \$26



the need to put the next meal on the table. We don't need death to propel that forward. We have a hierarchy of needs: air is pretty much a need, but if you have air, then you worry about food, and if you have that, you worry about shelter. But most

# urgency.

of us have already moved on to worrying about ego needs, and beyond that, there are desires to create meaningful knowledge and so on.

**WIE:** What is your response to the observation that death is part of a process of regeneration, and that it's through the cycle of death and rebirth that the very process you're speaking about happens? That in some sense, evolutionary

progression wouldn't really be possible once the regenerative dimension were taken out of it?

**KURZWEIL:** Religion talks about transcending death, but it has a mystical answer to how that happens. In fact, we find this transcendence in the real physical world. We find it in technology. If you put materials and energy in the right configurations, magical things happen. You get powers that go beyond the original materials. That's what excites me about being an inventor.

And we will transcend death and that natural cycle. We're not just grapes on the vine—we are overcoming that natural process that we emerged from. Yes, we came from nature, but we are going to surpass it through the power of our technology, which comes from our mind made manifest in the real world. ■

**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Listen to the audio of Craig Hamilton's interview with Ray Kurzweil on [wieunbound.org/kurzweil](http://wieunbound.org/kurzweil)

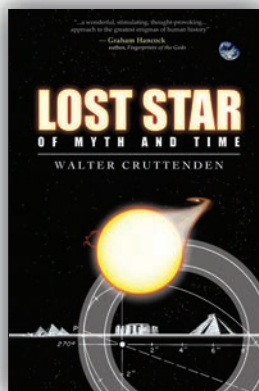
"...a wonderful, stimulating, thought provoking... approach to the greatest enigmas of human history" – Graham Hancock, Author, *Fingerprints of the Gods*

## LOST STAR OF MYTH AND TIME

WALTER CRUTTENDEN

Ancient folklore from around the world rings with two resonating themes:

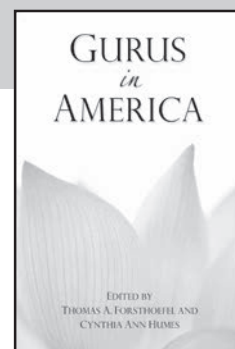
History moves in cycles with alternating Golden and Dark Ages, and the Precession of the Equinox is the cause and timekeeper of these cycles. Could the myths be true? New astronomical evidence suggests...



Visit The Author:

[www.loststarbook.com](http://www.loststarbook.com)

\$19.95 352 pages



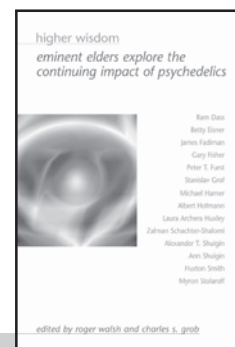
Now available from  
**SUNY Press**

**GURUS IN AMERICA**  
**Thomas A. Forsthoefel and**  
**Cynthia Ann Humes, editors**

*A fascinating look at Hindu gurus with significant followings in the United States.*

288 pages

\$24.95 pb 0-7914-6574-8



**HIGHER WISDOM**  
**Eminent Elders Explore**  
**the Continuing Impact**  
**of Psychedelics**  
**Roger Walsh and**  
**Charles S. Grob, editors**

*Interviews with fourteen pioneers in psychedelic research.*

288 pages

14 b/w photographs

\$24.95 pb 0-7914-6518-7

1-800-666-2211

[www.sunypress.edu](http://www.sunypress.edu)





DO YOU WANT *TO LIVE FOREVER?*

# AGAINST *immortality*

by Andrei Codrescu

I AM A POET NOT A SCIENTIST, so many of the things that matter to me are not the subject of scientific studies. Walt Whitman and Herman Melville had opposing visions of the force that gave birth to the universe. For Whitman, the universe was born in and is held together by the force of love. For Melville,



“the invisible spheres were formed in fright,” in a terrifying primal darkness—a dark force that continues to dictate the evolution and workings of the universe. No matter which vision might seem more congenial to you, both of them are transcendent, posing the fundamentals of a connective unity that is whole in every single aspect. Scientists, however, outside of theoretical physics, are generally unconcerned with the

## There is no scientific experiment that does not raise ethical questions in every aspect of its unfolding.

universe as a whole. The nature of scientific inquiry would seem to privilege human beings a priori, but beyond *that*, the motives and contexts of research are obscure or downright disingenuous. Not to speak of the results, which rarely resemble the original intentions.

There is no scientific experiment that does not raise ethical questions in every aspect of its unfolding, from the premise it aims to prove or disprove, from the context in which it is conducted, from the results, and from the subsequent interests that translate those results into practice. If one looks at nature as the Great Experimenter whose motives are either Whitmanic or Melvillian or neither (being self-propelled by its own, as yet unknown, logics), all other experimenters fall woefully short. The Great Experimenter, indifferent to how we interpret its intentions, acts as an organic whole; no part of it is left out. Science, as practiced by humans, began as an investigation into the deepest questions raised by nature and did not, until after the Enlightenment, lose sight of the ethical and the philosophical. In the nineteenth century, discoveries in medicine, physics, biology, astronomy, and nearly all aspects of matter led to astonishing practical results that then fed back into scientific inquiry and increased the pressure for more results. Many ethical and philosophical concerns fell by the wayside in the rush to improve control over nature. All that remains today connected to the whole of the universe is the insatiable appetite for bettering the human enterprise. Everything else in the universe is tangential or at least secondary to the human need to improve the human body and its material needs. The *spiritual* needs of humans in connection to the whole of the universe are not the concern of science now. It is generally assumed by scientists that those needs either do not exist or will take care of themselves in some mysterious ways that are the specialty of an imprecise class: poets, ethicists, dreamers,

theologians, humanists of every stripe. This is a distinctly lesser class of people now. Culture is of interest to scientific researchers only insofar as it affects their funding and their relationship to the political class. Politics itself has abandoned, for the most part, its ancient concern for philosophy, becoming focused only on the visible benefits of science to power. And vice-versa. The political matters to science because it facilitates research.

In our democracy, competing political interests are constantly meeting the competing interests of science, adjusting themselves to one another in a tiresome game of redefinition. Ethics rarely enters the equation in this mutual game, because if it did, it would awaken a terrible anxiety in individuals—an anxiety that is already quite widespread today, despite the use of optimistic or neutral language by both scientists and politicians. The fact is that

individual human beings continue to be racked by essential questions about their connections to the universe, and they will simply not put up with becoming numbers in a statistic or guinea pigs in the soothing rhetoric of science and power. Our job as humanists, as lesser members of the investigative class, is to encourage and increase the anxiety of individuals about what is done in their names.

Poetry is one of the surer ways to increase this anxiety. As I was preparing to write this article, I trusted, as I always do, in the inexplicable generosity of the left field to provide me with a few meaningful balls. Sure enough, a little poetry booklet appeared in my mail. I opened it at random and came upon this:

### CRUSHERS OF THE UNIVERSE

By William Zink

10% More for Free!

Five-legged frogs are better  
Than their four-legged friends.  
It's always a plus to have more  
Of a good thing.  
Remember *that* when you see  
One of those creatures with an extra  
Appendage dangling from her shoulder,  
Struggling from the water to bask  
On his favorite stone.  
What looks like a burden  
Is really a bonus.

10% more for free

10% more for free



Maybe not a great poem, but containing enough “unscientific” delights to raise the blood pressure of a hundred scientists. Among those: irony (a truly unquantifiable and un-research-worthy force); outrage at the unending boosterism of late capitalism in its essential belief that “more is better”; and genuine sadness at our disregard for nature, still the Great Experimenter. For scientists happily playing with the genes of animals to produce aberrations on their way to some desired modification, these concerns are irrelevant. They are “sentimental,” that is to say, they come from some affective area of the brain that feels such things. The frog with five legs may not have been produced in the laboratory but has come about as nature’s own mistake. Furthermore, the Great Experimenter is the author of many mistakes, and evolution is littered with them. Your scientist will see nothing wrong with duplicating mistakes on the way to a successful result. He will see no difference between his experiment and that of the Great Experimenter. Is he not part of the Ongoing Experiment himself, a *pequeño dios*, as the Peruvian poet Cesar Vallejo put it? Objectively, there is no reply to that without reference to other unscientific human responses, among which is the persistent feeling that we may be involved in some unspeakable act of hubris, that some kinds of research are *contra naturam* and not part of it. It is the feeling that we are conducting a parallel experiment that is at odds with the Great Experiment, that, in the end, we are a part of the Great Experiment that is about to go awfully wrong, and that, if this is indeed the case, the Great Experimenter will have no choice but to terminate humans altogether as part of the universal experiment gone wrong. Buckminster Fuller saw humans as an “information-gathering function in an eternally regenerating universe,” and if we fail in this regard, we will be unsentimentally replaced by another “information-gathering function,” maybe some kind of ants.

It’s also the job of humanists, then, to see to it that this doesn’t happen, that the universe might be propitiated in some way to not act like your run-of-the-mill human scientist who doesn’t care how he gets to experiment or where the experiment might lead.



**A**mong the many mysteries in the toolbox of poetry and ethics is synchronicity. This phenomenon cannot be easily bypassed by scientists, who know, just as poets do, that the left field often provides them with unexpected and inexplicable

help. A book in the mail, a just-published DNA sequence, an overturned glass, a phone call from a stranger working on the same problem . . . Luther Burbank, the California botanist who created many new plants in his garden, used to say that he rarely requested any seeds or cuttings for his experiments: they just showed up in his mailbox. In fact, he ended up relying so much on his mailbox, he got angry if what he needed *didn’t* show up, though he’d never asked anyone for it.

Scientists are not unconcerned with this force. Looking at studies of twins, Ruth Levy Guyer mentions “the Ohio twins Jim and Jim, named identically by their separate nonadoptive parents. When they were studied at age 40, each weighed 180 pounds, was six feet tall, had a dog named Toy, a child named James Allen, a wife named Betty, and an ex-wife named Linda. Each drank Miller Lite and chain-smoked. Each ground his teeth at night and regularly wrote love notes to his wife.”

## Science began as an investigation into the deepest questions raised by nature and did not, until after the Enlightenment, lose sight of the ethical and the philosophical.

How are these twins connected? Scientists fascinated by twins have measured everything measurable, from brain waves to electrical signals they may have received in the womb, but they cannot find the force that connects them.

Neither can we experimentally find the force that drives certain researchers to be fascinated by twins, without introducing a fundamental ethical question. All researchers of twins may be performing “science,” but there is a profound ethical difference between Dr. Mengele, the Nazi doctor at Auschwitz, who tortured and murdered Jewish twins, and researchers at, let’s say, St. Thomas’ Hospital in London. Is “science” really the connection between the monster Mengele and the London researchers (who are probably Tony Blair Labourites)? If that’s the case, there is something seriously wrong with “science.” Mengele and other Nazis produced reams of data that later scientists were not reluctant to use until they were brought up short by ethicists. An anatomy atlas by Eduard Pernkopf, *Topographische Anatomie des Menschen*, was used by physicians in Europe and the United States until the late 1980s, when

some people began to question the source of the drawings. The models turned out to be victims of Nazi atrocities, and the medical illustrators were Nazi butchers. Some of those bastards considered themselves good doctors or good artists, and they doubtlessly invoked the god “science” when they were questioned. Most of them were never questioned; some of them were hanged; others died of old age under assumed identities.

It is easy, from the perspective of today, to condemn the Nazis, though it is harder to deny that their work was science. The ideology that underwrote that science was evil, but science itself was generally understood to be something pure, driven by that generous cliché still in circulation: the human thirst for knowledge, a thirst that generates the next cliché, which is that science works to improve mankind. Certainly, the researchers studying twins at the Twin Research and Genetic Epidemiology Unit at St. Thomas’ Hospital in London, established in 1992, wouldn’t have it any other way. Their mission is to explore the role of genes in complex diseases, including osteoporosis, arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, and asthma. St. Thomas has the UK’s largest database of twins, and it has the most detailed cohort of adult twins in the world, with hundreds of measurements for each twin. For Professor Tim Spector, director of the unit, this represents an important resource for researchers. We already have huge amounts of data on all our twins: 300 measures ranging from sense of humour to leptin levels, with the potential to gather much more. And we have a whole genome scan for 3,000 twins (1,500 pairs). It’s an exciting resource for the future.

What if, in some order not yet studied in any “scientific” way, names are indeed destiny? In such an order, an interest in twins by somebody named Spector is quite significant because a twin is the “specter” of another, the shadow, as it were. The

## Many ethical and philosophical concerns fell by the wayside in the rush to improve control over nature.

fascination with the mirror, with our own “other,” is not the subject of Dr. Spector’s genetic research, but we humanists cannot do without it.

The “other” haunts ethics, poetry, and literature. “The evil twin” is a common expression, denoting someone alike in every way except in their moral being. Thus, in Western tradition, the tradition that produced science, the Devil is God’s “evil twin”

(demoted by the Bible to a “fallen angel”), and good intentions are shadowed by evil twins. Reason has its shadow twin: mystery. Synchronicity, linguistic and musical congruences, orders of seemingly chaotic confluence, so-called accidents, etc.—all of these operate within human beings, driven by forces that have no mathematical formulas to explicate them. Or not any known mathematics. It follows that “science,” too, has an evil twin, “poetry” perhaps, a method of investigation that is the reverse image of everything science claims to be: neutral, in search of “pure” knowledge, etc. (at least that is how scientists rationalize their work).



I did not plan to deliver a diatribe against the arrogance of science. I originally intended only to identify three types of fantasy relevant to current debates in bioethics. The three types of fantasy at work today about the future of human beings are as follows: 1) literary utopian, 2) literary dystopian, and 3) political utopian.

A good example of literary utopian fantasy is a novel called *Icosameron*, written in the eighteenth century by a great figure of the Enlightenment, the philosopher, poet, and adventurer Giacomo Casanova. In the *Icosameron*, an English brother and sister named Edward and Elizabeth crash to the center of the earth where they discover the civilization of the Micromegres (or as I call them for short, the Micromegs). The Micromegs are androgynous, have both male and female sexual organs, can change colors at will, and speak a musical language. When they converse, which they do often—it’s their favorite pastime except for orgies—one of them sets the musical key for the conversation that follows. The Micromegs are peaceful lovers of beauty

who reproduce only when their numbers appear to be in decline. Edward and Elizabeth are so charmed by their hosts that they abandon their inhibitions and make love. Elizabeth conceives several sets of twins over two decades, and their twins conceive twins. After a time, the number of humans spawned by Edward and Elizabeth becomes greater than the Micromeg population, and human characteristics, including jealousy, possessiveness, territoriality,

greed for luxuries, and lust for power make their appearance. At this point, Edward and Elizabeth are mysteriously forced back to earth where we find them, at the beginning of the novel, telling the story of their sojourn among the Micromegs to the Queen of England. They haven’t aged a day since their crash, so they appear to be just two pretty adolescents weaving a fantastic yarn.



Here, in beautiful prose—not translated as yet into English as far as I know—is the utopian description of successful genetic modifications. Casanova's poetic fantasy has envisioned a world without human difficulties, a desirable society of creatures programmed for beauty and common welfare. There is, mercifully, no scientific explanation as to how the Micromegs got to be the way they are, because Casanova was too intelligent to chance extrapolating from the science of his day. At the end of the *Icosameron*, there is a dystopian note: by populating the Micromeg paradise with humans, the whole sorry mess is bound to start all over again.

Less than a century later, another type of fantasy appears, one in which the utopian impulse is quickly transformed into horror. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the story of a doctor who creates a human being, a job that had been until then reserved for God. Mary Shelley based her novel on the legend of the Golem, which was well known in Europe since the seventeenth century. Rabbi Loew in Prague created a human creature, a giant, which he animated by writing the living (and forbidden) name of God on his forehead. You could say that he animated the Golem by writing the genetic code on his forehead, a four-letter word that, until Francis and Crick, wasn't published anywhere else. The Golem starts out good, with the reasonable mission of defending the Jewish people from their enemies (who were many and whose numbers never seem to substantially decrease), but the unforeseen happens: the Golem falls in love with the rabbi's daughter and just doesn't have the subtle equipment to understand the power of his feelings. In a rage over the strangeness of this love force that he cannot understand, he becomes destructive and has to be destroyed in the end. Rabbi Loew erases the name of God from his forehead, and he crumbles into dust. It appears that the rabbi, in his rush to make the Golem functional for a good purpose, forgot to give him some understanding of basic human conundrums, such as love, jealousy, anger, possessiveness, and the consequences of great power. The Golem was a giant who didn't know his own strength.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the Golem, slightly updated, with some references to electricity, the great wonder of her day. Popular belief, and even scientific belief, was that electricity could shock matter into life, and even bring back the dead. Dr. Frankenstein is not without ethical qualms: "When I found so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work

of inconceivable difficulty and labour. . . . I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses."

One would be hard put to find anything of a modern researcher in Dr. Frankenstein's meditation—with the exception of that last phrase: "I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses." Here, Mary Shelley intuited the minefield familiar to many scientists today, the dark side of research. "A multitude of reverses." Yes, there will be many monsters created on the way to the "good enough one." Not "the perfect one," obviously, seeing how it all turned out, but "a good enough one." Many

## Mary Shelley intuited the minefield familiar to many scientists today, the dark side of research.

scientists today, propelled by their desire for glory and money, will not bother with a profound questioning of their enterprise, but will admit to a possibly horrific path toward getting good results.

Between the perfect Micromegs, soon to be corrupted by human traits, and Frankenstein, there is already a huge hermeneutic shift that involves the sinking of a good deal of ethics and the near-disappearance of belief in a benevolent creation. Casanova's utopian fantasy envisioned a perfected people who knew no evil, whereas evil is the inevitable result of attempts to perfect a human in Mary Shelley's vision. For all that, both these literary fantasies are unapologetic about their ignorance of actual science.

The third type of fantasy is the fantasy of current political discourse, which is encouraged or at least silently agreed to by scientists. This political discourse is ignorant both of literature and science.

Here is an example:

*And another thing, these embryonic stem cells, they could continue to replicate indefinitely and, theoretically, can be induced to re-create virtually any tissue in your body. How'd you like to have your own personal biological repair kit standing by at the hospital? Sound like magic? Welcome to the future of medicine.*

That is from Ron Reagan's speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. It's a classic example of the kind of political discourse fantasy that ignores the difficulties of science and takes deep questioning completely out of

# What would these hypothetical immortals keep alive? Only their flesh. Their inner beings, connected mysteriously to the entire universe, are bound to shrink or disappear.

the picture. I don't have an agenda myself (I am probably all for freeing stem cell research from religious arguments against it), but there is danger in the rhetoric of the fantasy itself. This kind of fantasy can be equally used in the service of cloning.

*How'd you like to have your personal clone standing by, ready to provide you with organs that could prolong your life indefinitely? Sound like magic? Welcome to the future of medicine!*

And to the future, I might add, of a new race of slave beings that exist only to provide us with organs for the perpetuation of our bodies. Here, I do have an agenda. Cloning human beings is wrong—not only because most of what science has accomplished so far is a series of failed organisms, but because cloning is an antidemocratic tool to perpetuate a grotesque social class, i.e., the rich. I'm not saying that the poor are any less grotesque than the rich, only that it disturbs me profoundly that people with means should have the hubris to fantasize their self-perpetuation. Here is science, with its tendrils of utopia, turning good intentions into their evil twin. The fantasy of utopian political rhetoric about science is dangerous to democracy. Americans are already improving themselves through necessary and unnecessary surgeries to an unprecedented degree. People with ten penises and ten vaginas, more breasts, more mouths, more teeth, more colors, more flesh (not fat), different color eyes for every hour of the day are ready to walk among us. If such creatures strike you as ridiculous, think of their twins, their doubles, their clones, the creatures in the mirror. What is the self-image of such creatures?

The ultimate promise of political utopian discourse is immortality. Immortality is wrong, if only because it is not democratic. Only tyrants would want to live forever, at the expense of countless fellow creatures destroyed or created in experiments. Can we all be tyrants? Every man a king? What would these hypothetical immortals keep alive? Only

their flesh. Their inner beings, connected mysteriously to the entire universe, are bound to shrink or disappear. The job of poets then, and humanists, is not only to increase the questioning and to encourage ontological and existential anxiety, but to prevent the birth of a race of immortals, even if right now they are only figments of political rhetoric. We are all born unique, but that uniqueness will vanish under the pressure of money and unreflecting

science, under the pressure of hubris and power. The immortals will not be unique; they will be clones born of a fantasy rhetoric. The rest of us will be raw material for their vanity.

