

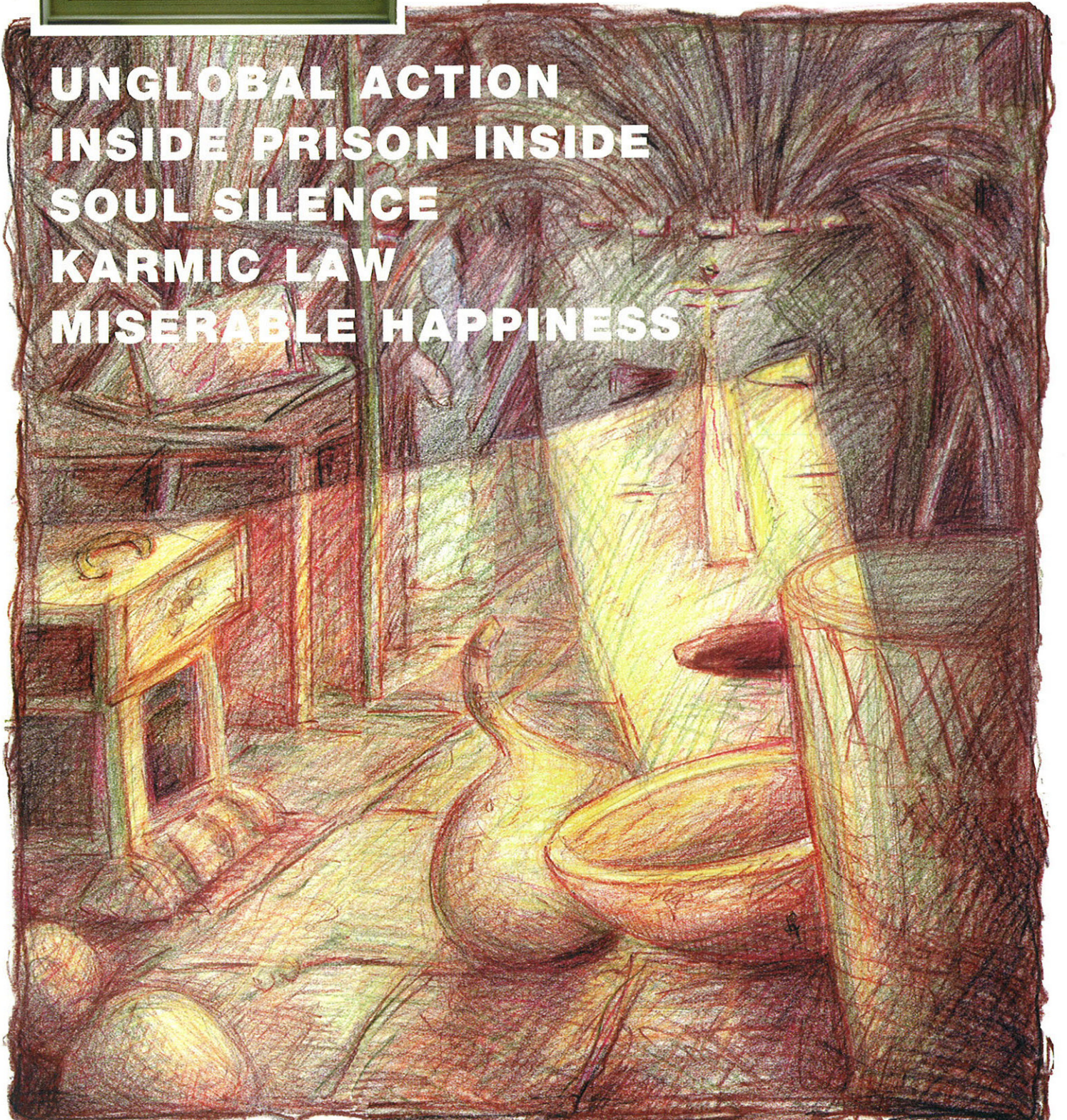


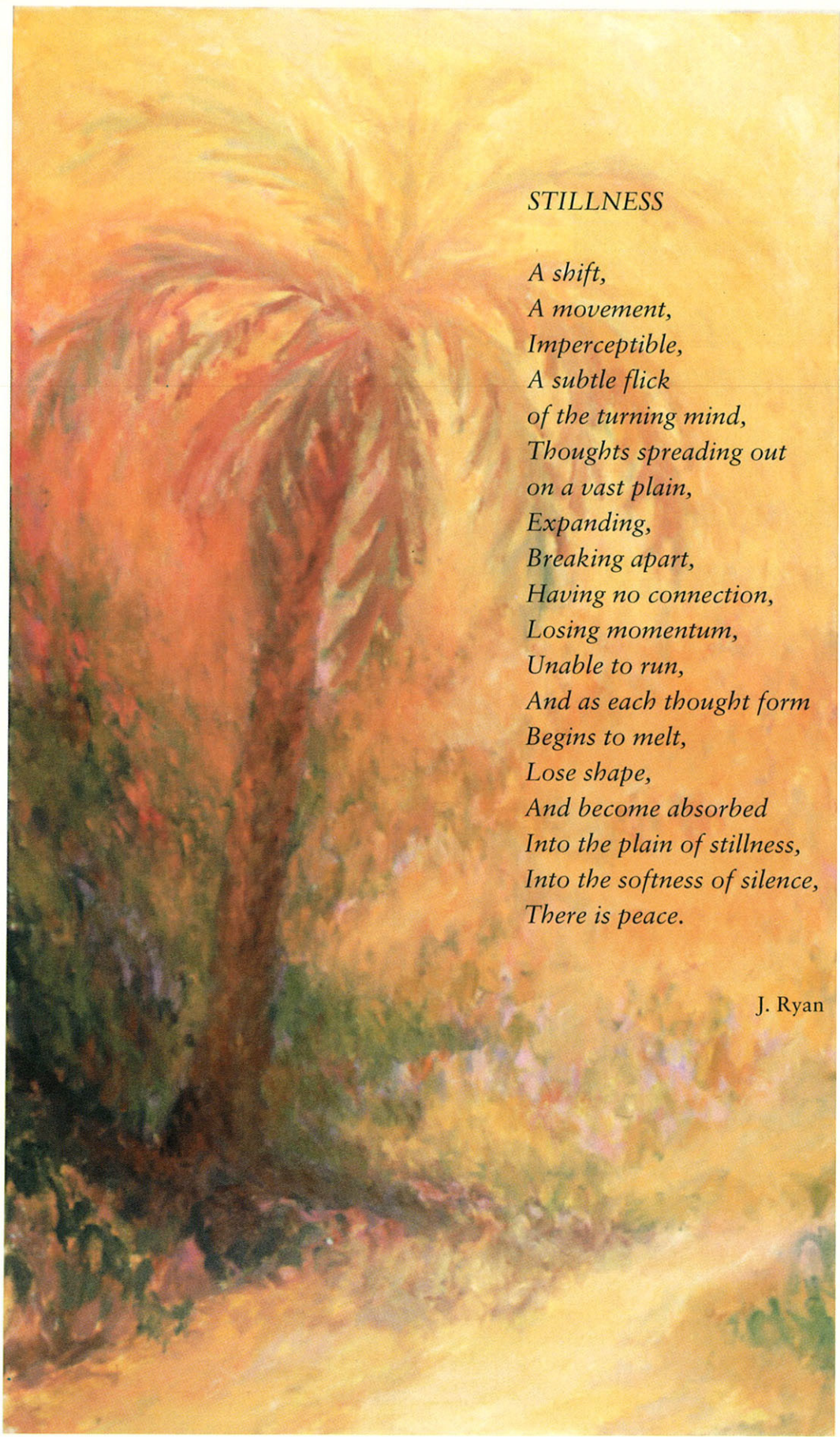
# RETREAT

*Retreat*

ISSUE No. FIVE

**UNGLOBAL ACTION  
INSIDE PRISON INSIDE  
SOUL SILENCE  
KARMIC LAW  
MISERABLE HAPPINESS**





*STILLNESS*

*A shift,  
A movement,  
Imperceptible,  
A subtle flick  
of the turning mind,  
Thoughts spreading out  
on a vast plain,  
Expanding,  
Breaking apart,  
Having no connection,  
Losing momentum,  
Unable to run,  
And as each thought form  
Begins to melt,  
Lose shape,  
And become absorbed  
Into the plain of stillness,  
Into the softness of silence,  
There is peace.*

J. Ryan

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## RETREAT



ISSUE No. 5

### COVER

Cover illustration by Harry Van Essen, created at The International Arts Forum, Sardinia.

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### PRINTED BY

Leighton Printing

15 Palmer Place

London N7

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ISSN 1353 - 811X

# How much do you really need to know?

From Global Information to Personal Dialogue

*In a world reduced to village proportions by communications technology, is it useful to think in global terms?*

Every day we feed ourselves on stories and information about what's happening thousands of miles away. Does this information empower us or disempower us? Does it strengthen your consciousness and therefore your enthusiasm, or weaken it. In practical terms can you actually do anything about the multitude of crises on the surface of the planet? Obviously not. In fact one argument states that the daily flood of disasters, conflict and cynicism only feeds feelings of hopelessness and despair. Feelings become attitudes, attitudes become habits and sooner or later our personal intimate interactions with others at home and at work are affected. Do you need to know what's going on a thousand miles away? Oh yes, comes the reply, I need to be informed, I need to keep up-to-date. But do you? Could you live without knowing? Could you survive without your daily injection of global gossip? No morning paper, no late night news? In *Off Your Horse, Out of Your Car*, Wendell Berry challenges the very notion of global thinking and sets out his argument for remaining totally focussed on what's happening around you right now.

