

# EnlightenNext

THE MAGAZINE FOR **EVOLUTIONARIES**<sup>SM</sup>

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the evolutionary  
process

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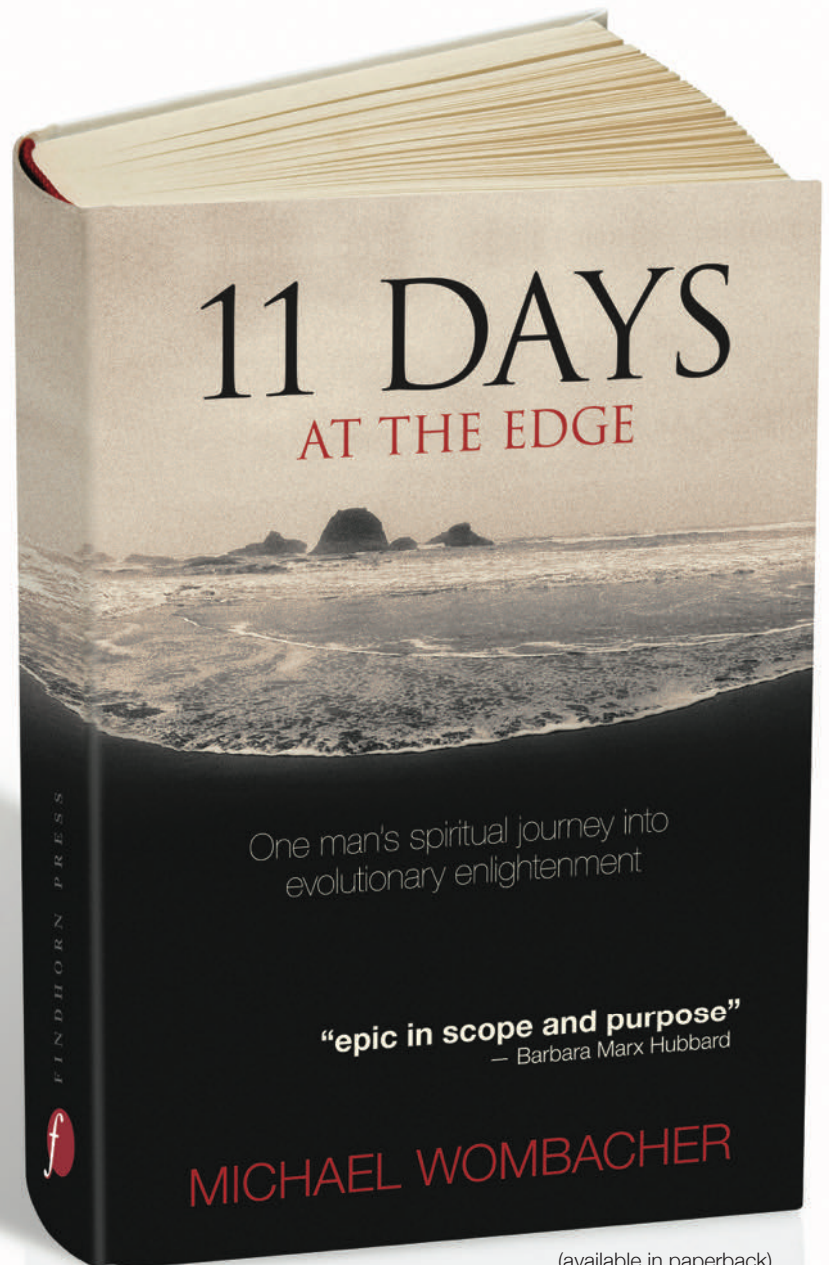
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**Featuring Andrew Cohen, Brian Swimme, Carter Phipps, Barbara Marx Hubbard, and more.**



*EnlightenNext* magazine is published by a nonprofit educational organization of the same name.

## Our Mission Statement:

EnlightenNext is dedicated to catalyzing evolution in consciousness and culture. We strive to be leaders, examples, and pathfinders in the emerging field of integral and evolutionary spirituality, and to stand for the ultimate relevance of spiritual enlightenment in our time. Through our integrated annual cycle of programs and events and our award-winning publications, we are awakening, connecting, and cultivating a global movement of Evolutionaries—individuals who feel personally responsible for creating the future.

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## FEATURES

### 42 *The Guru and the Pandit* **Eros, Buddha, and the Spectrum of Love**

Love is a hot topic in the world of progressive spirituality, but you haven't heard anyone discuss it like the Guru and the Pandit. Distinguishing between love's personal, cultural, and cosmic dimensions, they explore how this primordial force gives rise to every new emergence in the evolutionary process.

ANDREW COHEN AND KEN WILBER

### 28 **The Powers of the Universe**

Where does your self end and the universe begin? A popular cosmologist defines the eleven principles of cosmic evolution that have led from the fiery cataclysm of the Big Bang to the human intelligence now perceiving this page.

BY BRIAN SWIMME

### 52 **Dreams of an Eco-Spiritual Futurist**

*A conversation with British sustainability  
strategist Hardin Tibbs*

From nuclear energy and geoengineering to breakthrough technologies and the spiritualization of twenty-first-century environmentalism, a visionary whole-systems thinker tackles some of the biggest questions and controversies in the green world today.

BY ROSS ROBERTSON

**57 PLUS:** *Buckminster Fuller:  
First Poet of Technology*

### 74 **The Inimitable Madame B.**

In the mysterious universe of esoteric spirituality, no figure looms larger than the legendary Madame Blavatsky. Occult scholar Gary Lachman explores the amazing life and times of this globetrotting, nineteenth-century psychic, circus performer, cultural revolutionary, and spiritual pioneer.

BY GARY LACHMAN

42



28



52



74



# DEPARTMENTS

## 7 LETTERS & COMMENTS

## 10 ENLIGHTENNEXT TEAM & CONTRIBUTORS

## 13 EDITORIAL

- 14 PULSE:** *News from an emerging culture*  
New documentary films ask big questions, give vague answers; the gypsy-punk rock of **Gogol Bordello**; top ten wacky spiritual workshops; **John Haught's** *Making Sense of Evolution*; **Brett McCracken's** *Hipster Christianity*; **Bernard Haisch's** *Purpose-Guided Universe*; **The Onion** warns of Buddhist threats and the ghost of **Carl Sagan**; who to follow on **Twitter**; and more.

## 26 VOICES FROM THE EDGE

### *The Mirror of the Cosmos*

Is cosmology a form of theology for a secular age?

BY MARK VERNON

## 64 THE WORLD OF ENLIGHTENNEXT

- 64** *Pure Scenius*  
The Future of EnlightenNext . . . LIVE!
- 66** *The EnlightenNext Discovery Cycle*  
From virtual seminars to our first live conference, find out what EnlightenNext has in store beyond the printed page.
- 70** *Inspired by EnlightenNext*  
Featuring Melissa Hoffman, architect of Vermont's innovative Teal Farm.
- 72** *"Honoring the Deepest Part of Myself"*  
A short interview with Nadia Manzoor about her transformative experience at the 2010 Being & Becoming Retreat.

## 102 NATURAL SELECTION

- 102** *Speaking of Books with Mother Clare Watts*  
BY ELIZABETH DEBOLD
- 106** *The Eerie Silence* by Paul Davies  
REVIEW BY JAMES N. GARDNER

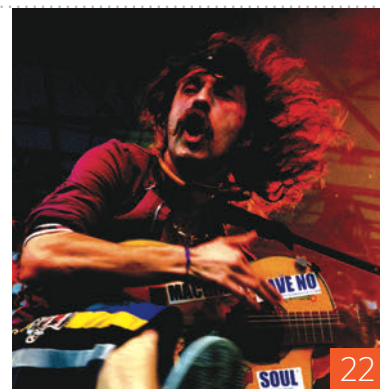
## 112 EVOLUTIONARY ENLIGHTENMENT

### *Seek Until You Find*

BY ANDREW COHEN



64



22



18



70



84



96

## FEATURES continued

### 84 The Mother's Evolutionary Vision

In 1926, India's renowned evolutionary sage Sri Aurobindo declared a French woman named Mirra Alfassa—a.k.a. "the Mother"—to be his spiritual equal. Aurobindian expert Peter Heehs tells the tale of how the Mother became one of the most intriguing woman mystics of the last century.

BY PETER HEEHS

### 96 On Spiritual Leadership

What does it mean to take a stand for Spirit in an often disbelieving world? Two evolutionary pathfinders discuss the dynamic challenges of stepping far beyond the status quo to pioneer a post-traditional, post-secular spirituality.

ANDREW COHEN AND DEEPAK CHOPRA

# Letters

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



Issue 46

Spring/Summer 2010

## A LANDMARK DIALOGUE

When I receive our copy of *EnlightenNext* magazine, I always turn first to the Guru & Pandit dialogue. What a delight to listen to Andrew Cohen, who not only speaks about the importance of an evolutionary worldview in one's spiritual development but also models the process himself. These dialogues never fail to be thought-provoking, but the twenty-fifth dialogue, published in the Spring/Summer 2010 issue, amazed me. Cohen brings a foundational discovery of mainstream science—that of evolutionary emergence—fully into the realm of spiritual growth. Henceforth, any spiritual teacher or philosopher who hopes to transform individuals and societies beyond the post-modern perspective will need to address the venerable concept of “becoming” with at least as much rigor and exciting potential as Cohen advances (and dances into existence with Wilber) in this landmark dialogue. Well done!

Connie Barlow  
Author of *Green Space, Green Time: The Way of Science*

## HORIZONTAL + VERTICAL = DIAGONAL?

As someone engaged with the evolution of culture, in my case in Israel, I find Andrew and Ken's discussion of the difference between vertical and horizontal development very important and useful. I beg to differ, however, with their description of horizontal development as merely staying at the level you're at and “moving furniture around on the same floor.” It seems to me that horizontal development plays an essential role in cultural evolution, and that the interplay between these two types of development needs to be further explored and clarified.

I'm referring to the fact that, while vertical breakthroughs are necessary for human evolution, they, in and of themselves, do not seem to automatically result in a broad and stabilized cultural shift from one developmental stage to another. Such a shift usually occurs gradually over an extended period of time.

This being the case, couldn't we say that cultural evolution involves a certain kind of horizontal development, maybe “diagonal” or “spiral,” which is horizontal development informed by the possibility and call of a new, vertically higher stage?

Amir Freimann  
Israel

## HOW MUCH MORE EVIDENCE DO YOU NEED?

In reading the interviews with psychical researchers Marilyn Schlitz and Michael Grosso, I was disturbed by the ambivalence expressed by both scholars when asked if they believed they would survive their own deaths. Schlitz voiced the surprisingly weak statement that she would survive only in the memories of others; and Grosso went so far as to say he did not think he would survive at all.

In the face of the amazing things these two scholars have discovered in their extensive research into life after death and other “paranormal” experiences, I cannot help but wonder about such doubt. Does it stem from a desire to appear more reasonable to, and thus be accepted by, mainstream scientists? This makes little sense to me, as it would seem that the nature of their work is fringe enough to get them rejected from all but the most open-minded journals and organizations.

I suspect there is something deeper going on here: the scientific mindset has caused them to doubt their own senses. Perhaps a worldview that relies heavily on measurable evidence tends to create the belief that there can never be enough. While I find their work mostly admirable, I fear that such an emphasis on scientific proof is

misguided. Admitting that they are convinced about some form of afterlife should not diminish the validity of their accomplishments. In fact, I would argue that going as far as they have without going all the way actually cheapens their work. If they can't be convinced by what they've seen, who can? Perhaps those less concerned with what some call evidence.

Stephen Brett Greeley  
Staten Island, New York

## YOUNG, AWAKE, AND INSPIRED

As a twenty-three-year-old female, I have unfortunately found that many of my peers are not as intrigued as I am by discussions of consciousness and quantum physics. For a long time I felt a longing to find a community of like-minded individuals, but after numerous visits to religious institutions, I found these places too rigid. Thus I was extremely grateful to have stumbled upon *EnlightenNext* a few years ago. Your magazine has continued to feed my hunger for knowledge and kept me updated on the topics I am most interested in. I no longer feel so alone. Thank you for providing us young Evolutionaries with the soulful nourishment that is hard to find elsewhere! Each issue inspires me to continue my questioning and contemplation of all that is.

Jade Vanacore  
Portland, OR





## Comments from the Editors' Blog

# Rebels Without a Cause

Has the counterculture gotten stuck on itself? Over the past year, Associate Editor Joel Pitney has been exploring a new mutation in postmodern culture known as the “hipster” movement. This spring, he wrote a provocative blog post on the subject titled “Rebels Without a Cause,” which generated a lively discussion on the EnlightenNext Editors' Blog ([blog.enlightennext.org](http://blog.enlightennext.org)).

The hipsters are a subculture of young avant-gardes congregating in the warehouses and coffee shops of liberal enclaves like Brooklyn, San Francisco, and Portland, Oregon, and are known for their bizarre retro-aesthetics, ever-hipper-than-thou attitude, and penchant for philosophical deconstruction. Some interpret this cultural phenomenon as the leading edge of Western civilization, constantly pushing the boundaries of fashion, art, and music. Others say the hipster counterculture is more like a faint echo of the taboo-busting 1960s but whose empty rebellion borders on irrelevance.

In response to Pitney's blog post, many readers jumped into a heated debate on the relative merits of hipsterdom and the fate of Generation Y. Here are some of our favorites:

### MATTHEW MAROTTA

In the post, you wrote: “There's not that much to really complain about or rebel against. So every time we rear our rebellious heads with a countercultural spirit that may have been cool and revolutionary in the Sixties, we just seem derivative and strangely out of place.”

There's not that much to complain about? Really? Perhaps you're right about the complaining part, but there are plenty of issues to be addressed: the energy crisis, environmental destruction, the continuing threat of nuclear annihilation, resource wars, to name a few. The world is on the brink of catastrophe. Young people (I am one) are generally not very serious about the things that matter most. It's not about being derivative or not, being cool or not, revolutionary or not. It's not about our need to carve out some sense of an identity. It's about trying to solve our collective problems.

### FRANK LUKE

The term “hipster” has been appropriated from what it originally meant in the 1950s and 60s, when it referred to those who were “in the know” and hip to what was going on. I was blessed to have been immersed in the sights, sounds, and ferment of the wondrous 1960s in NYC and if I compare that hippie nation with the subsequent young rebels of today, I would say that the progression has

paralleled that of American culture as a whole: a descent into the flabbiness of overconsumption and affluence.

We as a nation are faced with some hard work to revitalize the strength and promise of our country. Causes abound for all young rebels to embrace and take further, but I wonder if the young “hipsters” of today are too preoccupied with teen stuff—making out, hairdos, drugs, and everything else—or else just way too cool to dirty their hands with all the challenges that need their support?

### DOUGLAS TURNER

In my opinion, the hipsters have tastes that are particular to Generation Y, which has inherited a world that is much more advanced than any previous generation. In their youth, the baby boomers had a mission—civil rights, gender equality, and more access to financial stability—and they rebelled against the traditional values of their parents. But as the children of liberal parents, my generation has inherited an unprecedented level of material and economic comfort and we don't have the same kind of angst that fueled the boomers to fight for so many important freedoms. I believe that the seemingly lackadaisical, consumer-driven, self-involved milieu of the millennial generation is an expression of this.



*Hipsters hanging out on London's Brick Lane*

© Daniel Hart

### **MICHELLE DAVELLA**

What I got from this post is that the previous generation's youth rebelled for a reason, and now our generation just seems to rebel with no meaning. You mentioned the term hipster stemmed from being hip to know something, but in my opinion the people who are the "cool kids" are the ones following mainstream media trends. Hipsters, from my perspective, are the ones who are trying to be different. I think there are far more damaging impacts on society than hipsters.

### **ERIC SCHEY**

My generation, Gen Y (which includes the hipsters), was raised by the baby boomers. And the majority of us were brought up in a rebellious, free-spirited environment. It was impressed upon me from an early age that "no one can tell you who you are" and any idea of what you *should* be was rarely discussed. After all, doing something because you should do it doesn't feel all that free, does it? Our rebellious and free-spirited nature has directed us

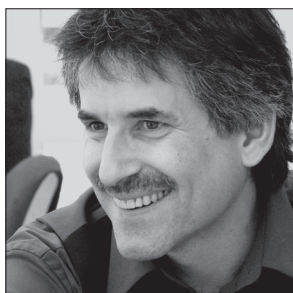
to shun the status quo and adopt "alternative" lifestyles.

The biggest problem I see with all this is that if we truly want to do something big (and I mean HUGE) not just as Gen Y-ers or Americans but as members of the human race, we are going to have to work together. That means large groups of people sharing the same goal and motivated by a similar sense of purpose coming together to create real, substantial, perspective-altering change. This is virtually impossible when our first inclination is to go in the opposite direction of everyone else. At some point we will have to choose what is more important: being "free spirits," or being the agents for change in a world of real need.

You can read "Rebels Without a Cause" and the online conversation that followed on the *EnlightenNext Editors' Blog*: [blog.enlightennext.org/hipsters](http://blog.enlightennext.org/hipsters)



# EnlightenNext Team



**ANDREW COHEN**, Editor in Chief, is the creative visionary behind *EnlightenNext* magazine and its nonprofit parent organization, EnlightenNext. In 1991, five years after his life was irrevocably transformed by a powerful spiritual awakening, Cohen founded the magazine to explore the potential of enlightened consciousness to inspire new ways of thinking about contemporary culture and spiritual life. Through his ongoing engagement with the *EnlightenNext* team and the growing global movement of Evolutionaries inspired by his thought and work, he is charting the landscape of an emerging evolutionary world-view. Cohen is also a spiritual teacher to students around the world, and is the pioneer of an original spiritual path called Evolutionary Enlightenment. In 2009, he launched the EnlightenNext Discovery Cycle, an integrated annual program

of spiritual retreats, conferences, and forums designed to accelerate both personal and cultural evolution. **Find out more at [andrewcohen.org](http://andrewcohen.org).**



**CARTER PHIPPS**, Executive Editor and 2009 winner of a Gold FOLIO Award for best spiritual and religious writing, has been a leading pioneer in EnlightenNext's work in cultural evolution for more than eighteen years. With expertise ranging from metaphysics to politics to science and technology, Phipps represents *EnlightenNext* magazine at conferences and leadership gatherings such as the Evolutionary Leaders Forum and the Parliament of the World's Religions. He has spoken at Brown University, JFK University, and the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology, and has appeared on BBC Radio's "Reporting

Religion." His first book, *Evolutionaries*, a manifesto for the emerging field of evolutionary spirituality, will be published by Harper Perennial in fall 2011.

**Twitter: @Carter\_Phipps**



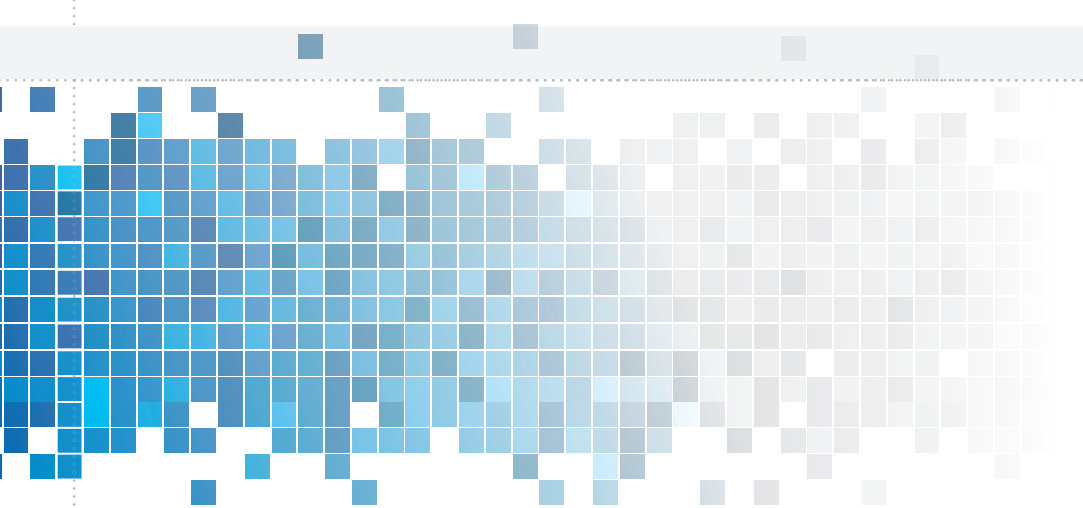
**ELIZABETH DEBOLD**, EdD, Senior Editor, joined *EnlightenNext* magazine in 2002. With a doctorate in human development and psychology from Harvard University, she brings a deep understanding of the evolution of culture, and particularly gender, to her work for *EnlightenNext*. Her best-selling book, *Mother Daughter Revolution*, and her research at Harvard under the direction of Dr. Carol Gilligan, earned her an international reputation as a leading gender theorist. She has made multiple

appearances on *Oprah*, *Good Morning America*, and National Public Radio. She covers a wide range of issues for the magazine—including gender, business, developmental theory, contemporary spirituality, and psychology. She has taught at the New School for Social Research, Harvard University, and the Graduate Institute.

**Twitter: @EvolveWomen**



**ROSS ROBERTSON**, Senior Editor, joined *EnlightenNext*'s editorial staff in 2003. A former environmental activist with a variety of different organizations, including Earth First!, Greenpeace, and NRDC, Robertson is currently helping to pioneer a radical new approach to environmental issues known as "bright green." His workshops,



lectures, and roving reportage for *EnlightenNext* have taken him from the halls of MIT to the utopian streets of Burning Man, the Italian ecovillage of Damanhur, and the 2009 Copenhagen climate conference, where he shared his thoughts on the new evolutionary environmental philosophy with a global audience. Robertson's other work for the magazine includes interviews with self-masters, spiritual teachers, and scientists, and feature articles on consciousness, manliness, rock music, pop spirituality, and neo-tantric sex. He is a graduate of Naropa University's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics.

**Twitter: @RobertsonRoss**



**LAURA DIDYK**, Managing Editor since early 2009, has an extensive background in publishing and writing, and

has worked with editorial teams at spiritual retreat centers throughout the Northeast. She was also editor in chief of the *Black Warrior Review* out of the University of Alabama where she received her MFA in creative writing. Her work has been published nationally, earning her finalist status for the 2010 Iowa Review Poetry Prize as well as a Pushcart Prize nomination.



**PATRICK BRYSON**, Art Director, has been a contributor to the *EnlightenNext* creative team for more than a decade. With a degree in textile print from Manchester Metropolitan University, his artwork has been exhibited in both London and India. He has worked as a graphic artist for almost thirty years, fifteen of those in top London design agencies. Originally

from Ireland, he has also lived in Switzerland, Holland, and India and currently serves on the Management Board for *EnlightenNext* UK. Bryson's key creative interest is in the relationship between art and the evolution of consciousness.



**TOM HUSTON**, Senior Associate Editor, joined the editorial staff in 2003. Author of *EnlightenNext*'s acclaimed article "A Brief History of Evolutionary Spirituality," he has explored a wide variety of subjects in his writings, including contemporary teachings of nondual mysticism, the cutting edge of science and cosmology, and the confusing cultural predicament of his own Generation Y. Huston is also a founding member of Ken Wilber's Integral Institute. When not tweeting or blogging, he

is often busy managing *EnlightenNext*'s websites.

**Twitter: @KosmicTom**



**JOEL PITNEY**, Associate Editor, joined the *EnlightenNext* team in 2007. With a background in sustainable agriculture, he is particularly interested in new philosophical perspectives on environmental issues, but his articles have also covered topics ranging from the emerging "integral revolution" to the narcissism epidemic in postmodern culture. Prior to his work for the magazine, Pitney graduated from Dickinson College with a degree in environmental science and helped launch the innovative web marketing company ThoughtLead.

**Twitter: @JoelPitney**

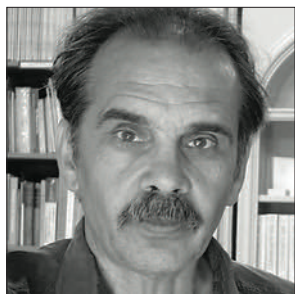
# Contributors



**KEN WILBER**, with more than two dozen published books, has created what is widely considered the first comprehensive integral map of human experience, the AQAL Integral Framework. He founded Integral Institute ([integralinstitute.org](http://integralinstitute.org)) in 1997, a nonprofit think tank that brought together hundreds of integral thinkers, including Michael Crichton, Deepak Chopra, Tony Robbins, Genpo Roshi, and Larry Dossey. In 2003, Wilber started Integral Naked ([integralnaked.org](http://integralnaked.org)), which offers cutting-edge audio and video content online. Two years later, he founded Integral Life Spiritual Center and initiated a series of yearly gatherings exploring the contours of integral spirituality. Wilber's latest endeavor is Integral Life ([integral-life.com](http://integral-life.com)), a for-profit extension of Integral Institute dedicated to offering practical, easy-to-understand ways to live a genuinely integral life. For all the latest news, blogs, and writings, check out [KenWilber.com](http://KenWilber.com).



**GARY LACHMAN**'s recent articles for *EnlightenNext* magazine include "2013: Or, What to Do When the Apocalypse Doesn't Arrive" and "Jean Gebser: Cartographer of Consciousness." He is the author of many books on the link between consciousness, culture, and the Western inner tradition, including *Politics and the Occult* and *Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to His Life and Work*. His newest book is *Jung the Mystic*, published by Tarcher/Penguin in 2010.

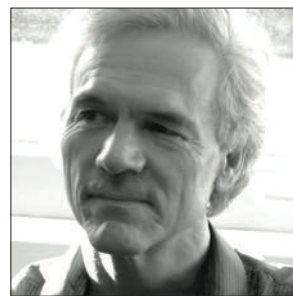


**PETER HEEHS** is the author of nine books and more than fifty articles published in magazines and scholarly journals. His latest book, *The Lives of Sri Aurobindo*,

was published in 2008 by Columbia University Press. Heehs has been practicing the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for more than forty years. He lives in Pondicherry, India.



**ZINA SAUNDERS** is an award-winning illustrator whose work can be seen in publications like *Mother Jones*, the *New York Times*, the *Nation*, and many others. Her series of interviews and portraits of impassioned New Yorkers—including Central Park portrait artists and members of the Puerto Rico Schwinn Club—have been featured in *Time Out New York* magazine. She is the daughter of pulp magazine artist Norman Saunders, who painted some of the most popular bubblegum cards from the 1960s and 1970s. In her teens, she joined a traveling circus in upstate New York as "the levitating lady" but eventually returned to New York City where she lives and works.



**BRIAN SWIMME**, PhD, is a mathematical cosmologist on the graduate faculty of the California Institute of Integral Studies, and is the author of *The Universe Is a Green Dragon*, *The Universe Story*, and *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos*. Swimme's primary field of research is the nature of the evolutionary dynamics of the universe, and he lectures worldwide, presenting at conferences sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the World Bank, UNESCO, the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit, and the American Natural History Museum. He is the producer of several DVD series, including *Canticle to the Cosmos* and *The Powers of the Universe*, and his newest, *The Earth's Imagination*.





**AS I WAS FLIPPING THROUGH THE PAGES** of this forty-seventh issue of *EnlightenNext*, I found myself surprised and pleased—even though I’ve been present every step of the way of its ongoing creation—to see what a satisfying philosophical and spiritual smorgasbord we’ve pulled together here.

Evolutionary spirituality lives and breathes with passion and conviction through this broad array of articles and essays. In “The Powers of the Universe,” our cosmologist mentor of many years, Brian Swimme, takes us on a mesmerizing journey, evocatively describing what he identifies as the ten qualities of the interior dimensions of our material universe. In “Dreams of an Eco-Spiritual Futurist,” Senior Editor and resident environmentalist Ross Robertson has conducted a fascinating and thought-provoking interview about the future of sustainability with British eco-strategist Hardin Tibbs.

We are very proud to be able to present two original in-depth essays by authors Gary Lachman and Peter Heehs, respectively, on two of the *grande dames* of evolutionary spirituality: the inimitable Madame Blavatsky and the great evolutionary sage Sri Aurobindo’s alter ego, the Mother. In both of these captivating and informative pieces, we travel back to the late 1800s and early 1900s, where we learn about the cultural and historical ferment in which these pioneering and controversial women emerged as two of the first spiritual teachers to speak about the evolution of consciousness.

Finally, there are dialogues between myself and Ken Wilber, one of the most influential philosophers of our time, and Deepak Chopra, a leading contemporary spiritual

icon. My conversation with Ken was edited from a teaching he and I did together at the Boulder Integral Center last August, while the conversation with Deepak was taken from *EnlightenNext*’s first virtual Evolutionary Worldview Seminar, held last May for thousands of people from seventy-six countries around the world.

Speaking of virtual seminars, I hope you will be able to join us for our second one on May 7, 2011, where we will officially begin the lead up to our live-and-in-person

The *EnlightenNext* conference will bring together thought leaders in unique “holonic” groupings to catalyze inquiry and discourse at the leading edge of their fields.

*EnlightenNext* conference, scheduled for the Spring of 2012. I have to confess, this is perhaps our favorite project, as the conference will bring together thought leaders in unique “holonic” groupings to catalyze inquiry and discourse at the very leading edge of their own fields. From spirituality to environmentalism to science to gender to politics, we will use a variation of the *EnlightenNext* Method forged through our many years of deep spiritual practice and evolutionary pathfinding to create a powerful

intersubjective context where many people will be able to have the perspective-enlarging experience of a lifetime!

In the meantime, we are busy working on an expansion into the online world. Stay tuned as *EnlightenNext*’s creative inquiry becomes more accessible and even more responsive to our evolutionary moment.

Enjoy!

**Andrew Cohen**  
Founder and Editor in Chief



Zeitgeist

## Big Questions, Vague Answers

A new breed of self-reflective documentaries brings spiritual ambivalence to the big screen.

**IN THE WAKE OF 9/11**, documentary filmmaker **Roger Nygard** found himself in the midst of an existential crisis. Desperate to find new answers to life's biggest questions, Nygard set out on an epic four-year journey to the holiest places on the planet, interviewing just about every mystic, scientist, and philosopher he met along the way. This past summer, he shared what he found in a 90-minute documentary called *The Nature of Existence*.

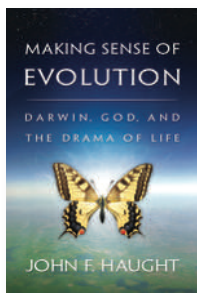
The title suggests that the film will deliver fresh insights into, well, the nature of existence. But after hundreds of in-depth conversations with some of the world's most sophisticated minds (in addition to some of the least), Nygard settles for the underwhelming conclusion that "the only thing I'm sure of is that nobody has the answers." The viewer is left entertained and slightly more tolerant but existentially dizzy and spiritually bereft.

Nygard is not the only filmmaker this year to try a shotgun approach to truth and end up with only a vague set of answers. Australian director **Peter Rodger's** film *Oh My God* is, as one *New York Times* reviewer put it, "the documentary equivalent of a spiritually angled coffee-table book of world travels." Shot against breathtaking natural backdrops in places like Kenya and America's Southwest, the film is more aesthetically pleasing than Nygard's, but it winds up in the same philosophical gray zone. Rodger asks the question "What is God?" to a celebrity-infused cast that includes yogis, druids, atheists, rabbis, and monks. But like Nygard, he resists making any clear distinctions between the collage of wise and not-so-wise answers

that make up the film. The cameo opinions of celebrities such as **Hugh Jackman**, for instance, are given equal or even greater weight than those of spiritual masters such as **Sonkyo Takito**, one of Japan's most revered Zen monks. As *Variety* magazine's **Justin Chang** points out, "only die-hard relativists are likely to derive much satisfaction" from the film. "[Its] true subject isn't God; it's multiculturalism."