I will end with a quote by Ervin Laszlo, a Hungarian philosopher of science:

*We are not just a block of cells, like a building is a block of bricks. Most fundamentally, our living tissue is not made out of hard-core elements—atoms and molecules—it is made of waves. Thus, we are living systems that are continually receiving and transmitting information. This information transmission is faster than any conceivable biochemical mechanism, because what happens in one part of the organism simultaneously happens to the other part. It's constantly interactive on multiple dimensions. It's a remarkable thing—going way beyond any technical, biological, mechanistic, and materialistic concept of the organism. . . . Consciousness is not a byproduct of the brain, produced by a complex set of neurons. It's something that's pervading the whole universe. It's there in the whole body, in all living systems, probably all the way down to the quantum level. We are living in a universe that itself is conscious.*

In other words, scientists must also be poets, or we'll all be replaced by ants. ■

*Andrei Codrescu is a poet, novelist, essayist, and screen-writer, and a commentator on National Public Radio. He is the editor of Exquisite Corpse, a literary journal on line at [www.corpse.org](http://www.corpse.org) and is the MacCurdy Distinguished Professor of English at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.*



# We Will Be the *lords*

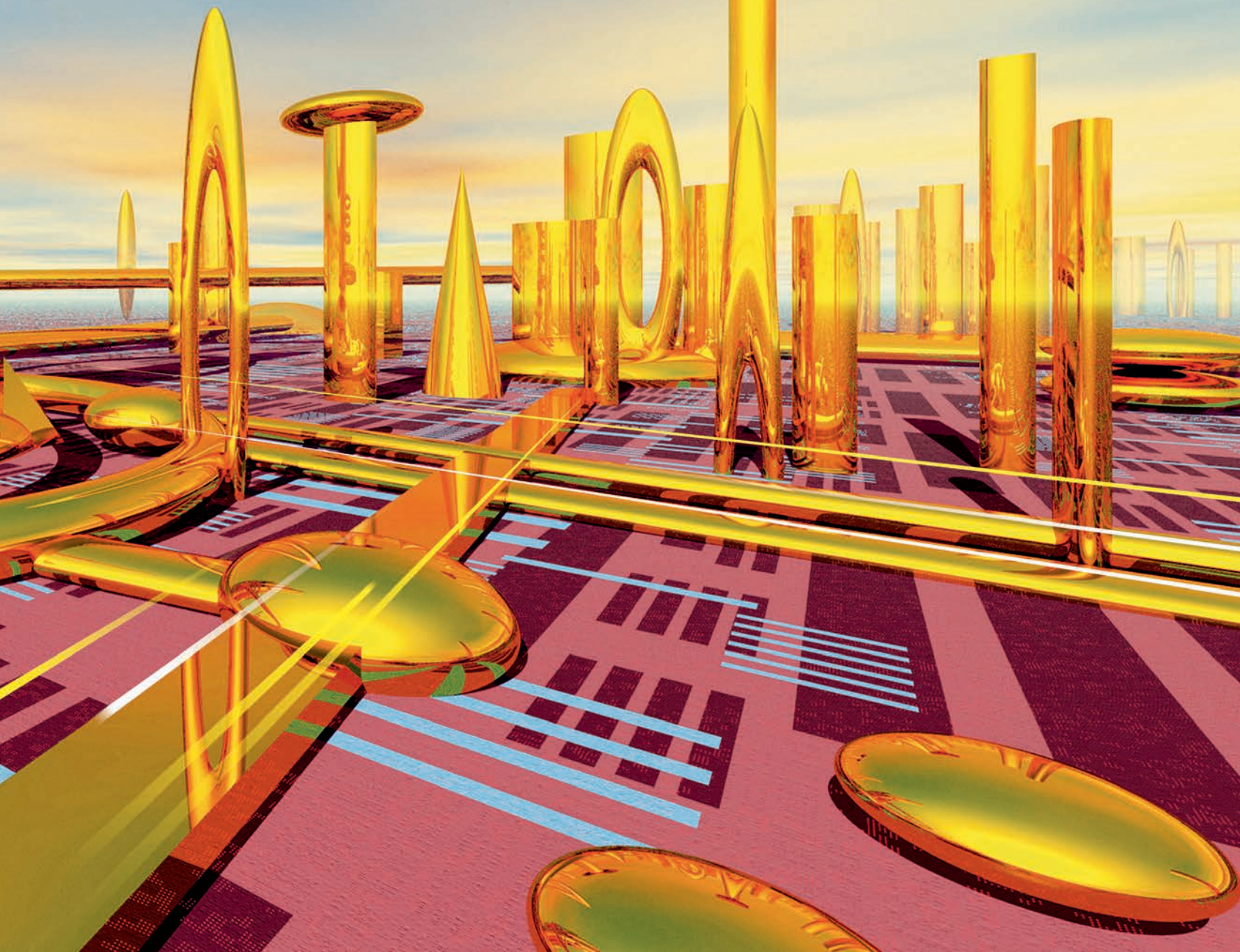


## Envisioning Our Immortal Future



DO YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?

# *of creation*



**with Science Fiction Writer Robert J. Sawyer** by Tom Huston

***“Of course, there are many advantages to artificial bodies, even at the current state of technology. Just like our artificial brains, they are virtually indestructible. The braincase, for instance, is titanium, reinforced with carbon-nanotube fibers. If you decide you want to go skydiving, and your parachute fails to open, your new brain still won’t get damaged on impact. If—God forbid!—someone shoots you with a gun, or stabs you with a knife—well, you’d almost certainly still be fine.”***

***Mindscan*** by Robert J. Sawyer

Science fiction writers have always been one step ahead of the technological curve. Although none anticipated the proliferation of personal computers, countless other life-changing technologies first entered our collective consciousness in fictional form. Aldous Huxley, writing in 1932, imagined a world populated by genetically engineered humans twenty-one years before Watson and Crick discovered the double-helix structure of DNA; Arthur C. Clarke famously envisioned the communications satellite in 1945, twelve years before the launch of *Sputnik I* and nineteen years before the first geostationary satellite was placed in orbit; George Orwell foresaw closed-circuit surveillance technology decades before Big Brother peered at us through electronic eyes in the ceiling of every Wal-Mart store; and in 1984, William Gibson’s *Neuromancer* described a world dominated by a global computer network called “the matrix” nearly a decade before the world wide web went online.

But today, as the rate of technological advancement increases exponentially every year, science fiction (“SF”) writers are facing stiff competition, from scientists themselves and also

from that specialized breed of pseudo-psychics known as “futurists.” Yet good SF writers still possess something that most scientists and futurists sorely lack—namely, the capacity to translate a potential new technology into the foundation for a vividly imagined and emotionally engaging world. So last spring, when researching the numerous scientific and futurist claims regarding immortality for this issue of *WIE*, one question naturally emerged: *Who can fully conceive of what will happen to the human race once we’re all finally liberated from the ever-looming blight of death?*

Enter acclaimed Canadian science fiction writer Robert J. Sawyer.

Sawyer has considered the human implications of various forms of immortality in seven of his seventeen novels, beginning ten years ago with his book *The Terminal Experiment*. Winning 1995’s Nebula Award—science fiction’s equivalent of the Oscar—for best novel, the story revolves around a medical equipment engineer who one day stumbles upon empirical proof of the undying human soul. Although the SF genre typically avoids dealing with such transcendental topics, Sawyer’s boldness

propelled him to the forefront of his field, eventually winning him the Hugo Award (SF’s other top prize) for best novel in 2003.

With his latest book, *Mindscan*, Sawyer puts an intriguing spin on the living-forever theme. Its premise? That in the near future, human beings will be able to duplicate themselves while still alive by copying their consciousness into indestructible robotic bodies, thus ensuring their ability to live dramatically longer lives. But the question remains: Once there are two of you, which is the *real* you? Like most of Sawyer’s work, *Mindscan* ventures into subjects that few SF authors dare to take seriously—questions concerning the nature of consciousness, the soul, and God—and remains firmly grounded in scientific theory while excelling in the speculative fiction department as well.

Employing that skill to full effect when I spoke with him about this issue’s feature topic, Sawyer explained the scientific basis behind some claims of imminent immortality, but he extrapolated well beyond the science into a vision of the future that could stretch even the most avid SF reader’s already open mind.



## I: Fear of Death, Frozen Heads, and Uploaded Souls

**WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT:** A lot of people probably don't realize that the subject of radical life extension—or even immortality itself—isn't just the stuff of science fiction, but that a growing number of scientists from a variety of fields are taking the possibility very seriously. What do you suppose is motivating the current spate of research into this topic?

**ROBERT J. SAWYER:** There is no question that from the moment at which we first became conscious of our own mortality, we've lived in fear of death. A defining characteristic of human consciousness is the ability to think ahead, anticipate what's going to happen in the future, and plan to avoid an unpleasant future or work out a good one. Cows, for example, never sit there asking, "How can I be the best of all possible cows tomorrow?" They're just a cow, day after day.

We have that ability. And so we also foresee the end of our own existence, and dread it. Cows don't fear that eventually they're going to die. They'll certainly be terrified if they see you coming at them with a battle axe, but they're not terrified in a cosmic sense that some day it's all going to come to an end. But we are, from the moment we become aware of our mortality. And so the drive to circumvent death and go to *great* lengths to avoid it has always been with us—the pyramids are a classic example, but there's also the apocryphal story of Walt Disney having his head cut off and frozen in liquid nitrogen. Somehow the idea of death is so tremendously terrifying that we'll do anything to avoid it.

**WIE:** Given that in four billion years of biological evolution, nature has never produced a complex life-form capable of living forever, do you think there's a degree of human arrogance involved in such pursuits as cryogenics, in which one chooses to have one's body preserved on ice with hopes of eventually being thawed out?

**SAWYER:** There is humongous hubris here. The TV series *Futurama* had great fun with this—all these twentieth-century frozen heads on display in the future. We think

somehow that the future would benefit from having the intellect of you or me around five hundred or five thousand years from now. But in fact, with *very* few exceptions, if you were to go back five hundred or five thousand years and pluck Joe Blow from that era and bring him to the present, there's no contribution of any particular weight that he could make to our culture. Of course, if you could somehow magically revive Isaac Newton or William Shakespeare, there might be some value in that. But it is enormously hubristic and egotistical to think that what the future really needs is Rob Sawyer or Tom Huston. It doesn't. What the future really needs is the people in the future.

**WIE:** Do you believe that soon we will have technologies available to us that will prevent us from dying in the first place, making us truly immortal?

**SAWYER:** Well, first, we should define our terms. When we talk about immortality, if we mean





# Death is so terrifying

*actually* living forever—i.e., you will survive as long as the universe survives—I don't think any of the technologies on the horizon are going to do that for us. In terms of substantially prolonging the human life span, I do think that biotechnology will make that possible. The fact that the human body decays after a handful of decades is an unfortunate fact of nature, but it's hardly an immutable law of the universe that bodies have to rapidly wear out and die. I don't know that it will happen in my lifetime, but I recently told my best friend, who just had a baby boy, "You and I are probably not going to live to see the twenty-second century, but there's no question that your son Sebastian is. In fact, I'm willing to bet that Sebastian is going to live to see the twenty-third century." In other words, that he's going to live to be a couple of centuries old.

**WIE:** You've written in your novels about a number of different methods for prolonging life, including genetic engineering and nanotechnology—the idea that we can build molecule-sized robots to live inside our bodies and continuously repair any routine wear and tear. Are there any other technologies that you see emerging as serious contenders for our ticket to immortality?

**SAWYER:** Here we come to a fork in the road, because there are two ways you can look at profound extension of human life. One is to try and make this flesh and blood container last as long as possible. And I think I recently read a statistic that there are now over a thousand people on the planet earth who have documented proof that they're over 110 years old. Well, about 110 years—*maybe* 120, if we're really lucky—seems to be the maximum that our human bodies can survive without wearing out. Biotechnology and nanotechnology might give us 50–100, maybe even 150 years of additional life. But still, we are talking about something that's made of fundamentally fragile material. There's a reason that if you fall out of a forty-story office building, you go splat.

So the other possibility is to say, "No, the substrate, the flesh and bone infrastructure on which our consciousness rests, is inherently not durable over long time scales—century, millennia, epoch time scales. It is not good enough for that." And then you get into the really radical notions of life prolongation, which involve the wholesale, total replacement of the body with

something that's robotic, something that's mechanical, something that's durable and is designed to last on mind-bogglingly long time scales.

**WIE:** You're referring to the popular concept of "uploading consciousness," which your new novel *Mindscan* explores. Can you say a bit more about the possibility that somehow, we'll soon be able to copy our carbon-based minds into silicon machines?

**SAWYER:** Yes. *Mindscan* takes as its starting point something that Ray Kurzweil said in his book *The Age of Spiritual Machines*: that by the year 2019, we will have sufficient technology to scan with absolute fidelity everything that physically constitutes the human brain. That is, we will be able to map all of the interconnections, all of the synapses, and all of the neurotransmitter levels that are instantiated in each of those synapses. These days, everybody knows that you can digitize any kind of information to any degree of resolution you want. You can have a crappy MP3 recording of a song, or you can have a really full-bodied CD-quality recording. So the idea is that if you could make a high-resolution map of the brain, you could digitize it, and if you could digitize it, you could copy it somewhere else. And if you can put it somewhere else, you can put it inside a robotic body with cameras for eyes to look out on the world.

**WIE:** I suppose that might be better than biological immortality, at least in terms of physical durability. It certainly worked for Arnold Schwarzenegger's *Terminator*. But what do you think about the scientific plausibility of this concept?

**SAWYER:** It will absolutely be possible to scan a human brain and re-instantiate that brain inside a computer within the next twenty years. I don't think anyone seriously disputes that. Even today, with our MRIs and our CAT scanners, we're getting very good at being able to map how the brain stores some codes of information. The question is whether there's something beyond just Newtonian mechanics, and/or beyond just neural nets, that makes up consciousness. Is what we see when we look at networks of synapses the actual consciousness, or, to use Roger Penrose's phrase, is it just

*we'll do anything to avoid it.*

a “shadow” of the real consciousness, which we haven’t yet located? A shadow can be a good imitation of a substance, precisely mimicking its movements, but it isn’t the same thing. So even though we might indeed scan the neural nets and neurotransmitter levels perfectly, we might not be copying *everything*—some ineffable part of what we are might still be lost.

Will people opt for this technology? Absolutely. Will many people be happy with the results? Most transhumanists, who are reductionists to the core, will be. Will something nonetheless be lost in the copying? I suspect so. Still, a copy that is 99.9999 percent you is way, way more you than any child you might ever have, who, at best, is just fifty percent you. And parents talk about their children as being their immortality.

**WIE:** Okay, but even if we did have the ability to copy our minds into machines, what would happen to our souls?

**SAWYER:** Well, I hopefully demolished that problem in *Mindscan*. Though I personally do not believe in souls, I do believe that the logic of how we define souls does not preclude their transportation to somewhere else—whether it’s the Hindu version of the soul that says it can be reincarnated in another body, the Christian version of the soul that says it can go to heaven or hell after death, or the more generically spiritual version of the soul that says it can leave this plane of existence and move to another.

Here’s the argument: The soul clearly can exist separate from the body; we know that if we believe that the soul goes somewhere after death. We know that the soul has volition; God does not judge physical bodies. He doesn’t say, “Bad hand, bad hand that hit that person.” It was the bad soul that motivated you to hit that person. So we judge the soul on the basis of the fact that it can make choices. If you accept those two premises—that a soul can do what it chooses to do and that the soul can leave the body and go somewhere else—then when you transfer your consciousness into the android body, if it was your soul’s wish to do this, your soul can just as easily move over and take up residence in the android body. There’s no theological barrier to the soul following the digitally copied version of your mind to wherever that mind goes.

## II: Ethics, Boredom, and Mastering Time and Space

**WIE:** Let’s suppose that some of this really does happen, and human beings suddenly find themselves endowed with immortality. Can you imagine what the social, ethical, or spiritual implications would be?

**SAWYER:** At least in the short term, immortality will create the ultimate gap between the haves and have-nots. There will be a lot of resentment toward the guy who basically can buy everlasting life. But two things will temper that. One is that eventually, immortality technology, like all technologies, will become cheap and widely available. And two is that in the meantime, although the elite might be able to make their biological bodies last virtually forever, the last thing you’d want is for some poor guy to decide he’s so resentful that he puts a bullet in your head, exceeding what the nanotechnology can repair. So as an immortal, it would be in your own self-interest to tackle social justice issues, to make sure that everybody else is happy and content and that there are no ghettos or political hot spots left on the planet where warring factions are going at each other.

But there would be an even bigger motivator than that for positive social change. The huge reality of our short lives, from most religious points of view, is that this is a prologue to the *real* life that is going to follow. That what you do here, and how you comport yourself in this life, sets the stage for what your existence is going to be in the life that is to come. You know, we use the word “immortality” without really thinking of its ramifications. Immortality does not mean living for several centuries, or until you get bored. Immortality means living forever. It means ceasing to have that dichotomy between this life and some life yet to come. Your present life becomes the *only* existence that your consciousness will ever, ever know. And that hugely changes the underpinning of most religious arguments for moral behavior. There is no undefined reward yet to come; there is no judgment by a God. There are simply human beings comporting themselves in a way that, hopefully, is beneficial to other human beings. And that makes for an *enormous* shift in what morality is all about.

Morality, then, is no longer self-serving—trying to get



a good report card when you're called up for accounts when you're dead. Morality is making of *this* world the best possible existence, because it's going to be the only possible existence. You're not telling yourself, "Yeah, I did a little bit of good here, I helped an old lady across the street there. And, you know, I didn't kick the dog when I could have. And therefore I will

## *If you can digitize*

be rewarded with some paradise-like existence in some other realm that I can't see right now." Your only route to paradise, if you're immortal, is to make this existence into an Eden, to make *our* world the best possible place it can be. It moves all of the desire to do good away from the selfish and personal—the sense that "I'm going to be rewarded personally for that"—and into the broadly societal. We all benefit if the world is a wonderful place.

**WIE:** One criticism that I've often heard being leveled against the idea of immortality is that if no one ever dies, the earth is going to become overpopulated, the resources are going to run dry, and we're going to need to stop having children. Do you think that's a valid concern?

**SAWYER:** It's a semi-valid concern; it depends first on how we choose to have immortality. If we have biological immortality, as opposed to robotic immortality, then the resource issue is a big question. But one solution is to revitalize the man/space program—and ironically, I don't think that's what George Bush had in mind when he recently decided to do just that. The universe is almost infinite in extent. There are resources to be claimed in profusion outside our planet. You cannot have a combination of immortality, continued unchecked breeding, and no space program. It is literally true that what killed the dinosaurs was their lack of a space program—they couldn't go anywhere else. And it's going to be true of us. The man/space program goes hand in hand with the desire to live forever.

Now, you can extrapolate that at some



point, gazillions of years in the future, we might in fact have colonized every habitable world in the universe. And at that point, fortunately, physics tells us that there are other universes, that we live in a multiverse. So I suspect that we will never, ever run out of places to expand to. And in the past, certain population pressures were the reason behind the development of a new

## *the brain you can copy it into a robot.*

world. People from the Old World thought that there were more resources, better economic opportunities, and infinite land to spread out to and develop in the New World. That hasn't changed—there are new worlds aplenty.

**WIE:** Your novel *Starplex* featured a ten-billion-year-old immortal human being. Do you suppose that true immortality may eventually lead to eons of boredom?

**SAWYER:** When I was twenty-five years old, I was doing some work for the CBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and I had the opportunity to interview a famous science fiction editor named Judith Merril. I asked her what was probably an impertinent question, because she was in her sixties and I was in my twenties, but I said, "One of the things science fiction talks about is immortality. But of course, living forever would be boring." And she looked at me as somebody who knew she was getting near the end of her life—she is now deceased—and said, "Only somebody who was young would ever say that. When you get near the end of your life, as I am now, you'll realize that for all the accomplishments you've had, no matter how rich and full your life has been, there is an infinite number of things that you wanted to get around to that you just aren't going to be allowed the time to do. The idea that immortality is boring, that you're going to run out of things to do in this universe of possibilities, is a conceit of the young. No matter whether you have a hundred years or ten billion years, there are still going to be things you want to do, people you want to interact with, relationships you want to have, books that you've always wanted to read.

No matter how much time you're given, I think you're always going to want more."

**WIE:** If you were to look one thousand years into the future, what kind of civilization and technologies do you see us being capable of creating if we do become immortal, versus if we just continue with our brief mortal life spans?