There is no shortage of words or ideas in a world avalanched by information. But there is a shortage of real conversation, real dialogue. In *Dialogue with My Son*, Prasad Kaipa is challenged by his inquisitive son to explain the true meaning and value of dialogue. Meanwhile there may be a new conversation about to begin: between the human mind and the mind of the machine, whatever that may be! **Dean Radin** thinks we are already speaking to our machines and they are listening. In *Hi-Tech Consciousness* he describes the phenomena of DMMI - Direct Mind Machine Interaction.

Do you know what you are doing? Are you aware of the significance of your actions? Are you aware of the philosophy of Karma? In the fourth session in the **Foundation Course in Meditation** the significance and consequences of your actions are explained and destiny is returned to your hands. Where there is action there is change and where there is change there is time. However, **Russell Stannard** has the feeling that there is one being who has no real sense of time, because He doesn't change, and yet He has a knowledge and awareness of all time as the One with complete vision - and that is whom he calls God. In *Making Sense of Gods Time* he challenges us to stretch our perception to view our lives from a higher dimension and then to take note of how our understanding of time might change. Welcome to Retreat 5 - it's good to have you with us.

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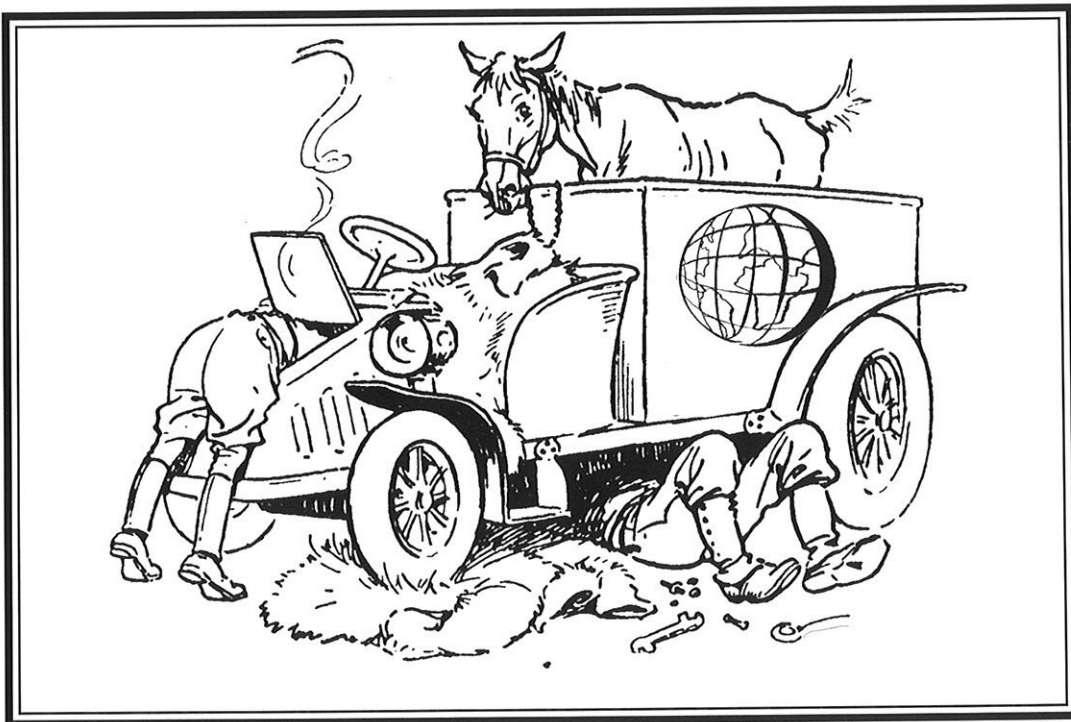
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# Out of your Car, Off your Horse

Wendell Berry says 'We cannot have our cake and eat it. Global ecology and global economy cannot go together'.