Multiculturalism is also the dominant theme in another 2010 existential documentary, *The Human Experience*. The film follows two twenty-something brothers to the streets of New York City, a leper colony in Ghana, and an orphanage in Peru, in their search for answers to more big questions like "Who am I?" and "What is the purpose of life?" It's a beautiful story about a genuine search for meaning, but as one reviewer writes, it winds up being "an earnest attempt to inspire that fails to offer compelling answers to the questions it poses."

In our pluralistic age in which giving equal voice to every possible perspective is usually prioritized over finding a higher synthesis between them, it's no wonder that these films struggle to provide more than a survey of the world's many belief systems. And while they are a welcome alternative to their more cynical counterparts, like **Bill Maher's** 2008 atheistic rant *Religulous*, they ultimately yield little more than the latest echo of the 1960s refrain that, in spite of our diversity, we are all one. These self-reflective filmmakers succeed in showing that there are many paths to the truth, but their only solid conclusion is that they have no idea which one to take.



## Making Sense of Evolution

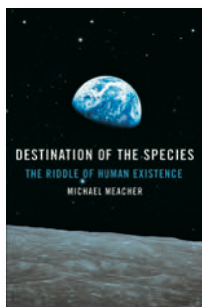
### DARWIN, GOD, AND THE DRAMA OF LIFE

by John Haught

(Westminster John Knox Press, 2010)

Something extraordinary is occurring on the boundaries between science and spirit. Evolution, that great pillar of the scientific worldview, that secular gargoyle that has

long blocked the gateway to God, spirit, and divinity in Western culture, is undergoing a transformation. Once considered to be the antidote to religious sentiment, evolution has become a friend to those who seek deeper spiritual meaning in the creative activities of our natural world and the developmental potential of human culture. There are few guides to this territory who have the skill, knowledge, and brilliance of Catholic theologian **John Haught**. In his recent book, *Making Sense of Evolution*, he outlines the broad strokes of his evolutionary theology. Drawing on his remarkable reservoir of knowledge, he situates his religious vision neither in prayerful piety to the heavens above nor in pantheistic surrender to the earth below—but in a deeper devotion to the promise revealed in our evolutionary future. “God abides in the depths of an elusive but forever-faithful future,” he writes. That may seem a tough sell in a secular age, but in the hands of this richly skilled interpreter of our culture’s intellectual treasures, we learn to believe again.



## Destination of the Species

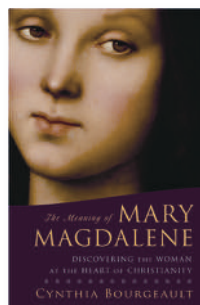
### THE RIDDLE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

by Michael Meacher

(O Books, 2010)

“All the scientific evidence strongly suggests that the Dawkins and neo-Darwinian view that the universe is driven by pitiless, directionless chance is seriously wrong and misleading,” concludes British member of Parliament **Michael Meacher** in his

new book. In *Destination of the Species*, Meacher synthesizes the overwhelming scientific, spiritual, and philosophical evidence for the fact that the universe is not a random event but may in fact be headed in a specific direction. He tracks our cosmic history from the big bang to the emergence of human consciousness, and presents a well-researched case that the universe seems carefully, and some might say suspiciously, fine-tuned to serve the emergence of life and higher intelligence. And in a radical stance for a politician in one of the most aggressively secular societies on the planet, Meacher argues that in order to take the next step in our species’ evolution, we must embrace “the emergent property of our spirituality,” which he calls “the single most important attribute of our human uniqueness.”



## The Meaning of Mary Magdalene

### DISCOVERING THE WOMAN AT THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

by Cynthia Bourgeault

(Shambhala Publications, 2010)

In her new opus, Episcopal priest, mystic, and medieval scholar **Cynthia Bourgeault** provocatively places Mary Magdalene

at the forefront of a new interpretation of Christ’s mission and message. Through scholarly reflection and intuitive leap, Bourgeault questions the canonical story that Christ physically resurrected and speculates about Mary Magdalene’s role. Based on the Gnostic gospels and the recently translated Gospel of Mary Magdalene, Bourgeault cleans up Mary Magdalene’s sullied reputation and presents her as Jesus’s spiritual partner—arguing that she may have been the only one of his disciples to comprehend and be transformed by his message. Bourgeault dances on the edge of *Da Vinci Code* pop-culture speculations about Jesus and Mary as lovers (and parents), and suggests that her version of their relationship could be the template for a mystical Christian path of conscious love.



## Cosmic Conversations

### DIALOGUES ON THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE SEARCH FOR REALITY

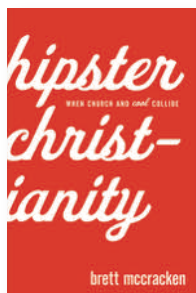
by Stephan Martin

(New Page Books, 2010)

What is the universe? To your average astronomer, the answer to that question might appear to be self-evident: just look up and see the stars! But for **Stephan Martin**,

who has taught astronomy and physics for twenty years, this question opens up an inquiry that goes far beyond the material universe. Through a series of compelling interviews, Martin introduces multiple perspectives on the cosmos from the spheres of science, spirit, and culture—speaking with many of the cutting-edge thinkers who have appeared in the pages of *EnlightenNext* magazine. **Brian Swimme**, **Joel Primack**, **Bernard Haisch**, and **James Gardner** offer scientific views, and **Barbara Marx Hubbard**, **Duane Elgin**, and **Richard Tarnas** all present new visions for how we think about being human within the context of cosmic evolution. The only slight disappointment in this remarkable collection comes in the section on spirit, which is, for the most part, limited to traditional and indigenous spirituality—only the interview with evolutionary thinker **Michael Dowd** represents a cosmic perspective on the evolution of spirit. All told, Martin has created a powerful and clarifying journey into one of the biggest questions there is.





## Hipster Christianity:

WHEN CHURCH AND COOL COLLIDE

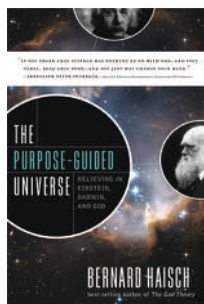
by Brett McCracken

(Baker Books, 2010)

"How did it happen that something as square as Christianity became rebellious, countercultural, and—in some incarnations—truly hip?" asks *Relevant* magazine contributing editor

**Brett McCracken** in *Hipster Christianity*.

McCracken tracks a new spiritual subculture of tattoo-bearing, Foucault-reading, Bible-thumping Christian hipsters from its origins in the hippie-led Jesus People movement of the 1960s to its current expression in punk-rock evangelical mega-churches like Seattle's Mars Hill Church and L.A.'s Mosaic. In the process, he shows how Christianity has evolved over the past half-century to be more relevant to our postmodern era's countercultural sensibilities. And while written for a Christian audience, the book raises an important question for any spiritually interested person: How do we infuse moral and spiritual depth into the avant-garde ethos that is driving the leading edge of culture today?



## The Purpose-Guided Universe

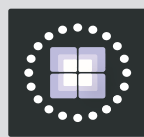
BELIEVING IN EINSTEIN, DARWIN, AND GOD

by Bernard Haisch

(Career Press, 2010)

In 2006, astrophysicist **Bernard Haisch** published *The God Theory*, an exploration of the scientifically

taboo notion that an infinite conscious intelligence lies behind the created world. But in the few years since that book's publication, God has been put on trial like never before, prosecuted by the infamous firm of **Dawkins, Dennett, Harris,** and **Hitchens**, whose bold atheism has left true believers everywhere scrambling to the Divine's defense. With his new book, *The Purpose-Guided Universe*, Haisch uses his God theory to join the fray, showing how both atheists and traditional theists may be missing a deeper truth. Taking readers on an entertaining tour of quantum physics, cosmology, and nondual spirituality, he offers a series of scientifically and philosophically sound justifications for finding "an uplifting sense of purpose" in the evolutionary process—a process that has led, miraculously, from stardust to us.



## Integral Theory at SUNY Press

**Dr. Sean Esbjörn-Hargens** is attempting to almost singlehandedly bring integral theory into the academic mainstream through a new series of scholarly books being published by the State University of New York (SUNY) Press. Like every academic publisher, SUNY Press puts its books through a peer-review process to ensure high scholarship standards. Thus far, the academic world has not taken kindly to integral theory (pioneered by **Ken Wilber**). Its holistic, evolutionary integration of self, cosmos, and culture is contrary to the disciplinary specialization that is currently the scholastic norm. "The first four volumes are really solid academic textbooks," says Esbjörn-Hargens. "We have had a very positive response and SUNY is quite pleased—plus we have over sixteen more volumes lined up for the next few years. This series is going to play an important role in the continued emergence of Integral Theory as a legitimate field of academic discourse within multiple disciplines."



### INTEGRAL THEORY IN ACTION: Applied, Theoretical, and Constructive Perspectives on the AQAL Model

Edited by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens (foreword by Roger Walsh; afterword by Ken Wilber)

Contributions from the 2008 Integral Theory Conference explore topics ranging from global ethics to climate change to feminist aesthetics.



### A GUIDE TO INTEGRAL PSYCHOTHERAPY: Complexity, Integration, and Spirituality in Practice

by Mark D. Forman

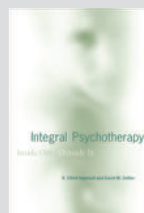
Forman uses integral theory to guide practitioners in determining which therapeutic approach will best meet various clients' needs.



### INTEGRAL EDUCATION: New Directions for Higher Learning

Edited by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Jonathan Reams, and Olen Gunnlaugson

Leading integral practitioners and researchers around the world examine the frontiers of higher education.



### INTEGRAL PSYCHOTHERAPY: Inside Out/Outside In

by R. Elliot Ingersoll and David M. Zeitler

Using Wilber's integral theory, Ingersoll and Zeitler articulate a new vision of psychotherapy that integrates body, mind, and spirit.

# Thank You to all our donors who supported *EnlightenNext* magazine in 2010!

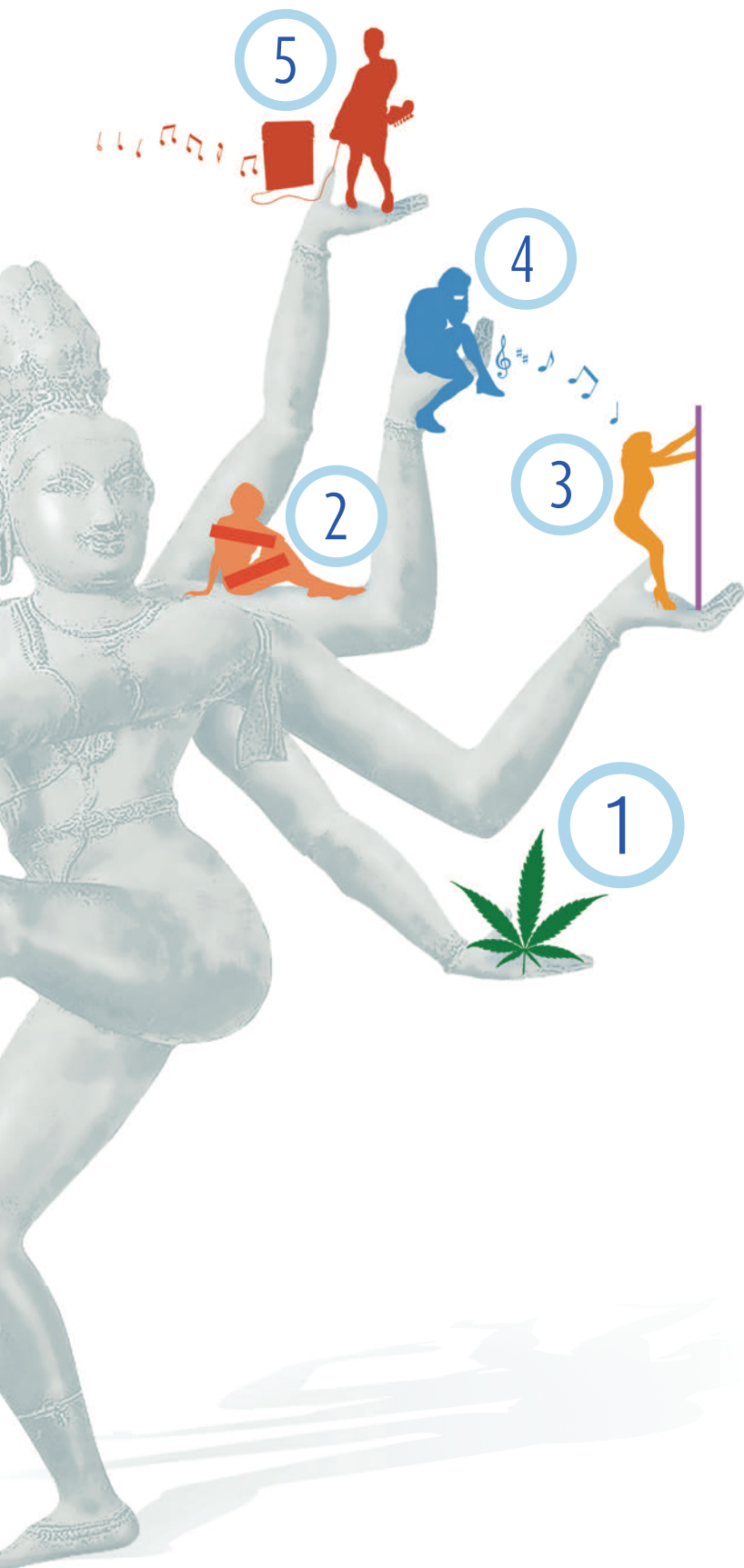
We are grateful to all our  
new donors who have responded  
to our appeal for support this fall.

And a heartfelt thanks  
to all our ongoing donors—  
we deeply appreciate your  
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Your donations allow  
*EnlightenNext* to continue  
to fulfill our mission to awaken,  
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Support *EnlightenNext*  
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For more information please contact Laura Hartzell,  
Director of Development, at [LHartzell@EnlightenNext.org](mailto:LHartzell@EnlightenNext.org).



**5 Punk Rock Yoga®** - Patanjali meets the Sex Pistols in this new Seattle-based “rebel” yoga class, often held in bars and night clubs against the angst-ridden backdrop of live punk music. How loud can you scream “om”?

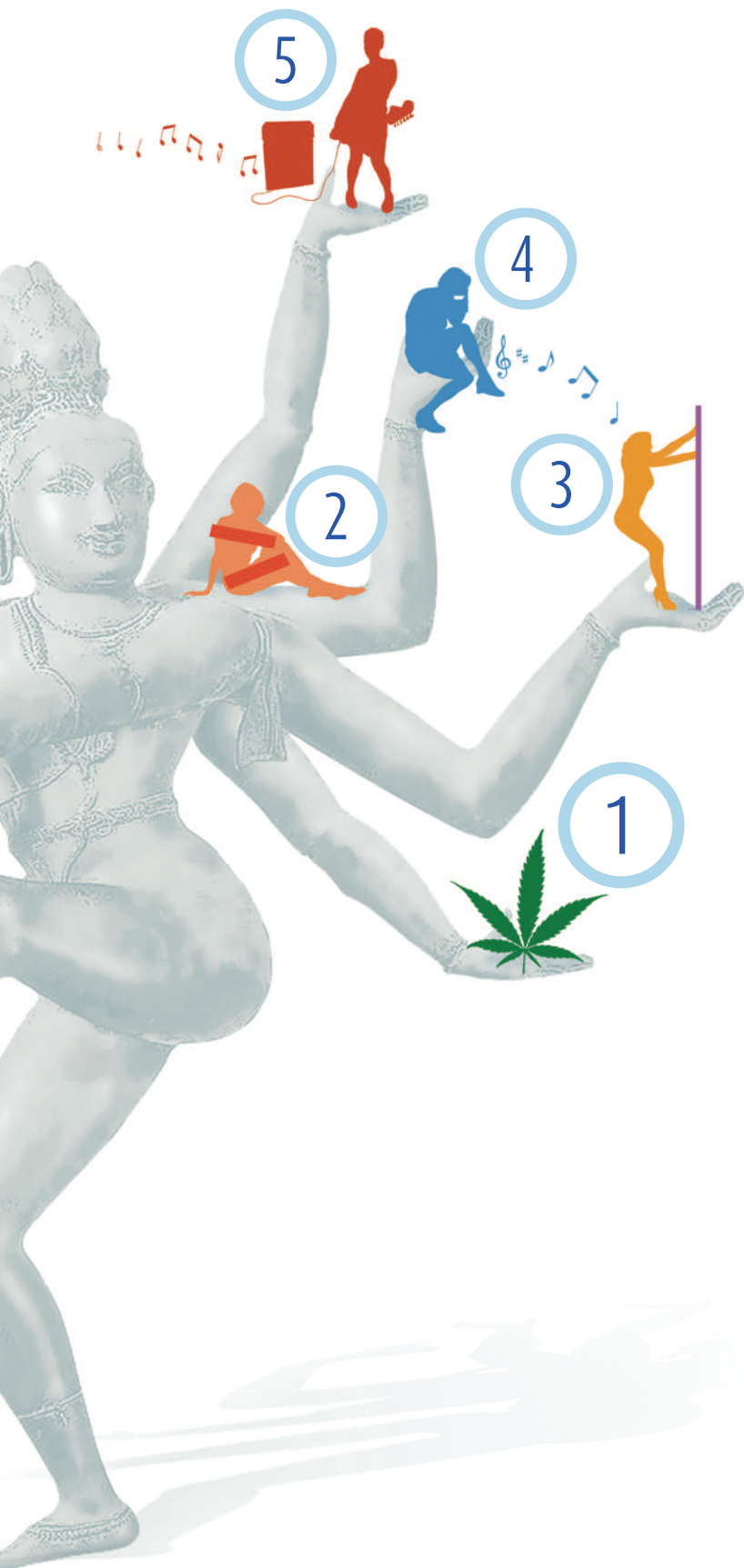
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**2 The Art of Orgasmic Meditation** - Grab yourself a latex glove and head down to San Francisco’s One Taste Urban Retreat Center for one of their infamous “spiritual masturbation” lessons—aka OMing—and learn to bring your “research partner” into a cathartic state of “limbic enlightenment.”

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EnlightenNext presents a selection of our favorite articles from

 **the ONION**  
America's Finest News Source

**SINCE 1988**, faux-news syndicate *The Onion* has been a source of sophisticated satire on everything from world affairs to the lives and opinions of average Americans. Nestled in their hilarious repertoire of irony-laden news is some of the most astute commentary we've seen on popular trends in contemporary spiritual culture. Consider the following:



### Search For Self Called Off After 38 Years



Andrew Speth moments after announcing the end of his search.



### Priest Religious, But Not Really Spiritual

**BOSTON**—Father Clancy Donahue of St. Michael Catholic Church told reporters Wednesday that while he believed in blindly adhering to the dogma and ceremonies of his faith, he tried not to get too bogged down by actual spirituality. "I'm not so much into having a relationship with God as I am into mechanically conducting various rituals," Donahue said. "To me, it just feels empty to contemplate a higher power without blindly obeying canon law and protecting the church as an institution." Donahue emphasized that although he did not personally agree with those who pondered the eternal, he had nothing against them.



### Ghost of Carl Sagan Warns Against Dangers Of Superstition

**ITHACA, NY**—Appearing as a hovering, wraith-like vision above the Cornell University Physics Building where he taught for years, the ghost of recently deceased astronomer/author Carl Sagan warned former colleagues Monday against a belief in superstition. "Exercise skepticism!" Sagan said, clanking a large metal chain. "Whenever possible, there must be independent confirmation of all facts pertaining to any so-called 'magical' or 'mystical' event or phenomenon!" Added Sagan: "One should always encourage vigorous debate on the nature of rational inquiry and empirical evidence. A thinking person must always utilize the scientific method, or wear the chains of superstition throughout eternity!" Cornell physics department head Arthur Ludvik said that he would heed Sagan's warning and buy a special anti-superstition crystal amulet and incense cone.



### Catholic Church Condemns Metrosexuality

**VATICAN CITY**—Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said Monday that metrosexuality, the trend of heterosexual men co-opting the aesthetics of homosexual men, is strictly prohibited under Catholic doctrine. "The truly faithful will avoid the temptation to adopt this hip urban lifestyle," Navarro-Valls said. "The devout Catholic must remain on the path toward salvation, no matter how good he'd look in an Armani pullover, and no matter how much he might covet his neighbor's set of Williams-Sonoma lobster forks." Karl Weis, director of the New York-based activist group Freedom From Religion, responded to the ban by stating that "metrosexuality is so 2003."



# The Onion Magazine

MARCH 26, 2006

## The Hidden Buddhist Threat In Our Midst

A Special Report By Eric Scopelli

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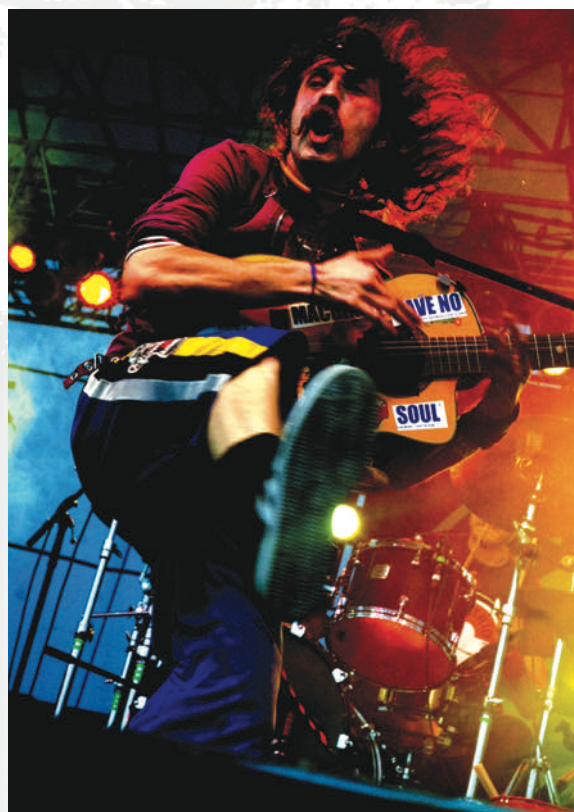
## Think About This

## Cultural Evolution, Gypsy-Punk Style

**IN THIS POSTMODERN DAY AND AGE**, the word *optimism* has, for the most part, been demoted into the pantheon of pop-psychology approaches to feeling better and has all but lost its role as fuel for true spiritual and cultural evolution. But the “gypsy punk” band **Gogol Bordello** (GB) is hosting a revival. With members originating from more than six countries, spanning three generations, and known for their explosive live performances, GB fuses punk rock with traditional Eastern European melodies and a “neo-optimistic” belief in the power of celebration. And what makes their optimism “neo”? While they embrace the rebellious spirit of their punk-rock roots, they diverge from its historically cynical ethos (“f\*^ the man!”) in one very important way: they believe “the man” against whom we should rebel is cynicism itself. Evolutionary spirituality meets punk rock? Anything’s possible.

GB’s visionary mission statement (facing page)—written by the band’s part-Roma native Ukrainian founder and front man **Eugene Hutz**—emphasizes the urgent cultural argument for taking optimism to new heights.

Find out more about Gogol Bordello and listen to their music, including their new album *Trans-Continental Hustle*, at [gogolbordello.com](http://gogolbordello.com).



© Jonny Leather





## Artist's statement

Gogol Bordello's task is to provoke audience out of post-modern aesthetic swamp onto a neo-optimistic communal movement towards new sources of authentic energy.

With acts of music, theatre, chaos and sorcery Gogol Bordello confronts the jaded and irony-diseased. Our treatment of traditional material is frivolous, but is not irony-driven and thus real. Our theatre is chaotic and spontaneous and because of that is alarming and response-provoking.

From where we stand it is clear that World's cultures contain material for endless art-possibilities and new mind-stretching combinations, raw joy and survival energy. We chose to work with Gypsy, Cabaret, and punk traditions. It's what we know and feel. And many more are possible that can make the beloved statement of postmodernism, "everything [has] been done," sound as an intellectual error.

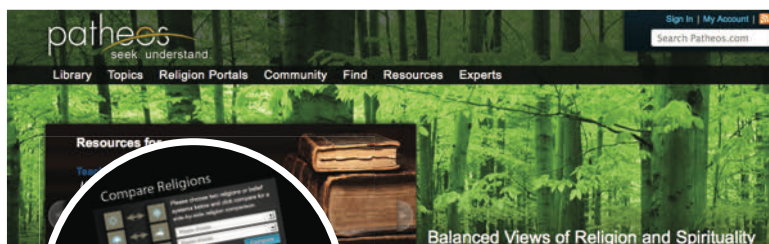
The troubadours of neo-authentics are coming as a trans-global Art syndicate family that has never been witnessed before.

**PARTY!**

**- HUTZ AND GB**



## Sites & Blogs



### Patheos

[patheos.com](http://patheos.com)

Founded by husband-and-wife business partners **Leo** and **Cathie Brunnick**, Patheos is our favorite new destination for gaining a quick, authoritative overview of the world's major religious traditions. While many have compared it to **Beliefnet.com**, Patheos aims to serve a more academic function, providing what is essentially a course in comparative religious studies in the form of a beautifully designed and highly interactive website. But what's likely to keep people coming back daily is the site's robust support for interfaith discussion and community. In addition to regular blog posts written by "experts"—the theologians and scholars who drive the site's content—Patheos allows anyone to participate in discussion forums and set up a free member profile and personal blog. After a few hours exploring the site, we began to realize just how massive and intricate Patheos actually is, and it seems like it is only just getting started. We can't wait to see how it develops from here.

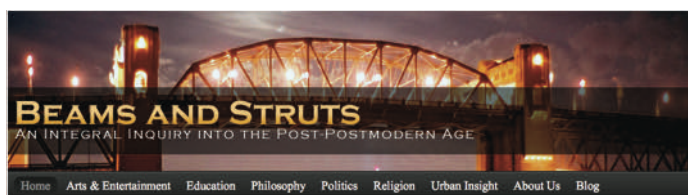


### Philosophy Is Not a Luxury

[jeffcarreira.com/philosophy](http://jeffcarreira.com/philosophy)

**Ralph Waldo Emerson. Henry David Thoreau. Charles S. Peirce. John Dewey.**

**Margaret Fuller. William James.** In the annals of American history, these nineteenth-century spiritual and philosophical pathfinders are legendary. But how relevant is their work today? According to EnlightenNext's Director of Education, **Jeff Carreira**, it's essential. Not only did these intellectual heroes create new avenues for post-traditional spirituality in America but they also seeded countless ideas whose time may have finally come. In an ongoing series of posts, Carreira explores how many of today's proponents of evolutionary spirituality in America—including EnlightenNext founder **Andrew Cohen**—have been influenced by the pioneering men and women that have come before. More than a history lesson, Carreira's blog is ultimately a celebration of what he identifies as the best qualities of the American spirit: "utilitarian attitudes, utopian aspirations, action orientations, and mystical inclinations."



### Beams and Struts

[beamsandstruts.com](http://beamsandstruts.com)

What happens when you blend Gen Y's love of pop-cultural superficiality with the depths of **Ken Wilber's** integral philosophy? You end up with one of the most accessible introductions to integral thinking around. Created by seven young writers inspired by the emerging integral and evolutionary worldview, Beams and Struts features thoughtful, entertaining essays exploring everything from the steady decline of



Rambo-esque action heroes in Hollywood films to the finer points of feminine psychology as interpreted through the 1980s cartoon series *Jem*. The site also includes insightful essays on more familiar subjects of integral inquiry—like religion, politics, and philosophy—but it's the fun pop-culture analyses that provide a fresh entry point to basic integral concepts and make this site a welcome contribution to the emerging evolutionary worldview online.



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## Conscious TV

*conscious.tv*

British businessman **Iain McNay**, founder of the punk and alternative rock music label **Cherry Red Records**—which signed such acclaimed eighties bands as the Dead Kennedys and Everything But The Girl—is investing his worldly success in a higher cause. Along with his partner, Renate, McNay has created Conscious TV, an ongoing interview series exploring the nature of body, mind, and spirit with some of today's top experts. Guests so far have included Director of EnlightenNext Europe **Chris Parish**, biologist **Rupert Sheldrake**, psi researcher **Marilyn Schlitz**, and Buddhist scholar **Alan Wallace**,

along with a growing list of spiritual teachers presenting their views on enlightened nonduality. All interviews are viewable for free online, and UK residents can catch them televised nightly on the Sky cable network.



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# Voices from the Edge



## The Mirror of the Cosmos

Is cosmology a form of theology for a secular age?

by Mark Vernon

**WHY IS COSMOLOGY SO POPULAR?** Books by writers such as Paul Davies and Stephen Hawking on fine-tuning or the multiverse routinely become best-sellers. They're good writers, of course. And there's the aesthetic appeal of cosmology too, offering a ceaseless stream of heavenly images at which to wonder and gaze. But I suspect there's more to it than that.

After all, many other branches of physics are progressing as fast, and arguably have a bigger impact upon our daily lives. But when did you last pick up a paperback on solid state physics, one of the largest contemporary research fields? Or who would choose a book about optics over one about the Big Bang? Chaos theory gets a look in, as does quantum theory — though that's very close to cosmology, as the history of universe turns on the physics of the very small.

So here's a possibility. Cosmology is so popular, not just because of the science, but because it allows us to ask the big questions — where we come from, who we are, where we're going. It's metaphysics by other means. If the Scholastic theologians of the Middle Ages liked to speculate about the number of angels on the heads of pins, we today like to speculate about the number of dimensions wrapped up in string theory.

The activities are similar insofar as they feed the delight we find in awe-inspiring wonder.

The most obvious example of "theophysics" concerns the so-called God particle. This is the Higgs boson, required by the standard model in particle physics to account for the observation that many particles have mass. But why should an esoteric entity to

do with mass gain such a weighty theological ascription?

It was named by Leon Lederman, a former director of Fermilab. He thought the divine reference was suitable because the particle is so crucial to contemporary physics, and yet simultaneously so elusive. And is that not a bit like God? If God does exist, then God would be the ground of everything, and also never quite seen — only detected in the after effects of the

divine wake, like traces in a particle collider. Ponder the Higgs boson and you ponder something of the concept of God.

Physicists profess to hate the title. But the media love it. And that surely reflects a wider public consciousness, sparked by physicists like Stephen Hawking, who are in search of a "theory of everything." Again, there's metaphysics in that dream, because a theory of everything would have many divine properties. It would be



a unity—one entity from which flows the diversity of all that exists. It would be flawless—a complete and beautiful truth that could not be added to in any way. It would be necessary, which is to say it could not be otherwise and is entirely self-sufficient. God, if God is, is like that.

The links between cosmology and metaphysics can be drawn in other ways. Consider speculations about extraterrestrial life. The interesting feature of this subject is that we constantly and regularly return to it—in books and newspaper articles—although precisely nothing of ET has been discovered. SETI has been operational for fifty years with no positive results. But we never cease to be fascinated by the search, not only because we're fascinated by

reflection on what it is to be human implicit in it. There's a historical take on this too. Extraterrestrial life has been entertained for centuries. In the seventeenth century, the poet Thomas Traherne imagined the experience of a "celestial stranger" coming to Earth. What would this alien find? The thought experiment provides Traherne with a chance to express the wonder of being alive. He imagines that the visitor from the azure sky would cry out, "How blessed are they holy people, how divine, how highly exalted! ... Verily this star is a nest of angels!" That's Traherne 350 years ago. It's striking that, in our speculations today, we tend not to cast ourselves in so lovely a light.