**SAWYER:** If we're immortal, we will have the ability to tackle the biggest questions of existence and accumulate all the wisdom there is. Gone will be the idea that anybody has to be a specialist in any one thing—for instance, that your specialty might be South American butterflies, and that's all you know about. I mean, you get so incredibly specialized today because in short life spans, you can only learn one very narrow field really well. The great beauty of having unlimited life is that everybody becomes a generalist, and as we have always seen in the past, it's the serendipitous juxtaposition of disparate areas that leads to big ideas. Chaos theory is a beautiful example—you know, the little butterfly wing beating here affects the weather patterns in China. But you have to know about butterflies, and you have to know about meteorology, and you have to know about China before you can come up with chaos theory. Chaos theory didn't exist at all as an idea a hundred years ago. Imagine how big and complex, how new and startling our thoughts are going to be when each of us knows everything that the human race has learned to date.

As we prolong our lives and start having centuries and millennia of time in which to undertake our worldly pursuits, the scale on which we will think thoughts, create works of art, and have discourse on complex sociological issues will allow us, I think, to finally get somewhere. Every politics or philosophy course you take today starts off by discussing the Pre-Socratics, because in the thousands of years since the Pre-Socratics, we haven't really gone very far on these issues. And the reason we haven't is that we're *all* constrained. Whether it was Plato or Socrates who would live for a handful of decades, or our best thinkers today, we don't have enough time as individuals to achieve any real progress. I mean, Ken Wilber has done enor-

## *There will be resentment toward the guy who can buy everlasting life.*

mous, enormous thinking and good work in a constrained human lifetime. Imagine how far he could go, or Albert Einstein could have gone, with a thousand years to beat up on these problems instead of a hundred years.

And so fundamentally, we will be able to have and create any technology that is physically possible in our universe. There are some who think that, for instance, traveling faster than the speed of light will never be possible. If it is, we will have it. We will be able to figure it out if we have a thousand years to approach the problem. If the other technology that even more people think is totally impossible—time travel—actually is possible, we will have it. We will certainly have infinite clean renewable energy; the complete elimination of

disease, poverty, material want, and suffering; and the colonization of this galaxy, if not other galaxies as well. All of those things are mere engineering. We already know the steps that have to be taken; we just don't yet have the technology to realize those steps. We'll have them with life spans of a thousand years, for sure. None of these problems are inherently insoluble. And the few that might be inherently insoluble—time travel, traveling faster than the speed of light—will be the only ones that will elude our grasp.

But if there *are* any loopholes or ways around those problems, we'll come up with those too. We will be the masters of time and space. We will be the lords of creation. Everything will be within our grasp. ■

*gardens of Kyoto, Japan*

*april and november -  
ten day tours*

**ZEN GARDENS**


[www.worldspirit.org.uk](http://www.worldspirit.org.uk)  
[worldspirit99@aol.com](mailto:worldspirit99@aol.com)  
 ++ 44 161 928 5768

**SACRED INDIA**

*January & December*

**Temple Tours, South India**


**WORLDSPIRIT**  
 ALEX GREY • KENJI WILLIAMS




*"A beautiful, brilliant, exhilarating multimedia  
presentation of sacred art & music.  
Dazzling from beginning to end,  
and deeply moving throughout.  
Highly recommended!"*

**Ken Wilber**

**NEW! DVD/CD box set available  
at [www.magneticpresence.com](http://www.magneticpresence.com)!**



magnetic presence  
Integral media for integral minds.  
1-866-558-9049





EVEN THE





DO YOU WANT **TO LIVE FOREVER?**

# HEAVENS *are not immortal*

## An Alluring Vision of Death

An interview with Connie Barlow  
by Craig Hamilton

**I**N A CULTURE OBSESSED with the preservation and extension of life, defending the value of death may seem like a task fit for few but the devil. But for biologist Connie Barlow, singing the Grim Reaper's merits is becoming nothing short of an inspired mission.

Having spent the last three years on a nonstop nationwide speaking tour with her husband, Michael Dowd, this itinerant "evolutionary evangelist" and author of such popular science books as *Ghosts of Evolution* and *Evolution Extended* has recently unveiled a new chapter in her running rendition of "the great story" of our cosmic and terrestrial history. Death, as Barlow tells it, is not something to be feared, or even merely accepted, but is a healthy and life-giving part of the cosmic process that deserves our wholehearted embrace.

Is science's race to free us from mortality's grip a misguided and perhaps even perilous attempt to override the cosmic order? What are the evolutionary implications of making a permanent break in one of nature's most time-proven cycles? If we were to do away with death, what would become of life? During a recent visit to the *What Is Enlightenment?* headquarters, Barlow spoke with us about her passion for the perishable and her thoughts on the quest for immortality.

**WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT:** *There's a growing body of scientists who are convinced that before long—some even would say in the next twenty years—we're going to have the capacity to extend the human life span indefinitely and attain physical immortality. Based on your own understanding of biology, do you think such a thing could be possible?*

**CONNIE BARLOW:** Honestly, I haven't wanted to think about it. But I guess I'd probably have to say yes. If we're speaking about long extensions of life, if not actual immortality, I'd certainly say yes. But I haven't wanted to think about it.

**WIE:** *Why not?*

Our tendency to think that there's something wrong with death actually limits our understanding of life and our zest for life.

**BARLOW:** Because I don't like the prospect. For one thing, it will exacerbate the schism between the haves and the have-nots because, obviously, the whole world isn't going to have access to this. For another, I view it as undesirable because we're having enough trouble right now limiting our reproduction, and if we have a significant number of people who are engaged in that sort of life extension, it will create even more of a population problem on the earth.

But more fundamentally, I think that our tendency to avoid the thought of death or think that there's something wrong with death actually limits our understanding of life and our zest for life. When people have such an individualized sense of self and self-importance that they don't see the larger picture in which death functions, that to me is immaturity. I mean, if you view your individual self as being this body and this mind here, then the prospect of death could be rather frightening. But in what I would consider a broader, more mature understanding of the self, the fear of death eases up. In fact, death becomes something that's seen as good for the whole, and also good for individuals.

When I look at the new cosmology—which harvests discoveries from all the modern mainstream sciences—the con-

clusion I draw is that death is not only natural, it's generative. Understanding that death is natural and coming to peace with it can happen at any level of human development. For thousands of years, our myths and creation stories have given us that peace. But only recently has it become possible to see death not just as natural but as creative and generative at all levels of reality; not just to reconcile with the fact of death but to see goodness in and feel gratitude for death. So many of the things that we love and cherish in life would not even be here were it not for death. And the way that I've come to this more alluring vision of death has been through cultivating what I like to call "deep-time eyes," eyes that see the fourteen-billion-year story of the universe as a sacred story.

**WIE:** *Could you give us some examples of what helped awaken you to this more alluring vision of death?*

**BARLOW:** I'd love to. My own field is evolutionary biology and evolutionary ecology—that is, a deep-time understanding of ecology and biology. But the example that was the most eye-opening for me came later in life, from outside my own field. And that is the understanding from astronomy and astrophysics that what powers stars is the creation of elements.

The original simplest element in the universe is hydrogen; it's been here since the beginning, since the big bang. In the center of stars, gravity fuses hydrogen atoms into more complex atoms. Our sun is fusing hydrogen into helium right now. And as it approaches death, it will be fusing helium into carbon. Larger stars than our sun move on and fuse carbon into silicon, and silicon into calcium, and so on. Every single element in our bodies, other than hydrogen, was once inside a giant star that lived and died before our sun was born. As stars died and recycled themselves, they sent their elements pulsing or exploding out into the galaxy. These elements eventually came upon primordial clouds of hydrogen gas and were caught up by the gravity of those clouds as though by spider webs, providing the matter from which new generations of stars could be formed. And these stars, such as our sun, enriched as they were by the creativity of previous generations of stars, were able to have rocky planets around them, whereas the first generations of stars could not.

We are recycled stardust. Everything we love and everything we see is recycled stardust. And we're only here because the heavens and the stars are not immortal. To me, that's an eye-opening insight, particularly when we think of how our religious traditions view the heavens as where God is, as immortal.



Over the life span of human cultures, stars do not come and go. But over the life span of geological periods they certainly do. Death is in the heavens just as much as it is on earth.

**WIE:** *In this example from cosmology, you're using death as a metaphor, because the elements and the stars were never alive in the sense of our biological definition of life. In the way we normally think of live versus dead, they're dead matter already—dead matter taking another form. Are you saying that the same principles apply to living systems as well?*

**BARLOW:** Right now we're looking out the window at these glorious trees. The only way we have trees that can stand up against the wind and gravity, and move their leaves up toward the light of the sun, is because previous generations of tree cells have died but haven't been immediately recycled. That's what wood is: dead cells that now provide support for the very thin layers of living cells between the wood and the bark.

But the litany of examples that come out of the biological sciences really starts with evolutionary biology. The basic

underlying premise of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection is the understanding that species have gone extinct in the past. Around the beginning of the 1800s, paleontologists were out discovering fossils and they realized that enough of the world had been explored to be able to state definitively that a certain animal whose bones they'd found—be it a mastodon or a mammoth—no longer existed on the earth. Whether people believed in God or didn't believe in God, there was huge resistance to the idea that nature could have produced something so "imperfect" that it would go extinct.

Once that was understood, Charles Darwin could open his eyes to what he was seeing in the world and visualize the whole complexification of life for the first time in history. It was now possible to see how wave upon wave of species had come into existence and gone out of existence, and that through that process, there were tendrils of complexification. Eyes developed. Fins developed. Wings developed. Neurons developed into congregations that we call brains. All of that depended on the death not just of individuals but of whole species. So fundamentally, if we love ourselves and our consciousness enough to want to

September 17-18, 2005



Peace Festival

at the  
World Peace Sanctuary  
Route 22, south of Amenia, NY

1-800-PEACELINE

[WWW.IMAGINEPEACEFESTIVAL.COM](http://WWW.IMAGINEPEACEFESTIVAL.COM)

"Wow, I remember when all these trees were a parking lot."

The future can be taller. Quieter.

And filled with green places.

Invest in tomorrow today.

**Domini**   
**SOCIAL INVESTMENTS®**  
**Investing For Good™**

1-800-530-5321 [www.domini.com](http://www.domini.com)

You should consider the Domini Funds' investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. Please obtain a copy of the Funds' current prospectus for more complete information on these and other topics by calling 1-800-530-5321 or online at [www.domini.com](http://www.domini.com). Please read it carefully before investing or sending money. DSIL Investment Services LLC, Distributor. 04/05



keep going forever, then from a biological standpoint, we must embrace death. Death is the reason we're sitting here talking about the prospect of immortality. We're only here because death is creative.

# Every single element

in our bodies, other than hydrogen, was once inside a giant star that lived and died before our sun was born. We are recycled stardust.

Another example from biology is fetal development in animals. First, egg and sperm come together as zygote and reproduction starts happening, with cells doubling and doubling and doubling. We start off as a sphere. And then, through differential death—that is, some cells go on and reproduce for a certain number of cell divisions, some die earlier, and so forth—we take on shape. The great evolutionary gift of multicellularity is the celebration of form and shape, and that's because of the death of individual cells within the development of creatures.

Neurons begin dying in human brains from infancy, and scientists have always thought that that was just the aging process starting early. But in the last five years they've discovered that the death of neurons actually allows more connections to be made between those neurons that remain. And as we know from complexity theory, and from our own lives, it's the connections that allow creative intelligence to emerge. We've also discovered that even in a healthy adult, there is a winnowing away and a replenishment of cells. It's called programmed cell death. Part of it is due to oxidation, and the people working on life extension are trying to reduce that oxidation. But even with minor injuries, if the body stopped discerning when to recycle the elements from certain cells and start anew, we would be wasting away even faster than we already are. Cells that forget that there is a time in their life that they need to die and stop reproducing—whether they've had their DNA damaged by toxic chemicals or radiation or some other means—are called cancer.

So, from the smallest levels within our bodies to the largest levels out there in the universe, we have a whole nested reality

in which death is not just natural, it's creative. It's what allows everything to be. Were it not for death, there would be no such thing as food. Everything we eat was once alive. When you're eating salad, or anything that's uncooked, those cells are still alive right at the moment you're eating. You're killing them as they go into you. Even if immortality comes about in some way, we still can't eliminate death from the whole cycle of life.

**WIE:** Ray Kurzweil thinks that we're no longer going to need food because our digestive systems will be replaced by little nanobots in our bloodstreams that will administer all the right nutrients at the precise time we need them. Therefore, eating food will become just an aesthetic activity.

**BARLOW:** Once you go the route of thinking about immortality, so much sort of gets swept up along with it. If we got to the point where we were no longer growing food, would we no longer value leaves falling in the autumn and becoming compost? How much of our aesthetic appreciation of the world would change if we didn't have the poignancy of death—of looking at death in the autumn, and the beauty of the leaves, and also having a resonance within us that, especially as we get older, we're in the autumn of our lives too? Would we just completely lose our connection with the natural world? I don't know.

Or take another example. If we were immortal, eventually we'd get to the point where, at least on this planet, we would have to outlaw having any more children. And the warm, fuzzy part of us wants to always go on having babies. But also from the standpoint of cultural development along an evolutionary trajectory, there's something to be said for a world in which you can always have children. There's something to be said for what happens to human beings when their formative years occur at later and later stages of cultural development. I met a woman recently who told me that in her work with kids, she is seeing that this generation of children is remarkably different from previous generations because the world they're growing up in is changing so fast. I often think, "What would I be like today had I grown up with the understanding that my ancestors include the stars?" So much of who we are has to do not with what we read or learn later in life but with how our imaginations form as children.

So I, for one, would not want to live on a planet without death and without children, where we're all just grown-ups

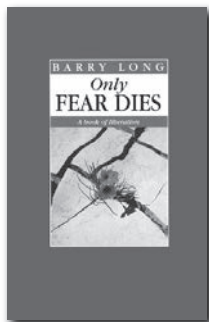
together forever. For some reason, people who are into immortality find the prospect of immortality more alluring than the prospect of a mortal life, and I don't go there. I mean, if someone were to give me the choice to actually download my brain and live forever, or have some sort of nutritional supports so I would live forever, I would absolutely say No. I can't imagine a worse hell.

**WIE:** *What if the technologies for immortal life become so widespread and so built into the fabric of everything that it becomes natural to live forever, or at least for a very long time? And all you have to do is take a pill to stop the dying process, to stop all kinds of diseases and degeneration. At some point, people who take the position you're taking are going to have to say, "I choose death." So I'm curious: At what point would it be? It obviously wouldn't be now, because we all have that choice every day. You could choose death over life today if you wanted to, and you are choosing life.*

**BARLOW:** Right.

**WIE:** *Well, how do you know it's going to be any different in fifty years? Maybe in fifty years, you'll still wake up and say, "I'm going to choose life." And you will. And then in another fifty years, life will still be rich and interesting, and once again you'll want to choose life. Given the option, can you be sure that at some point you would want to choose death over life?*

**BARLOW:** The thing is, I don't view it in those terms. The prospect that unless I chose to die, I would live healthily forever, or for a thousand years, is appalling to me. Where would we get our motivation for not putting things off till tomorrow? Or next century? Where would we get our sense of real poignancy in a moment of joy with a spouse? The moments that we feel most alive are when we recognize that our experience is passing, that at some point it will be gone. But if we're always at a point where our experience will never go away—like if I were going to be married for a thousand years—then I just think life would be diminished. It wouldn't be as rich. We would have to develop a whole new psychology, and it ain't the one I've got right now. ■



BARRY LONG SHATTERS THE ILLUSION OF SELF

# Only Fear Dies

## *A book of Liberation*

*'An extraordinary book that anyone wishing to affirm the joy of life should read.'* THE PLANET

THIS BOOK IS ENERGETIC, used rightly it takes you to freedom. It examines modern existence – the media, politics, and your love life – and uncovers a deeper reality. You are given access to the most powerful tool to change your life, the law of karma. And, from conception to death and beyond, the way to liberation through the mysteries of living and dying is revealed.

ISBN 0 9508050 7 6 • 160 PAGES • US\$12.95 • £8.95 • Aus\$26

TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE IN DUTCH, FINNISH, FRENCH, GERMAN AND HEBREW

**BARRY LONG** (1926-2003) is acknowledged as one of the foremost spiritual masters of our times. The author of 16 books, his work is published in 11 languages. His teaching is direct, practical and all embracing – describing the most profound states of spiritual realisation, yet also addressing every aspect of our lives: from meditation to making love, from raising children to the origins of man and the universe.

**BARRY LONG'S** books are available from bookstores. Mail order purchases are available from The Barry Long Foundation at the addresses and website below. Ask for a free introductory pack including an introductory teaching booklet and full information about his books, tapes and video showings.

**USA/CANADA** ~ Tel 1 800 497 1081 • blf@whidbey.net • 7690 S Jewett Rd, Clinton, WA 98236

**UK** ~ Tel +44 (0)1736 751910 Fax +44 (0)1736 751911 • Email info@prinze.co.uk • Unit 3A Hayle Industrial Park, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 5JR

**AUSTRALIA** ~ Tel 02 6680 4988 • Fax 02 6680 4977 • info@barrylong.org • PO Box 574 [WIE], Mullumbimby, NSW 2482

Visit **WWW.BARRYLONG.ORG** for extracts, interviews, statements, articles and online ordering



**the guru & the pandit**

# A Vow to Live Forever

## Embracing the Tension between the Finite & the Infinite

Ken Wilber & Andrew Cohen in dialogue



**KEN WILBER: PANDIT.** *A scholar who is deeply proficient and immersed in spiritual wisdom. Self-described "defender of the dharma; intellectual samurai."* Hailed as "the Einstein of consciousness," Wilber is one of the most highly regarded philosophers alive today, and his work offers a comprehensive and original synthesis of the world's great psychological, philosophical, and spiritual traditions. Author of numerous books, including *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* and *A Brief History of Everything*, Wilber is the founder of Integral Institute and a regular contributor to *WIE*.



**ANDREW COHEN: GURU.** *Evolutionary thinker and spiritual pathfinder. Self-described "idealist with revolutionary inclinations."* Cohen, founder of *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine, is a spiritual teacher and author widely recognized as a defining voice in the emerging field of evolutionary spirituality. Over the last decade in the pages of *WIE*, Cohen has brought together leading thinkers from East and West—mystics and materialists, philosophers and psychologists—to explore the significance of a new spirituality for the new millennium. His books include *Embracing Heaven & Earth* and *Living Enlightenment*.





## Dialogue X

Whether it's heaven, reincarnation, or the fountain of youth, mankind has had a perennial fascination with immortality. But have we ever asked ourselves what it would really be like to live forever? In their tenth dialogue, Cohen and Wilber deconstruct the "immortality projects" of the human ego and in the process reveal a striking new vision of eternal life.

**ANDREW COHEN:** The twenty-first-century quest for physical immortality is the theme for this issue, so I thought it would be appropriate if we had a discussion about enlightenment and immortality. In fact, the first time I became aware of the possibility of extending our physical lives to a ridiculously long length of time—to hundreds, if not thousands of years—was when I read your book *Boomeritis*.

**KEN WILBER:** It really shook me up when I first heard about the possibility of physical immortality—or at least massively extended physical life span, perhaps several hundred thousand years—which is why I used it as a little subplot in *Boomeritis*. For about three days, I was in a daze, because when you think about that possibility, it seems to change just about everything!

**COHEN:** Precisely. It scared the heck out of me, too! But I think this is something we all have to begin to consider, because it seems that in the not-too-distant future, for better or worse, these capacities, these potentials, are actually going to be available to us. This fact should compel all thoughtful and sensitive souls to dare to face into

some big and ultimately challenging questions. Initially, at a deep existential level, the notion of the mortal self, or ego, being able to carry on for hundreds, if not thousands, of years just *feels* absolutely wrong. Intuitively, it seemed to me that if one could infinitely extend the life of the individual, one would be breaking some fundamental law of the universe—tampering with natural structures in the creative process that shouldn't be tampered with. It just seemed deeply chilling and even horrifying. But then it suddenly occurred to me that this is all inevitable—that sooner or later, we will have the ability to prolong our physical life span. And then I wondered: Would the possibility of extending the human experience still feel so deeply wrong *if human beings were much more evolved at the level of consciousness?* Or might extending our physical life span eventually be a natural expression of our evolutionary development?

**WILBER:** Well, I think that's a question everybody should ask. Let me give my own quick overview of what we mean by immortality.

**COHEN:** We're talking about physical immortality.

**WILBER:** I know, but physical immortality gets confused with other realms. Let me briefly give an overview of what we're talking about in terms of these realms—the body, the soul, and the spirit—and then we can focus on whether we mean physical immortality or the immortality of the soul or the immortality of spirit.