*Properly speaking, global thinking is not possible. Those who have “thought globally” (and among them the most successful have been imperial governments and multinational corporations) have done so by means of simplifications too extreme and oppressive to merit the name of thought. Global thinkers have been, and will be, dangerous people. National thinkers tend to be dangerous also; we now have national thinkers in the north-eastern United States who look upon Kentucky as a garbage dump.*



Global thinking can only be statistical. Its shallowness is exposed by the least intention to do something. Unless one is willing to be destructive on a very large scale, one cannot do something except locally, in a small place. Global thinking can only do to the globe what a space satellite does to it: reduce it, make a bauble of it. Look at one of those photographs of half the Earth taken from outer space, and see if you recognise your neighbourhood. If you want to

see where you are, you will have to get out of your space vehicle, out of your car, off your horse and walk over the ground. On foot you will find that the earth is satisfyingly large, and full of beguiling nooks and crannies.



If we could think locally, we would do far better than we are doing now. The right local questions and answers will be the right global ones. The Amish question "what will this do to our community?" tends toward the right answer for the world.



If we want to put local life in proper relation to the globe, we must do so by imagination, charity and forbearance; and by making local life as independent and self-sufficient as we can, not by the presumptuous abstractions of "global thought".



If we want to keep our thoughts and acts from destroying the globe, then we must see to it that we do not ask too much of the globe or of any part of it. To make sure that we do not ask too much, we must learn to live at home, as independently and self-sufficiently as we can. That is the only way we can keep the land we are using, and its ecological limits, always in sight.



The only sustainable city - and this, to me, is the indispensable ideal and goal - is a city in balance with its countryside: a city, that is, that would live off the net ecological income of its supporting region, paying as it goes all its ecological and human debts.



The cities we now have are living off ecological principal, by economic assumptions that seem certain to destroy them. They do not live at

home. They do not have their own supporting regions. They are out of balance with their supports, wherever on the globe their supports are.



The balance between city and countryside is destroyed by industrial machinery, "cheap" productivity in field and forest and "cheap" transportation. Rome destroyed the balance with slave labour; we have destroyed it with "cheap" fossil fuel industries.



Since the second world war, the norms of productivity have been set by the fossil fuel industries.



Geographically, the sources of the fossil fuels are rural. Technically however, the production of these fuels is industrial and urban. The facts and integrity of local life, and the principle of community, are considered as little as possible, for to consider them would not be quickly profitable. Fossil fuels have always been produced at the expense of local ecosystems and of local human communities. The fossil fuel economy is the industrial economy par excellence, and it assigns no value to local life, natural or human.



When the industrial principles exemplified in fossil fuel production are applied to field and forest, the results are identical: local life, both natural and human, is destroyed.



Industrial procedures have been imposed on the countryside pretty much to the extent that the country people have been seduced or forced into dependence on the money economy. By encouraging this dependence, corporations have increased their ability to rob the people of their property and their

labour. The result is that a very small number of people now own all the usable property in the country, and workers are increasingly the hostages of their employers.



Our present leaders - the people of wealth and power - do not know what it means to take a place seriously: to think it worthy, for its own sake, of love and study and careful work. They cannot take any place seriously because they must be ready at any moment, by the terms of power and wealth in the modern world, to destroy any place.




Ecological good sense will be opposed by all the most powerful economic entities of our time, because ecological good sense requires the reduction or replacement of those entities. If ecological good sense is to prevail, it can do so only through the work and the will of the people and of the local communities.





For this task our currently prevailing assumptions about knowledge, information, education, money, and political will are inadequate. All our institutions with which I am familiar have adopted the organisational patterns and the quantitative measures of the industrial corporations. Both sides of the ecological debate, perhaps as a consequence, are alarmingly abstract.





But abstraction, of course, is what is wrong. The evil of the industrial economy (capitalist or communist) is the abstract nature inherent in its procedures - its inability to distinguish one place or person or creature from another. William Blake saw this two hundred years ago. Anyone can see it now in almost any of our common tools and weapons.

 Abstraction is the enemy wherever it is found. The abstractions of sustainability can ruin the world just as surely as the abstractions of industrial economics. Local life may be as much endangered by "saving the planet" as by "conquering the world". Such a project calls for abstract purposes and central powers that cannot know, and will destroy, the integrity of local nature and local community.


 In order to make ecological good sense for the planet, you must make ecological good sense locally. You can't act locally by thinking globally. If you want to keep your local acts from destroying the globe, you must think locally.


 No one can make ecological good sense for the planet. Everyone can make ecological good sense locally, if the affection, the scale, the knowledge, the tools and the skills are right.

 The right scale in work gives power to affection. When one works beyond the reach of one's love for the place one is working in, and for the things and creatures one is working with and among, then destruction inevitably results. An adequate local culture, among other things, keeps work within the reach of love.

 The question before us then is an extremely difficult one: How do we begin to remake, or to make, a local culture that will preserve our part of the world while we use it? We are talking here not just about a kind of knowledge that involves affection but also about a kind of knowledge that comes from or with affection - knowledge that is unavailable to the unaffectionate,


and that which is unavailable to anyone is what is called information.


 What, for a start, might be the economic result of local affection? We don't know. Moreover, we are probably never going to know in any way that would satisfy the average dean or corporate executive. The ways of love tend to be secretive, somewhat inscrutable.


 The real work of planet saving will be small, humble, and humbling,



and (insofar as it involves love) pleasing and rewarding. Its jobs will be too many to report, too many to be publicly noticed or rewarded, too small to make anyone rich or famous.

 The great obstacle may be not greed but the modern hankering after glamour. A lot of our smartest, most concerned people want to come up with a big solution to a big problem. I don't think that planet saving, if we take it seriously, can furnish employment to many such people.

 Some cities can never be sustainable, because they do not have a countryside around them, or near them, from which they can be sustained. New York City cannot be made sustainable, nor can Phoenix. Some cities in Kentucky or the Midwest, on the other hand, might reasonably hope to become sustainable.

 To make a sustainable city, one must begin somehow, and I think the beginning must be small and economic. A beginning could be made, for example, by increasing the amount of food bought from farmers in the local countryside by consumers in the city. As the food economy became more local, local farming would become more diverse; the farms would become smaller, more complex in structure, more productive; and some city people would be needed to work on the farms. Sooner or later, as a means of reducing expenses both ways, organic wastes from the city would go out to fertilise the farms of the supporting region; thus city people would have to assume an agricultural responsibility, and would be properly motivated to do so both by the wish to have a supply of excellent food and by the fear of contaminating that supply. The increase of economic intimacy between a city and its sources would change minds (assuming, of course, that the minds in question would stay put long enough to be changed). It would improve minds. The locality, by becoming partly sustainable, would produce the thought it would need to become more sustainable.

®

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# Dialogue with my Son

*“Dad, what is a dialogue?” my seven year-old son, Pravin, asked just as we were getting ready to sleep. While I use the word “dialogue” a lot, what triggered his interest in dialogue now, I wondered.*

**I** wanted to tell Pravin that dialogue is talking. If I did that, I would know what his next question would be: “Why do you call it a dialogue, if it is just talking?” Maybe I should say, dialogue is a special kind of a talk. Or, is it? Is it possible to not talk and still have a dialogue?