There's a fascinating psychological angle too, drawn out by Carl Gustav Jung. He developed an interest in alchemy, not because he sought to change base metals into gold, but because he believed alchemy was actually a metaphysical discipline. Individuals like Robert Boyle and Francis Bacon lambasted alchemists who pursued a crude desire for gold, arguing that true adepts see their craft as a spiritual quest. The properties of materials like mercury and gold were mysterious to these early scientists. And so, to use Jung's language, they provided a focus upon which to project great questions. As the alchemist

stared into the retort, so they gazed into themselves. Do not the heavens provide the same function for us now?

Many would balk at the suggestion that cosmology is the new alchemy. Jung spent many hours discussing it with the leading quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli. The two eventually published on the matter. So, it's an association that can be justified, and helps to explain the deep interest that is so evident today. It's not just the physics. The biggest questions themselves are embedded in the subject too.

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**Mark Vernon** is a journalist, writer, and former Anglican priest. His books include *The Meaning of Friendship*, *Plato's Podcasts: The Ancients' Guide to Modern Living*, and *After Atheism: Science, Religion, and the Meaning of Life*. He blogs at [markvernon.com](http://markvernon.com).

Cosmology is so popular because it allows us to ask the big questions—where we come from, who we are, where we're going. It's metaphysics by other means.

the possibility of ET, but also because we are fascinated by ourselves.

Thinking about what intelligence might be like elsewhere is a way of musing on our own nature. Again, it's metaphysics. Is it (are we) massively rare, and that's why the vast cosmos is apparently so silent? Is it (are we) violently destructive, so that intelligence wipes itself out before it gains the technology required to span the distance between the stars? Is intelligence so extraordinary that once it emerges it evolves startlingly rapidly—and that's our destination too? Is it that we don't detect alien intelligence because it outstrips our own, just as the cognitive powers of bacteria are outstripped by us? Or is the universe too enormous, and we'll never know whether there is intelligent life out there, which is to say that our cosmic state mirrors our existential loneliness? Whatever speculative scenario you prefer, there will be a



28 EnlightenNext magazine



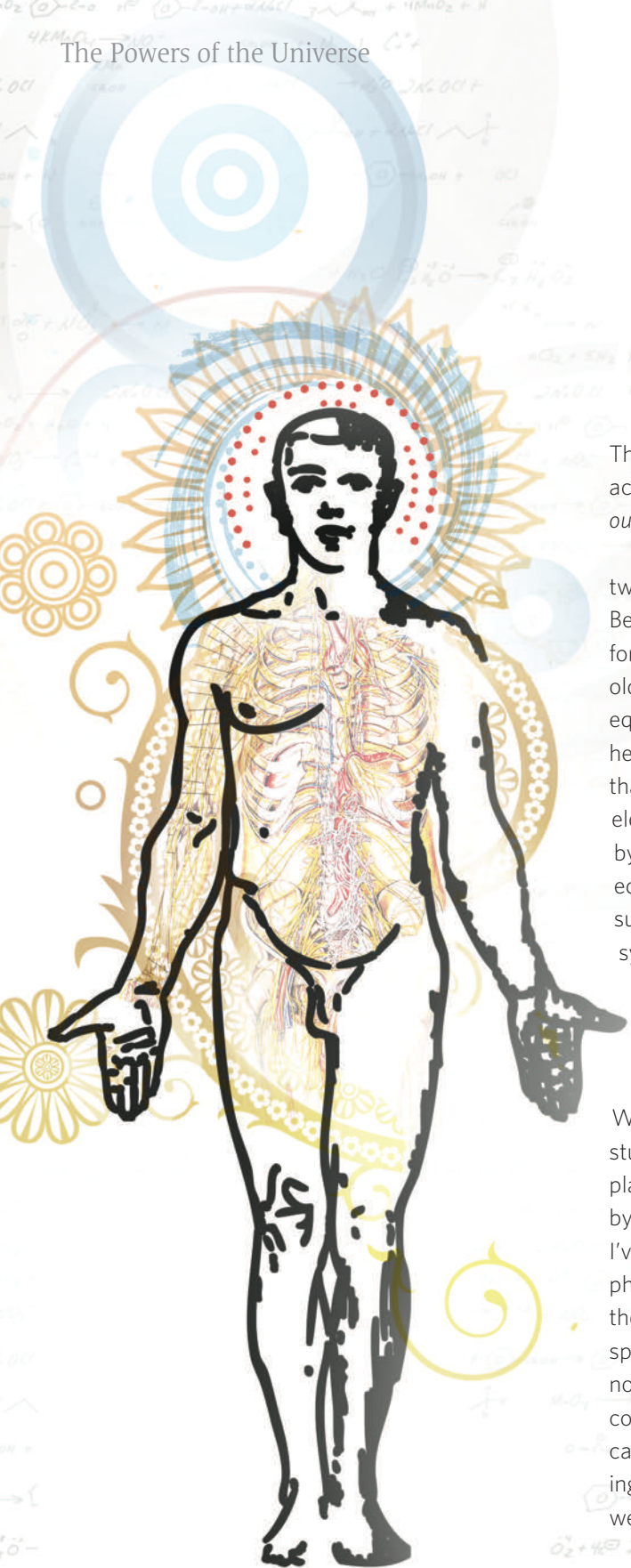




# The Powers of the Universe

by Brian Swimme

There are many ways of characterizing the last four hundred years of modern science. My personal favorite is this: scientists began with the assumption that they were learning about the physical processes at work “out there” in stars, hurricanes, dinosaurs, and so forth.



Then one day, it began to dawn on us that we were actually studying the processes that *gave birth to ourselves*.

Let's take one example out of a million. In the mid-twentieth century, German-American physicist Hans Bethe discovered the intricate process whereby stars forge the various elements of the universe. Just imagine old Hans at his desk one night, contemplating his new equations. Suddenly it all comes to him. Perhaps as he glances at his fingers holding the pencil, he realizes that the elements of carbon in his skin, as well as the elements of phosphorus in his brain, were constructed by the very processes he has just articulated with his equations. What a moment that must have been, to suddenly recognize that he—his mind, his nervous system—is actually a space where this process has burst into awareness of *itself*.

"The Powers of the Universe" is my attempt to summarize what modern science has learned about the way in which the universe has constructed us. What an amazing moment we live in! It's like we've stumbled into some ancient castle and found the secret plans for our existence—plans that were never known by any earlier civilization. In the following summaries, I've drawn on widely accepted scientific knowledge in physics, astronomy, biology, geology, paleontology, and thermodynamics, and for the most part I've avoided speculative areas of science like string theory. I have nothing against speculation. But the planetary shift in consciousness we are in the midst of is already so radical that it is helpful to proceed in a grounded way, building our understanding of who we are upon knowledge we have reason to believe is reliable.

THE FOLLOWING WRITINGS WERE COMPILED BY BRUCE BOCHTE.



# Seamlessness

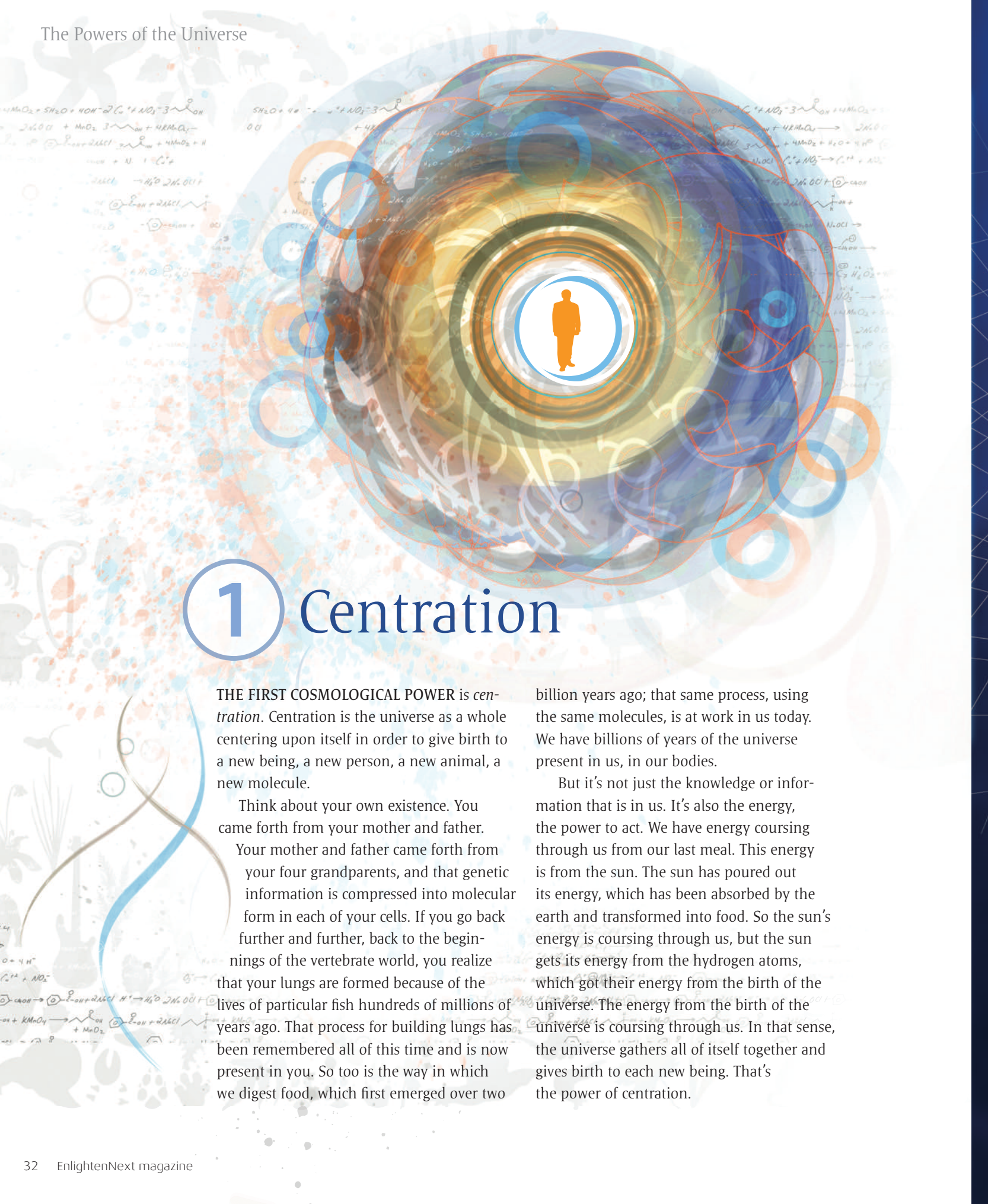
WE BEGIN OUR APPROACH to these powers of the universe with the little-understood idea of *seamlessness*. This is just my word for the Ground or Source of all Being—what classical Greek philosophy called the *apeiron*, sometimes translated as the realm of pure potentiality. Some scientists speculate that this primordial Ground might even correspond to what's known in elementary particle physics as the “vacuum” or the “quantum vacuum.”

The amazing notion of a quantum vacuum was first hypothesized in the 1920s and experimentally verified in the 1940s. We now know that pervading the entire universe is a realm that gives birth to an incessant stream of particles and anti-particles. These elementary quanta spontaneously burst forth into existence and then just as quickly annihilate

one another as they disappear back into seamlessness. Every verbal description of this realm is going to be adequate in some ways and inadequate in others. I used to call it “nothing-ness” as a way of indicating that this is not a realm of objects. But “seamlessness” carries the additional meaning of a divisionless domain replete with subtle connections.

In any event, even though our understanding of this domain is elementary in the extreme, we now know that the universe is more than just a place filled with things. Rather, the separate and distinct beings in the universe all have a common origin. This origin remains involved with the ongoing existence and functioning of each thing. Each being in the universe is grounded in a dynamic realm of pure generativity.





# 1 Centration

THE FIRST COSMOLOGICAL POWER is *centration*. Centration is the universe as a whole centering upon itself in order to give birth to a new being, a new person, a new animal, a new molecule.

Think about your own existence. You came forth from your mother and father.

Your mother and father came forth from your four grandparents, and that genetic information is compressed into molecular form in each of your cells. If you go back further and further, back to the beginnings of the vertebrate world, you realize that your lungs are formed because of the lives of particular fish hundreds of millions of years ago. That process for building lungs has been remembered all of this time and is now present in you. So too is the way in which we digest food, which first emerged over two

billion years ago; that same process, using the same molecules, is at work in us today. We have billions of years of the universe present in us, in our bodies.

But it's not just the knowledge or information that is in us. It's also the energy, the power to act. We have energy coursing through us from our last meal. This energy is from the sun. The sun has poured out its energy, which has been absorbed by the earth and transformed into food. So the sun's energy is coursing through us, but the sun gets its energy from the hydrogen atoms, which got their energy from the birth of the universe. The energy from the birth of the universe is coursing through us. In that sense, the universe gathers all of itself together and gives birth to each new being. That's the power of centration.





## 2 Allurement

THE SECOND POWER IS THAT OF *ALLUREMENT*. It's the way in which the whole universe holds itself together. At the level of the galaxies, we call this the gravitational interaction. Gravity is what keeps the galaxies in place; it's what draws the stars together. At the level of molecules,

it has a different name: it's called the electromagnetic interaction. The atoms and molecules in our body are being held together moment by moment by the attractive force of electromagnetism. The word *allurement* points to all of these various forms of attraction.





3

# Emergence

THE THIRD POWER is *emergence*. We’ve discovered that the universe is not a place; it’s a *story*, a story of an irreversible sequence of emergent events. For a long time, we thought the universe was an established realm that had its major creativity happening only at the beginning of time. We now understand that the universe is an *ongoing*

*creative event*. Stars came forth, galaxies came forth, planets have emerged, life burst into existence. This power of emergence could also be called ongoing creativity. In some ways, it’s the greatest discovery in the history of the human sciences—that the universe as a whole, and each being within it, is permeated with the power of emergence.



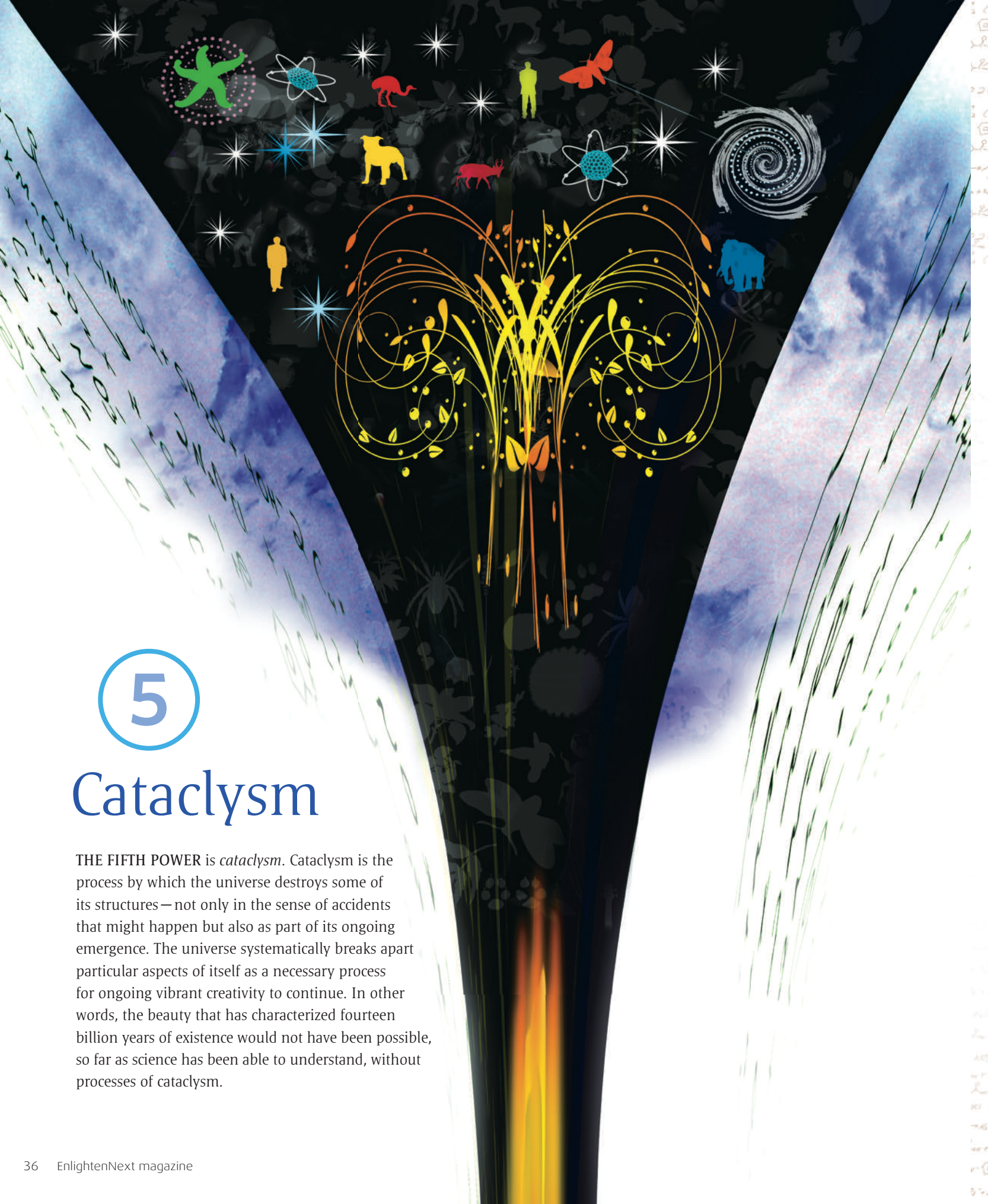
# 4

## Homeostasis

THE FOURTH POWER is that of *homeostasis*. Homeostasis is the way in which the great achievements of the universe are maintained. The term comes from the science of physiology and originally referred to the way in which a mammalian body maintains its structures. We are using it here more generally to describe how the universe maintains its great achievements. They don't just come and go. The universe values its finest moments of magnificence and holds them together.

The oyster shell is one such achievement, which has held together for generations and generations. It's something that has worked beautifully. And the interactions taking place on the planet as a whole have enabled all of this beauty to continue to come forth. The homeostasis of Earth as a dynamic integrated system holds together its communities, including the atmosphere and the biosphere and the geosphere.





5

## Cataclysm

THE FIFTH POWER is *cataclysm*. Cataclysm is the process by which the universe destroys some of its structures — not only in the sense of accidents that might happen but also as part of its ongoing emergence. The universe systematically breaks apart particular aspects of itself as a necessary process for ongoing vibrant creativity to continue. In other words, the beauty that has characterized fourteen billion years of existence would not have been possible, so far as science has been able to understand, without processes of cataclysm.

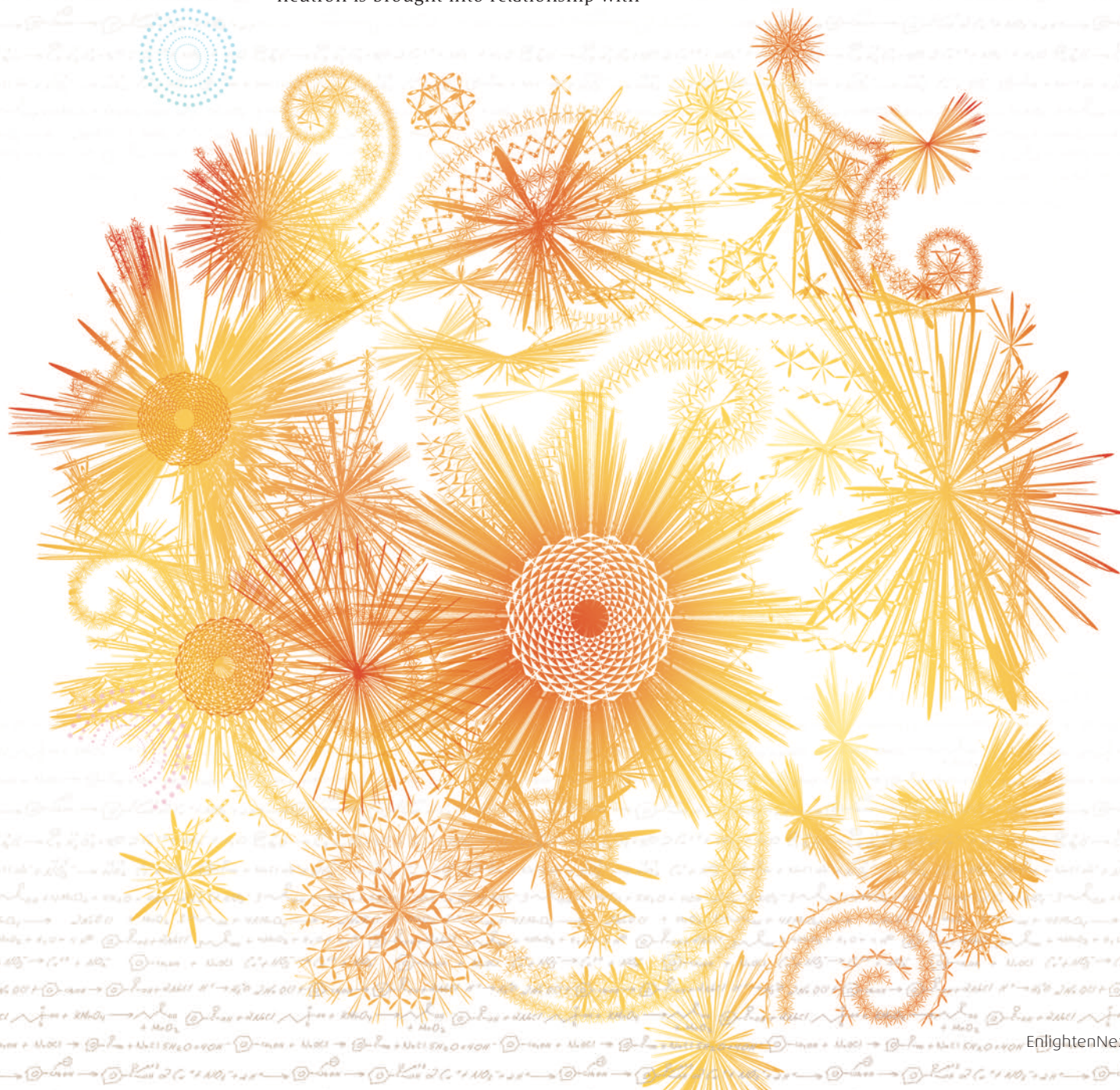


## 6

## Synergy

THE SIXTH POWER is *synergy*. A synergistic relationship is one that gives birth to causal factors in the universe that would not otherwise exist. One of the most surprising examples of this pertains to elementary particles such as neutrons and protons. For instance, if a neutron is on its own, it will disintegrate after only a few minutes. But if the same neutron is brought into relationship with

one or more protons, it can easily exist for billions of years. That's one way synergy operates in quantum physics. In biology, synergy can be thought of as collaborative association in order to arrive at strategies that are ever more successful in the great drama of life. Fundamentally, synergy shows the ontological power of relationship.





## 7

## Transmutation

NUMBER SEVEN is the power of *transmutation*. This is the way in which the universe sometimes insists that something new come forth. The universe never seems completely satisfied. Why didn't it just settle down and relax once it had hydrogen and helium atoms? When Earth finally emerged and brought forth bacteria, why didn't the universe just call it a day? Isn't it enough that tiny pieces of Earth jump with life?

Apparently not. Our universe is a self-transcending community of beings, and transcendence is often a necessity. That is, the universe often arrives at a fork in the road with a terrible option: either transmute into a new form or evaporate from the story.



8

# Transformation

**TRANSFORMATION**, A POWER related to *transmutation*, is the way in which change takes place in an entire society or community. It's an interconnected and self-amplifying dynamic: transmuted individuals give rise to new organizing codes that create a community in which it is even more likely that new individuals will go through transmutation. And so forth. Transformation is the way in which entire systems advance.

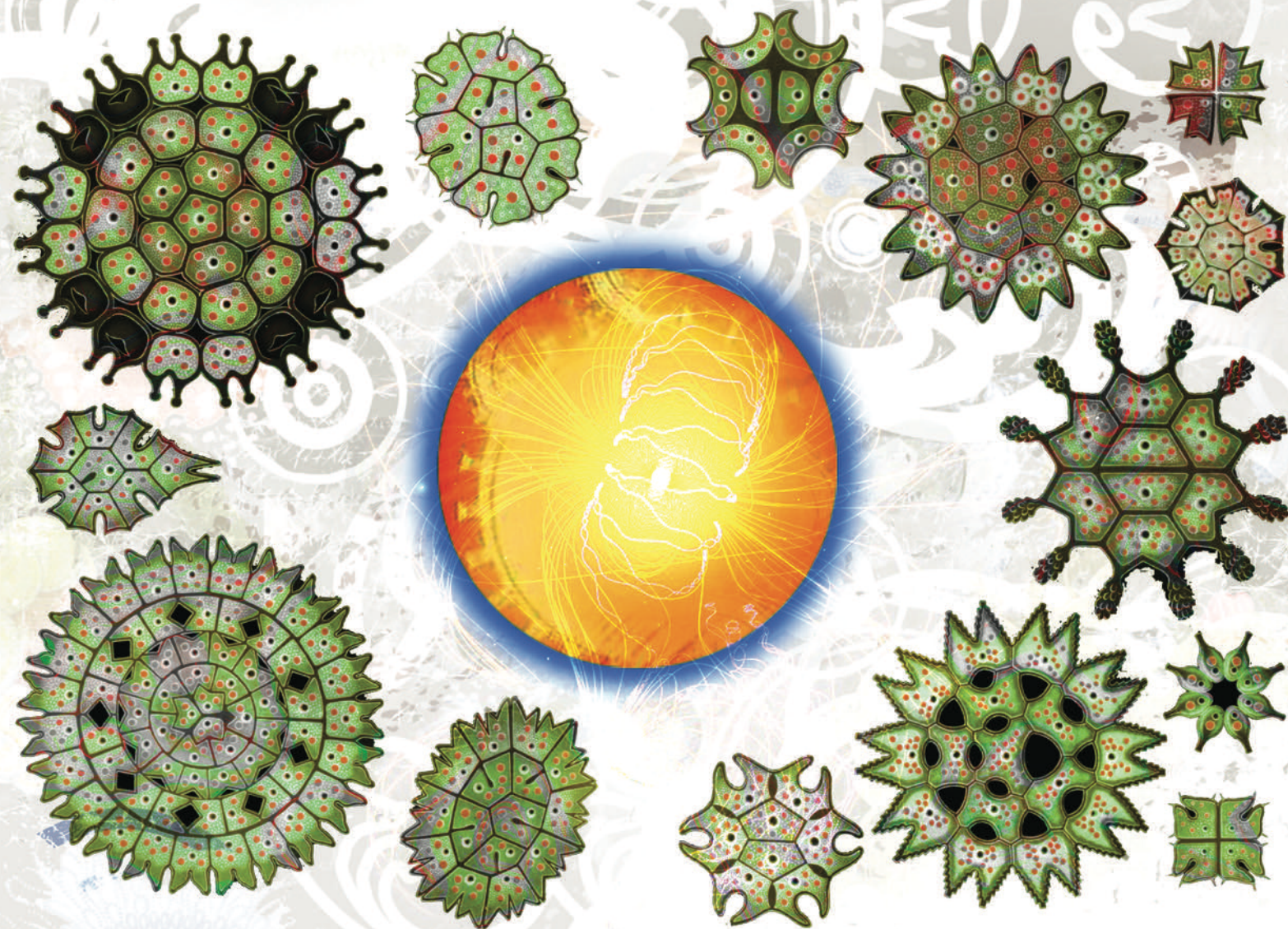




# 9 Interrelatedness

NUMBER NINE IS THE POWER of *inter-relatedness*—the power of integrity and connectivity. It could even be called “wholeness.” It is the way in which each being in the universe depends in various ways upon other beings in the universe.

Our own existence, for example, depends upon tiny organisms in the Pacific Ocean as well as the activity of protons in the sun. Seen from the outside, this power is interconnectivity; seen from the inside, this power is care or compassion.



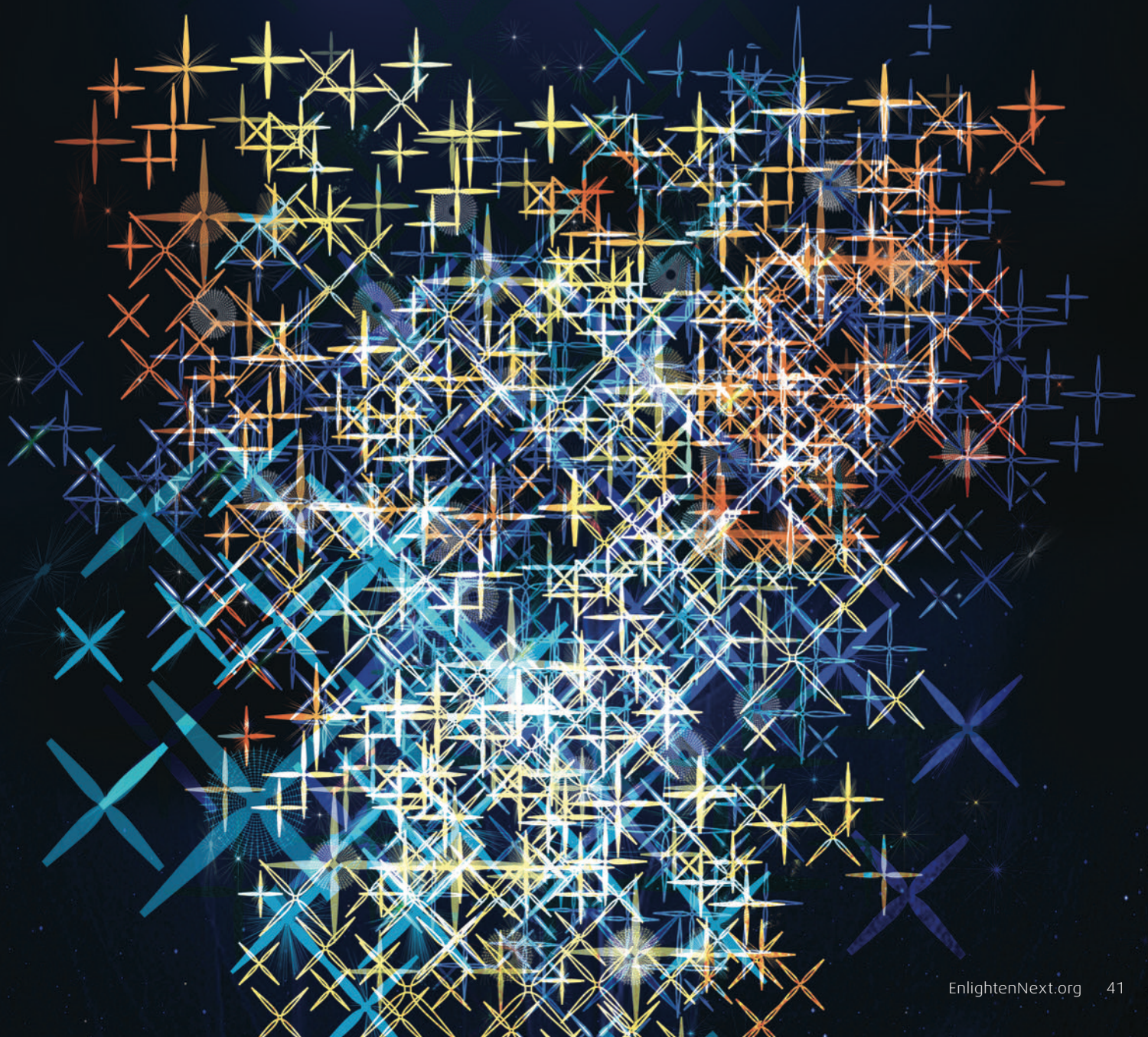


# 10 Radiance

THE TENTH AND LAST cosmological power is *radiance*. Radiance is the power referred to most directly by the second law of thermodynamics. In simplest terms, this law explains that any being with energy will disperse that energy. To radiate is the law of the universe. This is true of everything we examine. Even the coldest group of the tiniest hydrogen atoms in the

darkest night of intergalactic space are happily giving birth to, and releasing, photons of light instant after instant.