Human beings want immortality in a *bodily* realm because they intuit something deeper that's not bodily. That's one version of what I call the Atman Project, which is an intuition of infinity applied to the finite realm—when you want the finite realm to be infinite. And that's part of the difficulty. When most people think about immortality, they're thinking about some variation of overcoming time. And in the physical domain you overcome time by living forever. That's the *body's* idea of immortality. It's simply *not physically* dying. You're materially going on forever.

Immortality for the soul is usually thought of as reincarnation. The soul is immortal because it never dies. It

*The fact that physical immortality could make sense when we become **more evolved at the level of spirit** is totally intriguing. It gives one a perspective on an unimaginable potential in the future.*

andrew cohen



# *It's that intuition of infinity applied to the finite realm that makes human beings such a peculiar mixture—both completely human and completely divine simultaneously.*

ken wilber

goes from body to body to body. It's as if the soul takes off one coat and puts on another. That's another version of immortality, a higher-realm version, but ultimately it is also just another version of the Atman Project, because it is a fussing around in the realm of time looking for the timeless. It just fusses around a lot longer.

For the realm of nondual spirit, immortality doesn't mean living forever. It means the experience of *timelessness*; it means a moment of pure timeless presence, not going on forever in time.

**COHEN:** An infinite moment of timelessness.

**WILBER:** Yes, an infinite moment. It basically means without space and without time. Even Wittgenstein got it right. He said, "If we take eternity to mean *not* everlasting time but *timelessness*, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present."

So you can have eternal life by simply and fully being in the timeless present with spirit, now. And whether your body lives for a million years or not, *you* are still eternal. It doesn't mean you live forever; it means you're not in the stream of time. So all of time arises *within* the awareness or spaciousness that you *are* in *this* timeless present. The "I AMness" that you are is radically without time. So it's eternal in its fullness right now.

There are, at the very least, three types of "immortality." There's the immortality of living forever in time—whether physically living forever

or having the soul go on forever—and then there's the immortality or eternity of the timeless present as spirit's Presence. And you can have immortality and eternity in the timeless present, right now, with no further requirements whatsoever. But immortality through time, ultimately it just can't be done, not for any finite body and not for the soul, either, not really. You can make it live for a million years, but to go on for a million years in time looking for the timeless is simply to miss the point for a million years. So there's only one kind of actual immortality, and that's the immortality of the timeless ever-present clarity of spirit.

**COHEN:** Yes. The whole notion of physical immortality is strictly about the domain of the body and of the egoic self, which is inherently finite. When people speak about immortality in this way, it has nothing to do with the immortal nature of the spirit. Making these distinctions is very important. And one significant issue is that if we begin to experiment with extending our capacity or ability to live in the physical domain but are not more evolved spiritually, philosophically, and ethically, the picture becomes inherently problematic.

In the physical domain of the universe, there's a constant process of creation and destruction that's occurring in every moment at all levels. It's unbroken. It's never static. In fact, that appears to be the very nature of the manifest domain. And at some level it *feels* like attaining physical immortal-

ity would be interfering with that process. If we suddenly gained the capacity to live beyond what is currently considered our natural life span, it seems like we would be crossing over into a kind of ungodly realm of the "undead."

**WILBER:** I understand. It violates nature's laws.

**COHEN:** Yes. Ironically enough, I imagine that if we do succeed in extending our capacity to live for hundreds or thousands of years, it just might create more fear and attachment than we're already burdened with. For example, I've noticed that people who have a lot of money tend to be more worried and concerned about it than people who have a lot less. In the same way, if I knew I was going to live for 5,000 years, I would probably take fewer risks than I do now. In fact, maybe I'd never want to get on an airplane or go bungee jumping, because if anything happened, I'd lose my chance to live for 5,000 years! Just as people who are very rich become *more* attached to money—it doesn't free them; it imprisons them—the gift of immortality could create a hellish life.

**WILBER:** You'd never go outdoors, would you?

**COHEN:** Precisely. It could be ironic and horrible.

**WILBER:** Otto Rank was one of Freud's initial five inner disciples and he was a brilliant man. He was one of the first to use the term "neurosis," but he had an existential meaning for it, which is still quite extraordinary: a neurotic,



the guru and the pandit



*The fundamental and inherent tension between the time-bound mortal self and the timeless immortal spirit **is what holds the universe together.** It's the gravity that holds the whole in place.*

andrew cohen

he said, was somebody whose fear of death caused them to fear life. I drew a lot on his work when I was writing *The Atman Project*, which is basically about the fear of death, the ego's fear of death. The ego intuitively that its True Self is spirit and is infinite and eternal. But it applies that intuition of eternity to its own finite body or self and then wants its finite body or self to be eternal.

It's that intuition of infinity applied to the finite realm that makes human beings such a peculiar mixture—both completely human and completely divine simultaneously, and constantly prone to confusing those spheres! When we confuse these two spheres, all hell breaks out, *literally*. That's why Rank defined neurosis as when somebody's fear of death makes them especially fearful of life, which is a beautiful understanding of neurosis and not at all what you get from standard psychoanalysis. So that's what you're talking about, and yes, if we actually extended our life span to 1,000, 5,000, or 10,000 years, you'd feel like an idiot if on your thirtieth birthday you got run over by a truck.

**COHEN:** You'd hate it.

**WILBER:** Oh, man, what a bummer!

**COHEN:** But what's interesting is that the people in our culture who are pushing this whole potential are, of course, those who have reached the scientific/rational worldview and have what you might call a scientific Atman project: they intuit their infinite Selves but want to scientifically make their finite selves go on forever!

**WILBER:** Absolutely. And the latest twist is that they want to download consciousness into computers. But then you always have to say, "What level of consciousness are you talking about? There are a dozen levels and basically all you want to do is download the egoic rational level. I mean, why?" They say, "We're going to live 5,000 years or 10,000 years—won't that be great!" I say, "Why would you want Hitler to live 10,000 years? Why do you want Saddam Hussein to live 10,000 years? What exactly are you talking about when you say that this is necessarily a good thing?"

**COHEN:** To handle this extraordinary capacity, we would have to be evolved at the level of spirit.

**WILBER:** That's right. So let's say you *have* realized spirit in the deepest way possible. Let's say you have an enlightened realization that doesn't need to live forever in time. It's transcended the *soul's* version of immortality and therefore no longer needs to reincarnate, and it's transcended the *body's* idea of immortality and therefore does not have to eat food everlastingly and live everlastingly in the physical realm. You are a pure timeless presence and you have eternity in this moment. If human beings started developing the technology to live longer in a human body, would you *choose* to inhabit a body that might live longer, as evolution itself, if you were enlightened? Well, why not? Let's just suppose that somebody's born 10,000 years from now and they become fairly enlightened and at *that*

time human societies do have bodies that live for 5,000 years—

**COHEN:** They'll be ready for it. They'll be prepared.

**WILBER:** That's correct. That's the point. It all hangs on that.

**COHEN:** Obviously the main problem, though, is that our technological capacities are so far ahead of our moral, ethical, philosophical, and spiritual development.

**WILBER:** As always! There's got to be some mathematical law about a lag period in human understanding, because I see no exceptions to it throughout history.

**COHEN:** It's very problematic.

**WILBER:** *It is* problematic.

**COHEN:** But the fact that physical immortality *could* make sense when we become more evolved at the level of spirit is totally intriguing. It gives one a perspective on an unimaginable potential in the future.

**WILBER:** Doesn't it? And in the meantime, though, I think what we're looking at here is the Atman Project, where the typical egoic self intuitively that its own deepest nature is timeless, but it *applies* that intuition to a finite realm. And so it looks at its physical body and says, "I want *this* to live forever."

**COHEN:** Yes, but of course, the "I" that wants to live forever wants to do so for all the wrong reasons. And if it wants to live forever for the wrong reasons, it is going to wreak havoc in this world.



# Why would you want Hitler to live 10,000 years? Why do you want Saddam Hussein to live 10,000 years? What exactly are you talking about when you say that immortality is necessarily a good thing?

ken wilber

**WILBER:** That's right—that's what the Atman Project is. In my book *Up from Eden*, I went through historical epochs to show how so much of the havoc wreaked in each of those eras was indeed the result of an intuition of infinity applied to the finite realm. You want to blow the finite realm up to infinite proportions—and all you can do is blow it up.

**COHEN:** Like the Nazis, for example!

**WILBER:** Yup.

## WHAT HOLDS THE UNIVERSE TOGETHER

**COHEN:** It seems to me that the nature or the structure of the universe is supported by and completely dependent upon the tension between the unmanifest domain and the manifest domain, between the time-bound mortal self and the timeless immortal spirit. It seems that the fundamental and inherent tension between those two is what holds the universe together. And it is that tension itself that is the creative process and is simultaneously the gravity that holds the whole in place. I think that if the mortal, or finite, dimension succeeded in becoming immortal, the universe would disappear.

**WILBER:** I think that's right. The great German idealists were some of the first to talk about it. You can actually look at evolution from two perspectives: you can look at it from the perspective of a finite thing, and you can look at it from the perspective of infinite spirit.

And from the perspective of the finite thing, Hegel said, "Even the rocks cry out and scream and raise themselves up to spirit." And Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schelling and Hegel gave extraordinary accounts of what's driving developmental evolution, which is the attempt of a finite thing to find infinity. *And it can't do it.* It tries and fails. It tries again at a higher level, and it can't do it there, and it fails. It gives up and then tries again at an even higher level. And each level gets closer to spirit, but it's still in the *manifest* domain. And like you said, if it ever actually *reached* the infinite, then the whole game would be up. And then as spirit you would close your eyes, dream for a billion years, open your eyes, sneeze and start the whole thing all over again.

**COHEN:** And it seems to be in the tension of that juxtaposition—where the mortal self awakens to its immortal nature as spirit—that enlightenment is found and that *real* immortality is attained. *That's* heaven.

**WILBER:** Yes, I very much agree. But here's what is so interesting: there's a little stretch of hell in our development from subconscious to self-conscious to superconscious. The subconscious realm doesn't suffer because it's not self-conscious. There's no existential angst. But then there's a period where you're self-conscious enough to know that you're finite *and* you intuit infinity, but you haven't yet awakened to real infinity. And between that is all of the hell of humanity.

**COHEN:** That's *samsara*.

**WILBER:** That's exactly right. It is absolute hell because you are on earth, you intuit heaven, and you're a mixture of both. I think the great archetypal figure of this is Christ. Because, for example, the sitting image of the Buddha is largely of one who is simply awakened and "off the wheel." He's awakened to the infinite unmanifest but hasn't integrated the manifest. But Christ is both human *and* divine, and he knows fully that he's both. And the passion on the cross is the passion of humanity between those two points. I think it's a beautiful image. It's a sad, horrifying image, but it's very true.

**COHEN:** And of course, in his case he was aware of the predicament.

**WILBER:** Yes, he was, unfortunately.

**COHEN:** Most of us aren't, though. The tension between these two poles is *actually* the source of our deepest sustenance, our spiritual sustenance, our soul's *raison d'être*. But this is something a lot of people don't know about. A lot of us are looking for relief and release from the existential hell of postmodern alienation through the experience of the immortal self. But we're missing where the action really is: the tension point between both extremes—between the infinite, unmanifest, or immortal self and the finite, manifest, or mortal self.

**WILBER:** I agree that we have to embrace both poles. But let's keep in mind that there are two ways to get it wrong. On the one hand, you can stay



on the finite side of the street, trying to get the physical body to live forever. These are immortality projects in the physical realm. On the other hand, you have the form of spiritual seeking where you want your soul to live forever and be reincarnated. And of course you can remember the times when you were building a pyramid . . . or Cleopatra! You're doing an immortality project on the soul level, still finite, still not realizing the timeless present, and therefore being propelled through birth after birth.

**COHEN:** And in a traditional enlightenment context, you want to rest beyond the world.

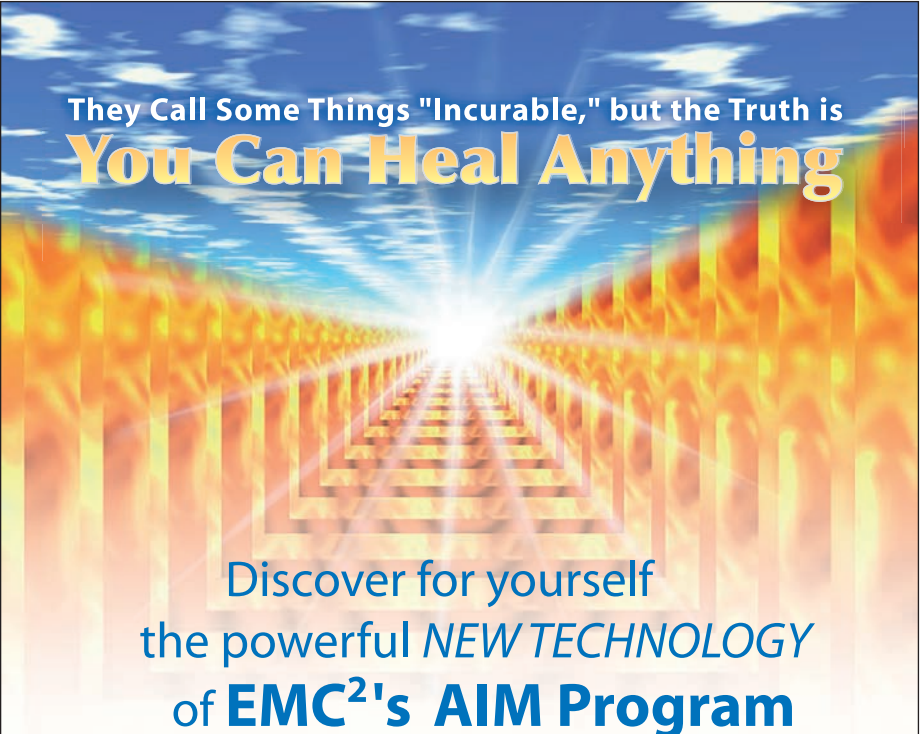
**WILBER:** That's right. You want to get off the wheel, which itself is an immortality project of the arhat.\* And then there's tantra, which embraces both the timeless realm and the fact that the timeless realm is manifesting itself in the realm of time. With tantra, you want to be able to embrace both of those domains without pulling an immortality project on the one hand or getting lost in the unmanifest domain on the other.

## TWO EXPRESSIONS OF OUR IMMORTAL NATURE

**COHEN:** What the concept of immortality *means* in relationship to our actual human experience is different depending on which dimension of ourselves we're speaking about.

\*An individual who devotes their life to, and ultimately succeeds in realizing, nirvana—the final goal of Buddhist practice.

**They Call Some Things "Incurable," but the Truth is  
You Can Heal Anything**




**Discover for yourself  
the powerful *NEW TECHNOLOGY*  
of **EMC<sup>2</sup>'s AIM Program****

Unleash your natural healing abilities with  
The Aim Program. Counter the hereditary and  
environmental influences that impact your wellness.


**Call or email now for your free CD**  
"Prayer and The Ability to Heal Yourself"  
**Call (877) 500-3622 or**  
**email [info@energeticmatrix.com](mailto:info@energeticmatrix.com)**

Please mention  
code 0801  
while supplies last.



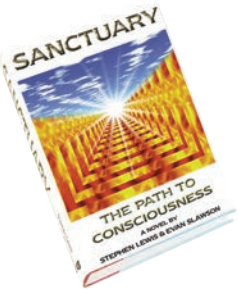
Stephen Lewis

Co-Author &  
EMC2 Founder



Dr. Michael  
Beckwith

Founder, Agape  
Int. Spiritual Center

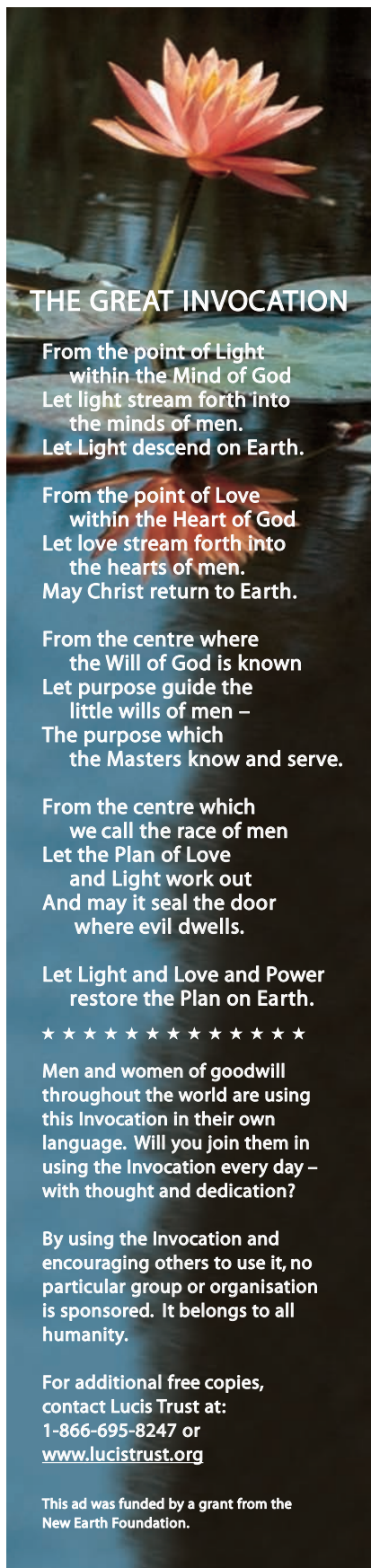


***SANCTUARY: The  
Path To Consciousness***  
visit our website at:  
**[www.energeticmatrix.com](http://www.energeticmatrix.com)**

In regard to Stephen Lewis, EMC2 and The AIM Program: Everything is energy, Everyone and everything has a frequency. Those frequencies that are out of balance with our natural harmony can be identified and removed...and I have seen wonderful results... It is a giant step into the inevitable future where each of us is our own totally enlightened healer. I have found that in my higher self and so can you.

**- Dr. Wayne Dyer, Best selling author of "The Power of Intention"**

[www.energeticmatrix.com](http://www.energeticmatrix.com) For more info call (877) 500-3622



## THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light  
within the Mind of God  
Let light stream forth into  
the minds of men.  
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love  
within the Heart of God  
Let love stream forth into  
the hearts of men.  
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where  
the Will of God is known  
Let purpose guide the  
little wills of men –  
The purpose which  
the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which  
we call the race of men  
Let the Plan of Love  
and Light work out  
And may it seal the door  
where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power  
restore the Plan on Earth.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Men and women of goodwill  
throughout the world are using  
this Invocation in their own  
language. Will you join them in  
using the Invocation every day –  
with thought and dedication?

By using the Invocation and  
encouraging others to use it, no  
particular group or organisation  
is sponsored. It belongs to all  
humanity.

For additional free copies,  
contact Lucis Trust at:  
1-866-695-8247 or  
[www.lucistrust.org](http://www.lucistrust.org)

This ad was funded by a grant from the  
New Earth Foundation.

When we awaken to the timeless *unmanifest* realm, or what's called the Self Absolute, that experience is the awareness of eternity. Suddenly one becomes aware of the eternal present. One awakens to the presence of eternity *now*. In an instant, one goes from a state of finitude, of being locked in time, to an experience in which the awareness of time recedes into the background, if not disappearing altogether. The experience of this state is absolutely tangible. It almost feels material—as real as this table in front of me.

**WILBER:** And in that state, nothing changes; time doesn't touch *this*.

**COHEN:** Yes. There's no beginning and there's no end. That's instant enlightenment—unconditional freedom.

**WILBER:** And radical release.

**COHEN:** In that release, one becomes aware of the immortal nature of consciousness itself. Its very nature *is* always free of anything that happens in time. So this is one manifestation of the immortal nature of spirit—the unmanifest, timeless ground of being itself. But there is another manifestation of the immortal nature of consciousness, which is the creative evolutionary impulse to *become*. This is what I call the "authentic self." The authentic self is the God impulse, the energy and intelligence that initiated the creative process in the first place. Now what does the authentic self, or evolutionary impulse, *feel like* when we awaken to it? It feels like a sense

of absolute power, of indestructibility, expressed as a kind of ceaseless optimism, an almost unbearable positivity.

**WILBER:** And it has a passionate, desireless desire to change the realm of manifestation.

**COHEN:** Right. And it's like an unceasing explosion; it's a power that is inherently creative, and it *also* feels immortal because its very nature *is* immortal, but in a completely different way than the Self Absolute. And so these are the two different expressions of our immortal nature as consciousness or spirit.

**WILBER:** And the immortal God impulse that is creatively working with the manifest side of the world also finds that it runs up against itself. In other words, that infinite power runs up against the density of its own material manifestation.