On reflection, silence is a powerful part of any meaningful dialogue. So dialogue is a meaningful conversation that may include talking, listening, and silence. I paused: isn't that what defines any conversation? I began to wonder whether I knew what a dialogue was. I still remember David Bohm's



words: “Dialogue is a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us.”

“Wake up, Dad”, Pravin chimed, “would you tell me what a dialogue is?”

I told Pravin that dialogue has something to do with meaningful conversation. I told him, con-verse has something to do with roughly-creating verse together. If I am right, verse is poetry and the difference between poetry and

Prasad Kaipa is forced to consider the true nature of dialogue

prose is that prose communicates content; whereas poetry communicates feeling - heart's meaning. In that respect, when we truly converse, or dialogue, we are making poetry and communicating with the heart and sharing meaning.

Pravin said that conversation is talking together. He further explained that talking together is not his father giving lectures to him just because he happens to be older and can dominate the conversation. Talking together, he explained, is actually listening to each other.

I asked him what he meant by listening together. Pravin replied, “When I told you this afternoon about trading my new markers for these Ninja Turtle cards, you didn't like it. But then you told me that if I felt these cards were more important to me than my markers, then I could keep them. But, I am going to trade them back because I realised that these cards are



not important any more. I just wanted to read what's on them. That's all."

I was quite surprised. While I thought that Pravin may be trying to please me by trading back his new cards for "old" markers, I let it pass by. The conversation was just getting very interesting.

"Is talking together a dialogue, Dad?" Pravin was at it again. It is amazing to see how children persist and have single-minded focus on what catches their attention. "Do you really know what a dialogue is?"

A thought flashed immediately in my mind: is Pravin trying to find out whether I know what I am talking about or not? I began to laugh at myself as I noted my own insecurity. Can I stop feeling the way I feel, if I choose to?

We all want simple answers. While answers are important, they are addictive and they silence questions. And if the questions disappear, where would the inquiry live?

"I really don't know what a dialogue is and there is no single answer to the question what is a dialogue. I do know that dialogue can be a source of creativity. It awakens what is dormant and brings freshness to conversation. It is a special kind of conversation, or being with each other in such a way that language is no longer the only means to communicate."

"What do you mean language is no longer the only means to communicate? How do you communicate without words? With sign language?" asked Pravin.

Sign language is again words of a different kind. Most language is limiting because mostly language is conceptual. It points at something.

**Dialogue has less to do with form than with energy. With energy, conversation sparkles. Words may come from different speakers, but the spirit unfolds as a whole.**

While the syntax and semantics are structural and procedural dimensions of language, words are really generative. A true dialogue is generative in nature. It is learning how to look, listen and pay attention. It is not about what to look at, but how to look.

How do I learn to just generate instead of all the other stuff? How do I look beyond my thoughts and feelings? I reflected for quite a while. The more I thought, the more I got into trouble. Interesting that thoughts go round and round, but thinking the unthinkable rarely happens. Do I need to unthink before I can truly participate in a dialogue?

It was all beginning to make sense. As long as I am speaking from my body of knowledge, my assumptions and beliefs, no thinking is possible. As long as I do not think, I continue to work from my frozen thoughts, and I did not have much to do with collecting them in the first place. My thoughts and feelings come with the package; you can call it conditioning, or culture, or belief system. I am perpetuating my belief system and acting out of it until I begin to notice it from outside, as an observer. "You really can't see anything outside of the body of knowledge that you already know, unless you learn to see all over again", I told myself. Any data that doesn't fit my existing patterns, I reject outright. I am imprisoned by my own knowledge. Exit doors in mental

prisons are hard to find, unless you specially look for them and acknowledge that you are imprisoned.

Dialogue is such an exit door. "You have to listen from a place that you have never listened from. You have to unthink and maybe, even unlearn. When you begin to see what you have not seen before, your seeing may totally be altered. When you begin to listen to/for what you have not listened to/for your conversations may get altered", I heard myself say.

I was on a roll and it was very energetic to have that conversation with myself. I thought, if I am listening, who is speaking? If I am speaking, who is listening? My inner dialogue continued.

Dialogue has less to do with form than with energy. With energy, conversation sparkles. Words may come from different speakers, but the spirit unfolds as a whole. Dialogue is a process of joining the past with the future. It is not about getting some place, but about coming from the same place. Conversation flows and time stops as the dialogue unfolds. Dialogue is a conversation in which communion occurs.

My inner dialogue stopped suddenly when I noticed Pravin fast asleep. Did my son inspire me and quietly went to sleep thinking that his work was done? Was I caught up in my own thoughts again and missed another opportunity to dialogue with him? I'd never know.

My head was clear and energy was high. It was a long while before I could calm down and sleep that night.

®

*Prasad Kaipa is Managing Director of the Mythia Institute for Learning.*

# SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

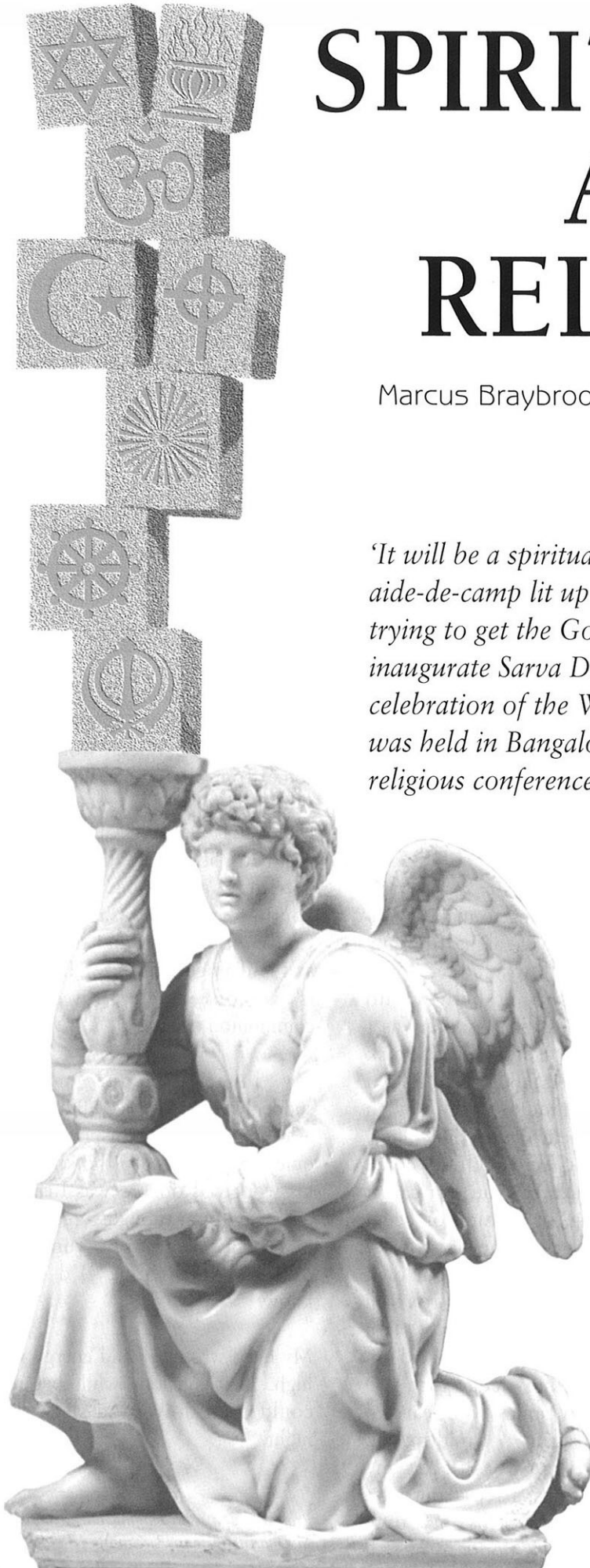
Marcus Braybrooke reflects on the difference