In my view, the power of radiance is an expression of the mysterious way in which the universe cannot contain the magnificence it houses. Instead, it is compelled to express itself in ten million different ways.





# The Guru & the Pandit Dialogue XXVI





# Eros, Buddha & the Spectrum of

# Love

**ANDREW COHEN & KEN WILBER**

**INTRODUCTION:** On a bright 90-degree day this past August, anticipation filled the air in the sanctuary of a repurposed modern church in downtown Boulder, Colorado. People from as far as France and Brazil had converged





## ANDREW COHEN: GURU

[n., Sanskrit]: one who teaches spiritual liberation from his or her own direct experience or realization.

Self-described “idealist with revolutionary inclinations” and widely recognized as a defining voice in the emerging field of evolutionary spirituality, Cohen has developed an original teaching for the twenty-first century which he calls Evolutionary Enlightenment. He is also the founder and editor in chief of *EnlightenNext* magazine.



## KEN WILBER: PANDIT

[n., Sanskrit]: a scholar, one who is deeply proficient and immersed in spiritual wisdom.

Self-described “defender of the dharma, an intellectual samurai,” 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. His books include *A Brief History of Everything* and *Integral Spirituality*.

on the Boulder Integral Center, filling the venue to capacity, to participate in a special event. For only the second time in the history of the Guru & the Pandit, their long-running dialogue series, spiritual teacher Andrew Cohen and integral philosopher Ken Wilber were conducting their conversation together live, in person, before an audience of integral thinkers and Evolutionaries.

Ever since the series’ debut in the pages of this magazine in 2002, their influential dialogues have united Cohen’s depth of experience as a teacher of enlightenment with Wilber’s formidable philosophical knowledge. It’s a creative interplay that has not only highlighted the all-important relationship between theory and practice but has also illuminated the new territory of evolutionary spirituality with increasing sophistication and clarity.



As the event began that day, Jeff Salzman, founder of Boulder Integral, gave a warm introduction to his guests. “Today we are graced with the presence of two extraordinary people,” he said, “who have given us so much in terms of mapping out the new territory that many of us find ourselves living in, in a way that softens the heart and sharpens the mind.” Over the next few hours, Cohen and Wilber explored their favorite topic—the intersection between the great mystical traditions of the past and new expressions of spiritual realization today. Many who were in attendance said they sensed the emerging possibility of a higher philosophical fusion between Cohen’s Evolutionary Enlightenment and Wilber’s Integral Theory, while others were struck by the respectful synergy they felt between these two evolutionary pathfinders, who seemed to be more in sync than ever.

In the article that follows, based on two of the best questions posed by members of the audience, Cohen and Wilber explore the relationship between traditional enlightenment, the new enlightenment, and a universal force of evolution called *love*.

—Tom Huston

## WAS THE BUDDHA ONLY HALF ENLIGHTENED?

**QUESTION:** Ken, I've heard you say that the Buddha wasn't as enlightened as an enlightened person today. In thinking about that, I've encountered a lot of different definitions of what enlightenment even is. Can you please explain what you mean?

**KEN WILBER:** Well, this is a controversial point, but there's a good reason why I continue to make it. What I've actually said is that Gautama Buddha was only half as enlightened as a modern sage has the potential to be. And to understand why that is, we have to look at a couple of facts.

First, we have to understand that reality consists of two fundamental dimensions: the realm of emptiness and the realm of form. Emptiness is the timeless, unmanifest ground of being, and realizing that primordial emptiness has traditionally been what spiritual enlightenment is all about. That's what the Buddha called *nirvana*. It means nothing is arising. It's a state of consciousness essentially similar to deep dreamless sleep, in that there's no pain, no self, no suffering, no desire—none of that. It's a place of peace, stillness, and freedom beyond the turmoil of manifest existence. And discovering that unmanifest emptiness has always been seen as the one way to find liberation from *samsara*—the wheel of pain and suffering, birth and death.

Now, Gautama Buddha realized emptiness perfectly, so from the point of view of that traditional understanding, he was enlightened. He experienced a perfect oneness in consciousness that transcended the multiplicity of manifestation, time, and form. But about eight hundred years after the time of Gautama, an extraordinary gentleman by the name of Nagarjuna came along and pointed out that if you're serious about finding ultimate oneness, then you can't just be looking for nirvana divorced from *samsara*, because that's still dualistic. You have to be looking, instead, for the union of nirvana

and *samsara*, the union of emptiness and form, the union of the unmanifest and the manifest, which Nagarjuna called *nonduality*.

This realization ushered in the whole Buddhist Mahayana revolution, summed up in the famous declaration of the Heart Sutra: "That which is form is not other than emptiness; that which is emptiness is not other than form." And this dramatically changed the way liberation was thought of. No longer was it thought of as escaping half of reality and hiding in the other half, but uniting both halves, finding an enlightenment that included both the freedom of emptiness and the fullness of form. All of a sudden, you're no longer just enlightened to the nature of your own consciousness inside here, looking at a separate world outside there. You're no longer looking at a mountain, you *are* the mountain. You're no longer looking at the sun, you are the sun. You're no longer touching the earth, you are the earth. Galaxies circulate through your blood and stars light up the neurons of your night, and you are one with all of this.

So that's the first point—the Buddha realized emptiness, but as far as we can tell, he didn't realize the fullness of non-duality, or becoming one with all of form.

The second point is that while emptiness is timeless and unchanging, the world of form is not. We now realize that the

The enlightened sage today is not necessarily *freer* than the Buddha—because timeless emptiness has never changed—but he or she is *fuller* and able to experience oneness with a lot more of manifestation.

KEN WILBER

world of form is continuously changing, evolving, and becoming. And that means the world of form has evolved twenty-five hundred years beyond Gautama Buddha's time. Since then, at least three major cultural stages have unfolded that are now part of the structural world of form. They are aspects of manifest reality that the Buddha didn't have access to, simply



because they didn't exist yet. So the sage of today is, evolutionarily speaking, several stages down the line from the Buddha. The enlightened sage today is not necessarily *freer* than the Buddha — because timeless emptiness has never changed — but he or she is *fuller* and able to experience oneness with a lot more of manifestation. In terms of evolutionary development, someone living in the twenty-first century is just further ahead.

**ANDREW COHEN:** This is an important distinction. Up until fairly recently in human history, the reference point for the Absolute, for awakening to the mystical Godhead, was only the

As the process of evolutionary emergence continues to happen, and the depth and breadth of our consciousness continue to grow, what is an enlightened person going to look like a thousand years from now? I can't even begin to imagine, which is what's so exciting.

ANDREW COHEN

unborn and uncreated timeless, formless, empty ground that Ken was referring to. It's a dimension that exists prior to all of manifestation, and when we awaken to that, we experience a freedom from being trapped in a physical form and from being trapped in a cognitive process. We experience a deep existential freedom and release from the entire world of manifestation. But, as Ken said, once we discover that the realm of emptiness and the world of form are one and not two, and then, moreover, that the world of form itself is *evolving*, the whole picture changes.

A million years from now, the traditional foundation for enlightened awareness — the realization of emptiness, of pure *Being* — will be the same as it is now because that dimension of ourselves can never change. That's why the Buddha called it

the Unborn. But everything else will continue to develop in a perpetual process of evolutionary *Becoming*. The Being is timeless and unchanging, whereas the Becoming is in a continual process of development and of emergence — the emergence of potentials that don't exist prior to certain breakthroughs. And so, as the process of evolutionary emergence continues to happen, and as the potential for the fullness of our humanity and the depth and breadth of our consciousness continue to grow, what is an enlightened person going to look like a thousand years from now? Or five thousand years from now? What are the glorious potentials that are going to be emerging at that time? I can't even begin to imagine, which is what's so exciting. It doesn't mean that the Buddha was not one of the greatest realizers in all of history, but it's just that there really is this new, emerging way of understanding the goal of the spiritual path. There's a radically creative, evolutionary dimension to enlightenment that we are only just beginning to awaken to.

## EROS: CREATIVITY AND ECSTATIC URGENCY

**WILBER:** Again, the great mystical traditions typically divide the Absolute into these two dimensions: one is radically timeless and formless, and the other relates to the world of space and time. In Hindu Vedanta, for example, the radically unmanifest, formless dimension of the Absolute is called *Nirguna-Brahman*. *Nirguna* means without qualities, so it's Brahman, or absolute Spirit, without any qualities whatsoever. But then, as the Absolute begins to manifest in and as the created world, it's referred to as *Saguna-Brahman*, or Brahman *with* qualities. These qualities are basically the earliest characteristics you can think of arising as the world emerges in manifest form. *Being*, *consciousness*, and *bliss* are the ones commonly described in Vedanta. But *creativity*, I think, is another important one, which Andrew and I often refer to by the Greek term *Eros*. It's the desire to exist, the drive of Spirit toward ever-increasing, ever-higher, ever-more-complex forms of existence. In other words, *Eros* is the drive of evolution — Spirit's own drive toward more and more complex forms of Kosmic<sup>1</sup> manifestation.

As we increasingly understand *Eros*, we increasingly understand what the new evolutionary enlightenment is all about and how Spirit manifests in the world of space and time.

<sup>1</sup>In Ken Wilber's Integral Theory, the Greek term *Kosmos* refers to the evolving totality of existence, encompassing not only the material cosmos but also the biological, emotional, mental, psychic, and spiritual dimensions that comprise our multidimensional reality.

In addition to being-consciousness-bliss, it's ecstatic, urgent, innovative creativity. And being plugged directly into that is one of the things that Andrew teaches, calling it an awakening to one's Authentic Self, which is the dynamic, liberated, spiritually evolving self as opposed to the unenlightened ego. This concept of the Authentic Self has become increasingly important because not only is it a true expression of spiritual self-liberation and awakening but it is radically needed in a world of serious global problems that demand wildly creative solutions. It directly challenges the idea that mystical spirituality is inherently life-withdrawing and not helpful in terms of dealing with the world's problems. Because, as a matter of fact, getting in touch with one's spiritual self and the ecstatic, innovative, creative drive of Eros that the spiritual self carries is one of the few things that actually *can* help us deal with today's problems.

**COHEN:** That's right. It's really important to realize that when the nonrelative Absolute chose to create the universe, it took a radical leap from formlessness to form, from being to becoming, from nonexistence to existence. When that leap happened, its nature or quality changed. The nature or quality of the Absolute in its timeless, unmanifest form is always perfect peace. But the instant time began and the Absolute changed shape and entered into the creative process as Eros, its nature and quality changed completely.

As human beings, we experience that quality as ecstatic urgency. And for those of us who are actually interested in awakening to evolution—to not just understand it conceptually with our minds but to really awaken to the process itself, as ourselves—we have to discover how to locate the primordial vibration or pulsation of the evolutionary impulse within our own being.

Now, the first and easiest place to locate that impulse is in the sex drive. Whenever we experience sexual desire, lust, and the overwhelming biological command to procreate, we're experiencing the ecstatic urgency of the Big Bang expressing itself within our own nervous systems. That's the most basic level of this vibration that we can feel, pulsing through our own physical bodies, and any animal can experience it as well.

But the next level of this is what makes human beings unique and extraordinary, and that's the internal command we feel to *innovate*. The human species is driven by an internally felt command and compulsion to give rise to that which is new. And any human being can relate to this. In your most creative moments, when you're really at your best, when your highest capacities are coming to the front and you feel

incredibly excited, inspired, and turned on by what is possible and by the ways you can actually contribute to the life process, you are experiencing ecstatic urgency. You're experiencing Eros. If you pay attention to how you feel when you're inspired by these higher creative potentials, you'll see that you experience an extraordinary enthusiasm, fearlessness, freedom, and lack of self-concern. Just as if you were entering into a very deep meditative state, your ego falls into the background, and what comes to the foreground is the overwhelming desire to give rise to that which has not existed before.

Finally, the highest level of this is the spiritual impulse—the urge to become more conscious. Where does the urge toward consciousness come from? Why is it that some of us awaken to an all-consuming compulsion toward consciousness, which we experience as the sense that “I *must* become more conscious”? There's a mysterious moral obligation that says, “I cannot remain in this semiconscious state. I must evolve, I have to evolve, I don't have any choice.” It's the aspiration to become a truly enlightened human being. What's so thrilling about it is to see it in the context of evolution and realize that your urge toward consciousness and my urge toward consciousness are both expressions of the same energy and intelligence that initiated the creative process with the Big Bang—and is driving us toward our own evolutionary enlightenment right now. Why? So that the universe can become more conscious through *us*.

## WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

**QUESTION:** One of the experiences that I've frequently had when I feel like I'm in alignment with the evolutionary impulse is this amazing love and sense of connection to the world, which I always find very encouraging and strengthening. You both spoke a lot about the experience of ecstasy and urgency, and I can relate to



that as well. But I'm wondering if love is also a quality that can potentially arise?

**WILBER:** From the perspective of Integral Theory, we can see two fundamental expressions of love at work in the Kosmos: Eros and Agape, which are both Greek words for love. With any holon,<sup>2</sup> there is a drive to reach down and embrace its already-existing lower levels—for instance, a cell embraces a molecule embraces an atom embraces a quark—which we call Agape. Then, when a holon reaches up to *create* higher levels, that's Eros. So Agape, with its power to embrace junior levels, can definitely be felt as what we generally call love. But Eros can be felt as what's generally called love as well, and that drive

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KEN WILBER

toward higher creative unions is one of the most astonishing things about Eros, and about the universe itself.

I mean, think about it. At one point in history, there was nothing but atoms wandering around. And one day, several atoms got together and were just kind of sitting there, having a little tea party, when all of a sudden, a single membrane drops around them and they form a single molecule. All of these atoms become one molecule. Now, it's really astonishing that the universe would do this. Some think that this is some sort of chance, random mutation—but that, in fact, is exactly what it *isn't*. It's the opposite of chance or randomness. It's evidence of a force that is pushing against randomness in the universe.

Now, if the emergence of molecules wasn't astonishing enough, the real kicker is that dozens of these molecules, each a different type, each playing a different role, got together for the next party. They were just hanging out, kind of boogying

and dancing around. Then all of a sudden a membrane drops around them and a single cell emerges. And what's more, it's *alive*. It can reproduce. The fact that such a thing can happen is a miracle. It's just unbelievable.

Cells wandered around for a long time. Eventually, some of them got together. And *pow!* Another single boundary drops around them, and multicellular organisms and plant life emerge.

And on and on it goes, with higher unities being created as you move from plant life into locomotive life and the emergence of animals, and then animals get more and more complex as a neural net drops down and emerges, and then a reptilian brain stem, and then a limbic system, and then a paleomammalian brain, and then a cortex. And then something new with human beings: a neocortex that makes it possible for you to comprehend these words.

All of this, without exception, is driven by *love*. The great philosophers throughout history have referred to it by many names. Eros is one of the most common.

Now, Neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory holds that all of these transformations upward were just the result of chance and randomness. But there is no way in hell that the universe went from atoms to Shakespeare out of random stabs. This is an extraordinarily *driven* process. The astrophysicist Erich Jantsch referred to evolution as “self-organization through self-transcendence,” which is a good way to think about it. Because when this shows up in human beings, Eros shows up in increasingly higher, self-transcending levels of unity and consciousness.

In other words, consciousness initially goes from being *egocentric* and caring only about itself, or what Carol Gilligan called in her research on women the “selfish” stage of development. Then it moves to the *ethnocentric* stage, which she called “care” because in noticing somebody outside of your own egocentric self—such as your family or ethnic group—you can start to care for them. So care and love, in a certain sense, first come into existence with this ethnocentric level. Then there's the *worldcentric* stage and what Gilligan calls the move from care to “universal care.” That means that you begin to care about all human beings, period. You start to feel a universal love for humanity, a love for your identity with all human beings around the world. And then to move into the *Kosmocentric* stage is to find an identity with, and a love for, all sentient beings everywhere.

What this means, essentially, is that there's a spectrum of love. So love, when seen in an evolutionary context, is this embracing emotion of reaching out and finding ever wider and greater unities. It means you are transcending yourself more and

<sup>2</sup>In Integral Theory, a holon is a fundamental component of reality, defined as something that is both a *whole* entity in itself while simultaneously being *part* of a larger whole.

more—and there is increasingly more Authentic Self and less ego—until there’s a dramatic self-liberation and self-realization. You awaken to your own “Supreme Identity,” as the Sufis call it, which is this radical oneness with the entirety of existence.

## WHEN LOVE THREATENS THE STATUS QUO

**COHEN:** I think the implications of these higher levels of love can become very profound. Especially in an enlightenment context, the awakening to what we could call *spiritual* love actually threatens the status quo—both the status quo of our personal lives and our culturally shared status quo. Often people in spiritual contexts use the word love in a way that makes everybody feel very warm and fuzzy. And real love is and always will be an ecstatic experience of euphoria. But in my experience, the emergence of authentic spiritual love, which is part of the process of awakening to that which is absolute and nonrelative, profoundly threatens the status quo of our separate, personal selves. It compels us and challenges us to take a big step forward and upward for the biggest reasons imaginable.

**WILBER:** And that is threatening. A bullwhip in the temple!

**COHEN:** Absolutely. And we have to appreciate, as you said, that there are many different levels of love. Someone may say, “I love spaghetti.” Okay, well, that’s one kind of love. Or “I really love my dog.” That’s also an authentic experience of love. Or “I love my spouse.” “I love my daughter.” “I love my friends.” “I love my community.” And so on. These are all real emotional experiences, and they all have different qualities.

But when we awaken to the deeper dimensions of nonrelative, absolute manifestations of love, we begin to feel a quality of emotion that’s of a whole different order. It radically transcends any of our lesser experiences of love and may begin to shake up—in very direct, powerful, poignant, and sometimes shocking ways—many of the notions of love that we had before we became enlightened by this far deeper experience of spiritual love. We might begin to see through and no longer feel so at one with the other, or the others, in the way that we did before. Now we’re seeing them from a higher perspective, and we’re experiencing a love that isn’t personal anymore. It’s not based on attachment or historical experience or personal history. And suddenly we find that this love begins to include more of the world, more of the universe, more of the Kosmos. It’s a more inclusive, less exclusive kind of love.

The individuals with whom we had these more relative experiences of love and attachment may even start to feel that we don’t love them anymore. Of course, we don’t love them any less. We’ve simply found a deeper source of love that includes a lot more of the Kosmos—specifically, the *interior* of the Kosmos. We discover that we’re no longer in love with individuals as much as we’re in love with *consciousness itself*. And that profoundly changes the way we relate to the world. It changes the quality of our relationships. It changes the way we think about what the word *relationship* even means, and it forces us to question literally everything.

So the experience of authentic spiritual love always challenges the status quo of our personal selves in a way that’s very dramatic, evolutionary, and deeply inspiring. But the point is, if we really want to know what love is, if we want to be intoxicated with spiritual love, then we’re going to have to be willing to relinquish our attachment to the way things have been. Things may change very dramatically, or maybe things won’t change that much, but we have to be ready for the earth to shake. Real love creates earthquakes and reveals to us a completely different landscape from anything we’ve known before.

**WILBER:** The higher you go up the spectrum of consciousness, the more capacity you will have for love. And what you’re describing is a love born of a very advanced consciousness indeed. It’s an ultimate identity with the entire manifest realm. And this love for all manifestation, this spiritual love, is an

The experience of authentic spiritual love always challenges the status quo of our personal selves in a way that’s very dramatic, evolutionary, and deeply inspiring.

ANDREW COHEN

ecstatic Eros drive that goes all the way back to the beginning of the universe, pulling things together into higher and higher unities for fourteen billion years and never giving up.



**COHEN:** That's right. And it would be good to come back briefly to what you were saying about there being two different *kinds* of spiritual love—Eros and Agape—because I've given a lot of thought to this, and it's a significant distinction in terms of understanding what Evolutionary Enlightenment is about.

If we look at more traditional notions of enlightenment, in the East and the West, the idea seems to be that once an individual awakens to who they really are, as Spirit, the outward expression of their awakening usually has to do with healing—compassionately healing the suffering that exists in the world. And there have been many great spiritual masters and enlightened realizers historically—and there are many today—who express their awakening through doing heroic, courageous, and deeply compassionate work to heal the very real suffering in the world. But it's rare that we see the kind of ecstatic, forward-reaching Eros that we're describing here. And I think that when one awakens to Eros, or the evolutionary

healing the problems and suffering that exist all around us. So the experience of love as Agape and the experience of love as Eros, at least in my understanding, are two very significant but very different manifestations of what spiritual love is—and two very different expressions of enlightened consciousness. And it's important to understand that spiritual love comes in these different forms. We need to be aware of this so that when we become overwhelmed by the power of love, we'll be able to recognize what we're experiencing and realize that it's not all the same.

## WARRIORS FOR THE POSSIBLE

**WILBER:** Let me just add that it is Eros itself that gives rise to more Agape by driving the process of evolution toward higher and wider embraces. In human beings, it's Eros driving the move from egocentric to ethnocentric, ethnocentric to worldcentric, and worldcentric to Kosmocentric stages of consciousness. And as each new level of consciousness and love emerges, one's previous understanding of love is completely revamped to embrace more of the Kosmos, which can be quite dramatic.

As I mentioned earlier, egocentric moving into ethnocentric is a profound leap, because it means, rather shockingly, that I am no longer concerned only about myself. I actually care for others. I start caring for my family, my tribe, my religious group, and my nation. That is a move up into a care mode, an ethnocentric mode. But then what's even more shocking is when Eros pushes ethnocentric upward into worldcentric—and this pushes, for example, fundamentalists who think they have the one and only correct way to God and that you're going to burn in everlasting damnation if you don't accept Jesus as your personal savior. When Eros moves ethnocentric fundamentalists into the worldcentric stage, they suddenly realize that all human beings are to be treated fairly regardless of race, color, sex, or creed. That's a shockingly different type of love, even though ethnocentric love is genuine enough love. I mean, Nazis loved their families. They just didn't love anybody else's families! So worldcentric represents a higher degree of love than ethnocentric. And finally, the Kosmocentric stage is just a blast beyond worldcentric—or our being tied to this finite identification with humanness itself—where we start loving all sentient beings and the whole evolutionary trajectory that has led to this moment. So the shocking readjustment that each new level of love can bring goes all the way up the scale.

And today, humanity is confronted by major problems that simply cannot be solved by ethnocentric nation-states because the problems are genuinely global in magnitude. So if we don't

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KEN WILBER

impulse, sooner or later the bias inevitably shifts. We become less concerned with healing the world and more concerned with giving rise to that which is truly evolutionary and *new*.

One of the few times I've seen this expressed in the traditions is in the biblical story about Jesus walking along the road with his disciples. A man approaches them, wanting to follow Jesus, but he asks if he can bury his dead father first—according to Jewish tradition, you have to bury the dead. And Jesus basically says to him, "Let the dead bury the dead! What we're doing is more important."

When we awaken to these new emergent potentials, and if we keep going and we don't stop, we become far more interested in giving rise to what's *possible* than in the process of

have individuals who are increasingly capable of that type of larger, loving embrace and creative expanse—which means being *at least* worldcentric—then we are really in trouble. I think we all sort of intuit this. And I think a lot of us realize that this drive that we feel toward integral and evolutionary spirituality is actually a drive to grasp the global situation, to be able to get a handle on it, and to be able to make a positive contribution to the situation because, again, if we don't, we are in a lot of trouble.

The fact that this is the first time that mankind's problems have become essentially global, and that it's also the first time in history that both our philosophy and spirituality have become global, integral, and evolutionary, isn't an accident. I think these things are arising together. The evolutionary minds and spirits are arising that will be capable of confronting these global issues. So it's global minds and spirits for global issues and solutions. And I think we can all feel deep within our being how important this is, and that it's a very new call for many of us.

**COHEN:** And to add to that, in relationship to figuring out how to deal with the global crisis and the many problems we're facing collectively as a species, I think that the worldcentric stage of development is enough. Worldcentric should be enough to allow us to solve the problems we're all facing, because in order to rise to the occasion and really work together, we need to be able to see ourselves as part of a world process—as six billion citizens of planet Earth—rather than anything less than that.

But once we've awakened to a Kosmocentric perspective, we can see that everything that's happening here on Earth—including everything that's happening within our own interior consciousness—has been produced by, and is part of, a Kosmic unfolding. This realization creates more space around the actual events that are taking place here within our psyche, within our culture, and in the world around us. So learning how to see everything that's happening as part of a Kosmic process—not just intellectually, but as a kind of interior unfolding—will awaken compassion within us, for sure. But it also awakens an appreciation for how unbelievably delicate this whole experiment is. We see that what's happening here is almost unbearably poignant in its sensitivity and delicacy, and we recognize how much unimaginable potential there is in human beings if we survive and continue—and how much would be tragically wasted if we don't.

By taking the step beyond this worldcentric capacity to awaken to the Kosmocentric stage, we really do begin to see everything from an evolutionary, deep-time perspective, which

helps us to develop a greater sense of appreciation for how miraculous the process is, how miraculous we all are, how extraordinary human history is, and how extraordinary nature is. We understand more and more why we have all of the problems we have. We feel less and less victimized by the problems we face and see that we don't really have an excuse to give in to cynicism or nihilism. If it all could have happened another way, it would have. But it didn't, because this is how evolution has been working through us, doing the best it can. Humanity has been doing more or less the best we've been able to do up until now.

Through a Kosmocentric lens, we begin to see everything in this way, but it doesn't take away, at all, from the sense of overwhelming urgency that we have to wake up and find a way to do things a *lot* better. Because unless we solve these prob-

When we awaken to these new emergent potentials, and if we keep going and we don't stop, we become far more interested in giving rise to what's *possible* than in the process of healing the problems and suffering that exist all around us.

ANDREW COHEN

lems, the grand experiment of life, at least in this particular corner of our galaxy, is probably not going to work out. At the same time, we begin to find a growing sense of appreciation for everything that has happened, *including* all of the problems. We realize that conflict and struggle are inherent parts of the evolutionary process, and this gives us more strength to carry on and to take responsibility for it all. It's a vast, evolutionarily enlightened perspective that opens our hearts in the biggest way, inspiring us to stand up tall, roll up our sleeves, and be willing to be warriors for the possible. ■



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# Dreams of an Eco-Spiritual Futurist

A conversation with British  
sustainability strategist Hardin Tibbs

By Ross Robertson

**APPROXIMATELY FOUR YEARS AGO**, I first heard about a growing strand of environmentalism called “bright green” and explored its emergence in the article “A Brighter Shade of Green: Rebooting Environmentalism for the Twenty-First Century” (*EnlightenNext*, Issue 38, October–December 2007). As a former activist myself, I was lit up







by the discovery of a new way of thinking about ecology and sustainability that no longer vilified humanity's presence on planet Earth but rather highlighted our potential to redesign modern society through technological and cultural innovation. I started giving lectures and workshops on the subject, traveling to conferences, and talking with all kinds of people—from integral philosophers to climate scientists, artists to activists, engineers to businessmen. Of all the many conversations I've had along the way about the developing edges of bright green thought, some of the most interesting have been the ones I've had with a brilliant, soft-spoken British gentleman named Hardin Tibbs.

I met Mr. Tibbs in Washington, DC, last June at the awards ceremony for the Buckminster Fuller Institute's Buckminster Fuller Challenge—an annual \$100,000 design prize for which he served as head of this year's jury—and was immediately impressed. CEO of the UK-based management consulting firm Synthesys Strategic Consulting, Tibbs is many things—an accomplished futurist and scenario planner, a business analyst, and an expert in sustainability strategy and design. Early in his career, he'd helped pioneer the application of ecological principles to the processes of industry, a discipline known as “industrial ecology” that later grew popular through books like Paul Hawken's *The Ecology of Commerce* and William McDonough and Michael Braungart's *Cradle to Cradle*. He'd also been deeply influenced by Buckminster Fuller himself, whose writings introduced him to ideas of an order he'd never considered before.

“Bucky gave me permission to think about really big questions,” Tibbs said in a talk he delivered the day after the awards ceremony in DC, “to think the biggest possible thoughts about the world—what it was, where we're going, and what we should be doing here.” He went on to describe some of the major currents of thought that had grown out of his grappling with these fundamental questions, and the more I began to grok the complexities of his radically future-oriented perspective, the more I was hooked. “For quite a long time, people were trying to sort of ‘save’ nature, ‘save’ the biosphere, and preserve the preceding natural conditions on Earth,” Tibbs explained. “But I think it's too late for that now. History is in a kind of riptide. One of my colleagues at the Global Business Network, Stewart Brand, coined the phrase ‘history in motion’ around 2003. And we're all right in the middle of that.”

The seed for this interview was planted then, when I realized that Tibbs had been a close colleague of Stewart Brand—one of my biggest environmental heroes, and a significant influence on the evolution of my thinking over the last few years. They worked together in the 1990s at the Global Business Network, a strategic consulting firm where Tibbs honed his chops as a futurist and scenario planner. Brand is a counterculture demigod, a former Merry Prankster who created the famous *Whole Earth Catalog* in 1968 and taught an entire generation of anti-establishment greens how to think outside the box—and how to install their first solar panels. Always evolving his thinking, Brand went on to found a

host of other innovative ventures, including the WELL and the Long Now Foundation. His latest book, *Whole Earth Discipline*—a self-described “ecopragmatist manifesto” exploring some of the most difficult fault lines between old modes of green thinking and new ones—has stirred up a great deal of both controversy and sensation since its release in Fall 2009. So I thought it might serve as a provocative reference point for my interview with Tibbs, and I wasn't disappointed.

In the dialogue that follows, Tibbs and I discussed several of Brand's key ideas, which he sometimes refers to as “environmental heresies,” using them as launching pads for our discussion about the future of humanity, and the future of environmentalism, on a rapidly warming globe. We didn't always agree, but that's part of what made the interaction so rewarding. Tibbs is consistently open-minded and subtly sophisticated—and he exhibits in spades one of the rarest blends of technological savvy and spiritual intelligence I've ever encountered. It's a combination I'm convinced we need more of at the cutting edge of bright green.



**ENLIGHTENNEXT:** *What's your definition of sustainability?*

**HARDIN TIBBS:** Fundamentally, sustainability means that everything we do, including the technology we create and design, has to mesh with the ecology—or what James Lovelock calls the *geophysiology*—of the planet. The planetary context is always the reference point.

One way of thinking about the planet is as a huge system of material flows. And you can think of our industrial economy as another huge materials-transport system. As long as human industry was very small compared with nature, it wasn't much of an issue. But it has now gotten very big, and it's also growing quite rapidly. If you look at the quantities of toxic heavy metals that are being moved around in the industrial economy, for example, in almost every case they are several times greater than the amount of those same elements moving around the biosphere through natural processes, like the weathering of rock and so on. We've reached a global scale of operating, and something has to give at this point.

So we have to make a shift from thinking about technology as something we use for mastering or controlling nature to something we design to *fit in* with nature. This shift requires some humility, and that may be one of the reasons why we find it rather difficult to do. But if we can find the wherewithal



to do this, it will give us a blend of the natural and the technological if you like—a kind of technology that’s not going against the grain of nature but with it.