**COHEN:** Yes. It's constantly striving to push beyond what it has already created—and that is its ongoing battle.

**WILBER:** So this infinite power of ours is running into our *own* density.

**COHEN:** Absolutely, constantly.

**WILBER:** And that's the tension of evolution.

## THE EXUBERANT YES

**COHEN:** As we were saying earlier, when the mortal self considers what it would *actually* be like to live forever, something about that possibility is felt to be deeply and inherently wrong. Interestingly enough, most mortal

**You can have eternal life by simply and fully being in the timeless present with spirit, now. And whether your body lives for a million years or not, you are still eternal.**  
ken wilber

selves find the notion of living unendingly quite unbearable. Just think about it for a minute. Would Andrew or Ken or anyone else *really* want to live forever as Andrew, Ken, or anyone else? The idea is actually quite terrifying, isn't it? But how does the authentic self, the conscious evolutionary impulse alive in us, *feel* about living forever? It was, after all, that same creative impulse that initiated this whole process fourteen billion years ago. In other words, from the perspective of the authentic self, the universe is *our* creation. We did it; we created all this. We were the ones who decided to do this. Of course, we forget that . . . but who else could it have been?!

The universe is the project of the authentic self, of the creative impulse. And the degree to which we awaken to the authentic self is the degree to which we awaken to that God impulse, which is none other than our own passion to move this process forward. Now, that part of myself and that part of yourself never think about what it would be like to live forever, because that part of the self doesn't have the capacity to think of itself as being separate from the ongoing creative process. It's only aware of this unbridled passion to create, to move forward ceaselessly. On the other hand, the ego, or *mortal* self, has an inherent fear of death and dissolution. We don't want to die. Our worst fear is dying. But from the perspective of the authentic self, or the part of you that is one with the evolutionary impulse, which is what I call God, *we're just getting started*.

From God's perspective, the fourteen billion years it's taken to get to this point is just the beginning—we're really just getting rolling. It's as if we're running a marathon and we're maybe halfway through the first mile, if that. We're just warming up! But when the mortal self considers the infinite nature of the evolutionary process, it finds it *absolutely unbearable* to think of having to be at it for that long. And what's so interesting about this is that the ego is presented with this contradiction: "Oh, I *thought* I wanted to live forever, but I really don't." Just as we feel the relief of going to sleep at night after a long and busy day, even death can be felt to be a relief and a release from the experience of incarnation. It's like we need a rest in which we go through a process of regeneration before we get back in the fray.

From God's perspective, the infinite nature of this process is not frightening or overwhelming, or a process for which we need any rest. And this is why I have come up with a new definition of the bodhisattva ideal. The *traditional* declaration of the bodhisattva is, "I vow to postpone my own nirvana until all other sentient beings reach nirvana," which is the point at which we all get released from the ordeal of the evolutionary process. But in the *new* version, it changes to "I vow to participate in this process forever because that is who I am." It is the most frightening thing for a human being to say yes to that, because what that really means is, "*I vow to*

*be conscious for eternity.*" And *that* is unbearable. It's ultimately frightening. It challenges our humanity at a soul level. And it's a new way to look at this whole notion of the bodhisattva ideal in an evolutionary context.

**WILBER:** It's true that we as human beings indeed have this chance—to *consciously* engage with the evolutionary process—for the first time in fourteen billion years, and this really has only occurred in the last microsecond of this whole evolutionary unfolding. So, on the one hand, we have the Christ figure who is fully aware of how deeply you can suffer when you're awake to *both* your natures—your infinite, eternal, timeless Self and your finite, suffering, existential, dread-and-angst self. The cross is a perfect expression of the suffering that is caused by the intersection of those two. On the other hand, there's the Eastern, nondual, tantric version of all this, which is: I vow to be both nirvana and samsara for as long as they both last. And that's the kind of vow you're talking about, which is basically a commitment to not withdraw from either.

**COHEN:** But there's another dimension to it. Don't you think that as the energy, the intelligence that initiated the evolutionary process awakens to itself *in us*, the very direction of this process literally depends on our willingness to take responsibility for it? In other words, unless we are unconditionally willing to say, "Yes, I will do this with all of my heart, and all of my soul, and all of my being, for eternity,"



*From the perspective of the authentic self, the universe is our creation. We did it; we created all this. We were the ones who decided to do this. Of course we forget that, but who else could it have been?!*

andrew cohen

ultimately, the process won't be able to continue to develop. It seems we're at this crossing-over point. Up until now, the evolutionary process has been occurring more or less unconsciously. But in beginning to become conscious of itself, it's becoming more and more dependent upon us to take it to higher and higher levels.

**WILBER:** I agree. And there are two different phases of it. One is the phase of promising not to withdraw from the finite realm. And that is the Mahayana or bodhisattva vow, which is basically, "I vow not to get off the wheel of samsara but to help it as best I can," because essentially nirvana and samsara are not two.

But there is an extraordinary deepening of that realization with tantra or Vajrayana, which is a realization, not just that, I won't get off the wheel of samsara, but that samsara itself, the entire finite realm, is an ecstatic expression of my very own infinite selfless Self or True Nature. The best parts of tantra went further and played with luminosity. All of a sudden samsara becomes a sparkling ornament and manifestation, or radiant joyous expression and taste, of what you always already are. And so now it's not, "I promise not to withdraw." It's, "I will *fully* enter that, and I will enter even the lowest domains of samsara as expressions of nirvana itself." In this there's a little intimation of what you're talking about. And this comes to an even fuller flowering with an understanding of the *evolutionary*

nature of spirit, which happened with the great idealists, and then Sri Aurobindo, among others.

I think that's close to what you're describing, which really has only come into fruition on the planet, East and West, in the last thirty years. It's God realization as the positive, absolute commitment to an exuberant embrace of the manifest realm, and the promise to carry it forward forever, as endlessly unfolding dimensions of your own deepest Divinity and Spirit-in-action.

**COHEN:** The beautiful thing about this is that it overwhelms the ego in the most absolute way. I mean, the traditional notion of ego death in the face of unmanifest emptiness, or the void, is one thing. That's when so many people declare, "I'm so afraid of the unknown." But what about taking on the manifest realm *forever*? That pulls the rug out from under the ego and its fear of the dark! It's an instantly tangible, absolute confrontation that is profound, ever-new, and relentless. It shakes us awake to what we really have to step into now, and it destroys the split between the world and the spirit in a way that's essential at this time. Any spirituality that is merely a *personal* matter is completely undercut in this new way of thinking.

**WILBER:** Like I said, there were beautiful early intimations of this in the Mahayana and the Vajrayana turnings of the wheel. The Heart Sutra is a very static simple form, but it's still

extremely beautiful: "That which is emptiness is non-other than form; that which is form is non-other than emptiness." But then we discovered that form is *evolving*. Therefore, that which is evolving is none other than spirit. That which is spirit is none other than that which is evolving. That's the Heart Sutra in its updated evolutionary form. So all of a sudden, emptiness becomes the exuberant manifestation of its own evolving form, and that's what you're calling God, or the God impulse, which is to enter into that with an exuberant yes that is so actually immortal that it completely undoes the immortality project of the ego.

I think the form that you're expressing it in is exactly right. A thousand years from now they'll have a slightly different form. But that intersection between the infinite and the finite—that's the seed. It was the cross for Christ, it was the basis for Mahayana, and it was much stronger in tantra and is even stronger in the present-day nondual evolutionary panentheism, which is what we're speaking about. It's that extraordinary intersection between the infinite and the finite that is where all the action is. It's such a friction point—and once you get on the other side of it, you can't go back.

**COHEN:** Because now you know who you are, and there's no escape clause anymore. It's kind of like a permanent crucifixion.

**WILBER:** Yes, and liberation simultaneously! ■

beyond limits

# If you're conscious





# *how can you die?*

## **An Interview with a Modern-Day Taoist Wizard** by Andrew Cohen

I'VE OFTEN WONDERED HOW IT WOULD LOOK IF SOMEONE like Jack LaLanne or Anthony Robbins—whom I've always admired for their indomitable spirit, incredible self-discipline, and joie de vivre—became enlightened. When I discovered Peter Ragnar, I think I found out.

The amazing Peter Ragnar is a modern-day shaman, Taoist wizard, natural life scientist, and self-master par excellence. He lives in the Tennessee mountains with his wife, and he claims to be a "senior citizen" but refuses to give away his age because he "doesn't believe in it." He does strenuous two-hour strength-training workouts seven days a week and performs record-breaking feats. He's been a martial arts practitioner for over fifty years, and he has developed his own version of Taoist energy practice called "Magnetic Qi Gong," which he claims is



# You've got to get sick in order to die. *Nobody dies*

the key to immortality. He has healing powers and is renowned for his clairvoyant and telepathic abilities. He lives on a strict diet of raw foods and juices and has spent a lifetime studying the relationship between the body and the mind at all levels. And his most remarkable attainment is his profound awakening to the energetic dimension, or "bio-electric-magnetic" field, of life. While this dimension of reality and experience is one that many have heard of, it's a world that Peter actually lives in.

All this being said, Peter's most compelling and inspiring message is his steadfast and passionate call to self-mastery based upon the relentless cultivation of intention. This foundational element of his teaching is clearly a contemporary expression of the great American New Thought tradition, championed in the early twentieth century by Napoleon Hill, author of the all-time bestseller *Think and Grow Rich*, and later by Norman Vincent Peale, known for his widely acclaimed, inspirational classic *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Hill wrote in 1937, "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe it can achieve." At the beginning of the new millennium, Peter Ragnar is proving that it's still true!

**ANDREW COHEN:** *Peter, why is it that you declare that there is no explainable reason why a person should die, other than his or her belief in death?*

**PETER RAGNAR:** Because I feel that we have ultimate control to the degree that we're conscious. If we are conscious enough, we can make anything happen in our body. We can preserve this body or we can kill this body.

It's very simple to see how people kill their bodies with their thoughts—it's a product of their unconsciousness of causes and effects. If we're conscious of our thoughts—I mean *luminously* conscious of our thoughts—those thoughts then impregnate the cellular structure of our body in a way that is very, very difficult to explain. When you have an abundance of life force inside you, it pours out of your eyes. It comes out of the palms of your hands as heat, as healing heat. It radiates as if you swallowed the sun, and you are different. Now, with that type of dynamic and powerful energy inside of you, how can you die?

**COHEN:** *Interesting question!*

**RAGNAR:** It's a working hypothesis, of course. But the more life we have running through our body's energy system, the more alive we are. Life is not death, life is the opposite of death. So embracing life is the situation. How many people embrace life with *every* thought and *every* action and *every* decision they make? Only a very, very rare few.

You see, we've been conditioned to believe in death. Right

# healthy.



from the very first breath we take, we feel like life is a march between the womb and the tomb.

**COHEN:** *(laughs)* Well, it does seem that everything in the universe that is born and takes on physical form goes through a maturation process and ultimately degenerates and falls away.

**RAGNAR:** That's true. But let's look at it from the standpoint of a caterpillar in the process of becoming a butterfly. Andrew, do butterflies come out of deformed cocoons, or do they come out of cocoons that are fully perfected?

**COHEN:** *Cocoons that are fully perfected.*

**RAGNAR:** Exactly. So I feel that we should endeavor with every ounce of strength that we have to create a perfect life, to become fully perfected as human beings, and then see if we fly. Now, we may not. I may be wrong. But the quest is to be a perfect human.

That may sound rather egotistic. People might say, "Oh no, just give up, don't do anything. You're *efforting* too much." But it's not effort—it's our evolution. Our evolution is to get better and better and better at every single thing that we do. For example, I'm well past my athletic prime, according to the experts, and yet I keep breaking my own personal records. I don't believe in age; I'm ageless. But I will say that I'm a senior citizen, a pre-baby boomer. And I continue to break records I couldn't have done when I was in my twenties and thirties.

Why? Because I don't believe in limitations. And because I don't believe in them, I'm free. I'm free to do anything I want to do. If I want to break world records, I can break world records, if that's what's important.

**COHEN:** *What you seem to be saying is, "Let's make the effort to transcend all of our self-limiting thoughts, all of our convictions of emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical limitation. Let's first try to discover, at least as far as we can humanly imagine, what a perfectly full and absolutely positive embrace of the human experience is. And then let's see what the result is going to be on every level, including the physical." Is that what you mean?*

**RAGNAR:** Absolutely. You put it as good as it can be put.

**COHEN:** *So therefore, you don't actually mean that if you strive to live a perfect life, you will live forever. But that if you strive to live a perfect life, you don't exactly know how long you're going to live, but let's find out. That kind of thing?*

**RAGNAR:** Exactly, let's find out. It's a working hypothesis. Let's find out if this life is a definite one of eighty to ninety years, or seventy to eighty years, however gerontologists might want to estimate it—or whether it's an indefinite life that you can go on living as long as you stay in that space. If you can live the "perfect life," how long would that life span be?

# I don't understand how you can have

**COHEN:** *What would it mean, then, to live a perfect life?*

**RAGNAR:** Well, first, it would be free of all limiting beliefs, because we are not limited creatures unless we *believe* we're limited. And how do we drop all limitations? By becoming more conscious. By adding more conscious energy and life force to our physical organism until we literally see it glowing; we see it glowing in the dark.

**COHEN:** *Peter, what is the life force? Where does it come from?*

**RAGNAR:** I wish I knew that. The Chinese Taoists call it chi, and a lot of people refer to it. But these are just words. It's an oscillation that is absolutely physically measurable. To the degree that your body oscillates with its vibration, it can be measured. But what it is . . . they're still arguing about what electricity is! We know how to create it, but we don't know what it is.

Every time you have an electrical field, you also have a magnetic field, so you can't really talk about electricity without bringing magnetism into it. But what's beyond that? They've discovered that maybe the smallest quantum of energy is actually what is defined as chi. It's an oscillation of *something* that gives off a bio-electric-magnetic field. The stronger that bio-electric-magnetic field is, the more vitality the individual has, the more life force. And of course, you'll see it in the electricity in the eyes; you'll hear it in the voice; you'll see it in the way the body flows without hesitation; you'll see it in the posture. I don't know what it is; all I know is that I *am* that.

**COHEN:** *You make a distinction, I think, between prenatal and postnatal chi. Could you explain what the difference is?*

**RAGNAR:** Basically, we come into this life with a battery that has a certain amount of juice in it. I call this *prenatal* chi. If you don't do a thing and you just continue to run with your lights on and the radio blaring, eventually the battery will wear out, depending upon how much demand you put on it. And that's generally seventy to eighty years. So we've got a battery that is meant to last at least that long. However, if you plug the battery in at night and you charge it, there's no end in sight—that's *postnatal* chi. I have a concept that says: If you go to bed with more energy than you woke up with, then

all night long, you've got the battery charger on. And that's the secret to life. It's that simple.

**COHEN:** *How do you go to bed with more energy than you woke up with? Is it because you're building it during the day?*

**RAGNAR:** Right. This is why I do what I call Magnetic Qi Gong. I've discovered a way to go to bed with my body buzzing. And the buzz is basically the battery charger. We tested this just last week with a chiropractic acupuncture clinic. They brought their electro-meridian imaging equipment up here, and after I did some chi gong, they tested me. The unit can't even measure past where the life force in my kidneys reached; they said they'd never seen anything like that before. The Chinese say that the life force is in the kidneys, and there are some reasons for that, but nevertheless, they couldn't believe the readings. The readings were off the chart.

And it's not just the kidneys—it's all the organs. If you do certain practices, you can enhance the voltage in all the organs and meridians of the body. Basically, we're buzzing power plants. We're nuclear power plants.

**COHEN:** *And you believe that human life expectancy should be between 160 and 200 years?*

**RAGNAR:** If you look at the rate of maturation of any animal—in other words, the ratio of the length of time it takes an animal to mature to the length of its life span—for most animals it's ten to twenty times. A horse, for example, will mature in two years and live for twenty-five to thirty years. Same thing with chimpanzees, dogs, cats—with all animals, it's at least ten to twenty times. The only exception to this rule is the human species. Even if you take ten times human maturity, which is a low figure, that gives you 180 years. If it's twenty times, then double that.

You've got to get sick in order to die. Nobody dies healthy. I've heard people say, "They just died of old age." And I say, "No, they had so many diseases, they didn't know which one killed them!" To get sick, you have to get into some type of negativity that damages one or more particular organs.

I'm probably out there by myself on this one, but I feel that we do have ultimate control of our body, because our



# mastery over your thoughts and not have *mastery over your body.*

body is a thought. It's filled with frozen memories—memories that are formed by our experiences that we have already reached conclusions about, and we've emotionalized those conclusions and frozen them into our flesh. Therefore, only when we thaw it out and release, and stop holding on for dear life, can we *have* dear life.

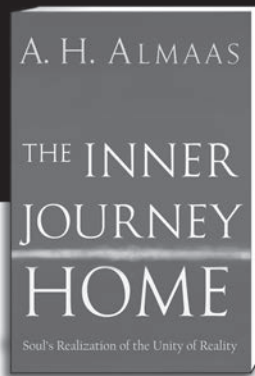
**COHEN:** *What you're saying is that a lot of the ideas and beliefs that we have about who we are, about the nature of life, and about how long it's possible to live are subconscious and unquestioned. So in this sense, I understand what you mean about them being frozen in our body. And unless they are released, since we are not aware of them, they are likely to determine our destiny.*

**RAGNAR:** Precisely.

**COHEN:** *Okay. That's clear. But when you said that our body is a thought, did you mean that literally?*

**RAGNAR:** Yes, I meant that literally. Actually, I should have said that many, many trillions of thoughts form our body. And it's really the health of our overall life view or worldview that determines our physical health.


**COHEN:** *You seem to have awakened to a perspective where you see the nondifference between the physical, the psychological, the emotional, the spiritual, and the energetic—where you're able to see all these as literally one*



**"A brilliant synthesis of the best in traditional spirituality with the best in modern psychology.**

Almaas is among that select company who can combine spiritual depth with a profound and insightful intellect."—**RICHARD SMOLEY**, author of *Inner Christianity: A Guide to the Esoteric Tradition*

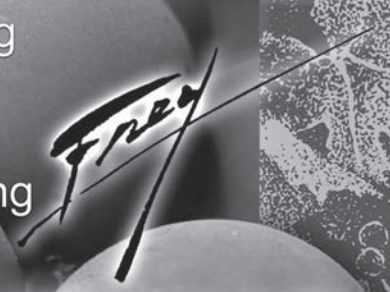
**"This profound book offers a visionary understanding for anyone who wishes to know and traverse the territory of the psyche and the soul, the spiritual and the psychological. [Almaas] is among our wisest and most illuminated teachers, and this is one of his masterworks."**—**JACK KORNFELD**



**SHAMBHALA PUBLICATIONS**  
To order, call (888) 424-2329, or visit [www.shambhala.com](http://www.shambhala.com)

For more information about A. H. Almaas and his work, visit [www.ahalmaas.com](http://www.ahalmaas.com)

Celebrating  
Twentyfive  
Years of  
Organic  
Winemaking



**Frey Vineyards**

Mendocino  
Premium  
Organic  
Wines

**No Sulfites Added**

Order direct at: [FreyWine.com](http://FreyWine.com)  
[info@freywine.com](mailto:info@freywine.com)

707.485.5177 800.760.3739

*process. And of course, most of us are in the habit of relating to our experience in a way that is very conceptual and completely divorced from the integrity of the process itself. The way we see our experience is often only a small fraction of the totality of what's really happening. And I suppose that unless one actually gets to the point where one directly experiences this insight into the ultimate nondifference between spirit and matter, there will still be some kind of fundamental separation between what one is doing and how one is thinking about the process, some fundamental duality in terms of oneself.*

## His tumors melted like *snowballs on a hot stove.*

**RAGNAR:** You're describing it so well, Andrew, because there is no separation.

**COHEN:** *Some people would say that this insight into the fact that there is a much deeper relationship between the mind and the body than we had previously thought is true up to a point, but that there are certain processes that really won't be affected by what we think, certain processes that are, in fact, unconscious. And you're basically defying that. You're saying that it's possible to become so conscious of these physical processes that we would be able to have absolute control over the whole system.*

**RAGNAR:** Absolutely. There are so many people, for example, who have had spontaneous remissions of cancer. The medical researchers scratch their heads and say they don't know why it goes away. But the reason it goes away is that the intention to live is so powerful, so strong, that it overrides any other negative programming that might be in the body.