*'It will be a spiritual gathering.'* The face of the Governor's aide-de-camp lit up and he became enthusiastic. I had been trying to get the Governor of Karnataka to agree to inaugurate Sarva Dharma Sammelana, the centennial celebration of the World's Parliament of Religions, which was held in Bangalore last year. I had talked about a religious conference, but in India religion had become involved in 'communalism'. Religious differences were being exploited by some politicians to create division between communities.

**I**n many places religion has been misused to aggravate conflict: Northern Ireland, former Yugoslavia, the Middle East...

Particular groups use their religion almost as a 'weapon' against other groups. Elsewhere religion seems to be used to reinforce oppressive attitudes. Too many religious groups have sanctioned the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. To others, religion seems a matter of complicated intellectual belief or obscure ritual.

The disillusion with organised religion is often because religious activity does not live up to people's expectations. As long ago as 1970, Jacob



Needleman wrote that 'the contemporary disillusionment with religion has revealed itself to be a religious disillusionment' (1). He went on to talk about several religious movements, which he called a 'spiritual explosion'.

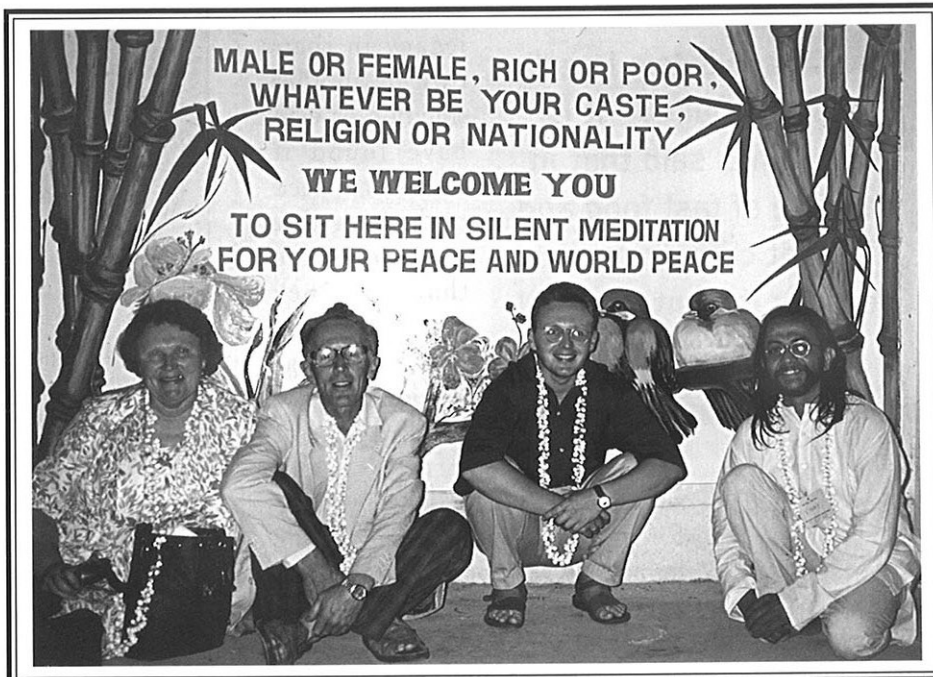
The word 'spirituality' seems often to be used in contrast to the unattractive face of religion. It suggests a living experience of meeting the Divine or of transcendental unity. It implies compassion, gentleness, a concern for all living beings. It may be used of the great mystics or exemplary figures such as Thomas Merton, Mother Theresa or Father Bede Griffith, but to the sceptics it may also have 'New Age' overtones.

As I write, today's *Times* has an article predicting that 'the American craze for spirituality will soon make itself felt in British bookshops'. 'The spiritual boom', the article continues, 'is no hippie or New Age backwater - it is mainstream popular demand. In America, The *New York Times* paperback best-seller list has four spiritual books in its top ten.' Popular spiritual books feature 'the care of the soul, near-death experiences, encounters with angels, personal spiritual growth and pocket-sized thoughts for the day' (2).

Whilst my own feelings about organised religion are ambiguous, I

have always thought that the purpose of ritual or organisation or doctrine was to point beyond itself. In the Church of England communion service, before approaching the altar, all are invited to join in 'the prayer of Humble Access' which ends with the words 'that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us'. These words echo St Paul's testimony 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me'. At the heart of my

God, but the living God himself' (3). That encounter may be felt and expressed in many ways: in the exuberant worship of the charismatic, in the measured beauty of a cathedral evensong, in the quiet simplicity of a country church. That encounter is not confined to church activity - it may be felt in the beauty of art or nature or the loving concern of family or friends. There is a wideness in God's mercy, so that no



Mary, Marcus and Jeremy Braybrooke at the Sarva Dharma Sammelana in Bangalore

one religious group should claim a control over God's grace. As Rabindranath Tagore said, 'To reject any part of humanity's religious experience is to reject truth' (4). I am grateful for many opportunities to learn from the spiritual experience of those of other traditions, not least from members of the

Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

My feelings about the church are, as I have indicated, ambiguous. They are rather like those I experienced when as a grown-up I went back home to visit my parents. The tensions between my parents were as they had always been, the heating was still as inefficient as it is in most churches, the chronic shortage of money meant that little of the equipment quite worked: but at a deeper level there were bonds of affection, of gratitude, of responsibility and an awareness of my own fragility

Christian faith is the deep longing for union with God through Christ. By Christ's life, teaching, death and resurrection I am assured of God's accepting love and my hope is so to open myself to the spirit of Christ that Christ's loving will, not my own selfish will, should guide my thoughts and actions.

Rituals, for me, do not have a purpose in themselves. They are valuable insofar as they bring us closer to the Divine. The Bible and the creeds point beyond themselves to the Living Word of God. Revelation, as William Temple taught, is not 'truth concerning

which gave me both sympathy for my parents' weaknesses and admiration for their courage.