I don’t have any problem with the idea of advanced technology—that’s not the issue. The issue is with the design and the pattern of deployment of the technology. When we think about the possibility of big, game-changing breakthroughs, we tend to think only in terms of advanced technologies. But you can take *any* level of technology and design it to be used in various ways. In order for us to become sustainable, we need to apply this kind of ecological design approach to old and new technologies alike.

**EN:** *That’s a very clarifying distinction you’re making, because for a lot of people sustainability typically means moving away from technology, period. Technology is seen as inherently crude, clumsy, and automatically equated with mastery over nature. So to be able to say, “No, technology can evolve, it can be designed differently”—that’s a big step that many environmentalists are reluctant to take.*

**HT:** Yes, it is. But whether a technological capability is good or bad depends on how we use it. So the way something is designed is really the test of whether or not it is sustainable.

The sprawling urban megacity—  
somewhere like São Paulo, where  
you’ve got densely populated  
shantytowns right next to the  
enclaves of the super-rich—  
is a growing phenomenon  
around the world.

**EN:** *Stewart Brand, whom you know well from your days working together at the Global Business Network, has a knack like few others for stirring up controversy in the environmental world. I think that’s healthy, because he’s forcing a lot of people—myself included—to reexamine their perspectives and values in light of changing times.*

*Over the past few decades, Brand himself has changed his mind about many of the things greens have traditionally held most dear, like the problems of massive urbanization, the dangers of nuclear power, and our longstanding fears surrounding genetic and even geospheric engineering. Five years ago, he took his first public swings at some of these big sacred cows in an article for MIT’s Technology Review called “Environmental Heresies,” and he launched a full-scale*

*attack with his recent book Whole Earth Discipline. I think each of his “heresies”—urbanization, nuclear power, genetic engineering, and geoengineering—provide an interesting reference point for pushing the boundaries of the environmental conversation. And I’d like to use some of them as a contextual basis for our dialogue together, if that’s alright with you.*

**HT:** Indeed. Brand does revel in being controversial, I think. He once told me that he comes from the Midwest, and back



home, they apparently said of the Brands, “If you throw a Brand in the river, he’ll float upstream.” So there is that quality to his thinking.

I went to see him on his recent book tour for *Whole Earth Discipline*, and he was careful to say, more or less: “Look, this book is basically journalism. It’s the stories I’m reporting that are the main thing, and you should feel free to draw your own conclusions.” He actually took a step back from positioning himself too strongly on any one of these issues. But he loves being provocative. And he has such a good turn of phrase.

**EN:** *I know, he really does. And more than pushing any particular position on any particular issue, as you were saying, his underlying message is about shifting away from the deep romanticism and conservatism of classic environmental thinking toward scientific pragmatism and the willingness to openly question everything. I really see him as a metaphor of environmentalism itself evolving, and that’s one of the reasons I find him so interesting.*

**HT:** Well, that willingness to be flexible and to change one’s mind if there’s new information available is, I think, a very positive thing.

## Metropolis Earth

**EN:** *So the first of Brand’s environmental heresies is population, particularly the global demographic shift from rural to urban modes of living. More than half the human race now lives in cities, which sounds on the surface like an ecological disaster. Yet more and more people in the environmental world, including Brand, are speaking instead to the advantages of urbanization in terms of sustainability. What are your thoughts on this?*

**HT:** I guess I think about global population growth as being a very useful measuring stick more than I see it as a problem. It’s not something to be afraid of or something we should try to manipulate coercively, because we are the actual human beings we’re talking about here. It’s not some external phenomenon. In fact, I often use the profile of population and where it might go in the future as a device for allowing us to understand the big picture, because the sheer number of people in the world is obviously one of the major drivers of consumption.

The global population is still growing rapidly. In 1999, it reached 6 billion, and this year I think it’s somewhere around 6.7 or 6.8 billion. But the interesting thing is that although it is increasing, the rate of increase is actually dropping, so there’s a

deceleration going on. It’s as if you are in your car on the highway and you take your foot off the accelerator. The car is still moving rapidly, but it’s beginning to slow down. In a sense, that’s the good news. This deceleration is a natural phenomenon caused by increasing material well-being, good housing, food, employment, health care, sanitation, clean water, and so on. These trends naturally drive down birth rates. Another big factor is education, particularly education for women, along with the availability of birth control. All of these things are non-coercive; people tend to want them anyway.

There’s a famous equation that goes back to Paul Ehrlich, the so-called IPAT equation, in which environmental impact (I) is a function of the size of the population (P), how affluent it is and therefore how much people consume (A), and the kind of technology they use and how environmentally clean it is (T). Ehrlich’s equation has been made a bit more sophisticated over the years, but that’s still a basic way of thinking about it. What it says is that if the population is going to continue to increase, and if we are going to continue to be more affluent, which it’s hard to argue against when large portions of the world’s population are surviving on less than a dollar a day, then the third part, the technology factor, is what needs to take up the slack. And that takes us back to our earlier conversation about sustainable design.

**EN:** *Exactly. As Brand points out, this global demographic transition is taking hundreds of thousands of people every day from the country to the city—particularly to the teeming megacities of the developing world like Lagos, Nigeria, and São Paulo, Brazil. When we think about masses and masses of people living in dense urban environments, it’s easy to picture, in sort of Dickensian terms, the most squalid environment imaginable to live in. But Brand pitches this demographic transition very differently. The story he tells is one of rising economic opportunity, personal empowerment, social connectivity, and enormous creative potential coming to life. Do you agree with him?*

**HT:** In straight factual terms, he’s absolutely right. The proportion of people in cities is growing very rapidly, and the numbers of people left in the countryside are falling. The sprawling urban megacity—somewhere like São Paulo, where you’ve got densely populated shantytowns right next to the enclaves of the super-rich—is obviously a growing phenomenon around the world. I’ve seen myself, in places like São Paulo, that the shantytowns are indeed enormously creative. It’s a real eye-opener to see what goes on there.

At the same time, I’d have to say that from a longer-term perspective, I don’t really see this as a sustainable solution.





# Buckminster Fuller: First Poet of Technology

**IN EARLY 1927, A YOUNG INVENTOR** named Buckminster Fuller stood on the banks of Lake Michigan contemplating suicide. Having just lost his daughter to polio and been laid off from his job, the thirty-two-year-old World War I veteran was pondering whether or not the universe would be better off without him when suddenly he was overtaken by a vision that would dramatically alter the course of his life. He heard a voice from within saying, “You do not have the right to eliminate yourself. You do not belong to you. You belong to the universe.”

This was the birth of the Buckminster Fuller we know today: the popularizer of the geodesic dome, an early pioneer in whole-systems thinking, and one of the brightest minds of the twentieth century. Fuller’s lakeside experience inspired him to embark upon a fifty-plus-year experiment in human potential in which he would use his own life to “discover what the

little, penniless, unknown individual might be able to do effectively on behalf of all humanity.” And he discovered *a lot*.

By the time “Bucky” died in 1983 at the age of eighty-seven, buildings inspired by his geodesic-dome design covered more land area than those of any other architect in history. He had published twenty-eight books, given more than two thousand lectures at over five hundred universities around the world, appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine, and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Fuller was driven by a kind of mystically inspired eco-techno-humanism that the world had never seen before. Coming of age during the technological renaissance of the twentieth century, he believed that the newfound power of the machine was inseparable from the spiritual force of the universe. And he was convinced that by mastering new technological potentials, it was possible to “raise 100% of humanity to

a level of previously unimagined success.” The goal of his work, which he called “comprehensive anticipatory design science,” was to rethink and redesign just about everything, from our cars and our houses to our language and political institutions.

While Bucky invented countless futuristic devices, his greatest contribution to humanity may have been his dynamic and deeply altruistic orientation towards life, which he summed up in his 1970 book, *I Seem To Be A Verb*: “I live on Earth at present, and I don’t know what I am. I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing—a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process—an integral function of the universe.” Few people have ever heard of his three-wheeled Dymaxion car or his giant interactive world-peace board game. But Fuller’s legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of those he inspired to see themselves as crucial components of “an eternally regenerative universe.”



Because of the sheer numbers of people on the planet now and the fact that it's going to take some period of time to make a transition to sustainability, I think that for the medium run, Brand is probably right. We have to kind of work with this, for a while at least. So I do think that new concepts of urban design are going to be a major focus for sustainable innovation in the years ahead, and probably quite a number of solutions are going to arise from that. But if you were to ask me to look many decades or even hundreds of years into the future, I would imagine that eventually what we're going to see are smaller sustainable cities spread more evenly through the countryside rather than these vast collections of people in just a few geographical areas—cities measured more in terms of hundreds of thousands or a few million people, but probably not tens of millions.

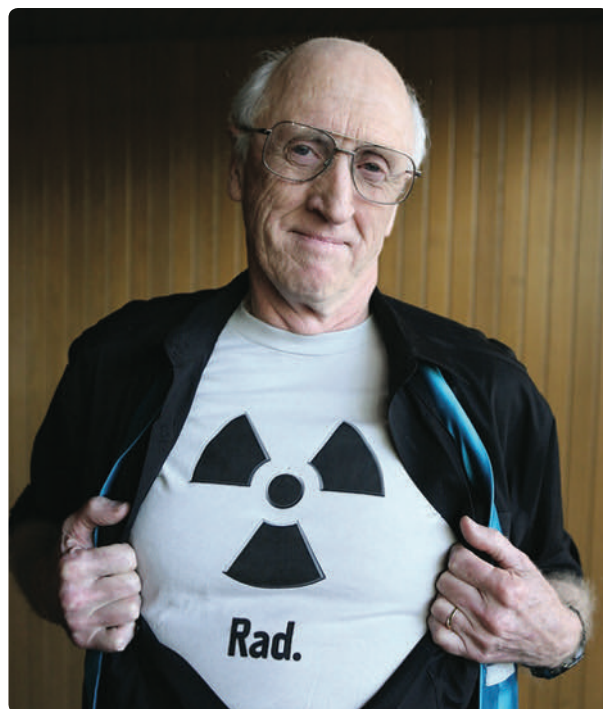
**EN:** *Why do you say that?*

**HT:** If you think of these cities of the future in terms of their ecological footprint and how they interface with the environment around them, it's probably going to be easier to manage that as a series of smaller cells blended into the hinterlands. In some sense, perhaps they'll be more like the walled cities of the Renaissance, with very defined boundaries—not to protect citizens inside from marauding warmongers but rather to protect *nature* from the citizens. I think we're going to see the establishment of very clear boundaries between the city and the wilderness surrounding it. But in the meantime, these megacities are going to be with us for a while yet.

## Nuclear Power and the Future of Energy

**EN:** *The second of Brand's environmental heresies is nuclear power. And he has definitely been stirring up a hornet's nest with this one. Along with James Lovelock, father of the famous Gaia hypothesis, he's probably the most esteemed environmentalist to embrace nuclear energy and argue that it may actually be our best short-term solution for preventing catastrophic global warming. According to his reasoning, there's just no other way to take enough coal plants offline and reduce carbon emissions fast enough to ward off a nightmare climate scenario. I'm curious to hear your take on this. How do you see our energy future in relationship to climate change?*

**HT:** I certainly agree that the future energy supply is a real issue, not just because of climate change but also because of



*"Heretical" environmentalist Stewart Brand, whose willingness to question the status quo of the old green agenda includes advocating nuclear power as an interim solution to climate change*

the whole issue of peak oil. And if you're a big energy company or a government, this is a real headache. At the same time you're trying to reduce carbon emissions, you're also hampered by worrying about how the overall rising energy demand can possibly be met. Having worked for both energy companies and for governments, I understand the difficulty of the situation they're in. But if I take off my corporate-adviser hat and put on my pure futurist hat, then the situation starts to look different. And this is probably where I would diverge a bit from Brand's point of view.

One of James Lovelock's arguments, which I think Brand has picked up, is that the whole of industry should be kind of hermetically sealed off from nature, and that nuclear power is good because the amount of waste it produces—never mind the fact that it's radioactive—is so small. If all electricity was nuclear, it would only generate something on the order of a candy bar's weight worth of waste, per person, per year. From that point of view, it's a relatively containable problem to deal with compared to the sweeping worldwide impacts of global warming. We also know that nuclear can generate large amounts of energy for long periods of time, which is what we need for our current industrial base. The French example is generally pointed to, where they built large numbers of conventional nuclear power stations over a fairly short timeframe and now have one of the lowest-carbon-generating bases of anywhere in the world.

So I know exactly where Brand's coming from on this. But it's a static line of argument, and things are not static. One thing we can say about the future is that it will have all sorts of things in it that we don't know about at the moment. Another thing we can say is that all of our thinking about the future hinges on the kind of assumptions we decide to impose on our thought experiment. If I were to make the same set of assumptions that Brand and Lovelock are making, I might arrive at the same conclusion. If I were to assume, for example, that global energy demand will continue to rise in the way that it currently is, and that the only energy technologies that will be available in the future are the ones that we already know about, and furthermore, that the energy intensity of industry is more or less going to remain where it is now, then under those constraints I might agree with them. In that case, renewables might never be enough. And if renewables aren't going to cut it, and we can't use fossil fuels, and there isn't anything else, then we're pretty much left with nuclear.

With that frame of assumptions, you can see how you logically arrive at that view. But I can paint a completely different set of assumptions that arrive at a rather different view.

**EN:** *What would that be?*

**HT:** Well, my view is that, historically, there has been a long-run decarbonization of the global energy supply, and that trend is likely to continue. In other words, the percentage of carbon to hydrogen in the fuels that we use has been gradually decreasing for hundreds of years. Going back to agricultural society, we started off with wood, which has a very high percentage of carbon in it. After that, we moved to coal, which has a slightly lower amount of carbon per unit of energy released. We then went to oil—gasoline—which again is a bit lighter on the carbon. And now we're moving towards methane, or natural gas, which is even lower still. Methane still has a carbon component, and you can see it right there in the formula— $\text{CH}_4$ —but it's mostly hydrogen.

When you extend this trend line, you find that by 2030, the average carbon intensity of the entire world fuel mix will be less than the carbon intensity of methane. And this is almost enough on its own to paint a continuing decarbonization scenario that doesn't invoke nuclear. I haven't even touched on all the venture capital going into more exotic energy technologies that may be coming along. I also haven't said anything yet about demand-side energy savings and efficiency, which is also a critical part of the rubric of sustainability and has the potential to change the current landscape considerably. So if I were in the business of building big nuclear power stations, I

would look out there at all of this—the continuing decarbonization of the global energy supply, the increasing availability of low-carbon fossil sources, the reductions in end-use energy demand, and the long time frames in which my installed base of new nuclear would be expecting to recover its investment over its lifetime—and I'd already be starting to raise significant questions about the payback I'm expecting to get.

**EN:** *I see what you mean.*

**HT:** Of course, we also have to make room for the possibility that we may be blindsided by something much smaller and faster—some fundamental breakthrough. It's like that hoary old example of the dinosaurs and the little furry mammals. What if some new device comes along? Perhaps it's even a distant cousin of nuclear, but there's no neutron yield from the thing, and it's safe to have one in your basement, you know? Maybe one the size of a television puts out thirty kilowatts, and it's carbon free.

If I look at the energy situation with my probably rather wild-eyed futurist hat on, I see that there's new physics and probably new energy sources on the horizon. But in order to

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see that, you've really got to look at the fringe. The center is always very slow to acknowledge developments on the fringe because that's not its job. It's trying to keep things stable and sensible. But if you're trying to see what might actually *happen*, as opposed to what you think you might need to do about it, then there are all sorts of interesting things to be seen on the fringe. More exotic possibilities like cold fusion, for example, that fall under the general heading of ambient energy—that is to say, the energy that is available all around us, wherever we are.

**EN:** *Wouldn't some people say that we're abdicating our responsibility as stewards of the planet if we just kind of cross our fingers and hope for cold fusion to save us?*



**HT:** Well, that's why I was careful to say I was putting on different hats! Because if I take off the futurist hat and put back on the corporate or government-planner hat, I'd say that's all very well, but you can't ask me to create policy based on a technology you think *might* exist but which nobody actually has at the moment. That's irresponsible. And I do see that. But, at the same time, I think the discourse could probably be leavened by much more openness to the potentials of some of these fringe things, because they do tend to be subject to knee-jerk dismissal most of the time, which just delays their development. The U.S. Navy, for example, has been continuing to do research in the area of cold fusion, and it's been fairly clear that this is a genuine phenomenon. Scientists have been publishing peer-reviewed papers, and it's still a ways away from being engineered to be used at scale, but the fact that it remains controversial is only holding up investment.

So I agree that there's a danger of abdicating responsibility, as you say. But I think there's also a responsibility to be much more open to some of these fringe developments and to start to find ways of recognizing and accelerating them.

**EN:** *That makes sense. I think Brand's line of reasoning is more that we just don't have the luxury of that kind of time. We have to make decisions now. I think this is probably one of the hardest questions we have to answer: How do we walk the line between optimism and pragmatism, idealism and urgency? From your perspective, is it even accurate to say that we're in a serious bottleneck right now with regard to planetary sustainability, or is thinking in terms of a bottleneck at all the result of assumptions that aren't complete enough?*

**HT:** That's a really important question. Yes, there is a very real problem in the present. It's just that I believe it's not a terminal problem if we approach it in the right way—and in particular, if we start designing technology differently. There are potential solutions, but they're not part of business as usual. They require new thinking. It's like that famous line attributed to Einstein: You can't solve a problem from within the mentality that created it. So the challenge this bottleneck is posing is that if we keep going like we are, then we are in trouble.

I can't prove my optimistic version of the future is the future. It's possible that we might fail to respond and, indeed, see our current civilization collapse. That is a possibility. But my primary interest is not to describe how everything could go wrong, because there are plenty of people out there explaining exactly how it could all be a horrible disaster. I'm much more concerned with trying to explain how things could actually go okay, because I think it's hugely important to create positive,

optimistic scenarios. Otherwise, people will inevitably get despondent. If all of these very well-informed people are saying that there's no hope, then eventually, you might as well give up and stop trying. I think we want to avoid that kind of psychological gloom falling over the situation.

This is actually one of my biggest concerns. It makes me very wary whenever the future is painted as something we should be afraid of, because I think FDR was right on the money: The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. And responses based on fear of futures that are projected but not absolutely certain are themselves as much of a problem as the things we are frightened of.

## Engineering the Climate

**EN:** *While we're still on the subject of climate change, let's talk about geoengineering for a moment. This is another one of Brand's environmental heresies—the idea that it may in fact be necessary at some point to actively intervene in the earth's climate, either through somehow reflecting sunlight away from the planet or through finding some way to actually pump CO<sub>2</sub> back out of the atmosphere. Ideas like this used to be total anathema to any environmentalist worth his or her salt. But they're starting to get more and more play these days, from Rolling Stone contributor Jeff Goodell's recent book *How to Cool the Planet* to former Microsoft tech-wizard Nathan Myhrvold's controversial idea to pump sulfur-dioxide particles into the stratosphere in order to diffuse sunlight. At the very least, it's intriguing that we've come to the point where serious environmentalists are beginning to consider these things as legitimate topics for debate.*

**HT:** It is intriguing, isn't it? For some reason, we think it's going to be easier to change the planet than to change our own behavior! That's what these proposals for geoengineering are basically saying. And again, I'd bring in my sort of litmus test for sustainability here. Does geoengineering mesh with the way the geophysiology of the planet actually works? Or is it a kind of intrusion into it? Are we simply trying to coerce the planet to make up for our own shortcomings?

It does strike me that a number of these proposals are just outright hubris—for example, the idea of putting a giant mirror or sunshield in space. That seems to me to have what should be blindingly obvious problems from a systemic point of view. Sure, you could put up a big shield and reduce the amount of solar heating, but it would do nothing to stop the continuing acidification of the oceans because of rising CO<sub>2</sub>

levels. In effect, we'd be saying that we can carry on using fossil fuels because now we've got this shield in space, but the CO<sub>2</sub> isn't only causing warming. It's also causing chemical changes that are themselves damaging, and our mirror would do nothing to avoid that. In fact, it would probably worsen the situation, because once the mirror was up, people would heave a sigh of relief and say, "Ah well, now we don't have to worry about the carbon emissions so much." And what if we've actually gotten the future wrong, and it turns out that the risk is a sudden *cooling* rather than a warming? There is still the possibility that global cooling could be the longer-run outcome of global heating, because the rapid warming that's already causing the ice to melt in places like Greenland also threatens to shut down the North Atlantic current, which could potentially move us into a mini ice age.

The problem here is that these potentials are fairly well understood, but the big climate models aren't able to factor them in. So we find ourselves in the sort of absurd situation where companies are trying to decide what the temperature is going to be in a certain location in the world in the year 2050, and we can't even get next month's weather forecast right. Our computer models are actually fairly brittle. They're big, expensive, time-consuming to build, and difficult to change, because they lock in a set of fairly narrow assumptions about the kinds of variables they can manipulate. They're rather like supertankers: it takes a long time to turn them around, and if you discover that something is missing, they take ages to adapt. From my perspective as a scenario planner, what we actually need is something more like a speedboat for very quickly and cheaply exploring what you might think of as the shoreline of the future.

I suppose I should also distinguish my point of view from climate denialism, which it is not. Climate change is clearly under way. It's just that the precise causes and the precise outcomes are somewhat less clear. And one of the big questions about geoengineering is, "Can it accommodate different scenarios?" It should, because there are some pretty high stakes involved with all of this.

**EN:** *Very interesting! It probably does come down to the question you started with, about whether it's actually easier to change the planet than to change human behavior. I suppose the argument for at least keeping geoengineering on the table is that, as frightening as it is, it may actually be easier.*

**HT:** The thing is, if we decide to say that we don't stand a chance of actually reducing our carbon emissions and, therefore, we have to do something else, then our current behavior

will just continue. It will continue to build up problems, and the partial response that we make through geoengineering will have other, secondary systems effects that we can't anticipate. So from a systems point of view, it's a very inelegant solution.

**EN:** *Still, I've never heard anyone I take seriously as an environmentalist argue for geoengineering on the basis of its elegance. I think it has more to do with our earlier conversation about the extent to which we're actually in a bottleneck or not, and the extent to which the urgency of the situation may demand powerful responses — imperfect or inelegant as they may be.*

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*Physicist David Keith at the University of Calgary, for example, who is one of the most outspoken and articulate supporters of geoengineering research, draws an analogy between geoengineering and chemotherapy. Nobody wants to do chemotherapy, he says. It's an awful treatment. But most cancer patients are probably glad they have the option.*

**HT:** I think the analogy with health care is a good one. We have been very keen on treating the human body as a machine, and we've gotten very good at putting in replacement parts. But we know that the human body isn't really a machine and that the parts we put in are, in fact, alien to the body and to its organic structure. We have various kinds of alternative therapies that try to be more subtle and address the underlying psychogenic reasons why somebody might be unwell. But we also have medical technologies on the horizon that would allow us to prompt the body to actually regrow damaged or missing organs, which would be a much better result for the person's health.

So I see quite a number of these geoengineering proposals as being rather like hip-joint replacements. I'm not saying they wouldn't work in narrow terms, and that they might not be rather brilliant engineering — but are they really ecological? Is geoengineering more like prompting the body to regrow an organ or implanting a lump of titanium to replace a piece of bone?



## Beyond Bright Green

**EN:** *There's one more environmental heresy I'd like to talk with you about, and this is one that Brand never mentions: spirituality. Over the last several years, I've often been struck by how difficult it is to have a serious conversation in environmental circles about things like spirit, consciousness, and the evolution of human interiority. This was definitely the case when I had the chance to sit down and talk with Brand earlier this year, but he's by no means alone in this. All throughout the more progressive wing of the environmental movement, which I typically refer to as "bright green," spirituality seems to be a kind of unspoken taboo. Why do you think that is?*

**HT:** It is extremely difficult to talk about, even among an audience that is concerned about the environment, because people are at different stages along the road of self-discovery and self-development. Everybody thinks they have some degree of self-understanding, and of course they do. But to recognize that one can always go further and that there are things that one hasn't yet understood takes a lot of maturity. Carl Jung described our personality as something that is not finite but continues to grow the more we understand it. He said the personality *itself* is an unbounded space of exploration and development. And that perspective—where you realize there isn't an end point, and there's always more—is humbling. There's no knowing how much further you can go beyond what you can possibly conceive of at the moment.

I do think that most previous ideas of futurism and environmentalism are not going to work for much longer, because it seems to me that we've arrived at a point where any hope of fully understanding the future is going to have to involve a spiritual element. And it's going to be difficult for someone like Brand to stomach that kind of dimension opening up in the debate. I don't want to come across as criticizing him, because I have a lot of respect for what he's doing. But in a way, the difference between the old way of thinking and the new way of thinking is almost precisely the appearance of spirit as one of the elements in the mix.

In fact, the more I think about it, the more I want to describe myself for your readership as something like an "eco-spiritual futurist." Because my picture of the future is really not just that we kind of "save the environment" and that's it. After we've solved all the environmental crises—after we've made peace with nature and created an order of planetary technology that sustains everybody at a high quality of life—then what? Where do we want to go *beyond* that point?

As I see it, ecological sustainability is really the platform for the next stage of cultural evolution, in which the entire culture begins to move into higher realms of spiritual development, self-discovery, and advancement. Think of the artistic and cultural forms in a society like that! I mean, some people might contemplate exploring space or something, but as much as I love *Star Trek*, it's still a kind of twentieth-century version of culture, with a few improvements. Imagine *Star Trek* instead with a full spiritual dimension layered into the picture—you've got all that technology, and yes the planet's "greened," and it's healthy, and it's beautiful, and the forests are coming back, and the climate's stabilized, and all of that. But the human race is now evolving a culture that is able to reach far beyond that, because all the lower levels of Maslow's pyramid are taken care of, as Buckminster Fuller would say, for 100 percent of humanity. A self-actualizing culture—now *that's* the positive track.

**EN:** *That's a world I'd want to live in! And there's an interesting paradox here, because there's also probably a certain degree of cultural and spiritual evolution that has to happen first in order for us to get to the point where we can actually establish sustainable technologies all over the planet.*

**HT:** You're right. It is paradoxical, because higher spiritual and cultural development is also a precondition as well as a future goal. Unless we gain enough spiritual capacity to balance the technological capacity we have now, let alone what's coming next, we probably *will* fry the planet. It's only our level

Can we, in the face of blistering change, continue to have faith that this is not the end of the world but the beginning of a new one?

of awareness that keeps technology in balance and makes it a useful tool for the future, as opposed to a destructive one. So the outer concerns about the environment are, of course, immensely important. But unless we've got the inner capacity to really see and respond to them, and take action, then it's not going to happen.

I think the seamlessness of the inner and the outer is also important to emphasize, because one of the features of modernist thinking is to compartmentalize, and we're still carrying



that into our debate. We like to think about “the environment” over here and “spirit” over here and something else over there, you know? Even the progressive movement tends to split things up into separate issues, and we have to learn to stretch to see the whole picture, and then find ways of expressing that and pointing out the connections and how it all fits together.

**EN:** *I couldn't agree more. And I must say, I love the name you just coined for yourself. As an eco-spiritual futurist, how would you describe your mission statement? If you had a manifesto, what would it say?*

**HT:** That's a wonderful question. I guess, off the top of my head, it would be a profoundly creative orientation towards the future—one that is motivated by hope and optimism, not by fear. One that looks for a better future for humanity on a healthy planet, that acknowledges spirit, and that uses all of our knowledge and abilities to, in a sense, take the next step in a deeper kind of evolution.

At one level, our problems as a globalized industrial society are intensifying very fast, and it looks like we are rapidly pushing the entire planet to the brink. When you just focus on this, the situation looks terrible. But at another level, the potentials for positive change are also accelerating very rapidly. It's sometimes said that each time period in history seems special when you're living through it, but in spite of that, I do have the strong sense that this is a special time in some very profound

way. It's a time when some things are very explicitly moving into crisis—the economy and the environment are the obvious examples—and these are the result of an old way of being and doing things.

Part of the challenge we face, more so than in the more communitarian Asian economies, is to admit that, when the chips are down, the individualistic thrust of Western society has left us isolated. People have realized the limits and the undesirable consequences of that, and they're trying to move away from it. I'm thinking of the “blessed unrest” Paul Hawken talks about, and the Transition movement, and thousands of other progressive initiatives. Individualism is not all bad, though: the past few hundred years have popped the individual out of the social ocean

into self-consciousness. Now, we are ready to forge something new—a tightly bonded society of diverse individuals.

It's also a personal challenge to be calm in the face of the riptide of change sweeping through society, and this relates directly to the role of spirit in all of this. Can we, in the face of blistering change, continue to have faith that this is not the end of the world but the beginning of a new one—a world that depends on us hanging in there and being willing to co-create the new story together? Can we feel that, under the surface of all of this keenly felt turbulence, there is a deeper current, an evolutionary pull that is somehow shaping significant global transformation?

Trying to understand the future in this light goes way beyond the scope of previous futurism. To see the future now means stepping beyond the worldview of modernity. Something more is needed, and that's what I'm getting at with “eco-spiritual futurist”—a phrase that will be absurd to the modernist mind. Precision of thought is still vital, but I think the extra qualities needed now include intuition, empathy, feeling for nature, and sensitivity to spirit, in order for us to be able to map the new landscape appearing in front of us as the old way of being burns off like morning mist. ■



Explore the leading edge of environmentalism with “Our Bright Green Future,” an online course featuring Hardin Tibbs, Ross Robertson, and others, at [enlightennext.org/brightgreen](http://enlightennext.org/brightgreen).



# The World of EnlightenNext

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## Pure Scenius

### The Future of EnlightenNext .



# . . LIVE!

**THE BEATS, GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY, CIRCA 1950.** Art studios in Florence, Italy, around the fourteenth century. The Transcendentalists in New England, mid-1800s. Madame Geoffrin's salon, Paris, eighteenth century. What do these all have in common? *Scenius*.

It rhymes with genius, and indicates a cultural happening, an incubator of epoch-changing creativity, the cradle in which individual genius awakens. Coined by the musician Brian Eno, *scenius* describes “an ecology of talent,” or “the communal form of the concept of the genius.” You could say that *EnlightenNext* magazine is the product of *scenius*—each issue is born out of a collective creative process—which is why it's more than just words and images on a page.

But a magazine, no matter how good it is, is not enough to change culture by itself. Our mission at EnlightenNext is to catalyze the revolution in consciousness and culture that can help pave the way to a new integrally informed, evolutionary era. And for quite a few years, we have been increasingly inspired by the possibility of taking the creative process that has long driven *EnlightenNext* magazine and expanding it far beyond the printed word.

What would happen if we brought together, in person, the thought leaders, visionaries, and pioneers

who have enlivened these pages over the years? What if we were able to provide a living context in which new and higher forms of *scenius* could emerge? What insights might we discover? What new potentials might arise? How might our discoveries serve the creative, unfolding edge of cultural evolution?

On the pages that follow, we've outlined our plans to establish a series of events and activities leading up to our first-ever conference, EnlightenNext LIVE!, scheduled for Spring 2012. These programs are all part of an annual arc of engagement we call the EnlightenNext Discovery Cycle. Whether it be the deep inner work of evolving consciousness or the development of a particular area of cultural inquiry—e.g., spirituality, ecology, philosophy, and gender—our intention is to create the context and forums for an “ecology of talent” that can move thinking and practice forward in significant ways. Together, with your support and participation, we intend to facilitate the conscious emergence of true *scenius*. And we invite all of our interested readers, supporters, and Evolutionaries to help us in this endeavor—to discover how extraordinary life can be when one is living at the creative, chaotic boundaries of the future, where new ideas are born, new potentials are uncovered, and a new evolutionary worldview is being shaped and formed.