A classic example that is cited in psychology texts is the Krebiozen story. A cancer patient, Mr. Wright, got this worthless placebo—at least that's what the AMA eventually said about the drug Krebiozen. He went to a doctor and said, "Look, I'm dying." He had tumors so big they had to milk them. And the doctor said, "What's it going to hurt to give the guy

Krebiozen? He's going to be dead in a weekend anyway. It's an inoperable cancer, the worst of the worst." After he got the worthless drug, the journals stated, "His tumors melted like snowballs on a hot stove." He totally recovered from his cancer in ten days' time. No one could explain it. Unfortunately, the story has a bad ending because later, when Mr. Wright read the AMA report revealing that Krebiozen was worthless, he said, "Oh, it was worthless," and his cancer came back, and he died.

Here you have a classic example of the power of intention. His intent was to stay alive, and when he saw that he had an opportunity, the body said, "Yes sir, what do you want us to do?" All the immune soldiers lined up and saluted him and

said, "Whatever you want; you're the commander." And we are the commander.

**COHEN:** *What do you think happened to the cancer? If it went into total remission, theoretically, it wouldn't be there anymore, so it wouldn't be able to come back. Are you saying that the cancer that was originally present was also a thought?*

**RAGNAR:** Yes, I believe that. Look at how many people die after receiving a diagnosis saying they've got six weeks to live. And sure enough, in six weeks they're dead. Yet what if it was a misdiagnosis, as it has been in some cases?

**COHEN:** *Yes. But one could live next to a chemical plant and get poisoned, or live next to Chernobyl and get cancer from radiation, and that wouldn't necessarily have anything to do with any negative thinking, right?*

**RAGNAR:** It's a hard question to answer because people get very sensitive when you say anything about personal responsibility. But I think that if I had been living in the Ukraine, there would have been something inside me that said, "Get out of here, boy; get out of here." You know, whenever a severe storm comes, if you look around here, the animals are gone. They disappear;

# Everything I knew about myself seemed to be

they know. All you have to do is listen to nature, and it tells you everything and anything you need to know about life. The animals know without knowing all the time. Not some of the time, not part of the time, but all of the time. And we do too.

**COHEN:** *But there were thousands of people who would have had no warning. I mean, that has to be part of the equation, doesn't it?*

**RAGNAR:** When do we have no warning? I've said this so many times, and I know it bugs people. It irritates them when I say, "Look, you never have an accident without being warned at least three times in advance. It's just that you fail to hear or see or perceive the very warning that's before you." Nothing happens to us without us first being told about it. It's like the tsunami. Where did the animals go? They already knew.

**COHEN:** *Yes, that was amazing.*

**RAGNAR:** Well, we have the same faculty.

**COHEN:** *But let's say you're driving through a town where the water has been completely polluted, and you don't know it. And you happen to go to a diner and drink a cup of tea or something, and then eventually, you get cancer as a result.*

**RAGNAR:** You'd know it. You'd know it ahead of time.

**COHEN:** *But how would you know?*

**RAGNAR:** Are you familiar with behavioral kinesiology, or muscle testing?

**COHEN:** Yes.

**RAGNAR:** Okay. How is it that certain things weaken us and certain things strengthen us? Our body tells us. Our body sends us a signal, and that signal either weakens or strengthens us. The other day, someone was asking me about some testing equipment for kinesiology. And I said, "I don't need the testing equipment. I've already got it; it's inside me." I can look at something or think of something, and I know the feedback loop. I know whether it comes back "this is good" or "this is bad." It's the same feedback loop that all animals have.

**COHEN:** *So, in other words, you're saying that when you become more and more conscious, you become more sensitive to what you should do and what you shouldn't do, a direction to go in or a direction not to go in, a place to eat or a place you shouldn't eat, that kind of thing? That your intuition will evolve in leaps and bounds, and you will experience a level of sensitivity and intuitive knowing that most people would ordinarily be unaware of, or wouldn't even be able to imagine?*

**RAGNAR:** Precisely. Now, I know people will say, "You're making me feel guilty now. You're making me feel uncomfortable because I don't have that." And I say, "But you *can*. It's something that develops in time. It's all called consciousness." Some of us have been at it longer, that's all. Some of us have grown up faster. It's just a part of our evolution. We grow more conscious if we work at it, and if you make a commitment to work at it, then you have the ultimate protection. You're always in the right place at the right time for the right reason—you are never *not*. Nothing can happen to you that you do not designate if you are that conscious.

Now, let's say my belief is wrong. Okay, we'll find out. But the neat thing is that your confidence is bolstered once you realize that the process works. It works in little ways, and if one is conscious enough to see it working in little ways, then you will see it working in dramatic ways. I choose to believe that everything works because you are more conscious. If you're conscious, everything works in your favor. And if you're unconscious, everything works against you.

**COHEN:** *Is that because if you're more conscious, you're at one with the life process? So then the process itself opens up within you and before you and around you?*

**RAGNAR:** I'll give you an example. The other day, a wild coyote came out of the forest, came right up to me. I was outside, and I opened the door and said, "Do you want to come in?" It said, "Sure." And it came in. I said, "Let me fix you a meal." So my wife and I fixed him a meal. I handed him a cookie, and he said, "Thank you, I really appreciate that." I said, "Well, I appreciate your visit. It's nice to meet you, Mr. Coyote." And so now Mr. Coyote comes back and forth. But this is the relationship we have with all the animals because I see that as an extension of my own energy. This is life force, just the flow of life force. It's like I have a kite, and he's on the other end, and the



# evaporating and dying *spontaneously.*

wind is blowing, so he runs through the forest. And then when I wind up the kite, here he comes again.

We have deer, a whole bunch of deer, and when we walk out there, they come up and nose me. We give them apples. I know the wildlife people in the park would go crazy if they heard me telling this story. But I say, “Hey, they love me, because *I love them*, and they have nothing stopping them from feeling that.” We have a wild boar—I mean, you ought to see this thing. He’s got a mane like a big black lion and burning red eyes—especially at night—and these big tusks. It would scare the hell out of anybody if they saw him. We call him by name; I call him Rasputin. He comes running up and dances around in a circle on the deck. He loves us. And this thing is totally wild. If a stranger came here, they’d never see this happen. They wouldn’t see a bear, they wouldn’t see a deer, and they certainly wouldn’t see the coyotes. The birds leave, too, when the vibrations are wrong or off.

Now, what does that tell you about life? All life is one, and if you’re in harmony with it, you can walk out into the middle of a forest, walk up to a strange deer, and touch it. The first time a mama bear came, I was out in the woods. I laid down in front of her, and she came over and sniffed me. And I showed her that I was totally surrendered, that I wasn’t going to hurt her. I have not one ounce of fear or negativity about these animals. You know, she was pregnant, and she brought her three cubs. She brought them right to our bedroom door, and we babysat the cubs while she went off and had some free time. This is on a regular basis. I’ve got photographs of this. The cubs would come in the bedroom, and we’d watch them until she came back half an hour later. And then off they’d go with their mama, because there’s no disconnect. There is no separation. It’s all one beautiful picture. However, when people with other energies come—people with fears and apprehensions—they don’t see a thing. The world changes. It’s a different world. And between the two worlds, I choose this one.

**COHEN:** *Was there a particular moment in your life when you went through a transition where these things started to happen, when they hadn’t before?*

**RAGNAR:** Yes. I was a spiritual maniac. I would meditate, and I’d sit cross-legged into the deep hours of the night until

my knees and back hurt like hell. Finally one day, I gave it all up. I said, “This is nuts; this is totally nuts. I’m not doing this anymore.” So I just went on doing what I usually do, and it sort of became a habit to sit before the fire. And one day, back in 1977 in May—I remember it, full moon night, sitting in front of the fire—something happened. I was never so frightened in all my life. Everything I knew about myself seemed to be evaporating and dying, spontaneously. I felt like I had turned into a pillar of stone, and the last vestige of what I knew as myself was leaking out. Once the fear evaporated and the experience ended, I was different.

I don’t know how you explain that, but I can remember going out to my outhouse the following morning and sitting there with the moonlight coming in through the trees. I had the door open, and here a fox comes running up to me, and sits right before me while I’m sitting in the outhouse. Right by my knees, looking me in the eyes, and talking to me without words. Later that day, I went out to my garden. I took a little lunch with me so I didn’t have to go back to the cabin, and when I sat by a big tree to eat, a crow jumped down, sat on my knee, and said, “Can I have some of your food?” And I said, “Sure.”

From that point on, everything was different. It’s the same world, you know. I get up, I wash, I use the bathroom, I brush my teeth, I do what everybody else does, I guess, at least to some degree. But it’s different, because my amnesia went away. I don’t know if I’m enlightened. I have no idea what the word means. All I know is that I’m now different, and I like this different feeling. Nothing has ever been the same.

**COHEN:** *How long had you been a seeker up until that point?*

**RAGNAR:** My entire life. From the time I was a child, in one form or another, there was something nagging me, an uncomfortable nagging that never went away.

**COHEN:** *Peter, in the way that you think about it today, is there any difference between the quest for enlightenment and the quest for physical immortality? Because most revered sages and masters have passed away.*

**RAGNAR:** I know I go out on a limb when I answer questions like this, but I have to say, master of what? Master of your thoughts? If you’re a master of your thoughts, you’re master of your body, master of your money, master of your life circumstances. If you



I don't believe  
in limitations.  
And because I don't  
believe in them,  
I'm free.

have personal mastery, then it's visible, measurable, and you can demonstrate it.

Right now, at my age, I am master of my body. I'm master of my mind, my financial world, my emotional world, my personal environment. I don't know, maybe it won't always be that way. But I doubt it. Why would I give up now? People say, "You're getting arrogant, you're getting pompous, and life is going to show you." You know, "Pride comes before the fall." And I say, "Well, pride is something you've got to earn." You *earn* the right to be proud of your accomplishment, and at the same time, once you realize how hard you had to work, you're immensely humbled.

**COHEN:** Right. But in relationship to this question, for example, in India, maybe even in the last century, there were people such as Ramakrishna or Ramana Maharshi who were undoubtedly highly enlightened beings, yet who died painful deaths. They died of cancer.

**RAGNAR:** Well, I guess there was one thing they didn't have mastery over, isn't there?

**COHEN:** The reason I'm asking is because those individuals were universally considered to be profoundly enlightened beings. The Buddha, too, seemed to have passed away from food poisoning.

*And it seems that the power of their awakening had everything to do with victory over the mind. Yet they all died painful deaths.*

**RAGNAR:** I don't discount their reputations, and I would never say anything negative about them. But I immediately have doubts about the levels of mastery. I don't understand how you can have mastery over your thoughts and not have mastery over your body, because the body, at least from my perspective, is your thoughts. Unless you simply choose to commit suicide. And then I have to wonder, why do you want to do that? Don't you like the people around you? I mean, have these disciples absolutely eaten you up? I don't know. But at least I'll go on this particular track until I'm proven wrong. And when I'm proven wrong, I'll apologize to them! I'll say to all those dead gurus, "I apologize to you. You were right; you can't get to keep this body."

I'm lonely. I'm out here by myself, Andrew. But I can say for sure that the little things give you confidence. If you can do the little things, you know that by the inch it's a cinch and by the yard it's hard. So you do the little things, and you keep building, and every little unit of consciousness that expands, every little breakthrough that you have, is living a life of victory. And pretty soon, the final victories, whatever they may be, are there on the horizon and you're crashing through them. I've often said, "Okay, so you've climbed the mountain. Now we're standing on the peak. What do you do next? You step off into space." ■



# The Morro Bay Times

VOL. 6

TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2005

EXCLUSIVE

## TWO AMERICANS MISSING

### Youths Traveling in India Not Heard From in Months

#### New Website [www.evanandella.com](http://www.evanandella.com) Dedicated to Their Story

By BRIANNE SORG  
Associated Press

NEW DELHI, India, August 2—The Associated Press learned yesterday from government officials in the province of Uttar Pradesh that the search for two young Americans who went missing in India nearly three months ago has officially come to a close.

"At this time, there is little else we can do," said Sergeant Bikram Mujabi of the Delhi police. "Our hypothesis has been that they, like so many Western seekers who have come to our country in search of spiritual enlightenment before them, have simply gone off to live in the mighty Himalayas and sit at the feet of Lord Shiva. However, their parents are very worried, and there is no way to let them know if their children are dead or alive. It is possible that young Evan and Ella



**VANISHED** Ella Paris and Evan McAllister are shown smiling before Morro Rock during a weekend trip down the California coast in August 2003, a year before their misadventures in India began.



met their ends through foul play or a miscalculation while hiking through a dangerous mountain pass. It is also possible they were abducted, or even murdered, by a band of marauding Kashmiri rebels." Mujabi paused before adding, "I suppose they may even have joined the rebels, in which case we will have to kill them ourselves should we encounter them."

Meanwhile, friends and family in the United States are continuing to mourn the disappearance of Evan McAllister, 23, of San Francisco, and Ella Paris, 24, of New York. "I'm terrified," said Paris' mother from her home in Brooklyn. "The last I heard from either of them was an email Evan sent telling me that my daughter was passing her days with a pervert pretending to be a tantric master. My baby would *never* do something like that!" Close friend David Michael, 26, said: "We always thought they would have, like, the perfect life with, like, tons of kids and cool jobs, if they could just have ignored their existential angst and stuff. They were always so worked up about the meaning of life and junk like that, and, dude, look where it got them. Nowhere. I mean, literally: we don't know where the f--- they are. It sucks."

Paris and McAllister's ultimately mysterious saga began while both were in school—she at Stanford University, where she was studying to become a marine biologist, and he at the University of California at Santa Cruz (his major was undeclared). During a summer internship in Santa Cruz,

Paris met McAllister at a beach party and they quickly bonded over a few beers and a heated argument about George Lucas and the transformational dialectic of Zen Buddhist motifs in contemporary film.

It is unclear whether their almost immediate attraction was ever consummated, although a friend of Paris's, Amanda Jane Caper, 22, told the Associated Press, "You should have seen the sparks between them."

---

**"We were compelled to publish Evan and Ella's emails because they epitomized the very real spiritual predicament of an entire generation."**

---

It was totally like Romeo and Juliet, you know? A love/hate thing from the very beginning."

Their relationship became a long-distance one upon Ella's return to Brooklyn to care for her ailing father, who eventually died in February 2004. It was Evan and Ella's passionate and heartbreakingly authentic email correspondence, resulting from their separation, that gained them a small international following and made them famous to all Americans, who four times a year could read the latest developments of their lives in the

pages of *What Is Enlightenment?* (or "WIE") magazine.

"We were compelled to publish Evan and Ella's emails because they epitomized the very real spiritual predicament of an entire generation," Craig Hamilton, managing editor of WIE, said. "These kids grew up in the aftermath of the East-meets-West spiritual explosion of the sixties, and their lives are in constant confluence with the cutting edge of technology, pop culture, and postmodern globalization," Hamilton continued. "The complexity that their generation faces in the world today is tremendous, and they sadly lack a legitimate spiritual context in which to understand their experience. For us, 'A 21st Century Love Story,' as we called it, was a means of exploring the deepest philosophical and spiritual aspirations of young people today." Added Hamilton as he stared into the distance, "Man, we miss those two something terrible. But you know, I refuse to lose hope. I truly believe it's possible they're still alive. Every day when I hear that funny little chirp that alerts you to a new email in your in-box, my heart jumps, and I silently pray that when I open up the email, it will be from Evan or Ella."

Within months of the first publication of their emails, Paris and McAllister's lives were riveting tens of thousands of readers. The San Mateo Register wrote in their review of the series, "'A 21st Century Love Story' is nothing less than a vision of metaphysical nonpareil, in which heaven and hell, and dynamic and passive forces, are pow-

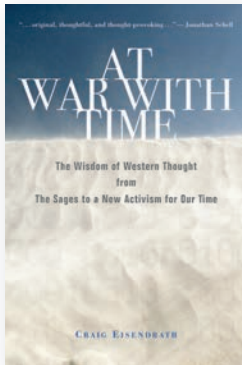
erfully juxtaposed. It reveals the private passions of an entire generation, and always leaves readers breathless for more."

For the past year, readers of the series were taken on a whirlwind journey as they joined Paris and McAllister on their romantic goose chase for each other's affections and their on-again, off-again quest for spiritual liberation with Mother India as their stage. Circumstances eventually conspired to lead Evan to Rishikesh, where he studied ancient yoga techniques, and Ella to Dharamsala to study with a young Tibetan tantric master.

"Although many may think that their stories ended there," Hamilton said, "we actually received another ten or so emails from them before they disappeared. We intend to publish these installments from the last days of their known lives online in a new multimedia interface that their devoted fans—as well as friends and family—can visit on a regular basis." Hamilton continued, "You know, some people accused WIE of publishing these emails because Ella is my niece. But it isn't true; my motives were never nepotistic. On the contrary, my editorial decision to make these dialogues public was purely based on their profoundly transformative value. And that just makes it all the more heartrending that Evan and Ella are missing like this. It's as if a radiant light in our world has suddenly gone out. But with evanandella.com, we are going to keep the fire of their passionate idealism blazing. And who knows? Maybe it will help us to find them."

# natural selection

books | film | other media



## AT WAR WITH TIME

*The Wisdom of Western Thought from the Sages to a New Activism for Our Time*

by Craig Eisendrath

(Helios Press, 2003, hardcover \$24.95)

Western civilization is at war, author Craig Eisendrath informs us in his latest book. But the war Eisendrath

is documenting here is not the one against terrorism, radical Islam, or even drugs or poverty. No, this is a war against time—and it's been going on, he tells us, since the beginning of human history. Human beings are the protagonists, fighting since the dawn of civilization to find some sense of security in a universe where instability is the rule and the passage of time is a constant reminder of our own mortality.

So how exactly does one fight the passage of time? According to *At War with Time*, it is by constructing a world beyond death, an eternal metaphysical universe free of the instabilities and insecurities so real to human life. Indeed, starting with the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh (the story is about the quest for immortality), Eisendrath traces how human thought has done just this, enshrining in philosophy,

religion, art, and literature an eternal world of permanence that exists beyond the insecure temporality of time and space. From the idea of an eternal soul to the metaphysical forms of Plato to notions of a personal God, humans have built a sophisticated network of ideas he calls the “permanence complex.” “The permanence complex,” he writes, “ultimately looks to a static world. It says that, beneath the flux of existence, the deeper realities are eternal.”

The only problem with those deeper “eternal” realities is that in the last two centuries, we have discovered that they represent a false picture. It was Darwin, Eisendrath feels, who struck the crucial blow. Indeed, with the advent of an evolutionary understanding of the world, the “entire structure of permanence and certainty which had been erected for four thousand years came under attack.” Darwin—and those who followed his lead in fields as diverse as psychology, biology, and philosophy—revealed not a static, stable, unchanging natural world ordered by divine providence, but a universe that is evolving, unstable, dynamic, and generative. And human life itself has been profoundly impacted by that radical new picture. To prove the point, Eisendrath takes the reader through the work of a number of twentieth-century intellectual luminaries, including philosophers John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead, ego psychologist Jane Loevinger, complexity theorist Stuart Kauffman, and cognitive scientist Gerard Edelman. He illustrates how our natural world, our biological lives, and even the fundamental categories of our thinking are all part of that dynamic evolutionary unfolding and can hardly be attributed to eternal, unchanging laws of nature. For example, speaking of the new physics, he writes, “Once thought timeless and

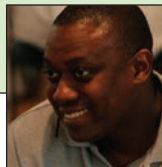
## Harvard Negotiation Insight Initiative



### Spirit in Action

*“The biggest problem in negotiation is not the other side. It is oneself—the all-too-human tendency to react blindly, to suppress one’s emotions or to overreact to them, to resist putting oneself in the other’s shoes. That is the gift that HNII brings us—to remind us to begin the study of negotiation by looking within and seeking to understand our own selves.”*

William Ury, Director, Global Negotiation Project, Co-Author, *Getting to Yes*



Program on  
Negotiation  
at Harvard Law School

For more information visit [www.pon.harvard.edu/hnii](http://www.pon.harvard.edu/hnii)  
or contact Cristin at [cmartin@law.harvard.edu](mailto:cmartin@law.harvard.edu)

HNII: Fostering peace in the world from the inside out



essentially static, the universe is now seen as an historical process, which could possibly have a beginning or an end."