Just as at some stages of life we expect our parents to be perfect, so we expect this of religious organisations. But the disappointment should not be a reason for rejection. It is worth pondering why it is that through the vicissitudes of centuries the great religious traditions have renewed and maintained themselves. Repeatedly, people have spoken of the Church of England as if it is in its death throes. "When I think of the Church of England, I could sit down and pine and die", wrote Thomas Arnold in 1833 (5). The great religious traditions have handed on to subsequent generations the spiritual wisdom of the past.

Spiritual wisdom is not easily acquired. It is sometimes said that in this age of fast food and instant coffee, people hope for instant spiritual illumination. Yet to discover the truth, one 'around and around' must go - rather like the road to Mount Abu. The spiritual quest requires discipline, patience and a holy life.

If religion is divorced from spirituality, you have only the shell and miss the kernel. Equally an individual spirituality divorced from community and living religious tradition may be the wish fulfilment of that person or reflect the psychoses of the guru. I believe that both 'religion' and 'spirituality' will be impoverished if they are set against each other. What matters is that people find

their way to a living experience of the Divine and that this issues in a life of loving concern for others.

It has been said that the next century will be a spiritual century or it will not be. This, I hope, means a recovery of a sense of the transcendent, a valuing of person above possession, a reverence for nature, a passionate concern for peace and justice and the relief of poverty. Such spirituality is the living legacy at the heart of all the great religious traditions. Those

**Spiritual wisdom is not easily acquired. It is sometimes said that in this age of fast food and instant coffee, people hope for instant spiritual illumination.**

who have glimpsed this legacy in their own or another tradition or who have found it elsewhere, need to share together the treasures that they discovered and witness that religion need not be a cause of strife and suffering but points the way to life for us as individuals and as the human race. For religions point beyond themselves to the Divine Source of Life and Love in whom 'we all live and move and have our being'.

*Marcus Braybrooke is Vicar of the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay, Chair of the World Congress of Faiths and a Trustee of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford. He is the author of various books, including Pilgrimage of Hope.*

Notes

1. Jacob Needleman, *The New Religions*, Penguin Press, 1970, p. xi.
2. Kate Muir 'Near-death at W H Smith?' in *The Times*, 16.8.94, p 14.
3. William Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, Macmillan, 1960, 1960, p.322.
4. Rabindranath Tagore, quoted in *Theologising in India*, Ed M. Amaladoss, Theological Publications, Bangalore, 1981.
5. T. Arnold, *Principles of Church Reform* 1833.

## THE UNIQUE LUNACY OF ENGLISH AS SHE IS SPOKEN

There is no egg in eggplant, niether pine or apple in pineapple, and no ham in hamburger. English muffins weren't invented in England or French Fries in France. Sweetmeats are candy, while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat!

We take English for granted. But when we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is niether a pig nor is it from Guinea.

And why is it that a writer writes, but fingers do not fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham. If the plural of tooth is teeth, could the plural of booth be beeth? One goose, two geese - so one moose, two meese? One index, two indices? One Kleenex, two Kleenices?

Maybe all English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what other language do people drive on a parkway and park in a driveway? Recite at a play and play at a recital. Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? How can overlook and oversee be opposites, while quite a lot and quite a few, are alike? How can the weather be as hot as hell one day and as cold as hell the next?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which your alarm clock goes off by going on.

# Reaching out to those inside

Louise Gordon works in unusual ways with prison staff and inmates



*Imprisonment constitutes a severing of human relationships. Behind high walls and gates and fences, the prisoner is cut off from society at large. Contained within the institution, the prisoner is isolated from his personal social network of family, friends, neighbours. Confined within the cell, the prisoner is, for much of the day, segregated even from his peers. Bars create barriers. That, after all, is their purpose. Prison bars exist to prevent prisoners from interacting freely with their fellow men.*

**I**n such a context, it is hardly surprising that the people who work within prisons - the staff - and the people who reside there - the prisoners - find it difficult to communicate with openness and mutual respect. How can discourse be free when one party to the



relationship is so overtly fettered? How can staff and prisoners relate to each other as persons of equal worth when everywhere there are signals of rank and status which distinguish them? How can people sustain unreserved human contact through the barrier of bars?

These are the questions I sought to address in my workshop on "Breaking the Cycle of Confrontation and Control" at the Brahma Kumaris retreat for people working in prisons. This article explores some of the points from that workshop.

Functioning on opposite sides of the bars, staff and prisoners often find themselves in opposition. Their positioning leads to confrontation. The conventional view sees confrontation as, at best, a breakdown in communication and, at worst, a threat to security. But confrontation also offers an opportunity for communication. In an institutional culture pervaded by posturing and deception, a confrontation provides an eruption of honesty along with an outburst of hostility. Thus, confrontation offers a rare and precious chance to communicate directly with the person - the real person, not the prisoner/role - who confronts us. It is vitally important that we who work in prisons perceive these confrontational incidents for what they are, as points not of blockage, but of breakthrough. However negative the interaction, however brief the time available to us, however pressing the external demands upon us, if we operate with awareness of ourselves and concern for others then we can, with them, transform the confrontation into a positive interaction expressing value and regard for both the other person and ourselves.

### *STANDOFF IN THE CORRIDOR*

At one end of a long, narrow corridor, a prisoner paces, shouting obscenities. At the other end stands a member of staff, first cajoling, then commanding. Their raised voices attract the attention of other prisoners and staff who watch warily, sizing up the situation, wondering whether to intervene. What started as an angry exchange between individuals has become a contest of power between representatives of enemy camps.

Their language is different, but prisoner and staff member convey the same message: "Respect me!" At loggerheads, they are united by a common fear of losing face. In this narrow corridor, it is hard to see a way out. In fact, what is needed is not a "way out" but a way through. The prisoner and staff member can extricate themselves from this conflict only by engaging with each other, by taking notice of each other. At this point, they are ignoring each other, each conscious only of his or her own needs and feelings, and oblivious to those of the other person.

When we feel unable to "put ourselves in the other person's shoes", it is often because we are wearing a matching pair. If we seek to bring about movement, we should look first to our own feet. Far easier to take a small step yourself than to compel another to walk. And if your first step is sideways rather than forward, then so much the better: communication alters dramatically when we shift from "face-to-face" to "alongside". Moving from a demand - "Respect me!" - to an acknowledgement - "I respect you" - entails no loss of self-respect. In valuing others, we do not diminish ourselves.

A willingness to communicate, no matter what the other person says or does, can transform a "no win" interaction into one offering mutual gain. And where both can gain, there is no need for bargaining: "I'll respect you if you respect me" is a hostage to fortune, dependent on the other person's response. By contrast, "I respect you and I also respect myself" is an exercise of power lying wholly within your own sphere. There is nothing the other person can do to weaken this standpoint. Offering respect to an "opponent" confers strength upon yourself.

If the staff member addresses the prisoner's need to be respected, then the prisoner may feel able to reciprocate. As long as both are consumed by their own need, neither will have the capacity to offer recognition to the other. The goal is mutual respect, yet we must begin not at the end, but at the beginning. To harvest co-operation, we must sow communication even in the fields of confrontation. In such a way, the contested ground will, in time, come to be perceived for what it is: shared ground.