# The EnlightenNext Discovery Cycle

## Two Poles of the Discovery Cycle

### The Being & Becoming Retreat

Summer 2011

Ten days of immersion in the timeless Ground of Being. Ten days of inspired concentration on the power of evolutionary becoming. A total of twenty days of enlightenment and evolution that will **dramatically change the way you look at the world**, all carefully guided by spiritual teacher Andrew Cohen, founder of EnlightenNext. This year will mark the third annual incarnation of our flagship Being & Becoming Retreat, to be held in the beautiful hills of Tuscany, Italy. After the unprecedented success of last summer's retreat in the Colorado Rockies, this unique event is rapidly earning a reputation as one of the most transformative spiritual events of the year. (For more on the Being & Becoming Retreat, see page 72.)



### The *EnlightenNext* LIVE! Conference

Spring 2012

Join us for the first ever **EnlightenNext LIVE!** conference.

Imagine everything you love about *EnlightenNext* magazine—the quality of inquiry, the depth of insight, the unique voices of today's visionaries, and the explorations at the leading edge of science, philosophy, and spirit—and now imagine it up close and in-person. **Experience first-hand the inspired *scenius*** of the EnlightenNext network of evolutionary leaders, integral thinkers, and creative pioneers. Don't miss what promises to be the cultural event of the year!



# Collaborating at the Leading Edge

## Thought-Leader Holons

A “holon” is an entity that is both whole unto itself and simultaneously part of a larger whole. It’s the term we’re using to describe our vision for bringing together **small groups of cutting-edge thinkers from various fields**—miniature think tanks that can help define the emerging edge of specific cultural fronts, from the future of environmentalism to the new frontiers of evolutionary spirituality. By leveraging EnlightenNext’s strength at creating **ego-free, creative, and collaborative contexts** for dialogue, these holons will be places where *scenius*—collective genius—can emerge to spur new thinking and practice in critical areas of cultural evolution. EnlightenNext’s new thought-leader holons will make their

debut in our 2011  
virtual seminar  
(right).



## Our 2nd Annual Virtual Seminar

May 7, 2011

In May 2010, thousands of people in more than seventy-five countries tuned in as Andrew Cohen and the *EnlightenNext* team launched our inaugural yearly broadcast exploring the **transformative power of an evolutionary worldview**. This year’s virtual seminar, *Leadership at the Edge of Culture*, promises to reach even further as we introduce our new “Thought-Leader Holons” (left), each clustered around specific topics—philosophy, ecology, gender, science, and more. Save the date for the premier virtual event of 2011 where you can delve deeper into the far-reaching implications—personal, cultural, and societal—of an evolutionary perspective on life.



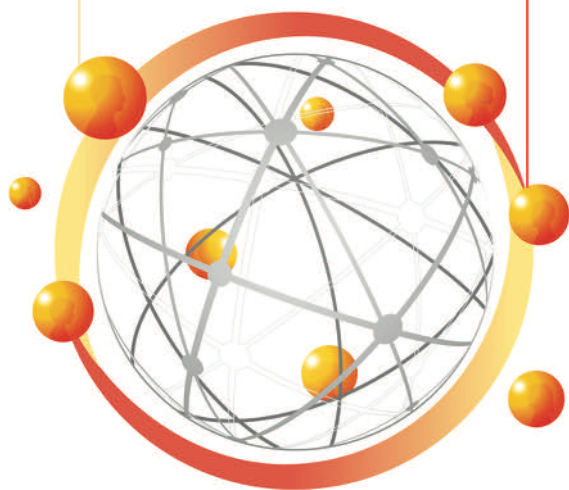


# The EnlightenNext Discovery Cycle

## Evolving Our Digital Universe

### The EnlightenNext Collaboratory

Imagine Facebook populated entirely by cultural evolutionaries and you'll have the new EnlightenNext Collaboratory! Join our just-launched social networking site and **connect, collaborate, and create** the future with new friends and like-minded individuals from all over the globe. It's the perfect place for inspired philosophical discussion, **in-depth spiritual exploration**, cultivating deeper relationships, or just enjoying a chat in our virtual café. Sign up at [enlightennext.net](http://enlightennext.net).



### A New Media Landscape

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## Inspired by EnlightenNext



Teal Farm founder Melissa Hoffman

# Designed with the Future in Mind

How EnlightenNext inspired a one-of-a-kind farm project in Vermont's Green Mountains

by Elizabeth Debold

**TEAL FARM IS A FARM LIKE NO OTHER.** Developed by Melissa Hoffman, a former editor of *EnlightenNext* magazine, it's a new vision for the traditional nexus of food production. Given how many images of the quintessential "farm" populate the collective psyche, this is no mean feat. There's the farm as a slice of Americana—bales of hay, creaking spoke-wheeled wagons, and corn as high as an elephant's eye, right along with mom and apple pie. Then there is the farm as agribusiness, with mud-splattered tractors on six-foot-high wheels and the drone of small airplanes spraying a fine mist of chemical onslaught over genetically modified wheat fields. Or there's the farm as a romanticized back-to-the-future, off-the-grid haven for either left-wing hippies or right-wing survivalists. Hoffman's farm presents an altogether different picture: a food-energy system that is rooted in both natural systems and state-of-the-art technology—it runs entirely on sunlight, produces no waste, and grows food continually without seasonal planting. And Hoffman credits *EnlightenNext* with being "the single largest influence on the project."

EnlightenNext influenced Hoffman in two key ways as she established this one-of-a-kind farm in the Green Mountains of Vermont. First and foremost, it was the energy and optimism that bolsters all of *EnlightenNext*'s work that kept pushing her forward. "Unabashedly, many of the thinkers presented in *EnlightenNext* magazine express a utopian vision that is both sophisticated and well grounded," she says. "And *EnlightenNext* as an organization amplifies that perspective." That vision

became a motivation and the inspiration behind her project. "The energy of that utopian idealism was so powerfully present throughout the development of this project," she comments. "It drove it, as a matter of fact."

Second, Hoffman was also influenced significantly by the organization's unique philosophy. "*EnlightenNext*'s evolutionary perspective leads one to ask big questions," she explains, "like imagining the design of the next iteration of human civilization. What are our communities going to look like? How can we live here in a fashion that expresses a love of life and an integrity with the environment, and that focuses on what's next?" Teal Farm has been her way to explore these questions. "It's a prototype that redesigns fundamental human infrastructures so that we can have a life-giving presence on the earth and not shoot ourselves in the foot by destroying the environment that gives us life," she says.

The result is what Hoffman calls "farming+," which she notes "goes back to the roots of the human-nature relationship, gleaned wisdom from both time-proven practices and the latest technology and design." The advent of agriculture seven-thousand years ago, she reminds us, marked a turning point in human civilization, during which our capacity to produce and store surplus food and settle in one place was key to the development of language and the capacity to innovate. And since then, up to the present moment, agriculture—planting, raising, and harvesting crops—has been the main source of food for the vast majority of humans on the planet.

## Teal Farm Center

The residential and farm center will process, store, and pack all farm produce using site harvested solar, wind, and micro-hydro energy. This central zone of the Teal Farm houses the nursery and seed conservation facilities and serves as the focal point for all farm activities.

A demonstration project of Hoffman's nonprofit LivingFuture, Inc., Teal Farm combines permaculture (permanent agriculture), new forms of energy, and a contemporary aesthetic. While all of the technologies and methods of food production that she has used at Teal Farm have been in existence for decades, the innovation of the place lies in the way that these different spheres are fully integrated to create "a total environment designed with the future in mind."

"Often when people think of renewable energy," she explains, "they just think of the hardware that produces the electricity. They don't think of how you have to optimize a building and human behavior in order to use that energy wisely, so that constructing a building in and of itself becomes part of the energy system. You have to think of these things as integrated wholes, not as separate little

fruit, herbs, berries, compost crops, fertilizing crops, and fuel wood. The fuel wood connects to another innovation — the Energy Barn. Barns on most farms accommodate livestock, grain, and hay, but at Teal Farm, the twelve-thousand-square-foot barn accommodates the means to produce the energy to run the entire property. Hoffman explains that "it was designed to incorporate five different energy sources: wind, solar photovoltaic, microhydro for generating electricity, solar thermal, and biomass [wood]."

In addition to the practicality of its structures, Hoffman sees Teal Farm's aesthetics as essential to creating an attractive vision for the future. "It's an uplifting place to encounter, just in terms of its beauty," she notes. "The building techniques that are positive for the environment have been executed artfully. We cut all of the wood — five different varieties — that was used inside the house directly from the property. We took these buildings to a high aesthetic so that the design and the simplicity of the materials could be beautifully rendered in the craft of the woodwork and the carpentry."

After having put over five years into Teal Farm, Hoffman is now moving on to other projects through LivingFuture. She wants to continue to work creatively with people who want to roll up their sleeves and "think about how to do things that will allow us to be here perpetually, that will allow us to continue to develop and create and meet these challenges without being overly distracted and debilitated by the problems that we're facing." That's where she thinks the real excitement is — in seeing the positivity that gets pulled out of people when they are willing to care that much to put themselves behind seeking real solutions. "I am keen on bringing together an evolutionarily inspired utopian idealism with the very nitty-gritty, concrete issues that we have to deal with to create new, life-sustaining ways of living. To me, bringing those two things together is both the challenge and an incredible opportunity." ■



Teal Farm's 12,000-square-foot Energy Barn is designed to gather and distribute energy from five different sources: wind, solar, solar thermal, microhydro, and biomass.

pieces of hardware that you put together. So when people come to Teal Farm and experience how everything is tied together, they feel uplifted not only by the surface beauty but also by the new possibility that this represents for human living."

On over five-hundred acres, the farm boasts what may be the largest temperate permaculture installation in the United States. Permaculture, as she has used it, is "a philosophy and methodology of focusing primarily on perennial plants to grow and to supply food rather than relying so heavily on annual crops where you till the soil, replant seeds each year, and apply heavy amounts of fertilizer and water." Teal Farm's permaculture system produces nuts,

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## EnlightenNext Being & Becoming Retreat

# “Honoring the Deepest Part of Myself”



### “YOU’RE GOING TO BE SILENT FOR TEN DAYS?!”

Those were the surprised words of Nadia Manzoor’s father last July when she shared her plans for attending the 2010 EnlightenNext Being & Becoming Retreat led by Andrew Cohen.

These days, it is simply not a common experience

to spend several weeks on retreat exploring the evolution of consciousness and culture. But the EnlightenNext retreat is not your average retreat, and Nadia is not your average person. Raised in a Muslim family in London, she left behind the structures of traditional religion and struck out on her own in America as a young adult. Yet she was still seeking a life of higher meaning and purpose. So when the opportunity arose to attend last summer’s gathering, this self-described “smart, loud, chatterbox, slightly neurotic” young woman surprised family and friends by joining several hundred Evolutionaries in Colorado for a twenty-day immersion in EnlightenNext’s unique spiritual perspective. We caught up with her a few months later to ask about the retreat and the after-effects of this one-of-a-kind experience.

**What inspired you to attend the 2010 Being & Becoming Retreat?** The opportunity to engage with Andrew Cohen, someone who I’ve grown to respect and trust, and to surround myself with like-minded individuals who share the same aspiration for spiritual growth. How could I not go? I knew that by going I was honoring the deepest part of myself.

**The first ten days of this two-part retreat were focused on Being, emphasizing the power and potential of meditation. What was this experience like?** It was spectacular. Every day the simplicity and beauty of Andrew’s teachings on meditation sent me diving into a sea of untarnished bliss. Everything fell away. There was a magnetic current so strong it kept me in the meditation tent for hours into the night.

As a result of the Being Retreat, I found a new confidence within me. I’ve always been a person who displays confidence on the outside, but this confidence was much deeper. I realized the incessant need to find something outside myself was the very thing that had been preventing me from uncovering who I really am. I now see that there is nothing to find out there; I am already complete.

**The second part, the Becoming Retreat, is more focused on development and conscious evolution through active interaction and discussion. After ten days of stillness, Cohen guides retreatants into a deep realization of what he calls the Authentic Self, or the evolutionary impulse that drives the creative process. How was this retreat for you?** The group discussions were on fire! The evolutionary inspiration really came alive. The openness between people was remarkable, and the quality and depth of the conversations were new to me. It was also striking to see how much people changed

## This retreat has reconfigured my bearings for life.

over the course of the ten days. It became clear how vital each individual is for creative, conscious evolution, and this was a significant discovery for me. It changed the way I see other people and our impact on each other and on culture.

**Now that it’s been a few months since the retreat, how would you say it has affected you?** An evolutionary spark was ignited in those twenty days, but it was just the beginning. I realized that in order to change culture, we have to tend to our relationships with others. This retreat has reconfigured my bearings for life, and fueled meaning and purpose into my existence—not for my own sake but for the sake of everything and everyone else. What could be bigger than that?

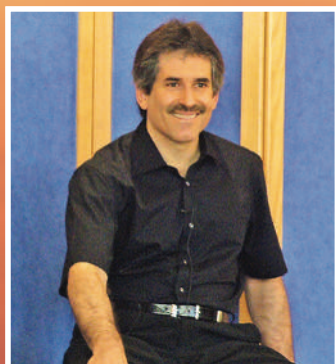


To watch “Heaven on Earth,” a short video about the 2010 Being & Becoming Retreat, visit [andrewcohen.org/retreats](http://andrewcohen.org/retreats).

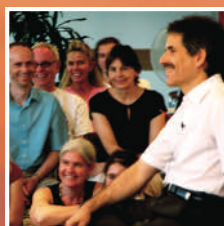
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with **Andrew Cohen**



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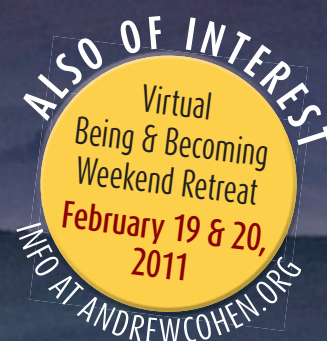


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# The Inimitable Madame B.

by Gary Lachman

New York's Irving Place isn't a place we'd usually associate with the start of a new spiritual movement, but on September 13, 1875, that's exactly what it was. In a room cluttered with oriental bric-a-brac in Manhattan's bustling and often dangerous East Side, three people came together then to form an occult society that would have

zs



a profound influence, not only on modern spirituality and esotericism but on practically the whole of modern culture itself.

Two of the three were men with distinguished careers behind them. William Quan Judge, an Irish immigrant, had worked his way up from poor beginnings to become a lawyer, and had only a few years earlier passed the New York Bar exam at the age of twenty-one.

The forty-two-year-old Colonel Henry Steel Olcott was an officer in the Civil War, a journalist, and an agriculturalist, and had been a member of the commission that investigated Abraham Lincoln's assassination. But it was the third, female member of this triumvirate that was the real center of attraction.

Even before immigrating to the U.S., which she did in 1873 (she'd passed through briefly in 1852), she had lived a life packed with enough adventures to last several incarnations. Circus performer, revolutionary, spiritualist, music teacher, cousin to a future Russian prime minister (and friend of the "Holy Devil," Rasputin), and daughter of a princess—to name only a few of her many distinctions—in a century noted for larger-than-life characters, Olcott and Judge's partner was perhaps the most supersized of them all, both literally and metaphorically. I'm surprised no one's yet made a film of her life, although in today's world of anorexic supermodels, finding an actress willing to play a 232-pound leading lady might be difficult.

Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the third occupant of that East Side room, has been called many things, both during her lifetime and after it. To some she was an "explosive madcap."<sup>1</sup> To others, like the psychical researcher Richard Hodgson, she was "one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history." To the founder of Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner, she was a "cheeky creature," an "electrically-charged Leyden jar" who exhibited a "lack of consistency in external behaviour."<sup>2</sup> To the poet W.B. Yeats, who knew her in her last days in London, she was like an Irish peasant woman. To her early biographer John Symonds, she was "one of the most remarkable women who ever lived," yet her later biographer Peter Washington called her a "badly wrapped parcel."<sup>3</sup> And to the novelist Kurt Vonnegut, writing in *McCall's* magazine in 1970, she was "the Founding Mother of the Occult in America."<sup>4</sup>

To some, Madame Blavatsky was an "explosive madcap." To others, she was "one of the most remarkable women who ever lived."

As with many complex, vital, and fascinating characters, all of these assessments are in some ways true, yet all fail to grasp the full essence of this enormous personality. HPB, as she became known to her followers, was as capacious an individual as possible, and if, as the writer Henry Miller once said, we should "live life to the hilt," she had certainly done that, and more. But on that September day, she embraced a destiny that would transcend even her own fantastical life, and, quite frankly, affect the world. Because it was then that she, Olcott, and Judge decided to found the Theosophical Society, arguably the most important spiritual and esoteric organization the West has ever known.

It's no exaggeration to say that if it wasn't for Olcott, Judge, and HPB, much of what we know as modern spirituality, consciousness exploration, and alternative thought—not to mention our inexhaustible fascination with the "wisdom of the East"—might not have arrived, or at least might have taken much longer to than it did. By the time of Blavatsky's death in 1891, the Theosophical movement had spread from New York to India, Europe, and beyond. And by the early years of the twentieth century, it was a force, as the saying goes,



to be reckoned with, informing major developments in politics, art, religion, and much more. The poet T.S. Eliot; the artist Wassily Kandinsky; the inventor Thomas Edison; the creator of Oz, L. Frank Baum; and Mohandas Gandhi are only some of the people who over the years sat—figuratively or otherwise—at the incomparable Madame’s considerable feet. Even Einstein is said to have read her.<sup>5</sup>

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was born Helena von Hahn in 1831 in Ekaterinoslav, in what was then Russia and is now the Ukraine. As mentioned, her mother, Helena Fadeyeva, was a princess, but she was also a popular novelist, writing under the pen name Zeneida-Riva. Her father, Peter von Hahn, was a colonel and descended from a family of German nobility. Helena’s sister, Vera Zhelikhovsky, wrote children’s stories, as well as weird, occult fiction, something HPB’s detractors say she did herself, pointing to her vast works of mystical philosophy, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. (She did, in fact, write some occult short stories.)

When Helena’s mother died at the age of twenty-eight, Helena was only eleven, and she was raised by her grandmother in a cultured and spiritual milieu. This didn’t prevent her, however, from becoming something of a tomboy, an irrepressible, mischievous spirit more at home in the forests and fields than with dolls. But she was also attracted to the vast occult library of her great-grandfather, the Freemason Prince Pavel Dolgorukov. Although HPB didn’t reveal the source of her wisdom until she had passed forty and traveled around the world, she claimed that from an early age she had had meetings with her “master,” Morya, a strange figure who appeared in her dreams as a child and who she would later meet “in the flesh” in London’s Hyde Park and then again in Tibet. The master was one of a group of highly evolved beings who guided mankind in its development and whose emissary it was Helena’s destiny to become. But to get there, she’d have to take more than one rollicking roller-coaster ride.

When Blavatsky was just shy of seventeen she married a man more than twice her age, Nikifor Blavatsky, the vice-governor of Erivan in Armenia. One motivation seems to have been the belief that no one else would have her, although, until she gained weight in her later years, she was attractive, something that comes through in her portraits. In any case, her appearance was always striking. The marriage was never consummated and although they



were never divorced, Helena soon left Nikifor for the great unknown. It's thought Blavatsky remained celibate throughout her life—sex, she said, was “bestly”—and to counter later accusations of promiscuity (she was also rumoured to be a lesbian and transvestite) she produced a doctor's certificate establishing that a fall from a horse during her time as a circus bareback rider had made it impossible for her to have intercourse. The place, she said, was “filled up with some crooked cucumber,”<sup>6</sup> and she was frank enough to prove it. That flight from her crestfallen husband was the start of a decade-long *Wanderjahr*, a journey into adventure that her contemporary Jules Verne would restrict to fiction. For young Helena, it was everyday life.

Between 1848, when she abandoned Nikifor, and 1858, when she briefly returned to Russia, HPB's boot heels, as Bob Dylan sang, went wandering. Egypt, France, Canada, England, South America, Germany, Mexico, India, Greece, and Tibet were some of the main stops on her journey. Her passport, if she had one, must have taken a beating. Many of a mystical bent in the West have gone on prodigious voyages. In the sixteenth century, the travels of Paracelsus, the

father of Western alternative medicine, were legendary, and in more recent times figures like the enigmatic G.I. Gurdjieff and the dark magician Aleister Crowley trekked into more than one unusual place. But Blavatsky was a woman, just out of her teens, and for a woman to travel alone at all in those days was unusual. For one to enter Tibet was unheard of; for many years

Egypt, France, Canada, England, South America, Germany, Mexico, India, Greece, and Tibet—these were some of the main stops on Blavatsky's decade-long adventure.

Tibet was off limits to most Westerners, and HPB said herself that she was turned away a few times before finally crossing the threshold.

Blavatsky's tenure in Tibet has always been contested—and the controversy won't stop here—but some of her later adventures suggest it was more than possible. In 1867 she was wounded while fighting with the Italian liberator Giuseppe Garibaldi against the Papal army and the French at the battle of Mentana, a sacrifice that led to a friendship with Giuseppe Mazzini, leader of the revolutionary movement Young Italy. And if that wasn't enough to qualify as “living dangerously,” in 1871 she was one of the few survivors of the wreck of the *Eumonia*, a sea disaster as famous in its day as the *Titanic*. She washed ashore in Cairo, and it's believed she started her career as a spirit medium then, although she had exhibited “psychic powers” from the start. At any rate, she started holding séances and developed a taste for hashish—legal in those more enlightened times—a preference that apparently remained throughout her life.

From Cairo she went to France, and it was in Paris that the “masters” pointed her in the right direction. “Go west,” they said, so she sailed for New York. When she arrived in the summer of 1873, at the age of forty-two, she was penniless—she had crossed the Atlantic in steerage—and for a time lived in hostels and cheap boarding houses, scratching out a living by sewing purses. But it wasn't long before she showed her resourcefulness. Reading Colonel Olcott's series of articles in the *Daily Graphic* about a haunting at a farm in Chittenden, Vermont—he had developed an interest in spiritualism while learning to farm in Ohio—Blavatsky determined to meet him.

Her decision to ensnare Olcott in many ways resembles Gurdjieff's later decision to “entrap” his disciple Ouspensky, who was also a journalist; both “crazy gurus” seemed to need a respectable PR man, devoted to the cause. When the by-then-robust Helena approached the cautious



Olcott at the Vermont farm, it was a case of platonic love at first sight. The retiring, conventional Colonel was smitten, as much by Helena's fiery Garibaldi shirt (a bright red blouse with military embroidery, a souvenir of the barricades) as by her chutzpah. (As one writer remarked, she was "capable of colourful and imaginative profanity,"<sup>7</sup> another characteristic she shared with Gurdjieff.) She proceeded to dominate the séances, introducing her own crew of spirits—appropriately Russian—and made it clear that a real contender had arrived.

Spiritualism had been a part of American culture since 1848, when the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, discovered they could communicate with the spirit of a dead man. By the time HPB appeared, it had even entered politics. In 1872, Victoria Woodhull, another extraordinary nineteenth-century woman, had run for president on a spiritualist, free love, feminist, socialist platform; needless to say, she didn't win. But spiritualism was running out of steam, and it was clear something new was needed. Blavatsky herself had grown bored with table rapping and levitating tambourines. She could easily produce phenomena at will, and unlike most psychics, was not a mere "medium" but had control of her "powers." Nevertheless, her masters had counseled that she was being primed for something greater. She and the Colonel agreed, especially as Olcott had received a message from one of HPB's masters, advising he leave his unsatisfactory marriage and live with Helena, something that made both practical and occult sense. Their first attempt at "something greater" was to found what they called the Miracle Club. When this didn't produce the required miracle, they looked for something else.

Part of that something else was Blavatsky's massive tome, *Isis Unveiled*, a fourteen-hundred-page epic of occult wisdom, which she started writing in 1875, often in a cloud of hashish smoke and with "references" nabbed from the astral plane. When it was published two years later, in 1877, it sold out its first printing overnight. Although some newspapers panned the work—one reviewer called it, perhaps appropriately, "a dish of hash"—the *New York Herald* said it was "one of the most remarkable productions of the century," and the *Boston Evening Transcript* argued that its author had "read more, seen more, and thought more than most wise men." Its eager readers agreed.



People today familiar with Theosophy's more well-known Eastern character may be surprised at the more Western, Egyptian esotericism that fills *Isis Unveiled*'s many pages. For a time in her career, Egypt, and not the Himalayas, was the focus of Blavatsky's mystic yearnings, a popular spot, as the contemporaneous Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, led by the mysterious Max Théon, showed. Blavatsky herself spoke of a mysterious "brotherhood of Luxor," and Colonel Olcott received his mystic messages from a certain Tuitit Bey. These messages themselves were the first of series of "precipitated" (i.e., materialized) letters for which HPB would soon become famous. Later epistles would fall from thin air and apprise HPB's colleagues and skeptics of her masters' wishes.

It's impossible to summarize *Isis Unveiled* here, except to say it was one of the first works of occultism to argue that magic was not some mindless superstition palmed off on the gullible but a profound wisdom and science known to the ancients yet lost to modern materialism. It's an idea

still popular today, as a look at the works of Graham Hancock and other authors who make much the same argument shows. For much of her theme Blavatsky drew on the writings of the colorful nineteenth-century French occultist Eliphas Levi and the English novelist and psychic investigator Edward Bulwer-Lytton, whose *Zanoni* weaves Rosicrucian and Hermetic

Spiritualism had been a part of American culture since 1848, when the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, discovered they could communicate with the spirit of a dead man.

motifs into a historical romance. She also quoted—or plagiarized, depending on your perspective—dozens of other authorities, from Plato and the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* to Schopenhauer and Giordano Bruno.

Whatever we may think of *Isis Unveiled*, its historical importance is undeniable, as it contained the first detailed critique of Darwin's recently enshrined version of evolution. Samuel Butler—of *Erewhon* fame—published *Life and Habit*, the first of his several vigorous attacks on Darwinian theory, in 1878, but Blavatsky beat him to it. Her central argument is that the transition from monkey to man is only part of the more significant evolution of men and women into gods, a transformation that embraces the entire cosmos. As one writer remarked, instead of opposing religion to scientific fact, Blavatsky "subsumes those facts into a grand synthesis that makes religious wisdom not the enemy of scientific knowledge but its final goal."<sup>8</sup>

At the same time as Blavatsky scoured the astral plane for quotable material, a suggestion at a lecture given at her Irving Place apartment triggered the second phase of that elusive "something else" she and the Colonel were looking for. After hearing a talk about the "secret canon of proportions" that the ancient Egyptians used to construct the pyramids (like spiritualism, "pyramidology" was another late-nineteenth-century craze), Colonel Olcott had the brainstorm of forming a society that would study such things. HPB and the others present agreed, and a week later she, Olcott, and Judge met again and the Theosophical Society was born.

The name "Theosophy" was not new. Meaning the "wisdom of the gods," it had been used by Neoplatonic philosophers in third-century Alexandria, and also by the gnostic seventeenth-century Hermetic cobbler Jacob Boehme. With HPB and the Colonel, however, it would take on a somewhat different sense. The society's "mission statement" set out its goals: to promote the universal brotherhood of humanity, regardless of race, creed, color, or sex; to study ancient

and modern religions, philosophies, and sciences; and to investigate the unexplained phenomena of nature and the hidden powers in man. With its multifaith, multicultural emphasis, the Theosophical Society anticipated our own pluralistic sensibility by more than a century. And, as mentioned, its belief in a lost, ancient wisdom is still going strong.

Although the new society attracted some initial interest—later bolstered by the success of *Isis Unveiled* and Olcott's involvement in one of the earliest cremations in America<sup>9</sup>—by the end of 1878, the “chums,” as Olcott and Blavatsky called themselves, were running out of resources and seriously needed some new direction. Perhaps the masters had tired of Luxor, or perhaps Egypt was by this time old hat. Whatever it was, the needle on the Madame's mystic compass began to bypass the Sphinx and turn toward points East, and the “chums” shifted their gaze toward India.

Blavatsky had already introduced Eastern themes in the second part of *Isis Unveiled*, but a perhaps more encouraging prompt was the invitation from Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, leader of a Hindu movement called Arya Samaj, to come to India and unite their new society with his; an acquaintance of Olcott's had told the Swami about Theosophy, and he felt it was in tune with his teachings. Daniel Dunglas Home, the most successful medium of the age, had only recently made some damaging remarks about the Madame, who was rumored to have been his assistant for a time, so perhaps a journey to the East was in order.

They had by this time moved to their famous apartment in Hell's Kitchen, known as the “Lamasery” because of the unique collection of Eastern objet d'art that lined its walls; one such item was Blavatsky's notorious stuffed baboon. Alas, the baboon, as well as everything else, was sold to placate creditors, and following the orders of the masters, who would soon be called Mahatmas, on December 17, 1878, the “chums” boarded ship for Bombay (today Mumbai). Blavatsky's U.S. citizenship had come through just a few months earlier, but she would never see America again. Abner Doubleday, Civil War hero and purported inventor of baseball, was left in charge of the society's New York branch, while William Quan Judge later became, after the inevitable rifts, head of the order in America.

When the “chums” reached India in February 1879, the subcontinent was still in thrall to the British Raj, and the natives knew less about Hinduism and its great works, like the Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita, than most New Age folk do today. The two cultured and famous Westerners who embraced the immortal wisdom of the East and rejected Christianity, which was busily being foisted on the Hindus, were welcome, and soon HPB knew they had made the right choice. Swami Dayananda, however, grew to regret it, as Theosophy quickly eclipsed the Arya Samaj, and they soon went their separate ways.

Blavatsky and Olcott's magazine, *The Theosophist*, sold incredibly well, and many flocked to join the society. HPB's powers seemed to have increased. Among other feats, she caused a shower of roses, made a lamp flame grow larger and smaller at will, materialized cups and saucers, and located a brooch lost years before by her hostess. These miracles garnered much publicity, but Blavatsky herself thought them unimportant. She made a hefty social and political impact when she brought A.P. Sinnett, editor of the influential *Allahabad Pioneer*, into the fold. Sinnett's books, *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, would spread the teachings to a huge readership, including a shy, young Austrian scholar named Rudolf Steiner and an Irish poet named Yeats. Another catch was A.O. Hume, a high-ranking civil servant, who later organized the first Indian National Congress. Blavatsky's Hinduphilia and contempt for the British, who thought she was a Russian spy, set the snowball rolling, and some years later, when her successor, the Fabian suffragette Annie Besant, arrived on India's shores, Theosophy was at the heart of the independence movement. Both Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru became Theosophists and later praised the society for the immense good it did their nation.





For the first five years, India was an unqualified success for the “chums.” Olcott was so successful in bringing Buddhism to Buddhists that in 1967 Sri Lanka—in Olcott’s day, Ceylon—issued a commemorative stamp in his honor, and the growing Theosophical ranks were a serious rival to imported Christianity. Yet it was Blavatsky’s own good nature that proved her undoing. A woman she had befriended in Cairo wrote to her from Ceylon, telling of hard times. Blavatsky invited her and her husband to keep house for her in Bombay. This proved disastrous.

In 1884, Blavatsky left India to visit France and England, and in London the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) suggested they investigate her claims. Sensational reports of the “precipitated letters” from HPB’s master—not Morya this time, but Koot Hoomi—had been in newspapers around the world, and the SPR were eager to verify their authenticity. But back in India, Blavatsky’s friend, peeved by some assumed slight, told the editor of a Christian magazine that the whole thing was faked. The Mahatma letters, she said, were “precipitated” by being slipped through cracks in the ceiling, and the figure of Koot Hoomi—often seen by astounded visitors—was really Blavatsky, wearing a model of the Mahatma on her shoulders. There was other chicanery as well, and remembering her scathing remarks about Christian missionaries, the *Christian College Magazine* was only too happy to blow the whistle on the Madame.