The book is, at the very least, an educational journey through the essential elements of the Western philosophical worldview. And if you need to brush up on your Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Hegel—not to mention Whitehead, Meade, Dewey, James, Sullivan, Marx, Smith, Varela, Piaget, Sagan, Margulis, and even futurist Ray Kurzweil—look no further than Eisendrath's encyclopedic grasp of the development of the Western mind. But *At War with Time* has larger ambitions. Eisendrath's aim is to help create an entirely new worldview based on an evolutionary understanding of life, and more specifically, to foster a new activism based on that worldview. After all, he surmises, if the ways of life and nature are recognized to be plastic, changeable, and less certain than we once imagined, it also stands to reason that our own ability, and responsibility, to actually *change* the historical process, to impact life's development for the better, is also greater than we previously conceived. Thus, the fall of the permanence complex, however painful, reveals an unprecedented opportunity to affect human destiny. "The nostalgia we might feel for [a sense of permanence] is understandable, but [it] may not inform our vision now. Permanence has fled, but it has left a world conceived as process, contingency, and possibility. . . . It is a world which we can help create, or lose, by our own actions."

Still, for all its impressive rigor and thoughtfulness, the book tends to overreach in its attack on metaphysics. Eisendrath tends to conflate religion and metaphysics, and as he dismantles one, the other is thrown to the wolves as well. But he never makes it clear

why a breakdown of the permanence complex must necessarily spell the end of the spiritual dimension of life. Yes, two of its primary pillars are also pillars of religion—the belief in a personal God and the idea of an eternal soul. But there is no reason why our spiritual sensibilities need to be tied to premodern notions of an anthropomorphic God. Nor does there seem to be any inherent reason why accepting the fact that theologians might have missed the mark in their metaphysics of the soul need make us atheists. In fact, Eisendrath never actually makes any explicit case for why his post-permanence universe of change, process, and contingency must also be Godless or spiritless. Nevertheless, it is implicit in much of his writing.

For the most part, however, Eisendrath's book takes us into fascinating new territory and reveals newly discovered characteristics of our world, encouraging us all to face squarely into their profound implications. This can be a disquieting experience for the secular and religious alike, as many of the sacred cows of the culture come under scrutiny. For example, just ask some red-state evangelicals how much they like being told that their idea of an eternal soul is philosophically untenable. Still, for a growing number in this day and age, Eisendrath's new worldview may not spell the end of the religious spirit but rather its reinvigoration, albeit in radical new forms. In fact, many people have looked at the same data that he lays out and come to very different conclusions about their spiritual implications. Some are now speaking of a new "evolutionary spirituality" that is being formed through the work of scientists, mystics, and philosophers alike, incorporating much of the new view of the world discussed here. Certainly, many of these initial gropings may be riddled with leftover

elements of the same permanence complex that Eisendrath attacks so effectively. The New Age, for example, while jumping on the bandwagon of evolution and much of the new science, is often overly infatuated with the idea that there is an inevitable direction to human history, something that would surely be a red flag in Eisendrath's work. But such concerns hardly mean that we should throw out the whole religious/spiritual enterprise altogether. Indeed, rather than leaving all notions of God on history's altar, we may very well find, as we sort through the revolutionary ideas that confront us in the twenty-first century, that Eisendrath's powerful message of change, process, and evolution is the very thing needed for spirit's rebirth and further development.

Carter Phipps

## THERE IS NO DEATH

The problem of death is founded upon love of life and love of the physical form. As the consciousness of thinking humanity rises from personal to transpersonal levels where we begin to know ourselves as the Soul, our attachment to physical form loosens and a new understanding and experience of death becomes possible.

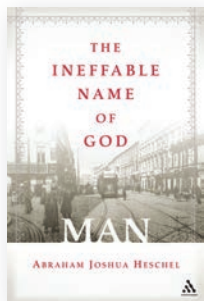
The Soul does not know death or the fear of death. Through the Soul we gain a sense of participation and cooperation in the cyclic process of life; we can meet death in a different way and can prepare for it as simply the Bringer of Changes.

What then do people experience during transition from life in form to life without form? Is it possible to gain control of the process? Answers can be found in a 34-page compilation of the writings of Alice A. Bailey, *Death: Entrance into Fuller Life*, available free:

*School for Esoteric Studies*

275 S. French Broad Ave., Dept. E  
Asheville, NC 28801-3951  
[www.esotericstudies.net](http://www.esotericstudies.net)





### THE INEFFABLE NAME OF GOD: MAN

by Abraham Joshua Heschel

*Translated from the Yiddish by*

*Morton M. Leifman*

(Continuum, 2005, hardcover \$19.95)

Abraham Joshua Heschel has been called “the most important Jewish thinker of the modern period.” Born in Warsaw in 1907, he was a renowned theologian and religious leader, a prolific scholar of Jewish ethics and mysticism, and a pioneering interfaith social activist who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr., in Selma, Alabama. Heschel uniquely straddled two worlds: descended from prominent Hasidic dynasties, he spent his youth immersed in a traditional Orthodox religious education; later, he studied avant-garde literature and European humanism at a Yiddish-language high school and the University of Berlin. It was the natural creative tension between these two worlds—traditional and modern, religious and secular—that defined Heschel’s life and would later guide the development of his mature theology. But what those familiar with his influential spiritual writings may not know is that he found his earliest and perhaps most intimate voice not as a philosopher but as a poet.

*The Ineffable Name of God: Man*, Heschel’s first book, contains sixty-six lyrical poems written between 1927 and 1933, when it was published in Warsaw. It was the year that Hitler came to power. Heschel was just twenty-six, a graduate student in philosophy and a Hasidic prince coming of age in a world entering modernity:

I pawned my youth and my home  
for an obscure dream  
and must continuously swim  
with the ebb and flow of eternity.

I’m pushed and pulled by horrors  
as if by an entire net of reins.  
It’s only on the narrowest of bridges  
that my exhausted flesh finds rest.

These are patient poems, and they reward sustained attention. Repetitive, meditative, like journal entries or quiet prayers, they illuminate Heschel’s cultural alienation in a way that eloquently mirrors his longing for God. “God follows me everywhere— / spins a net of glances around me, / shines upon my sightless back like a sun,” he writes. “God follows me in tramways, in cafes. / Oh, it is only with the backs of the pupils of one’s eyes that one can see / how secrets ripen, how visions come to be.”

The prayerful quality of Heschel’s poetry transmits the palpable depth of his faith, yet these poems are more than hymns of devotion. Indeed, Heschel’s most original expression of what he called *vunder*, or “radical amazement,” emerges in the intersection of his religious faith with the artistry of his language, which echoes the compactions and disrupted realism that marked the innovations of his Modernist contemporaries:

Houses are fog made of stone,  
trees have a thousand hands,  
awakened *ur*-shapes.

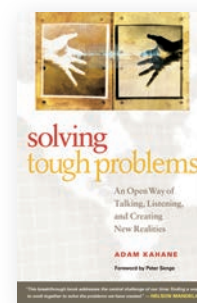
The blind earth dreams  
that she’s a windmill in the  
universe.  
Wind—a windowpane to stillness—  
wants to breach God’s castle and  
wonders,

split cracks in time’s wall.  
Despair grows meanwhile.  
Who will heal the pain of distance?

Composing in a space between poetry and prayer, Heschel met the ambiguity of his time with a willing-

ness to embrace paradox, striving to reconcile the moral purity of his religious roots with the growing complexity of a world that seemed increasingly abandoned by God. “I want to give you—world, / The inner lattice of my limbs;” he writes in the book’s final poem, fanning the holy fire that would only continue to intensify over the course of his life. “My word, my hands, / the wonder in my eyes. // Take me for service to you, / And use me for your ends!” Thanks to Morton Leifman’s translation, Heschel’s earliest work is now available for the first time in English, sketching a provocative portrait of a man yearning to erase all pain and division from a heart—and a world—in transition.

Ross Robertson



### SOLVING TOUGH PROBLEMS

*An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities*

by Adam Kahane

(Berrett-Koehler, 2004, hardcover \$22.95)

A quick scan of the headlines reminds us daily that the problems we collectively face defy the solutions we have in place to handle them. Intractable ethnic conflict, power plays for resources, religious and racial strife motivating horror after horror—where do we find the ground to move forward together? This is Adam Kahane’s work: to solve what he simply calls “tough problems,” the seemingly irresolvable human conflicts that fragment and fracture our world. “Tough problems,” Kahane writes, “usually don’t get solved peacefully. They either don’t get solved at all—they get stuck—or they get solved by force.” Kahane, a founding partner of Generon

Consulting and the Global Leadership Initiative, has been called in to help resolve some of the most difficult conflicts that have scarred human society in the last few decades. In *Solving Tough Problems*, Kahane's jewel of a book, he takes us on a frank and graceful exploration of both his own development as a facilitator and what he has learned about "creating new realities" out of the most hardened historical impasses.

Kahane's personal journey begins in a place familiar to most of us: his belief as a young man that all problems have one right answer that can be found using smarts and science. Trained as a physicist, he exemplified the optimism of a culture confident that the superior intellectual capacities of the scientific elite would come up with a technical fix for everything. But Kahane's attempts to bring analytical acumen to bear on significant global issues soon proved to be misguided and inadequate to human reality. "Something much messier was really going on," he tells us, "and I wanted to understand it."

In the early nineties, he got his chance—and by accident, began to discover a new way to engage with tough problems. Kahane went to South Africa shortly after Mandela's release from prison, just as the restrictions of apartheid were loosening. Invited by a left-wing professor at a black university, he was to help a group comprising twenty-two influential South Africans, ranging from far left to far right, to come up with pathways to a "new South Africa." The task was to create "scenarios," or stories, that express different possibilities for how the future might evolve. However, Kahane was so busy that he didn't have time to prepare. So, instead of being the "expert," he adopted a stance of being "both neutral and respectful—which turned out, unintentionally and synchronistically, to be the perfect recipe for being a facilitator. The more I worked with them, the more impressed I became with them, and as I opened up, this inspired reciprocal opening by them." Both Kahane and the scenario process itself were immensely successful. Because all of



## FREE CD and Report Reveals... How to Meditate Deeper than a Zen Monk . . . INSTANTLY!

If you'd like to meditate deeper than a Zen monk, literally at the touch of a button, this may be one of the most important messages you will ever read. Here is why.

Based in part on Nobel Prize-winning research on how "complex systems" (human beings, for instance) evolve to higher levels of functioning, a personal growth program has been created utilizing a powerful audio technology called Holosync®.

A precise combination of audio signals gives the brain a very specific stimulus that creates states of *deep* meditation — and causes the creation of new *mind-enhancing* neural connections between left and right brain hemispheres.

### Now a New CD & Report Reveal . . .

- The scientific evidence proving how Holosync® increases the production in the brain of many vital neurochemicals that can slow aging and increase longevity.
- How to achieve super-deep meditation, at the touch of a button.
- How to dramatically reduce stress.
- How to create remarkable emotional changes at the deepest level.
- How to improve your health.
- How to heighten your creativity and problem-solving ability.
- How to have more restful sleep.
- How to boost your intelligence.
- How to increase your focus, concentration and learning ability.
- How to enhance your memory.
- How to have more happiness and "flow" in your life.
- How to heal mental and emotional blocks.

The complete educational report on this amazing new technology and Holosync® CD, worth \$19.95, are **FREE** to *What Is Enlightenment?* readers for a limited time.

"A great part of my professional mission has been to help people feel that special heart connection, and to emotionally and spiritually improve the quality of their lives and the lives of the people around them. This program is something I feel can very powerfully help you do that, greatly enhancing the quality of your life and helping you create dramatic and powerful personal change. I don't recommend programs lightly and I don't do it very often; I'm convinced this is something well worth looking into. After all, part of my mission is to help you become the very best human being you can be, and I think the Holosync® program can help you do that."

*Jack Canfield, Co-Author; Chicken Soup For The Soul*

**Call NOW for your FREE CD & Report  
toll-free (24 hrs) 1-800-710-1804  
[www.magicalmindonline.com](http://www.magicalmindonline.com)**

## natural selection

the participants shared the responsibility to “actively shape their future,” something powerfully human and creative emerged. For Kahane, this revealed a new way of working that was both “a revelation and [an] awakening.”

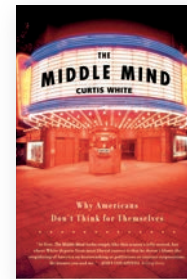
After this success, Kahane was called on to facilitate in hot spots around the globe: the civil war in Colombia, the social collapse that followed economic catastrophe in Argentina, the healing of Guatemala after the “disappearances,” and more. Taking us into each of these situations, Kahane frankly assesses his own and others’ behavior and develops an understanding of the mysterious process of coming together across the divides of atrocity and history to create a new future. He mines the wisdom from his often moving stories, revealing what he calls “an open way”—an approach to problem solving that is fundamentally about the profound human capacity to touch and change each other. Kahane’s personal transformation from a belief in the techno-rational to the recogni-

tion that we have to “change ourselves . . . to contribute to changing the world” reflects a shift in consciousness sorely needed to heal our fractured world.

In a style that is refreshingly clear, Kahane reaches a simplicity that leads to far greater profundity than one would usually expect in a book on conflict resolution. Unlike many of this genre that offer five steps or seven keys to resolution, this book offers nothing so formulaic. The demand, Kahane is telling us, is for us each to reach within ourselves for the willingness to not know, to listen, and to create with each other. He chronicles an evolutionary path of greater and deeper humanity as the only way we will ever solve our toughest problems. One cannot help but be struck both by the scale of what Kahane has helped to bring about and by his ruthless honesty and humility about his whole journey. Ultimately, he points to the truth that the potential for transforming conflict depends significantly on the facilitator’s depth and

authenticity—and on the intention of each of us to create a better world.

*Chris Parish*



### THE MIDDLE MIND

*Why Americans Don't Think for Themselves*

by Curtis White

(HarperSanFrancisco, 2003, hardcover \$23.95)

Curtis White's *The Middle Mind* is a brilliant critique of those instruments of contemporary society that push our culture toward mediocrity. Stretching

## Furniture for the Spirit



Beautiful Meditation Furniture Designs by Zen By Design  
Please call us toll free at 1-866-905-0328 for a free catalog  
[www.zenbydesign.com](http://www.zenbydesign.com)

Would you like a simple, effective  
tool to reach enlightenment  
this lifetime?

[www.theishayatradition.com](http://www.theishayatradition.com)  
1-888-474-2921



to revivify Kant's notion of aesthetic greatness, White's project is to offer something he calls "a practical and concrete sublime," which is the passionate attempt to think and create beyond the bounds of the predigested and already known. As White explains, "Works of the concrete sublime are antagonists to the status quo in entertainment, intellectual orthodoxy, and political ideology. They are advocates for change, and they need to be much larger public presences." *The Middle Mind*, his excoriating exploration of the mediocre mindset of contemporary culture, is itself an example of this "concrete sublime." And through this no-holds-barred critique, White brings us not only a philosophy of the imagination but also a broad study of political philosophy *alles durcheinander*, as the Germans would say—now here, now there, weaving in and out page by page, adding up to a single throb: the magnificent spirit of philosophy itself. In so doing, he expresses the true essence of philosophy as Plato defined it: the

"freedom to think"—to think dialogically, dialectically, and critically. And, as White observes, this spirit is all but lost within a contemporary culture that prizes intellectual passivity, managerial ethics and politics, and art devoid of the serious use of imagination.

This cultural loss is summed up by White in the phrase "the middle mind." And it is painfully exhibited in his reference to Walt Disney: "Having adapted Beethoven's Sixth Symphony for *Fantasia*, Disney commented: 'Gee! This'll make Beethoven.'" While the human imagination is the source of all human intellectual and cultural diversity, majestic enough to comprehend Beethoven's Sixth as well as *Fantasia*, it is the inability to acknowledge the *distinctions* that make up the fabric of that richness that is the essence of "middle-mindedness." In this "flattening of all distinctions," the inventive products of the arts are reduced to their lowest common denominators, to the templates of some ideology or, worse,

to the level of "entertainment." The most radical part of his critique is reserved for the institutions of education that produce middle-minded students who are taught not to doubt and not to question.

In middle-minded mass culture, one is satisfied by finding *truth in everything*; everything is grist for the mill, and one feels intellectually sated by this flattening of distinctions. NPR's Terri Gross and Charlie Rose will interview "genuine novelistic innovators" as well as "hack realists," never acknowledging any incongruity in their choice of guests—as if "it's all good." But such homogenization of qualitative differences does not serve the evolution of intelligence. Serious artists abound, he says, but they are "on the margins of mass culture." White, who celebrates the work of Mingus and Messiaen, Philip Glass and Elvis Costello, among many others, is not simply bemoaning the "devolution" of the imagination while remaining filled with "nostalgia for the

# Authentic Leadership

## Marpa Center for Business and Economics


15-week Certificate Program

Online Program: January 16-May 7, 2006

Onsite Seminars: January 30-Feb 3, 2006  
and April 17-21, 2006

Experience a profound shift in your perception of the world and of your own capabilities as a leader.

By cultivating awareness, insight and confidence and practicing powerful methods that foster engagement with others, you will expand your ability to act creatively and effectively with both skill and compassion.



**50 WAYS to GET HELP from GOD**

*"This booklet was Heaven-sent just when I needed it most. It explains what my heart has always yearned for."*

—Dr. Lynne Wooldridge


Send only \$3 for this powerful booklet by Vernon Howard to:  
New Life • PO Box 2230-SP  
Pine, AZ 85544 • (928) 476-3224

Naropa

EXTENDED STUDIES UNIVERSITY

Boulder, Colorado  
800.603.3117  
[www.naropa.edu/extend](http://www.naropa.edu/extend)  
[extend@naropa.edu](mailto:extend@naropa.edu)

www.naropa.edu/leadership




### Love Life Again

Discover the secrets for a fresh new start in life.

---

Have happy relations  
Feel protected • Be at ease  
End loneliness • Choose wisely



50 Ways to Get Help from God

"This booklet was Heaven-sent just when I needed it most. It explains what my heart has always yearned for."

—Dr. Lynne Wooldridge

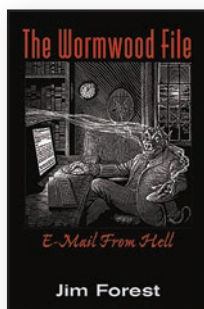
Send only \$3 for this powerful booklet by Vernon Howard to:  
New Life • PO Box 2230-SP  
Pine, AZ 85544 • (928) 476-3224

Visit our Website  
[www.anewlife.org](http://www.anewlife.org)  
FREE Daily Quote Service

old days of highbrow quality or folk art authenticity." His quest is largely "about the capacity within art for social antagonism," and, given the current loss of any genuine antagonism, the profound cultural loss in the power to "read" and to "think."

This quest takes us into White's vision for the future. "The next American sublime," he argues, cannot be a 'middling' attempt to satisfy everyone." Following Theodor Adorno, White proposes an aesthetic of the "beyond": works become beautiful by the force of their opposition to what simply exists. He invites us to "fashion tools to facilitate the revival of the social imagination" rather than succumb to its institutionalization. Thus, we engage in the quintessentially human task of projecting what the future might look like—which is the most profound and practical work of the imagination.

John Roemischer



**THE WORMWOOD FILE**  
*E-Mail From Hell*

by Jim Forest

(Orbis Books, 2004, paperback \$14.00)

It is a daring task to take on the remake/update of a great work of art, and Jim Forest certainly had his work cut out for him when he wrote *The Wormwood File*, a contemporary version of C.S. Lewis's masterpiece *The Screwtape Letters*. Forest's book offers many delights, but interestingly enough, one of the sweetest is that it makes you want to read its source and inspiration.

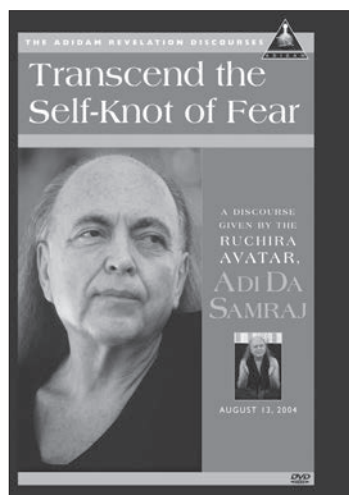
Written in 1941, the "Screwtape letters" were missives from a demon uncle, Screwtape, to his demon-in-training nephew, Wormwood, on how to capture the human soul for "Our Father Below." Readers became privy to the subtle intricacies of Wormwood's fight to win a particular "patient" from the "Enemy" as Screwtape taught his charge to divert his prey from any genuine virtues. Is the patient beginning to experience some humility? Easy. Just get him to reflect on himself as being humble, and voila!—pride will again appear. But don't stop there. Convince the patient that being humble means having a low opinion of himself, and you can keep him from rejoicing in his talents or using them toward the greater good as the Enemy intended.

And so with one incisive example after another, and with unmatched wit and depth, Lewis unfolded the perennial spiritual battle between good and evil waged within the heart and mind of any seeker of truth, revealing the universal through the particulars in a way that transcended the era in which he lived and wrote.