### *A RAISED FIST*

In a prison classroom, a prisoner raises his fist to the teacher. I am that teacher, but I do not feel scared. I ask myself: "What is happening here? Why don't I feel scared?" Looking for the facts of the situation, this is what I see: a well-muscled young man with a face full of anger and a raised fist. He is tall and standing. I am short and seated. And now I realise why I do not feel fear. For his fist to make contact with my face, he would have to step closer and stoop down low. But he's not moving, and his fist isn't moving. Interpretation says that this fist is a threat. Observation tells me that

this fist is suspended, waiting for me to make my move.

With this realisation, I am no longer the passive recipient of his hostile force. Now I am an active participant in our shared interaction. I can have a say in the nature of our communication and in its outcome. I don't like his script (certainly I don't want to get hit!), so I rewrite it. His lines are his own, but mine are up to me and for my part, I want our exchange to be a positive one. Just because his script centres on violence does not mean that mine must do the same. Each of us has a choice, and I choose to communicate value and regard for us both. Even without his co-operation, I can follow a positive script.

"What are you doing?", I ask. He continues to look down at me.

"What should I feel?" Puzzled, he murmurs "Huh?"

"Should I feel scared?" At this, he smiles and lowers his fist. "You don't have to feel scared of me", he reassures me, resuming his seat in the classroom.

The questions I asked this prisoner and the questions I asked myself were all straightforward "what?" questions. My sole interest and concern was in what was actually happening. I looked for observable clues to what was going on, not for possible meanings or potential consequences, just the facts. Asked in this way, "What?" is a neutral question. It doesn't judge the right or wrong, or good or bad, of the behaviour under consideration. It doesn't anticipate the outcome. It doesn't distract with irrelevancies, such as what might happen next, or what has gone before. Instead, it points in the only direction that matters: What is happening now?

Before we can reach reliable conclusions as to the meaning and consequence of a prisoner's behaviour, we must first establish what that behaviour is. Look not for the import of what you see: he's raising his fist to hit me, simply attend to what you do see: his raised fist is suspended, not moving to hit me.

Not once during this interaction did I ask myself or the prisoner, "Why is this happening?" "Why?" is the wrong question. The real "why" for all these confrontations

**Confronted by a prisoner, a staff member's usual reaction is to exert control. This authoritarian stance entrenches both staff and prisoner in a relationship of opposition.**

is rooted deep within the long history of offending which has brought this person to prison. The specific stimulus of any particular incident is neither here nor there. There will always be something to provide the "spark".

Asking "Why?" has another, more damaging effect. While "What?" seeks awareness, knowledge and responsibility, "why" seeks blame and excuse. Asking "Why?" implies excusability, even if the perpetrator is subsequently punished. But the prisoner's motive in behaving badly makes no difference to the effects of his behaviour. And it is these effects, on himself and on other people, which he must learn to recognise. Prisoners are well-practised in justifying, excusing, explaining and rationalising their bad behaviour. What they do not yet know how to do, and must now learn, is to see their behaviour for what it is and for what it does. That is why it is so

important for prison staff to see prisoners' behaviour not in terms of what it might do (its potential for "losing control"), but in terms of what it is doing. The prisoner can begin to see what is wrong with his behaviour only when he sees his behaviour for what it is. Prison staff concerned with "losing control" cannot help the prisoner towards an understanding of his actions, for the staff member's fear of what might happen render him as blind as the prisoner to what is happening.

Asking "Why?" initiates an established cycle of blame and excuse. It generates an adversarial relationship. By contrast, asking "What?" breaks this negative pattern, breaks through these negative expectations and offers a new and positive perspective. A "What?" approach acknowledges the interaction for what it is and works through it. Such an approach offers an alternative pattern of communication without rejecting the other person. There is guidance without condemnation. Acceptance provides the sense of self-worth and security which enables vulnerable people to contemplate making change.

Confronted by a prisoner, a staff member's usual reaction is to exert control. This authoritarian stance entrenches both staff and prisoner in a relationship of opposition. It preserves an illusion of power at the expense of encouraging the prisoner to continue treading the path that has brought him into prison. This article suggests a different response: a stance of acceptance. Communicating human warmth and fellow-feeling, *even in confrontation*, presents a new path which prisoners and staff can travel together.

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*Louise Gordon is a teacher and advisor in all work settings.*



## The Principles of

# Wizardry

Peter Russell presents the importance of learning wizardry

*A wizard knows the laws of creation, and how to work with them. A wizard allows synchronicity to manifest. A wizard follows three basic principles.*

**T**he first principle is that of wholeness and centredness. The more in touch we are with our essence, the more whole the self is, the more centred we feel, the clearer our consciousness, the more free our mind, the easier our

soul, the more does synchronicity seem to occur. It does not manifest nearly so abundantly when we are out of balance, tired, stressed or in some other way off centre. Synchronicity is a measure of our inner balance, our contact with the divine, our wholeness.



We cannot try to make synchronicities happen. It is in their very nature to occur "by coincidence" without our interference. We cannot shape the world in order to create a synchronicity for the source of synchronicity is not of this world. Yet we can encourage their appearance; we can open ourselves to them. And this we do by opening to ourselves, to our inner wholeness.

A wizard allows inner wholeness to be a priority. A wizard keeps rested, relaxed, centred and clear.

We can also observe that when synchronicity occurs it tends to support our needs; it brings us what we want. Things happen at just the right time, in just the right combination. It is as if the Universe has our best interests at heart, and arranges for their fulfilment in ways which we could never have dreamt of. This is what makes them so amazing and remarkable; the means of support are so unexpected - such a coincidence.

But if we do not know what we really want, or if two desires are in conflict, the synchronicities that manifest may not be in our own best interest. We may want something one day, have it the next, and not want it the day after. So before the Universe can support us it needs to hear what it is really we want. We let it know this by knowing for ourselves what it is we really want. (And it turns out, of course, to be what everybody really wants). The more clearly we know our inner intentions the more we find them being supported.

Thus, the second principle of wizardry is that of intention.

Intention is not desire. Our desires are not beliefs of how we think we can get what we intend. They are beliefs based on limited thinking and limited perception. The Universe knows how easiest to fulfil our intentions far better than we do. Our task is to be aware of the intention behind the desires, to know what it is we really want and need; to provide a direction along which synchronicity can flow.

A wizard knows what he really wants; what underlies all those other wants and needs. A wizard holds this intention at the back of his mind. And then lets go.

But wholeness and intention alone are not enough. You can sit alone in the middle of a forest, centred and whole, and clear on your inner intention, yet few great

coincidences happen. It is in the world of social interaction that synchronicity occurs most easily. The universe needs to reach us, and it does this most easily through our interplay with others. Coincidences involve other people much more often than other things.