The scandal reached the SPR, and to this day it’s unclear if the evidence for fraud their investigator Richard Hodgson found was planted or authentic. In any case, he issued a damning report, and HPB’s reputation suffered badly, although the SPR itself retracted Hodgson’s report a century later, saying it was prejudiced and unreliable.<sup>10</sup> Although she was not above hoodwinking when necessary, it’s difficult to study Blavatsky’s life and not conclude she was genuine. HPB returned to India to defend her reputation, but to avoid being drawn into a legal battle that would inevitably turn into a show trial, she soon left again, never to return.

On the road again, Blavatsky found herself in Italy, Germany, and Switzerland. She finally roosted in England. She was by this time ill, suffering from kidney failure brought on by her weight and other stress. (Contrary to much current spiritual thought, HPB didn’t give a hoot

for her health; her cholesterol levels were scandalous and she chain-smoked furiously.) She may have known her days were numbered, and so decided to write another monstrous tome, *The Secret Doctrine*, Theosophy's bible.

Even longer than *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine* expounded a monumental synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy that remains thrilling and controversial enough to fuel many a metaphysical discussion, although, as one writer remarked, it is in many ways “a muddy torrent carrying all kinds of strange objects on its surface.”<sup>11</sup> Blavatsky threw together a smorgasbord of occult and mystical teachings about humanity and the cosmos in a way that again precludes summary, speaking of the mysterious *Book of Dzyan*, written in the lost language of Senzar, and its profound revelations about human and cosmic evolution.<sup>12</sup> The universe, she taught, has been created and destroyed several times—an idea that science came to only much later—and we modern humans are only one of a series of races to inhabit the planet, its previous tenants going back to ancient Atlantis, Lemuria, and beyond. Reincarnation was a fundamental cosmic theme, and with it the eventual evolution of humanity into the divine.

When the book appeared in 1888, it fed the ravenous hunger many Westerners felt for some spiritual and religious meaning in a world increasingly seen to be little more than an accident. Darwin had shown us to be merely “trousered apes,” and in any case, the universe was rolling toward its “heat death,” an inescapable outcome of entropy in which the innumerable galaxies would flatten out into a formless cosmic puddle like a lukewarm cup of coffee. The Church had given so much ground to science that it had nothing to offer against these “facts,” and had become little more than an empty shell. Blavatsky's strange, exotic blend of hidden Mahatmas, supernatural powers, cosmic evolution, past lives, sunken continents, and prehistoric civilizations struck more than a chord in the fin-de-siècle mind—it offered a powerful counter-narrative to the doom and gloom that mainstream science served on tap. Many who rejected the Church but refused science's cosmic inconsequence gravitated toward HPB and the Theosophical view. To this day, both she and the Theosophical Society are due substantial credit for providing a vital alternative to the sense of purposelessness that characterized the last years of the nineteenth century. As mentioned, the Theosophical current informed much of the art, politics, and culture of the modern age, and contributes still to the spiritual life of our time.

Blavatsky's last days were spent in St. John's Wood, London, where she was wheeled around in a kind of perambulator. She died on May 8, 1891, a day celebrated in Theosophical communities as White Lotus Day. She was sixty and had taken the world by storm, and her last words were characteristically blunt: “Don't let my last incarnation be a failure.” Chances are we will not see her like again, but with her help, anyone today can remove the veil from Isis and discover where the secret wisdom can be found. ■

The universe, Blavatsky taught, has been created and destroyed several times—an idea that science came to only much later.

<sup>1</sup>Colin Wilson, *The Occult* (New York: Random House, 1971), 330. <sup>2</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *The Occult Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1973), 31. <sup>3</sup>Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1993), 41. <sup>4</sup>Kurt Vonnegut, “The Mysterious Madame Blavatsky,” *McCall's* (March 1970). <sup>5</sup><http://leonmaurer.info/einstein.html>. <sup>6</sup>Quoted in Washington, *Blavatsky's Baboon*, 407–6. <sup>7</sup>Wilson, *Occult*, 331. <sup>8</sup>Washington, *Blavatsky's Baboon*, 52. <sup>9</sup>Ibid. 56. <sup>10</sup>Sylvia Cranston, *The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1993), xvii. <sup>11</sup>Wilson, *Occult*, 339. <sup>12</sup>Readers can find a brief sketch in Gary Lachman, *Secret History of Consciousness* (Great Barrington: Lindisfarne, 2003), 55–67.



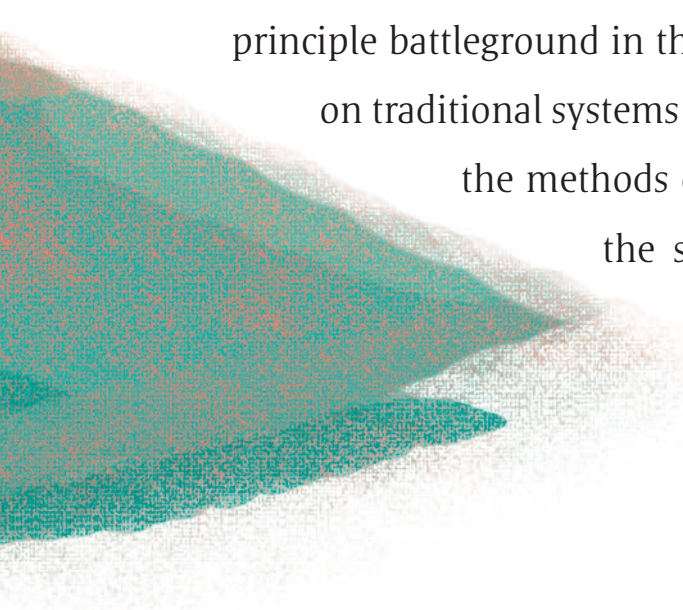




# The Mother's Evolutionary Vision

by Peter Heehs

Long before Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, the religious and scientific worldviews had been at odds. But after 1859, his theory of descent with modification — “evolution” as others called it — became the principle battleground in the war between those who based their lives on traditional systems of belief and those who took their stand on the methods of science. This war still goes on. But from the start, there have been thinkers who have





avoided direct attack on traditional or scientific orthodoxies. Instead, they have tried to harmonize religion's spiritual core with an enlarged understanding of evolution.

Some of these theorists were academic philosophers, such as Henri Bergson and Samuel Alexander. Others were scientists working within a religious tradition, for example the Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Still others, such as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and her follower Annie Besant, put together an eclectic mixture of science, religion, and the occult. All these thinkers had vast ambitions, but none were as audacious as the East-

West collaborators Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfassa, known as "the Mother." Their synthesis brings together Indian and European philosophy, science and spiritual experience, and Western esotericism and yoga.

Of the two, Aurobindo is better known. His influence on contemporary integral theorists has been profound. But he said more than once that his path and the Mother's were one, their system a joint creation.

Talented, beautiful, and enigmatic—her friends used to call her "the Sphinx"—Mirra Alfassa mastered drawing and painting, and eventually exhibited in some of the Paris salons.

When the Mother met Aurobindo in 1914, he was famous throughout India as an exiled political leader who had spent a year in jail on suspicion of conspiring with his brother, a militant revolutionary, to assassinate British officials. During the period of his imprisonment, he had a series of spiritual experiences that altered the course of his life. After his release, he settled in Pondicherry, a port in southern India that was under French rule. Mirra's companion and soon-to-be husband, Paul Richard, came to Pondicherry in the beginning of 1910 with the hope of being elected to the legislature. Wishing to meet an Indian yogi, he was introduced to Aurobindo. The two found that they had a number of interests in common, including politics and spiritual philosophy. Paul went back to France but returned to India four years later to run for office again, this time accompanied by Mirra. Unsuccessful at the polls, Paul decided to stay in India to publish a philosophical journal with Aurobindo.

Mirra had no interest in politics and little in philosophy. Her background was artistic and spiritual. Born Blanche Rachel Mirra Alfassa in Paris in 1878, she was the daughter of assimilated Sephardic Jews who had come to France from Egypt the previous year. Mirra was educated by private tutors and sent to the only Parisian art school that accepted girls. Talented, beautiful, and enigmatic—her friends used to call her "the Sphinx"—she mastered drawing and painting, and eventually exhibited in some of the Paris salons. She married an artist, Henri Morisset, who, like the more famous Henri Matisse, was a student of Gustave Moreau. The couple had a child but later divorced.



In Paris, Mirra mixed with the artistic and intellectual elite of France: Auguste Rodin, Anatole France, and many others. She also met some of the first Eastern spiritual teachers to come to Europe, among them Hazrat Inayat Khan and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. For a number of years, she was an active member of the *Mouvement Cosmique*, a group founded on the teachings of the Kabbalah that was led by the Algeria-based occultist Max Théon and his wife.

Mirra learned something from all these teachers, but she did not think that any of them was the master she felt destined to meet. When she saw Aurobindo in Pondicherry on March 29, 1914, she knew that her search was at an end. “He whom we saw yesterday is on earth,” she wrote in her diary the following day. “His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.”<sup>1</sup>

Mirra threw herself into work for the journal that she, Paul, and Aurobindo were planning to publish. Two months later, World War I broke out and Paul and Mirra were obliged to return to France. After an anxious year, Paul wangled a minor diplomatic post in East Asia. Leaving France when the bloodletting in Flanders was at its worst, he and Mirra passed the last two years of the war in quiet obscurity in Tokyo and Kyoto.

In Japan, Mirra studied, wrote, painted, and practiced meditation, looking forward to the moment when she could return to India. Aurobindo, who was bringing out the philosophical journal single-handedly, wrote and published serially a dozen books in the journal between 1914 and 1921. One of them was *The Life Divine*, the primary statement of his evolutionary philosophy.

Over a thousand pages in its final form, *The Life Divine* does not lend itself easily to summary but, very generally, begins with the idea of the Absolute—*Brahman*, as it is called in the Upanishads. To the commentators of the most prominent school of



Upanishadic philosophy, *Brahman* is all, and the relative world is illusion, *maya*. Aurobindo rejected this idea. The world, he said, is a manifestation of *Brahman*, an expression of its power, or shakti. This process takes the form of a progressive evolution, which is “in essence a heightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from matter into life, from life into mind, from the mind into the spirit.” Evolution does not end with the appearance of mind in the human being. A new power is pressing to emerge, which Aurobindo called “supermind.” A being in full possession of supermind would be the superman, or gnostic being.<sup>2</sup>

In November 1918 the war in Europe ended, but Paul and Mirra were unable to leave Japan. His association with the Indian nationalist Aurobindo and with Japanese proponents of pan-Asianism had put him on the blacklist of the British, and he feared he

would be arrested if any ship he was on touched at a port where the Union Jack was flying. At this moment of uncertainty, Mirra was asked to write something for a group of Japanese women. The result, published later as “To the Women of Japan,” was the first of her writings in which she dealt with evolution, drawing largely on Aurobindo's works.

Mirra took her place among Aurobindo's disciples, but soon he recognized her as his spiritual equal and collaborator.

Mirra began by speaking to her female audience about maternity, but she approached the subject from a surprising point of view. “The superman shall be born of woman,” she said. “It is no longer sufficient to give birth to a being in whom our highest personal idea is manifested; we must strive to find out what is the future type, whose advent Nature is planning.” It was a pivotal moment in the earth's evolution, Mirra said, one in which Nature felt “one of her great impulses towards the creation of something utterly new, something unexpected.” Just as humans are distinguished from animals by their use of intelligence, so the new race of superman (a term she adopted from Aurobindo, as Aurobindo had adopted it, with alterations, from Nietzsche) would have full possession of the power that we call, for lack of a better word, intuition. Nature had prepared this possibility through countless generations, making use of countless species. Now, in every child that is born, “in every attempt of human genius, Nature seeks the way which, once again, will lead her further.”<sup>3</sup>

Paul and Mirra were able to leave Japan in the beginning of 1920 and Mirra rejoined Aurobindo, convinced that her work was with him. Paul, lacking the same conviction, returned alone to France. Mirra took her place among Aurobindo's disciples; but soon he recognized her as his spiritual equal and collaborator. In 1926, he entrusted the community that had gathered around him to her care. She would, he told his followers, be their mother in more ways than one. They should turn to her for their material and spiritual needs, but they should



also look on her as the divine Mother, the shakti behind the evolutionary drive towards “supermanhood.” For the disciples, the phrase “the superman shall be born of woman” took on a special meaning.

In the years that followed, the Mother, as Mirra became known, oversaw the inner and outer lives of the members of the community, or ashram. She taught more by example than by words, but occasionally she sat with groups of disciples and spoke to them about life, philosophy, and yoga. Many of these talks were in the form of commentaries on Sri Aurobindo’s works, but she often presented ideas he had not written about explicitly and provided illustrations that were distinctly her own. These talks are the major source of the material that follows.

In speaking of evolution, the Mother made an important distinction between its universal and individual expressions. Universal evolution is a grand cosmic process that unfolds across the ages. Within this, each individual has a personal trajectory that continues from life to life.

Universal evolution has a dual movement: involution followed by evolution. Involution is the descent of all the possibilities of creation into what the Mother and Sri Aurobindo called “the Inconscient.” (They both preferred the French term *inconscient* to the English “unconscious.”) Before involution, there is only Oneness conscious of its own oneness. This casts itself, so to speak, into its opposite: total Separation, complete Unconsciousness. But at the heart of the Inconscient there is an urge to create forms and manifest consciousness, and this urge is not a blind drive but “the evolutionary will of a secret Conscious Being.” It follows that creation has a goal, a purpose: “to awaken, to develop and finally to reveal in a total manifestation the Spirit which is hidden at the centre of Matter and impels this Matter *from within* outwards towards a progressive development which will liberate the Spirit working





from within.” It therefore would be wrong to say that what emerges from unconscious matter — life, mind, supermind — is the *product* of matter. Rather, all that emerges was present in matter from the beginning.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly we are dealing here with a different sort of evolution than the one that scientists speak of. Biological evolution means the development of new species (more precisely, the change of inherited traits in a population of organisms over time) as a result of random mutation, natural selection, etc. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo accepted biological evolution, but they saw it as part of a larger process. Along with the bottom-up evolution of forms or bodies, there is, at each stage, a top-down descent of the principle of that stage, a principle that inhabits the bodies that have evolved and endows them with the new faculty. The emergence of mentality in the human being is not the *result* of random changes in the brains of higher primates; rather, these changes permit the descent of a pre-existing mental being, which makes use of human brains to give expression to intellect and other mental powers.

With the emergence of the mentally conscious human being, evolution itself becomes conscious. What before “was done in an apparent inconscience” can now be “done consciously, willingly, and therefore much more rapidly and in the joy of realisation.” But there is a downside to the emergence of consciousness. The human being must leave behind the sure instinct, the effortless mastery, the spontaneous purity of the animal. This, the Mother said, is the true meaning of the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden. The serpent, or evolutionary force, caused the first humans to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. As a result they had to leave the earthly paradise.<sup>5</sup>

Humans, because they are conscious of themselves and their actions, are capable of sorrow and suffering. They are troubled by the sense of wrong, of sin. This is unfortunate from the human point of view, but it is a necessary part of the evolutionary process. Sorrow, suffering, and similar human reactions, the Mother believed, “have all contributed to make consciousness emerge from the inconscience and to awaken this consciousness to the will for progress.”<sup>6</sup>

But finally it is only the narrow human mind that “makes tragedies out of events which for the Divine Consciousness are only movements in the general evolution.” If we learn to look at things from the evolutionary point of view, we put suffering in perspective and eventually can learn to rise above it. As for sin, it is merely something not in its right place. If we had the divine vision—a simultaneous vision of past, present, and future—we would understand that things humans find morally repulsive are simply things that are marked for disappearance. We would then, as the Mother said, “see the relativity of these things and that it is above all the progressive Force of evolution that gives us the will to reject [them].”<sup>7</sup>

Humans deal with moral dilemmas by creating and applying ethical and religious codes. These, as Sri Aurobindo explained in *The Life Divine*, cannot be regarded as spiritual. (He made the now-familiar distinction between “spiritual” and “religious” as early as 1917.) Ethical and religious formulas have a certain pragmatic value in the conduct of ordinary life. *The Life Divine* asserts that they even have value in “spiritual evolution itself as preparatory movements,” but “they still belong to the mental evolution.” Spirituality, according to Aurobindo, begins with “an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body”; it culminates in “a transformation of our whole being.” Commenting on this passage, the Mother made it clear that this awakening and transformation would mark “a *decisive* break in the life of the consciousness.” It would mean the beginning of a new stage of evolution.<sup>8</sup>

The human being, Sri Aurobindo famously said, is a transitional being. By this he meant that the imperfect human being is not the last word in evolution. Humans have passed through several ascending stages and will continue to do so until some of them reach “the threshold of the supramental nature” and are transformed into supermen, gnostic beings. “The human species,” wrote the Mother, enlarging on this theme, “will necessarily be succeeded by a new one which will be to man [i.e., the human being] what man is to the animal; the present human consciousness will be replaced by a new consciousness, no longer mental but supramental. And this consciousness will give birth to a higher race, superhuman and divine.”<sup>9</sup>

This transformation will not happen in one fell swoop. “One has the impression,” the Mother said in 1957, “that evolution will follow a curve which will draw closer and closer to a higher species and, maybe, everything that is still too close to the lower species will fall away.” Would humanity then become extinct? The Mother could not say. “Just as all sorts of

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo both accepted biological evolution, but they saw it as part of a larger process.



possibilities have been found between the animals and man, possibilities which have not remained, so there will be all sorts of possibilities: each individual will try in his own way. And all this together will help to prepare the future realisation.”<sup>10</sup>

Such is the course of universal evolution as the Mother saw it. But, as she stressed in the passage directly above, the human individual has an important role to play in the evolutionary

process. She was glad to speak to members of the ashram about such mind-boggling topics as the involution of spirit and the evolution of supermind, but she made it clear that “if you want to advance on the path, you must very modestly start on your way towards the new birth, first, and realise it before cherishing the illusion that you can have supramental experiences.”<sup>11</sup>

Along with cosmic evolution, there is, according to the Mother, a personal or individual evolution. Each being makes use “of the evolution of [universal]

“Humanity is not the last rung of the terrestrial creation. Evolution continues and man will be surpassed. It is for each individual to know whether he wants to participate in the advent of this new species.”

THE MOTHER

Nature as a field for its own individual evolution.” But if this being is to have an evolutionary persistence, it has to survive the death of the body. There must be, the Mother said, “something permanent which passes from one form to another and, with each new form, makes a new progress and becomes capable of entering into a higher form, more and more, until this ‘something’ becomes a perfectly conscious being at the end of the evolution.”<sup>12</sup>

The Mother called this “something” the psychic being, and her statements on the subject are her most distinctive contribution to occult evolutionary theory. She adopted the term psychic being (*être psychique*) from the Algeria-based school of occultism that she belonged to before coming to India, but she and Sri Aurobindo used it in their own way. The psychic being is, briefly, the evolutionary soul. It needs to be distinguished from the divine spark, or essential soul, which lies at the heart of every being in creation. The divine spark is unchanging, identical in all. The psychic being takes a distinct form in each individual being as a result of its actions on earth. It is “formed progressively” around the divine spark or soul “in the course of its innumerable lives in the terrestrial evolution,” becoming as it were “the conscious sheath of the soul around which it is formed.”<sup>13</sup>

It is the psychic being that carries the essence of the individual's effort from life to life. Occasionally it retains memories of previous existences, but these are not in the form of Technicolor replays of extraordinary events, as some people are fond of reporting.

(Such accounts, the Mother said, are sheer romance.) Rather, it retains impressions of “critical moments of evolution,” decisive turns that mark the inner development of one’s consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

Not long before her death in 1973, the Mother wrote: “The transforming evolution of the world has taken a hastened and intensified movement.” This was a consequence, she said, of the influence of the supermind, whose descent into the atmosphere of the earth she announced in 1956. This descent, she affirmed, would eventually pave the way for the emergence of the superman, just as the descent of the mental principle had paved the way for the emergence of the human being thousands of years ago. And just as that earlier emergence had been fraught with difficulties (imagine the relations between the first humans and their immediate animal predecessors), so the emergence of the superman would not come easy.<sup>15</sup>

The Mother hoped to ease the transition by gathering around her men and women who were dedicated to the fulfillment of the evolutionary process. Her first attempt was the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, founded in Pondicherry in 1926. A quarter-century later, asked about the purpose of the ashram, she replied in evolutionary terms: “Nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result [as the human being]; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.” At the ashram, she told her listeners, “You are in the most favourable conditions with regard to the environment, the influence, the teaching and the example, to awaken in you this supramental consciousness and to grow according to its law.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1968, the Mother made another attempt in this direction when she founded Auroville, an international township located a few miles outside Pondicherry. Here again she conceived of the community in evolutionary terms: “Humanity is not the last rung of the terrestrial creation,” she wrote in a message to prospective Aurovillians. “Evolution continues and man will be surpassed. It is for each individual to know whether he wants to participate in the advent of this new species.”<sup>17</sup>

Fifty years earlier, in “To the Women of Japan,” the Mother quoted a passage from Sri Aurobindo’s *The Human Cycle* that gave expression to her hopes for humanity’s future and spelled out the role that individuals would play in bringing this about. “The individuals who will most help the future of humanity,” Sri Aurobindo wrote, “will be those who will recognize a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being.” Such individuals would “be comparatively indifferent to particular belief and form” but would encourage all “to resort to the beliefs and forms to which they are naturally drawn.” Above all, they would “not make the mistake of thinking that this [spiritual] change can be effected by machinery and outward institutions; they will know and never forget that it has to be lived out by each man inwardly or it can never be made a reality.”<sup>18</sup>

One can use this passage as a template to see how well the communities that the Mother founded are keeping to the pattern of her evolutionary vision. Both in the ashram and in Auroville there is an awareness of the importance of evolutionary development and an attempt to put the Mother’s and Sri Aurobindo’s teachings into practice. At the same time,



there are signs of a falling back from spirituality to religion, from inner effort to institutionalized conformity, from respect for individual freedom to the imposition of groupthink. Rather than indifference to “particular belief and form,” there is a tendency to codify the teachings into a set of inflexible dogmas, leaving no room for individuals to find “beliefs and forms to which they are naturally drawn.” “Machinery and outward institutions”—centers, societies, committees, lectures, websites, blogs—abound. Change “lived out by each man [and woman] inwardly” is much less apparent.

The Mother was well aware of the dangers of dogmatism. “We have faith in Sri Aurobindo,” she wrote in 1970. “He represents for us something we formulate to ourselves with words which seem to us the most exact for expressing our experience. . . . But if, in our enthusiasm, we were convinced that they are the only appropriate words to express correctly what Sri Aurobindo

is and the experience he has given us, we would become dogmatic and be on the point of founding a religion.”<sup>19</sup> She was always firm in her rejection of religion and its forms. The program for Auroville, she wrote, was “research through experience of the Supreme Truth. A life divine but no religions.”<sup>20</sup>

The Mother was always firm in her rejection of religion and its forms. “A life divine,” she wrote, “but no religions.”

The Mother would not have approved of the recrudescence of religious habits among some of those who look to her for guidance; but she would have taken this setback in stride. She was aware that the course of spiritual evolution is not a straight road to heaven. She once said that, in the long run, “the whole creation must advance more and more towards the Divine, because it is its ultimate goal. But,” she continued, “it is a peculiar movement, for one takes three steps forward and two backward; one takes two steps forward and one sideways!” The trajectory of evolution is not straight but spiral, “and in this spiral there are innumerable points, and at each point a progress in the vertical line is achieved. But one has to make a whole round in order to come back once more to the same point, but at a slightly higher level.” Until one completes the round, the movement may seem retrograde. Perhaps, when the current round of the evolutionary spiral is complete, we will see that the overall movement has been upward.<sup>21</sup> ■

References are to volumes and pages of *The Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM) or *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA): <sup>1</sup>CWM 1:113, <sup>2</sup>CWSA 22:754-55. <sup>3</sup>CWM 2:160-61. <sup>4</sup>CWSA 22: 866; 9:210. <sup>5</sup>CWM 9:322. <sup>6</sup>CWM 10:294-95. <sup>7</sup>CWM 10:277, 10:76. <sup>8</sup>CWSA 22:889-90; 9:337. <sup>9</sup>CWM 15:109-10; 12:494. <sup>10</sup>CWM 9:235. <sup>11</sup>CWM 9:337. <sup>12</sup>CWM 9:228. <sup>13</sup>CWM 16:245-46. <sup>14</sup>CWM 15:341. <sup>15</sup>CWM 15:67. <sup>16</sup>CWM 12:116. <sup>17</sup>CWM 13:191. <sup>18</sup>CWSA 25:265. <sup>19</sup>CWM 13:21. <sup>20</sup>CWM 13:206. <sup>21</sup>CWM 5:247.

# Awakening the Authentic Self

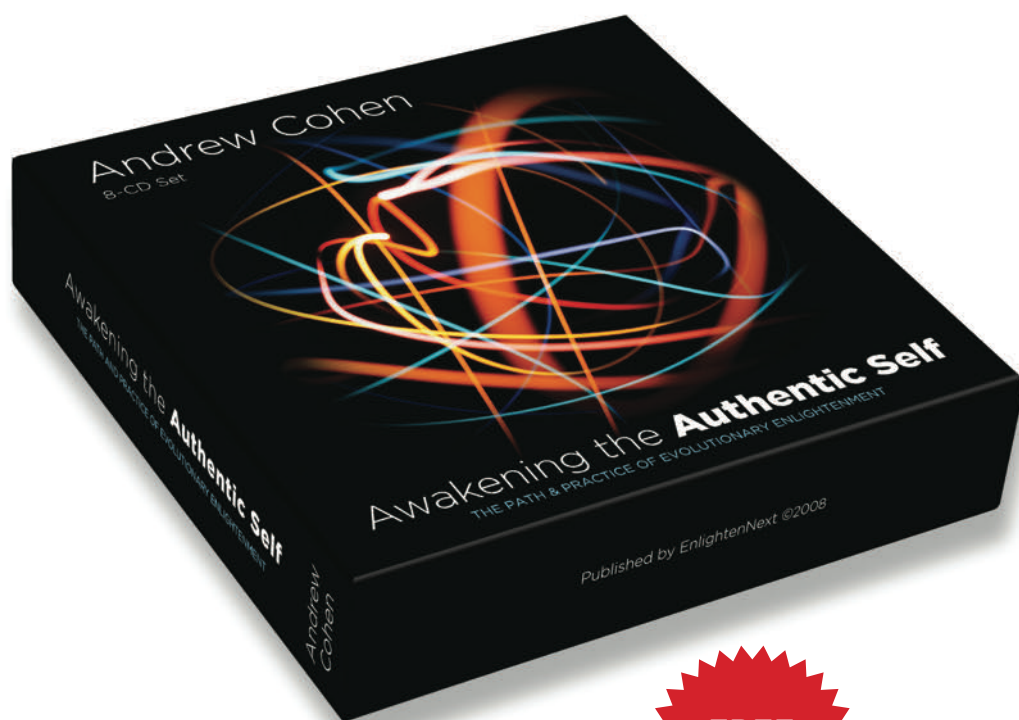
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# Andrew Cohen & Deepak Chopra in Dialogue



# On Spiritual



# Leadership





**WHAT I WANTED TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT TODAY,**

Deepak, is what it really means to be a **SPIRITUAL HERO**.

This is kind of a bold and audacious idea. But especially now that there are many, many people looking for ways to **STEP FORWARD** to make the world a better place, I think that more and more of us are going to have to be willing to take responsibility for where we are all going. We're going to have to be willing, in all our imperfection, to **EMBRACE LEADERSHIP** and to really be exemplars of what's possible.

I see you as a very courageous expression of that heroic spirit. You're someone who's willing to stand for the truth and reality of Spirit in a disbelieving world. And the reason that's important, as you well know, is because when we awaken to that truth and reality, we see much more deeply into the nature of who we really are, into the nature of reality itself, and we discover a **FEARLESS COURAGE** to live this life for the highest reasons. I think the degree to which each and every one of us is willing to do that is the degree to which we're actually going to have a **SIGNIFICANT EFFECT**.



**ANDREW COHEN**

**DEEPAK CHOPRA:** Well, the way I see leadership, now and in the future, is that a leader is really the symbolic soul of group consciousness. And the soul is our core consciousness, for lack of a better word, where we find meaning, context, relationships, and the yearning to access the larger archetypal being that we really are. As leaders, we represent the collective's deepest longings and aspirations, and the highest level of imagination and creativity, all of which exist in the collective consciousness but need a little stirring from a leader so that they can unfold.

A real spiritual leader unlocks not only his or her own potential but the potential of everyone on the planet. He or she harnesses the evolutionary impulse of the universe for greater good, truth, harmony, justice, and equality. Spiritual leadership is the call to rectify all of the problems that plague humanity right now, whether it's radical poverty or social injustice or war or conflict or ecological devastation — and not at the level at which they were created but from this deeper level where we cannot help but bring light where there is darkness.

**ANDREW COHEN:** What would you say are the personal implications of this kind of leadership? Especially for the individual who is inspired by spiritual sentiments and intuitions, and by an evolutionary philosophy and worldview, but still experiences a fear or reticence or existential hesitation to step out and be seen? To say, "I am awake to the ultimate reality and to the deepest truth of who we *all* really are, and I'm willing to stand for that in all the imperfection of my evolving humanity"?

**CHOPRA:** We have to ask ourselves: What kind of world do we want to live in? What kind of world do we want our children — and their children — to live in? What is our role or contribution in bringing about this new world?

When you ask yourself these questions, you live these questions. And you realize that you're not alone but part of a huge impulse in collective consciousness. When you

realize this, it energizes you and gives you passion for what you want to create right in this moment.

**COHEN:** No, we're not alone. But it's all too easy to sit back, observe what the problems are, and fall into a state of despair or cynicism. It takes spiritual courage to step forward and begin to take responsibility for the solution in our own ways. Our ability to make a significant difference depends on how wholeheartedly and with how much commitment we're willing to do that.

There are three important Sanskrit words: **SIMRAN**, remember who you are; **SATSANG**, hang out with the right people; and **SEVA**, let's start doing things without selfish motivation.

**DEEPAK CHOPRA**

**CHOPRA:** I think if we want to really succeed in this, we first have to have a regular discipline or practice that we've made our own. We have to get in touch with that deep consciousness inside us through meditative practice. We also have to start to pay attention to the fact that love is a very powerful force, and the more we create the energy of love in our environment, as we are delving deeper into our



own consciousness, the more we can harness and combine the two forces of *being* and *love*. Then the third element is creativity, and the fourth is action.

Being, feeling, creativity, and doing are the four expressions of our consciousness. And we now have the ability to harness these *collectively*, an ability we've never had before. Our collective being, our collective love, our collective creativity, and our collective action can solve not only any problem that exists in the world but can take us to a new plane of consciousness where we can literally begin to manifest what people will call heaven on earth. It is up to us now. As has been said before, we are the ones we've been waiting for, so let's not wait any longer. Let's act.

The naysayers are only part of the dying paradigm, which isn't going to last much longer anyway, so we shouldn't pay any attention to them. I stay immune to criticism, be responsive to feedback, and then just make the move and actually hang out with the right people. There are three important Sanskrit words: *simran*, remember who you are; *satsang*, hang out with the right people; and *seva*, let's start doing things without selfish motivation.

**COHEN:** That's absolutely inspiring. And this issue you just brought up, about hanging out with the right people, has been a very big theme in my teaching. Finding each other—finding those other individuals who also feel as passionately as we do about the kind of change we're speaking about—liberates our own spirits and gives us the courage to take very bold steps that we otherwise might not take.