Forest's book retells this tale against the backdrop of our current era. Wormwood, now a senior demon himself, has taken on the training of his own protégé, Greasebeek. Letters have become emails. Television is a favorite devils' tool to promote passivity. And the internet provides ready, private access to pornography, thus easily distracting the "client," as the patient is now called, from genuine love and commitment. Forest also makes many astute observations about the postmodern psyche, among them the distrust of religion, the valuing of relative truths over absolute Truth, the culture of victimization in which individual "rights" are paramount.

However, where Lewis's message was a universal one projected through the lens of his Christian faith, Forest appears to be promoting Christianity itself, using universal principles as support. The result, at times, is a descent into preachiness—abortion is wrong, the virgin birth is true—accompanied by a slight edge of sarcasm that unmasks

**A Remarkable NEW DVD from THE DAWN HORSE PRESS**  
**Transcend the Self-Knot**  
**of Fear**



DVD total running time: one hour ■ \$26.95

**A Discourse Given by**  
**Adi Da Samraj**

When a questioner asks about the fearfulness he feels "locked" in his body, Adi Da Samraj responds that the root of fear is the same as the root of all suffering: the "self-contraction", or the activity of identification with a separate and mortal body. Rather than avoiding the fear inherent in the body, Adi Da Samraj Calls us to understand and transcend the self-knot by Realizing the Divine Condition that is Always Already the Case. **ISBN:1570972087**



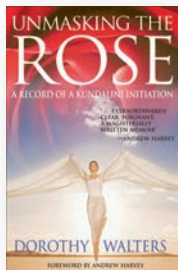
THE DAWN HORSE PRESS

To order DVDs and CDs as well as other publications by or about Adi Da Samraj,  
visit our website and order online at: **www.dawnhorsepress.com**  
or call **TOLL-FREE 1-877-770-0772**

this new Wormwood (and the Screwtape letters concept) as a delivery device for Forest's specific religious agenda.

Nonetheless, if you agree that there is virtue in grappling with the darkness in the human soul in order to more fully express the light, you will find many accurate reflections of both self and society in the mirror this book provides. To take it even further, read *The Screwtape Letters* too.

Wren Bernstein



### UNMASKING THE ROSE

*A Record of Kundalini Initiation*

by Dorothy Walters

(Hampton Roads, 2002, paperback \$14.95)

*Unmasking the Rose* is the story of the profound kundalini awakening of a midwestern college professor named Dorothy Walters. In Eastern spiritual traditions, "kundalini" refers to the awakening of intense spiritual energies. Walters describes her own experience of these energies as the moment that changed everything, leaving her doubtless that any notion of personal identity was an ongoing illusion. "Such is the nature of the overwhelming moment," she writes. "It changes not only the future, but reshapes, restructures the very past." For the next ten years, she used every aspect of her life as an opportunity to pursue a relentless and single-pointed inquiry into the most fundamental questions of human existence.

Walters beautifully describes frequent and powerful bursts of blissful union with divine energies but is unequivocal in her conviction that such experiences are not the goal of kundalini, and critical of those who

would teach otherwise. "The gurus and swamis who promise enlightenment as a permanent state to be achieved do us a disservice," she says. "The aim is to move constantly forward, progressing as our nature permits, in cooperation with universal forces." As she sees it, spiritual experience awakens us to a global shift in consciousness that is already in progress. And in our deeply troubled times, she insists that the only valid response to revelation is to participate in this evolutionary movement. "Our crisis is upon us," she says. "The outcome remains to be seen."

The book is composed of original journal entries enriched with commentary from the author as she looks back at her journey. The recent writing is the most profound, as the earlier journal entries are somewhat inconsistent in their clarity and depth. But Walters' tenacious desire for awakening and her heroic, independent spirit are abundant throughout.

Jeff Carreira



### CLOSER TO TRUTH

*Science, Meaning and the Future*

PBS Television Series

[closertruth.com](http://closertruth.com)

*Closer to Truth: Science, Meaning and the Future* aired in syndication on college TV stations until it made its PBS television debut in 2003. Using a roundtable discussion format in each of its half-hour episodes, *Closer to Truth (CTT)* brings together three or four leading experts from a variety of scientific fields and sets them loose to forcefully tackle specific philosophical, technical, and ethical questions from all sides.

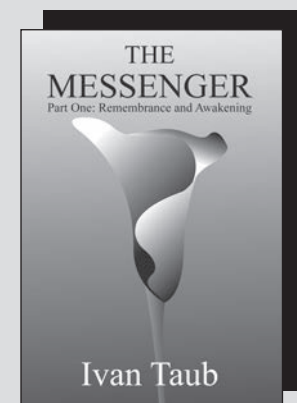
## THE MESSENGER

*"This sensuous story of hope and redemption was inspired by the belief that each soul has the power to heal and forgive."*

—Ivan Taub, Ph.D., Intellectual Heritage Program, Temple University.

**THE MESSENGER** recounts the thrilling and unusual adventures of Jonathan West and Gina Angelo, an artistic, young, American couple seeking love and spiritual enlightenment as they travel through Europe during the chaotic summer of 1970.

This vivid and fast-paced story seamlessly blends the past, present, and future, taking the reader on a riveting and unforgettable journey into the psychological depths of good and evil, a journey that climaxes in a life-transforming encounter with a powerful, mysterious, mystical Being.



ISBN 1-4184-0657-0  
paperback

Available at Amazon.com, your local bookstore,  
or call at 1-888-280-7715.



"Viewers," summarizes series creator and host Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn, "have a virtual seat at our studio table as new understandings of ourselves and our universe are bandied about by some of the most astute thinkers alive today."

With topics ranging from the nature of human consciousness to the ethics of testing experimental drugs to the mysteries of the cosmos, *CTT* aims to push the leading edge of our collective understanding by taking viewers on a fascinating crash course through the multitude of perspectives—and opinions—that pervade any scientific discipline. Perhaps its most striking aspect is its ability to reveal the intensely contentious nature of some areas of scientific debate, providing an example, according to the series' publicist, "of how the clash of opinion and the nature of proof guide the scientific process." While many shows feature entirely amicable discussions on such topics as the nature of autism or the unsolved puzzles of cosmology, the most compelling episodes are those in which the intensity of deeply held philosophical convictions comes to the fore, exploding in roundtable arguments bravely and skillfully moderated by Kuhn. This is especially evident in discussions around the "brain and mind" theme, which include such episode titles as: "Is Consciousness Definable?"; "Can Science Seek the Soul?"; "What Is Parapsychology?"; and "Does Psychiatry Have a Split Personality?" While often not a trace of resolution emerges between the participants in these episodes, every installment of *CTT* nevertheless ends on a high note. Minutes before the credits roll, Kuhn invites the panelists to share, one by one, their vision of where the discipline under discussion (such as the scientific study of consciousness) will be a hundred—or sometimes even ten billion—years down the road. And in these speculative visions of the future, the participants almost always find their specific field finally at peace with itself, either by eventually achieving a higher synthesis of diverse data and perspectives or, as philosopher of neurology John Searle half-jokingly put it in one show, by "everyone finally believing what I do."

*CTT* has already generated forty-three episodes, which are currently available in a variety of formats,

including audiobook editions, a 400-page companion volume of transcripts, and numerous older episodes downloadable in their entirety from [closertotruth.com](http://closertotruth.com). With a new season slated to air in 2006, Kuhn's mission to promote "rigorous thinking as we push back boundaries" clearly won't be ceasing to provoke deep inquiry any time soon, remaining a unique example of television's significantly underused power to open discussion and open minds, as well as to entertain.

Tom Huston

**Correction:** In our last issue's review of the Synthesis Dialogues DVD (p. 138), we failed to provide information as to where the DVD could be purchased. We also printed the wrong photo. To order a copy of the DVD, please contact [dvd@agnt.org](mailto:dvd@agnt.org)



**SYNTHESIS DIALOGUES**  
*The Dalai Lama of*  
*Tibet and World Leaders*  
*of Spirit*  
 (Sunyata Studios, 2004,  
 DVD \$29.95)



Live  
 Work  
 Learn

Awaken to a new way of living!

## Nyingma Resident Volunteer Programs

In Berkeley, CA & our New Rural Center in Sonoma County, 100 miles north of San Francisco. Includes room and board, small stipend and access to Buddhist classes.



(510) 981-1987  
[dharmavols@nyingma.org](mailto:dharmavols@nyingma.org)  
[www.nyingma.org](http://www.nyingma.org)

### "An absolutely extraordinary book...."

*I think you really have offered something to the spiritual literature, an insight into the difficulty of the extraordinary vistas of the path that has never been written before.... I absolutely recommend Darkness Shining Wild. It's a remarkable book long waited for."*

STEPHEN LEVINE, author of *HEALING INTO LIFE & DEATH*

## darkness shining wild

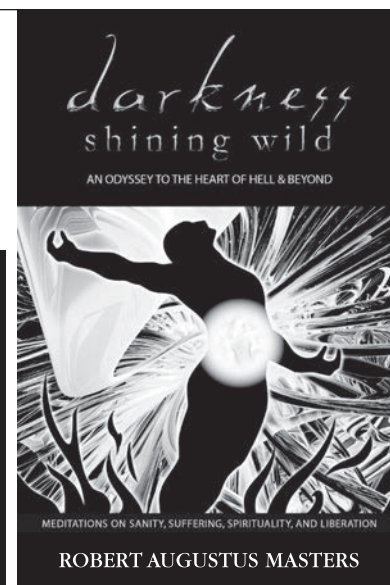
AN ODYSSEY TO THE HEART OF HELL & BEYOND

MEDITATIONS ON SANITY, SUFFERING,  
 SPIRITUALITY, AND LIBERATION

*"Many people who have had breakdowns of psychotic proportions have subsequently undertaken deep spiritual work. We have some powerful first person accounts of people who made this voyage into madness and then returned spiritually awakened. But Dr. Masters is the first I know of to take the plunge with a spiritually attuned consciousness and return to write about it. This is not a romanticized Dark Night's Journey....The story of his odyssey is a naked dance of spirit, with mind in its most wild wandering untamed form."*

DAVID LUKOFF, Ph.D., professor of Psychology, Saybrook Graduate School, and co-developer of the DSM-IV category "Religious or Spiritual Problem."

Available in bookstores or from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



\$19.95US/\$25.95CAN

ISBN 0-9737526-0-2



Robert Augustus Masters

Tehmenos Press  
[www.robertmasters.com](http://www.robertmasters.com)

## MARKETPLACE



**NEW DIMENSIONS**  
WORLD BROADCASTING NETWORK®

New Dimensions Radio is an award winning, independent producer of radio programming featuring in-depth dialogues with prominent thinkers, practitioners, and leaders in nearly every field of human endeavor and study. For a complete catalog of programs call

**1-800-935-8273**

[www.newdimensions.org](http://www.newdimensions.org)

WIE0905

## Prosperity Consciousness

Learn to earn 5 to 10 thousand dollars a week!

**Prosperity starts in the mind!**

Learn from self-made millionaires who have already done it, and you could be well on your way.

*"Whatever the mind of a man can conceive and believe, a man can achieve."*

Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich*

**800-714-7312**

[www.transformationisyourdestiny.com](http://www.transformationisyourdestiny.com)

Advertise in  
**What Is Enlightenment?**  
magazine  
[advertising@wie.org](mailto:advertising@wie.org)  
413.637.6003



**Issue 28**  
**March-May 2005**

## SEEDS OF CHANGE IN THE CORPORATE DESERT

Over a period of 15+ years, I worked as a corporate change agent, and a few years back, I basically lost all faith in organizations, both for profit and non-profit, for all the reasons articulated on page after page of your insightful publication. But after reading *WIE* for the first time, I was energized and inspired, and have recommended it to numerous colleagues, hoping you will catalyze a groundswell for change. In my previous career working at the organizational level, I came to understand that true change must happen at the cellular level. But I didn't know of any large-scale interventions that might be effective at the organizational level until I read about people like Dee Hock (on your website), and Rennie and Bellin of McKinsey. Hooray—someone is beginning to crack the code! Still . . . I'd have to say my money would be on Meg Wheatley's points; I'm not sure if it will happen in my lifetime.

On a more hopeful note, a topic I'd love to see more coverage on, which Carlos and Deborah Santana addressed, is a focus on children. To me, this represents our best and makes me wonder how he and his generation can be equipped to survive and transform the grievous pollution which we and previous generations have

inflicted on the planet. He and they can acquire the neural programming early to see the world clearly—and envision the way forward.

Thanks to *WIE* for being a lightning rod, reigniting my passion for fomenting change to create a better world; a beacon, inspiring souls feeling shipwrecked by corporate America; and a farmer, planting seeds of change in your readership and beyond. May those seeds bloom like this year's riotous California wildflowers in the deserts of corporations, carrying messages of hope, of renewal, and of life blooming with human potential.

**Jessica C. Williams**  
*Venice, California*

## BLOOM'S PAEAN TO CAPITALISM

I found Howard Bloom's paean to capitalism quite disappointing, to say the least. In his article ["Reinventing Capitalism"], he points out all the technological innovations that have made human life more bearable. However, he ascribes them to free market capitalism simply because they occurred in the capitalist West. But we can't necessarily conclude that just because these wonderful modern conveniences were developed in the West, they were the direct result of capitalism. More likely, they resulted from the Enlightenment and from science. There is no reason to believe that socialist or even communist societies couldn't be technologically productive (and China is beginning to prove the case).

Furthermore, in addition to his facile equation of technology with capitalism, Bloom fails to define in any way, shape, or form just what capitalism is. Is it a political-ideological system on par with socialism or communism? He seems to imply so, yet capitalism is not really a

coherent or formalized political ideology.

Finally, the fact that the great wealth of capitalistic societies is the direct result of the exploitation of other, weaker, and non-white nations is completely overlooked. If our wonderful society was built as a result of the exploitation of others, it's hard to see much cause for celebration. There are certainly wonderful things that have come out of capitalist economies. However, Bloom's shallow assessments prevent us from an adequate evaluation of its achievements as well as its failures.

**Steven L. Rosen, Ph.D.**

*Prefectural University of Hiroshima*

**ED. NOTE:**

**Howard Bloom responds . . .**

Steven—You're dead right. I'm singing a paean to the technological advances that have upped the quality of life so dramatically since our tool-less days, advances that have made us a radically different species, with powers that go far beyond those granted by our biology. But rather than attributing our techno-leaps to "free market capitalism," I'm saying that the creative learning machine we call "Western Civilization" has wrought these metamorphoses.

Two of the major pillars of the Western System are Capitalism and the Protest Industry. The Protest Industry began to industrialize in the 1790s when a slave trader named John Newton saw the error of his ways and helped finance the early anti-slavery movement. That movement was furthered by entrepreneurs of protest like Harriet Beecher Stowe, writer of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and by P.T. Barnum, who featured performances of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the middle-class intellectual theater that was part of his *American Museum*.

*The West has generated new techno-leaps every fifteen years or less since 1800. Could those hops, skips, and jumps of techno-revolution have come from free market capitalism alone, or did they need the other elements of the Western System to achieve their miracles? Did they need the Protest Industry and a democratic government that guarantees pluralism, freedom of speech, curbs on monopolies, and public support for basic research—like the research that eventually helped us enslave electrons instead of Africans? I suspect they did. So it's the Western System I'm singing my odes to.*

*Three products of Western civilization—the Abolitionist Movement, the Anti-Imperialist Movement, and the Industrial Revolution—put the slave trade and Imperialism out of business. No comparable movements have been generated in any other forms of modern society. So whether we're discussing creative self-critiques or creative techno-leaps, the Western System is riddled with flaws, but seems better than the rest.*

**Howard Bloom**

**FROM GOOD TO GREAT**

In the course of setting up a new advertising commitment with your magazine, I've had occasion to really drink in this issue and get a sense of what you all are doing. Congratulations! *WIE* has grown from good to great, and I'm sure you'll keep on growing it. Having been involved in magazine publication, I also have a realistic sense of what an immense commitment, passion, and labor of love it must be for you each and all.

Well, THANK YOU. You are providing a tremendous service for all of us and the whole "evolving world." Personally, knowing you're here doing what you do with this magazine, and hearing the evidence of this evolution from so many

voices you gather together, lets me breathe a little easier. You steady my heart's "hope-o-meter needle" in these increasingly challenging times. And that's a pretty big deal.

**Saniel Bonder**

*via email*

**STOP THE WORLD, I WANT TO GET ON**

Thank you for your discourse entitled "The Resonance of Awakening." It bears the ring of truth in me—I *am* relationship. My husband and I retired about a quarter of a century ago to live on a small island off the coast of Portland, ME. He wanted to pretend he was a lobster man. He stated (from the musical), "Stop the world. I want to get off."

After his death—which came as he was gathering juniper to smoke the mackerel we had been catching—I remained there on the island with the nature spirits and in our love, in relative isolation. At the end of seven years, possibly even to the day, I realized that my life there was over. I was 79. I could not manage the hard physical, demanding work of survival on an island any longer.

Life translated me into a fresh and thrilling new landscape. I am living above the Old Brick Store at the pulsing heart of the village of Charlotte, just south of Burlington, VT. My garden now is the people. It is the world, the planet; it is everywhere and beyond; it is the endless garden of life itself and knows no bounds.

**Carolyn Lockwood-Pitkin**

*Charlotte, Vermont*

**ONLINE EXTRAS:** For more letters, visit [wie.org/j30/letters.asp](http://wie.org/j30/letters.asp)



## The Eternal Declaration

by Andrew Cohen

**IN THE PREMODERN ERA, ESPECIALLY IN THE EAST,** it was believed that history moved in continuously recurring cycles. This idea is similar to what it would be like to be on a merry-go-round that turned round and round, eternally repeating the same process. For one who “awakened” in that context, the definition of salvation was obvious: to get off the merry-go-round of an endlessly repeating process in order to rest in the blissful peace and eternal freedom of nirvana—the formless unmanifest realm beyond time and space.

A bodhisattva is an enlightened being who compassionately refrains from entering nirvana until every other sentient being has been released from the endlessly repeating cycle of time. Traditionally, the bodhisattva declares, “I vow to liberate all sentient beings before myself. I refuse to enter into nirvana until *all* other sentient beings have entered before me.” The bodhisattva is a heroic figure because, for everyone else’s sake, he or she is willing to remain in the world of time and space, in the manifest realm, for eternity.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, we know that history does not move in cycles but is a linear *developmental* process that began fourteen billion years ago with a burst of heat, light, and energy that, over time, gave rise to matter, then to life, and finally to our unique human capacity for self-reflective consciousness. And it is only in our highly developed capacity for consciousness that the very impulse that created us miraculously gains the means to *know itself*. Indeed, the process that began with a bang so long ago has just begun to awaken to itself through *us*. This is why the universe needs us to *be* here! In that light, the very definition of the bodhisattva vow needs to be updated so that it is in alignment with this emerging cosmic perspective. The universe needs enlightened souls more than ever because the future literally

depends upon those sentient beings who are awakening to the evolutionary process *as themselves*.

Even the idea or concept of enlightenment—or *nonduality*—should be redefined. Spiritually, it just no longer makes sense that the ultimate goal of enlightenment is merely a release from the world process. Nor does it even make sense that enlightenment, as more recent and more inclusive definitions tell us, means becoming one with the world *and* one with that formless unmanifest dimension that lies beyond it. Because the universe is evolving in time, to become one with it we have to become one with the process of evolution itself at the level of our own consciousness. In this, we human beings find ourselves in the driver’s seat as never before, and the implications are dramatic. In fact, a new definition of enlightenment must express the dawning revelation that our *conscious participation* in the evolutionary process has become essential to the creative unfolding of the cosmos—the shocking recognition that from now on, *it really is up to us*.

In the postmodern era, the mythical God has fallen out of the sky. And the yearning for heaven, nirvana, or final release is being replaced by a call from the Self to the awakening human for an unconditional willingness to be here, to help shepherd the universe into a glorious future. Enlightenment has always pointed toward a state of consciousness beyond ego. And true postmodern bodhisattvas are those shepherd-warriors who courageously die to themselves so that they will be able to bear the enormous burden of facing directly into the infinite future for us all. Who would dare to embrace a future without end for the sake of the universe itself? Who has the courage to imagine what it would be like to vow to live forever? *Not my will, but thy will be done. I vow to live forever, to return again and again and again.* ■

---

Andrew Cohen, founder and editor-in-chief of *What Is Enlightenment?* has been a spiritual teacher since 1986 and is the author of numerous books, including *Living Enlightenment* and *Embracing Heaven & Earth*. For more information, visit [andrewcohen.org](http://andrewcohen.org)