**CHOPRA:** That's right. For years and years, we've said *theoretically* that consciousness is a field, but now through new technologies and new research, we're finding out that this is *literally* true: If you have a happy friend, the probability of your being happy goes up fifteen percent. If your happy friend has a happy friend whom you don't know, the probability increases by another ten percent, and if the happy

friend's happy friend has a happy friend, it increases an additional ten percent. This can only happen if consciousness is a field. And if we understand that consciousness is a field, and that *we* are the field, then there's nothing that can stop us.

**COHEN:** If consciousness is a field, then our individual actions and responses to life are obviously going to have an effect on the field.

**CHOPRA:** Absolutely. Every individual is interdependently coalescing with every other individual in that sea of consciousness.

**COHEN:** And individuals who have the greatest confidence in the reality of Spirit, and in its immortal and indestructible nature, are in a position to have a greater impact on the spiritual evolution of the field itself.

**CHOPRA:** That's right. And we can also imbue each other with greater confidence. Our interactions with each other will enhance that confidence and give it more and more power.

**COHEN:** It's really like coming out of the closet. The more we come out, the more we realize, "Oh, I can come a lot further out," until we get to the point where we realize there's no way back.

**CHOPRA:** Yes. There is no way back. It's irreversible. A child that is born cannot return to the womb.

**COHEN:** That's right. Of course, once we've come so far out of the closet that we're actually living for Spirit itself, our identity as an individual in the world *becomes* one of Spirit. The more of us who are willing to do that, the more the field will be affected in quite a profound way, and we'll be on our way to creating a cultural revolution.

Stepping forward as a **LEADER** is really like coming out of the closet. The more we **COME OUT**, the more we realize, “Oh, I can come a lot further out,” until we get to the point where we realize there’s **NO WAY BACK**.

#### ANDREW COHEN

**CHOPRA:** That’s precisely correct, Andrew. I couldn’t have said it better.

**COHEN:** So I agree with everything that you’ve said, that it’s important to have a spiritual path and a spiritual practice, one in which we can find access to the infinite source of our own being as Spirit. And alongside that, it’s also important that we embrace a progressive and leading-edge perspective about the evolution of culture. Because, for example, there are individuals who are expert meditators but live in a traditional cultural context, so when they come out of their meditative trance, they advocate worldviews and perspectives that people like you and me would find inappropriate for a modern or postmodern context. The perspectives simply wouldn’t be relevant at this moment. So meditation or spiritual practice is

important in order to access Spirit, but we also need an evolutionary worldview and philosophical perspective that will enable us to embrace the world of progress as well as the process of cultural development. This is what will allow our spiritual enlightenment to carry real meaning and power in the world.

**CHOPRA:** I think that’s the purpose of conversations like this, because the world in the end is a projection of our collective conversation. We do need to realize that much of our old religion and old spirituality is really a cultural mythology that has become obsolete and isn’t consistent with what we know about evolution or cosmology or everything that we call reality. A new secular spirituality is emerging that transcends those tribal and localized cultural expressions of spirituality, which have a great deal of truth in them but may not be relevant in their entirety as they are originally packaged. So we need to evolve with this secular spirituality, which is consistent with science, and actually elevate science itself to a new level of expression.

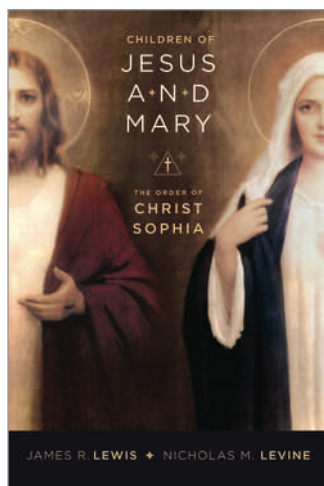
**COHEN:** Right! And I imagine we’ll get to the point sooner rather than later when it will no longer be a secular spirituality but an *evolutionary spirituality*. It will be based on science and on the discovery that we’re all part of a cosmic process that’s definitely going somewhere—and is urgently in need of and ultimately thrilled to have our higher participation in it.

**CHOPRA:** I like that phrase, “evolutionary spirituality,” much more than “secular spirituality,” which is the stage we must actually get *over* in order to become the evolutionary impulse of the cosmos. I like that because neither spirituality nor science are going to go away, and we need to bring them together to find this impulse. ■



Deepak Chopra’s latest book is entitled *The Soul of Leadership*. To listen to a series of dialogues between Andrew Cohen and Deepak Chopra, visit [enlightennext.org/deepak](http://enlightennext.org/deepak).





## Speaking of Books

with **Mother Clare Watts**

on *Children of Jesus and Mary: The Order of Christ Sophia* by James R. Lewis and Nicholas M. Levine

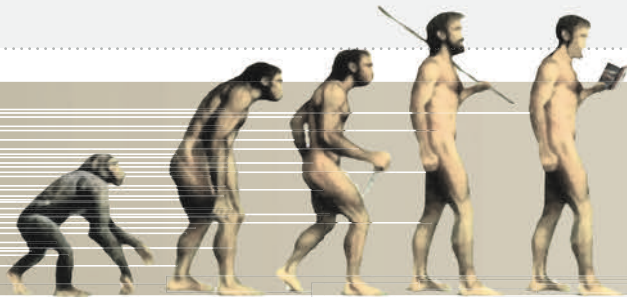
by Elizabeth Debold

**SOME MONTHS AGO**, a book arrived at the *EnlightenNext* offices that piqued our collective editorial interest. *Children of Jesus and Mary: The Order of Christ Sophia* by noted scholar James R. Lewis and colleague Nicholas M. Levine is a research study of a small but growing new religious movement. The book creates a straightforward portrait of the Order of Christ Sophia's membership, beliefs, practices, and history. A few of us had previously met some priests in the Order and their obvious passion for and love of God made us want to know more about them. Lewis and Levine's book gave us the perfect opportunity. The authors are also intrigued by the Order given that it is both very young as a religious movement and responding innovatively to the challenges of our times.

Most people don't tend to think much about the start of the major Christian denominations, because they are so much a part of our cultural landscape. But from Roman Catholicism two thousand years ago to the Mormon Church in the nineteenth century, every denomination began in the same way—with visionary leadership and a small band of the passionately converted willing to go against the status quo. While no one can say whether the Order of Christ Sophia will gain the stature and size of a Christian denomination, its beginning follows the pattern—with two charismatic leaders, Mother Clare Watts and Father Peter Bowes, and a unique approach to the Christian faith. Moreover, with about 150 members, the Order of Christ Sophia has just reached the size that researchers think gives a group staying power.

The Order blends familiar Christian ritual, Jungian psychology, and mystical esotericism. Founded by Watts and Bowes in 1999, the Order is a new variant in the long and often hidden history of esoteric Christianity. Watts and Bowes were previously involved in the Holy Order of MANS and the Brotherhood of Christ, two small esoteric Christian groups that each ran into difficulty over issues of leadership. Determined not to make similar mistakes, Watts and Bowes engage aspirants in rigorous psychological training as well as spiritual practice so that they develop the maturity to assume the mantle of spiritual leadership. Unique to the Order is that they not only uphold the belief in Christ as Savior but also see Mother Mary as an equally powerful spiritual teacher—a stance that is particularly appealing to many postmodern women.

In the following interview, Mother Clare Watts speaks about some of the key findings in Lewis's research and explains her Order's particular mix of myth and mysticism that is giving rise to a contemporary Christian esotericism.



**ENLIGHTENNEXT:** *In his book Children of Jesus and Mary: The Order of Christ Sophia, religious scholar James Lewis writes that the Order is “an unusual synthesis of traditional Catholicism and esoteric cosmology.” What do you think he means?*

**MOTHER CLARE WATTS:** We practice all of the seven Christian sacraments; we have a priesthood; we have ordinations; we have vows. We have practices of prayer and meditation. And we have a belief in the transformative power of these practices, that through them people can rise into a consciousness that is harmonious, congruent, and in relationship with the higher world—the world of light. This consciousness is available to anyone who is willing to work both at the level of mind and thought and at the depth of the heart. Developing deep feelings of devotion is vital—replacing negativity with love from and for God, and being willing to make this foremost in his or her life.

In these ways, we’re not that unlike the early Christian church, where people took these things very seriously and dedicated their lives to it.

**EN:** *How do you know that what you are doing is true to the early church?*

**MCW:** Well, we don’t believe that we need to be like the early church. We do what we know transforms people and brings them into direct relationship with God. In retrospect we’ve noticed that that’s what the early church was doing.

My brother is a Protestant theologian, and when he first heard about our Order and how intensively we live in community—that we meditate together every morning and have prayers every night—he pointed out that so many things we do are like the early church. We’re not Sunday-only

Christians. It’s not “Go to church and be saved,” it’s “Bring your whole life into the transformative process and put everything on the line for it.”

On the other hand, as Lewis is saying in his book, we’re an unusual mix. We teach reincarnation, which we believe the early Church taught, and astrology. We have Mother/Father

“Psychology is very good at naming the problems, but healing is not its business. Healing takes place in the spiritual domain.”

MOTHER CLARE WATTS

God, Christ and Sophia, Jesus and Mary. Mother Mary is Jesus’s equal. And two of us direct this Order with equal authority—one male and one female, myself and Father Peter Bowes. We have male and female priests, and we work with the masculine and the feminine within each person. Both of us have Jungian backgrounds, so we also work with the unconscious and with dreams. We bring people into psychological, emotional, and spiritual healing, which optimizes their potentials.

**EN:** *How do serious aspirants move along the path in your Order?*

**MCW:** After they decide that they are interested in what we have to offer, usually through taking an introductory course, a person might ask for “mystical baptism.” In most churches, you’re baptized, and through that you become a member of the church. For us, baptism means that you’re asking Jesus and



Mary to become your spiritual teachers and to start teaching you directly. You're setting your feet upon a path of enlightenment and asking them to guide you. That's the only initiation you can ask for. Other initiations are given by the teachers, when the teachers deem an aspirant to be ready.

Through spiritual exercises that are intended to bring more light into your being and through practices of letting go of everything that blocks the light, over time you can become ready for the initiation of illumination. From there, you can go more and more deeply into what's in the way and bring higher

**In 1954, the Vatican gave Mother Mary what you might call a “promotion,” which Carl Jung predicted would be the most significant event of the twentieth century.**

consciousness within, coming into direct relationship with God. If you continue, you can eventually be brought into the initiation of God-realization or Self-realization, where you come face-to-face with the Being at the center of your being and come to know that directly.

**EN:** *I found it very interesting that most of your members were not affiliated with another Christian denomination before becoming involved with the Order.*

**MCW:** Yes, mostly we have people who've never had any religious training or who had some as a child but hated it and left it behind. We have a good number of people who were raised Jewish, we have a few who were raised Muslim, and all the rest were raised somewhere between Christian and nothing. Most of our people had been looking around for a while and wanted something that had the substance that we were delivering and that gave them access to the dimension of reality that they experienced when they came to one of our classes.

**EN:** *Researchers who study new religious movements often theorize that such movements attract young people in their twenties, but this isn't the case with your Order.*

**MCW:** That's true. The typical member of our Order becomes involved in their thirties. Some find us in their mid- to later twenties, and some all the way up to sixty years of age. Another thing that Jim Lewis noticed about us that is unusual: we're apparently one of the most highly educated groups he's ever studied. Most of our members have a college degree—and if they don't when they come in, we often encourage them to go for one. Many have master's degrees and a good number have doctorates.

**EN:** *You and Father Peter have integrated psychotherapy into your teaching. Why do you feel that this is important or necessary?*

**MCW:** We have found it necessary because if you look at established religious groups of every kind, including alternative ones, all kinds of disasters happen when the leadership acts out of unresolved personal issues. We know that most of these types of issues have their roots in childhood experiences with parents, caregivers, and peers. If these don't get addressed, people will act them out in their lives with their significant others and in their professional situations. In positions of authority, they *really* get acted out—and it affects more people.

Our point is that if we're going to empower people spiritually, we want them to be conscious of their unconscious issues, to grow up psychologically and emotionally, and to bring integrity and consciousness into their relationships. First we want people to become conscious of how they're wounded, and then we engage very deeply with those wounds in order to heal them. However, while psychology is very good at naming the problems, healing is not its business.

I am a therapist, so I know whereof I speak! Psychologists help a little here and there—becoming conscious of your issues is a step toward healing. But it doesn't take care of it. Healing takes place in the spiritual domain.

**EN:** *Perhaps this is why the research showed that the most committed members of your Order tested as being the least neurotic.*

**MCW:** We are curious about whether the ones who stick with us, and go the furthest with us, were already on the healthier side psychologically when they became members or if they became healthier by being here. The only way we might determine that would be to test everybody from the beginning. It would be very interesting to see which is the case.

**EN:** *What's your gut sense?*

**MCW:** That the healthier ones stayed. People who are too neurotic and not able to get beyond it find the work too difficult. Members engage in an ongoing practice—both with teachers and in small groups—of examining their emotional attachments and their thinking. Eventually, the more neurotic ones find it too painful to keep examining themselves in that way in the presence of others.

**EN:** *I'd like to return to something that you mentioned earlier—that you view Mother Mary and Jesus as spiritual equals and co-teachers. How did you come to view them as partners in this way?*

**MCW:** Different Catholic churches teach about Mary in different ways. Back in the fourth century, at the Council of Nicaea, the hierarchy of the Church met to determine Catholic beliefs. They decided what was heresy and what was truth. The decisions were made on the basis of a debate between clergy who were scholars on particular topics. Whichever position was victorious in the debate became established in the Catholic Creed and was what was then taught and believed.

At this council in 325, they were debating whether God was begotten or made. And the Creed speaks of Christ as “begotten not made, one in being with the Father.” The scholar who won the debate did so through using the Old Testament words attributed to Sophia—which means “Wisdom”—and connecting them to the words spoken by the Apostle John regarding Logos—which means “the Word.” His argument made them essentially the same thing. Logos and Sophia were thereby joined as one energy or spirit, and from then on were simply referred to as Logos—or Christ. The great words of Sophia in the Old Testament's Book of Wisdom were left behind. Christianity no longer taught about Sophia, and in so doing dropped all mention of the Feminine Divine.

Even so, there have always been strains in Catholicism that have carried her forward. Throughout history, they'd show up now and again. Or they'd stay quiet and underground for a time and then a saint who was very devoted to Mary, and knew her personally, would arise and speak of her power.

In our Order, we work within the consciousness that Mother Mary and Master Jesus were born as equal master teachers. They came to pay off the karma of everyone on the earth. Mary came humbly to take the feminine, passive role in that process, and what she did at the foot of the cross was spiritually equal to what Jesus did on the cross. She was torn to shreds interiorly while he was torn to shreds exteriorly.

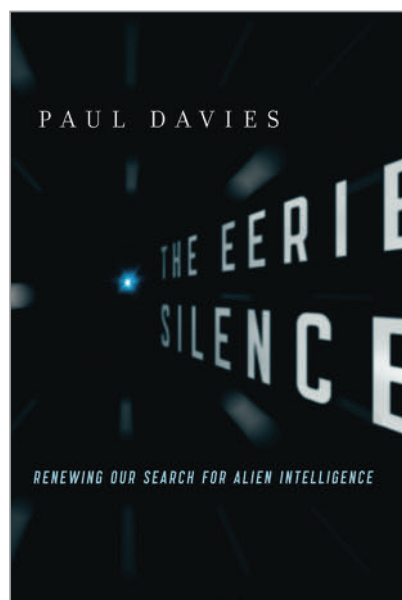
Because you at EnlightenNext are so interested in the evolution of consciousness, let me share a little more history on this. In 1954, the Vatican gave Mother Mary what you might tongue in cheek call a “promotion.” They declared her to be “Queen of Heaven,” and this became doctrine. When Carl Jung heard this, he predicted that this would be the most significant event of the twentieth century. And that was after two world wars! Because when the Pope “upgraded” Mary, it was an indication that the feminine archetype had changed, which is *very* significant. Carl Jung—whose psychology is based upon an understanding of archetypes and their effect on our collective consciousness—predicted it would change everything. Sure enough, within five years of that time, the pill appeared and women's lib started. And also the civil-rights movements. Those on the margins of social power—women, minorities, etcetera—also represent the feminine or the passive in our culture. In addition, very significantly and at the same time, men started to express their dissatisfaction with their role, wanting, for example, to participate more in their children's lives. Men wanted to develop their feminine side at the same time that women were saying that we wanted the freedom to move into all realms and express ourselves.

So, in terms of the evolution of consciousness, it starts with the archetype and then follows on earth. Jung always said that when there's going to be change on earth the archetype has to change first. ■



Hear more from Mother Clare Watts at  
[enlightennext.org/motherclare](http://enlightennext.org/motherclare).





## The Eerie Silence

**RENEWING OUR SEARCH FOR ALIEN INTELLIGENCE**

by Paul Davies

(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010, hardcover \$27.00)

**Reviewed by James N. Gardner**

In a new Discovery Channel documentary series about the greatest mysteries confronted by science, Stephen Hawking professes a virtual certainty that extraterrestrial forms of intelligence exist. “To my mathematical brain,” he explains, “the numbers alone make thinking about aliens perfectly rational. The real challenge is to work out what aliens might actually be like.” Just in time for the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the extraordinary new science known as SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence), astrophysicist and Templeton Prize-winner Paul Davies has written a terrific book—*The Eerie Silence: Renewing Our Search for Alien Intelligence*—that provides a close-up

look at the latest scientific thinking about innovative ways to seek evidence of extraterrestrial intelligence.

Because we cannot be sure that benign motives would animate the spirit of an alien intelligence, Hawking counsels extreme caution regarding so-called “active” SETI or METI (Messaging to Extraterrestrial Intelligence). This endeavor is “a little too risky,” according to Hawking, who analogizes possible human contact with advanced extraterrestrials to European conquest of native peoples across our planet. “If aliens ever visit us,” Hawking warns, “I think the outcome would be much as when Christopher Columbus first landed in America, which didn’t turn out very well for the Native Americans.”

It is a remarkable testament to the advancing scientific credibility of the SETI field that a scientist of Hawking’s stature would actually caution his fellow humans about the *risks of a successful outcome!* Not so long ago, SETI scientists were widely ridiculed by their mainstream scientific colleagues as dreamers or worse. Science-fiction author Michael Crichton once sneered that SETI was merely religion in disguise.

*The Eerie Silence* is based in large part on a workshop Davies convened at Arizona State University in February 2008 entitled “The Sound of Silence.” The workshop was intended to encourage radically new ways of addressing the evocative question “Are we alone?” (A note of personal disclosure: I participated in the workshop and presented a paper entitled “How Cosmological Models Should Guide SETI Search Strategies,” which argued that scientists might

profitably search for signs of a super-intelligent ETI embedded in the laws and constants of physics.)

The traditional method used by SETI scientists is to deploy giant radio telescopes to listen for narrow-band signals that betray evidence of an artificial origin. But according to Davies, the “central dogma” of SETI—the belief that alien civilizations are targeting Earth with narrow-band

**A cosmic electricity generator dreamed up by Princeton physicist John Wheeler would harness the rotational energy of a spinning black hole.**

radio messages—simply isn’t credible. The reasons are various, including the strong possibility that clearly artificial radio signals may be a transient phenomenon around the cosmos. As Davies puts it, traditional SETI is constrained by “an inbuilt bias towards anthropocentrism.” That bias has not been lost on Frank Drake, the father of SETI research, who has admitted that “our [electromagnetic] signals of today are very different from the signals of 40 years ago, which we then felt were perfect models of what might be radiated from other worlds of any state of advancement. We were wrong. If technology can change that much in 40 years, how much might it change in thousands or millions of years?”

Arguing persuasively that scientists need to think outside the box of SETI’s central dogma, Davies offers a dizzying array of nontraditional SETI search strategies—for

instance, seeking signatures of distant super-technologies like the so-called Dyson sphere (named after physicist Freeman Dyson), which would completely encircle a star in order to capture all of its radiated energy. Theoretically, a Dyson sphere would alter the light output of an entombed star, creating a noticeable infrared glow that could be identified across the length of an entire galaxy. Searches for Dyson spheres have actually been conducted by astronomers, so far without success. Another imagined super-technology, a kind of cosmic electricity generator dreamed up by Princeton physicist John Wheeler, would harness the rotational energy of a spinning black hole. No black-hole searches for Wheeler generators have been conducted, probably because such theoretical contraptions don't seem to throw off predictable optical or radio signatures.

Closer to home, Davies suggests that we should begin looking for a "shadow biosphere" that would provide evidence of a second genesis of life on Earth. The implications of such a discovery would be profound. In Davies' words, "If life started more than once on Earth, we could be virtually certain that the universe is teeming with it." Evidence of a shadow biosphere and a second genesis might be found in habitats favored by so-called extremophile microbes, which have been discovered inhabiting an astonishing array of hostile environments, including undersea ranges adjacent to "black smokers" — mineral chimneys in the seabed spewing forth dusky fluid at temperatures up to 350° C—and the highly radioactive waste pools of nuclear reactors.

So far, every extremophile organism studied by scientists has proven to be standard-issue life. But hope remains that life inhabiting the most hostile terrestrial environments imaginable — the upper atmosphere, for instance, or ice deposits at temperatures below -40° C—might be found to be truly "weird" in that they would have a nonstandard genetic code that could only have arisen from an ancestor different from the common ancestor shared by all currently known forms of life. As Davies notes, this would be a truly spectacular finding, with immediate and obvious implications for astrobiology:

*The discovery of a form of life that could have arisen only via a second genesis would be the most sensational event in the history of biology, with sweeping consequences for science and technology.*

This discovery would be groundbreaking for SETI — but what if it turns out, after every plausible SETI search strategy has been exhausted, that humankind does indeed seem to be alone in the cosmos? Would that be cause for despair? Perhaps not. As Davies concludes:

*We might [then] make it our mission and our destiny to spread beyond Earth, carrying the flame of life, intelligence and culture with us, to bestow this gift on countless sterile worlds.*

That would indeed be the crowning cosmic achievement for a species possessing the remarkable capacity, in the words of Robert Kennedy, to dream of things that never were, and ask why not. ■



**James N. Gardner** is an Oregon attorney and the author, most recently, of *The Intelligent Universe: AI, ET, and the Emerging Mind of the Cosmos* ([intelligentuniverse.org](http://intelligentuniverse.org)).



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*"Growth River doesn't tell us what our strategic direction is, they help us think in strategic ways so we can answer our own questions."*

Marty Rosenberg,  
Ethos Partners

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## Growth River

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### CREATE THE RIGHT AGENDA FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

At Growth River, here's our central conviction: enterprise growth and evolution are inevitable when the right people, in the right roles, with the right values, work together.

We don't push strategy into an organization. We create the conditions for higher levels of strategic thinking to emerge within the executive team. And then we help align the execution of that strategy down through the organization. Our mid-sized corporate and nonprofit partners experience dramatic performance increases — over 20–50 percent per annum. Our approach creates alignment in four major areas:

- Culture/Leadership Values
- System-of-Roles
- Effective Strategies
- Workflows and Resources

**A Special \$1,000 Offer:** If you are planning an offsite strategy meeting with your senior team, how will you ensure that valuable time is focused on strategic rather than operational issues and decisions?

Through our Business & Leadership Performance Assessment we evaluate your team's ability to plan and execute successful strategies and help you to create and facilitate an agenda for your next off-site meeting. For qualifying organizations, this high-value service is available for a nominal fee and with no obligation. Contact us.

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

# Partners in creating the future

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## Content Evolution

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### HELPING ORGANIZATIONS DISCOVER AND LIVE THEIR INTENT AND FULL POTENTIAL

Content Evolution links fact-based strategy with intent to deliver an end-to-end experience for customers and constituents.

Clients benefit from Content Evolution's unique business model: 40 organizations in collaborative federation creating a rich resource of diverse talent and expertise, and 8 general management companies with muscle and one mission: To serve clients interested in connecting strategic intention to what they promise and actually do.

Member companies of Content Evolution help clients create and align organization and thriving planning, brand strategy and management, human experience design and strategy, and customer insights and human factors research. Core capabilities include front-end customer and offering insights, value proposition and advocacy ecosystems, persona creation, customer and constituency segmentation, strategic brand experience design and sensory positioning, innovation and adjacent market explorations, meme and conversation systems, and scenario planning and complex adaptive systems modeling.

Meet our experts at [www.contentevolution.net](http://www.contentevolution.net) and find out more by writing to [ce@contentevolution.net](mailto:ce@contentevolution.net) or call (001) 919-942-4941.



Set the Content Evolution  
federation of capabilities  
in motion for you.  
Be intentional.

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## Zen Clocks and Timers

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### TRANSFORMING YOUR HOME ENVIRONMENT WITH BEAUTY AND TRANQUILITY

Founded in 1995 in Boulder, Colorado, by integral philosopher Steve McIntosh, Now & Zen manufactures a line of hardwood alarm clocks and timers that feature natural acoustic chimes and gongs. Zen Clocks are like musical instruments — they make waking up an exquisite experience. The “alarm” begins with a single, long resonating chime or gong strike. Then the next chime sounds in 3 minutes...then in 2 minutes... then 1 minute, so that you are gradually and gently awakened over 10 minutes by a “golden ratio progression.”

Zen Clocks also serve as aesthetically sophisticated timers for meditation or yoga. Whether you use the clock as a countdown or an interval timer, the acoustic sounds add beauty and tranquility to your practice environment. Zen Clocks can also be set to strike on the hour, serving as a periodic “mindfulness bell” for your home or office.

As beautiful to see as they are to hear, Zen Clocks reflect the sensibilities of a progressive spiritual lifestyle. Now & Zen has been an enthusiastic sponsor of *EnlightenNext* magazine since 1998, and we greatly appreciate their ongoing contribution to cultural evolution.



“Beauty is the final  
contentment of the Eros  
of the universe.”

Alfred North Whitehead

For a free catalog call: (800) 779-6383, or visit: [www.now-zen.com](http://www.now-zen.com)



# The EnlightenNext Sponsor Network



Our mission is to consciously and actively generate goodwill for our clients, employees, and partners, and to inspire all who come into contact with 4goodmedia, inc., to do the same.

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Contact founding partner, Eric Wholley, at [ewholley@4goodmedia.com](mailto:ewholley@4goodmedia.com).



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for Human Hive &  
Eco-Regional  
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### TRANSFORM CITIES, COMMUNITIES, CAPITALS, AND CAPACITIES

What if you could align leaders, organizations, and governments to transform an entire city from resistance to resilience? Integral City Meshworks delivers a framework and practical tools for:

- **Context mapping** that integrates Place, Priorities, People, and Planet. Why? To reduce risk and inspire opportunities for innovation. To add value to human systems and eco-regional ecology.
- **Sustainability and resilience strategies** for the whole city. Why? To optimize evolutionary city Purpose and unique global contribution.
- **Developing individual capacity and organizational capital** that aligns operations and amplifies innovation. Why? To grow cultural and social potential. To move vision into action.
- **Community engagement and dynamic decision making.** Why? To coalesce authority, power and influence that keep stories alive, direction adaptive, and well-being balanced for responsible economies and resilient environments.
- **Designing navigational dashboards** that monitor vital signs of wholeness across all city systems. Why? To integrate Key Success Factors across all sectors with multiple stakeholders.

Integral City *Catalysts*, *Communities of Practice*, and *Meshworkers* empower and attract high-performers who improve: supply chain security; energy efficiencies (in utilities, transportation, education, public health care, etc); strategies for profitability from ecologies of innovation; risk mitigation; and brand reputation enhancement.

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# Partners in creating the future

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Our network of professional change-agents is working to further conscious evolution by helping individuals and organizations achieve meaningful and lasting transformation. We drive measurable success and organizational performance through the integration of business methods with spiritual wisdom.

Founder Cindy Wigglesworth, a successful corporate consultant and a respected leader in the Integral movement, has translated spirituality into a skill-set that can be developed and measured. She has created the first ever competency-based Spiritual Intelligence assessment instrument—a comprehensive, faith-neutral, expertly tested model.

Integrating this model with the proven principles of rational and emotional intelligence, Deep Change provides organizational development consulting, executive coaching, and distinctive training program design and delivery.

Visit [DeepChange.com](http://DeepChange.com).



- Test your current level of Spiritual Intelligence or “SQ”
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“Words have the power to both destroy and heal. When words are both true and kind, they can change our world.”

The Buddha



## Seek Until You Find

by Andrew Cohen



**I BECAME A SPIRITUAL TEACHER** twenty-four years ago, once I found what I was looking for. Up until that point I had been a deadly serious seeker—an ardent meditator as well as a dedicated student who sought out companions and teachers who shared my passion for Spirit. Typical of my generation, I looked to the East to find illumination rather than to the West. After two and a half years in India, I met my last teacher and he liberated my soul when he uttered ten simple words: “You don’t have to make any effort to be free.” Upon hearing this, I made the transition from seeker to finder.

For any one of us who is moved by spiritual inspiration, it is important that we seek wholeheartedly until we find. And once we begin to seek, we must not stop until we are convinced, at the deepest level of our being, of the mystical reality that God, or Spirit, is our own true Self. For some, that might occur in an explosive revelation; for others, in a very quiet moment. However it happens, we will *know*. And it is at that moment that we have to be willing to take the most important step on the path to liberation: *to give up the seeking process forever*. There will always be more for us to experience, to understand, and to realize, but once we are convinced of the reality of Spirit, at a soul level, we are no longer seekers. And therefore, we have to take responsibility for what it means to be finders.

As finders, we don’t need any more evidence. To use theological language, we no longer have the right to demand that God prove him- or herself to us, over and over again. It could even be considered unseemly, greedy, and, in some cases, immoral for individuals who have been blessed with a direct glimpse of the miraculous to continue to insist on more experiential proof. As I see it, the purpose of mystical experience is to convince us, at a soul level, that our true nature is Spirit—to convince us so deeply that we are liberated from existential doubt. Why? So we will finally be *available* to participate, consciously and wholeheartedly, in the greatest gift we’ve been given . . . which is the life we are *already* living right now.

I was deeply struck when Mother Teresa died, and her journals revealed that this remarkable woman, who so many

millions revered as an expression of the highest compassion in action, had been living in a state of spiritual torment. While early in life she claimed God had spoken directly to her, since then, her inner experience had been like living in a spiritual desert, agonizingly separate from her chosen God, bereft of connection to the living source of her very own faith. But did she stop her extraordinary work and demand more proof of God’s existence? Did she insist on needing to *feel* God’s love in order to express that love to those in need? Her powerful example reveals in the most poignant way what it really means to be a finder.

When we are finders, we no longer have any doubt about who we really are and why we are here on Earth. In our own direct awakening to Spirit’s true face, existential doubt dies a sudden and irrevocable death, liberating an infectious confidence that is rooted deep within our souls. A true finder may or may not continue to engage in spiritual practice, but if he or she does, it is motivated only by the desire to *continue* to evolve for the sake of the evolutionary process itself. Indeed, in evolutionary spirituality, making the noble effort to catalyze our own individual and collective higher development is recognized to be the very *raison d’être* of human beings at the leading edge. And we can only begin to do this when we have given up seeking forever. Then and only then will we stop reaching for a spiritual epiphany to convince us of something. We instead make the effort to evolve because we are in love with life and are committed to unlocking its highest potentials through our own development. I have discovered that those potentials will only come to the fore when we are no longer trying to *become* enlightened but have let go of any other option than to *be* the expression of the highest we have seen and experienced, in all our imperfection, right now. That’s what it means to be a finder.



Learn more about Andrew Cohen’s philosophy of Evolutionary Enlightenment at [andrewcohen.org](http://andrewcohen.org).