We may not be able to make synchronicities happen, but we can allow the Universe to reach us more easily. We can go and engage ourselves fully in the world, mix with the social field. We can go and play in the world. Play whatever game and role best fits our intentions. Play it with our soul fully. And play it in whatever way gives us most enjoyment and fulfilment (there is, after all, no point in suffering while we play).

This is the third principle of wizardry; the principle of "zipping and zooming" through the world, playing our part, and letting the Universe play its.

In touch with inner wholeness, aware of the highest intention, the wizard plays in the world. He lets go of desires, and is open to whatever opportunities may come. He allows synchronicity to manifest.

These are the three principles of wizardry: Wholeness, Intention and Zipping and Zooming.

And if you need a mnemonic to remember them by, simply take their initial letters - W I Z - and remember that a wizard wizzes.

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*Peter Russell is author of The White Whole in Time and The Awakening Earth. The above is an extract from Passing Thoughts.*

# THE FRUITS OF MEDITATION

David Fontana looks into the mind in Meditation



*One of the exercises I use with my students when discussing the nature of mind is to ask them to close their eyes and stop thinking. After 20 seconds I ask them to open their eyes and tell me if they have succeeded. Usually none of them have. I use the same exercise in therapy and stress-management workshops, and the results are as before. No-one can manage to stop thinking for even 20 brief seconds. So I follow up with the question, "Who is in charge in there?" Who is in charge within the mind, if you can't stop the flow of thoughts for even 20 seconds?*



**T**he human mind is one of our biggest mysteries. In spite of over a century of psychological research, we still know very little about its nature and its functioning. We have some ideas on how to help people improve their powers of thinking, learning and remembering, and we have some insights into ways of treating neurotic and psychotic conditions, but we are still very much in the dark when it comes to knowing what "mind" actually is, and how it produces thoughts, and indeed what thoughts themselves really are. Consciousness - the conscious activity of the mind - is one of the great unknowns facing science, and unconsciousness - the activity of mind at its deeper, subliminal level - is an even greater puzzle.

**When concentration is well-established in meditation, tranquillity arises.**

Yet the mind is the space in which we live. It is our immediate, moment-by-moment experience of life. The quantum physicist (like the ancient sages) even tells us that the mind is literally the co-creator of reality, turning the whirling mass of sub-atomic energies which constitute the physical world into an apparent solidity of shapes and colours. The mind is what makes us human, and if we go through life without understanding it, then however advanced our intelligence and however numerous our qualifications, we have not begun to unravel the mystery of our own identity.

The essential first step in coming to know our minds is to recognise that we each of us must do much of the work for ourselves. In the West there is a belief that science can solve all problems, including the

nature of mind, for us. Nothing could be further from the truth. Tibetan Buddhists in particular are hugely amused by this curious Western notion, and the way it tricks us into thinking that we can look outwards and study other people's minds in order to understand our own. Like all the great spiritual traditions, Tibetan Buddhism teaches us that the path to self-knowledge leads inwards, and that the prime purpose of all genuine psychological research must be to help us find and follow this path.

The path is, of course, the practice of meditation. Meditation is the supreme method of mind-exploration, allowing one level of our awareness to scrutinise other levels, and to witness their shifting, haphazard, impermanent nature. Meditation allows us to see how the mind produces a constant procession of mental events - thoughts, memories, feelings, hopes, aspirations, resentments, anxieties, pleasantries - like the play of images upon a screen. Left to itself, the mind is never still, and as we look more closely we see that it is this lack of stillness, this agitation, that causes much of our unhappiness, drawing our attention continually to worries, to upsets and hurts, to tasks uncompleted, to embarrassments and social failures, to things we would like to have and things we would like to do, to



dreams unrealised and promises unfulfilled. It is the mind's own agitation that prevents us from seeing into its true nature, and that comes between us and an experience of the inner meaning of what it is to be alive.

There is a well-known Zen story that sums this up. One day a sage was walking in the country when a tiger sprang at him and chased him over the side of a cliff. Luckily he was able to break his fall by clutching at a small shrub, and there he hung, above him the tiger and beneath him certain death on the rocks far below. As the sage clung to the shrub, he noticed some mice nibbling away at its base, and realised it would soon be gnawed right through. Then he caught sight of a wild strawberry plant just within reach, picked the single strawberry growing there, and savoured its sweet taste...

In the story, the tiger at the top of the cliffs is the past, and the rocks at the bottom are the future. The mice nibbling away at the shrub are the passing of time, which inevitably one day will bring our earthly existence to a close. Yet the sage troubles himself with none of these things, and instead picks the wild strawberry, the symbol of life itself, and experiences to the full the beauty of its taste. His (or her) secret is the ability to be fully in touch with moment-by-moment experiences, rather than to obscure them with thoughts about past or future or the passage of time. The sage knows exactly what it means to be alive, and abides in that reality rather than in the confused chatter of the mind.

The sage is of course a great meditator, able to concentrate on the truth of existence even in the midst of great distractions. And in all the various meditation systems taught by the great spiritual traditions of the world, it is this concentration that is the vital key. Through concentration, the mind becomes, as the Buddhists say, one-pointed, focused clearly, gently but intently, upon whatever point of focus the meditator is using. This can be the breath, a mantra, a mandala, a koan, a blank wall or

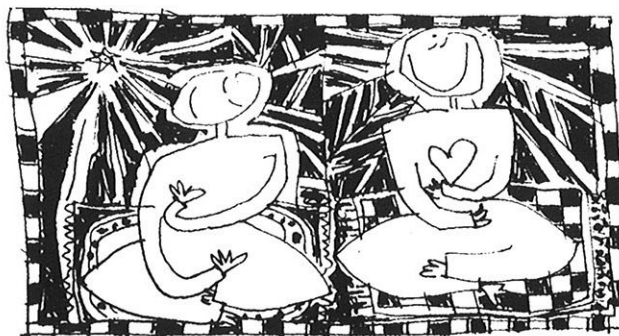
any one of a whole range of possibilities, but the constant factor is that the mind remains concentrated and alert. If it wanders from the point of focus, it is brought patiently back, time and time again, until over the weeks and the months of frequent and regular practice it learns to rest in its own awareness.

When concentration is well-established in meditation, tranquillity arises, a state of great inner peace which is the true nature of mind itself, and out of tranquillity arises insight, an awareness by the mind of its own eternal identity, of the unconditional love that lies at the heart of creation, and of the divine presence of God, by whatever name we may know him or her.

I have been privileged to receive teachings in a number of different meditation techniques. All have great strengths, and it would be improper to attempt comparisons between them. But let me just touch on three (there are many more) particular qualities of the Raja Yoga practice. Firstly, in Raja Yoga there is the important recognition that thoughts themselves can be the point of focus, provided they are carefully controlled and pointed always in the direction of the inner light of the soul and its divine source. Raja Yoga uses thoughts gently to turn the mind away from identification with the body (body-consciousness) and towards identification with the soul (soul-consciousness). Through the use of positive, well-chosen thoughts it continually reminds the meditator of his or her true nature, and subtly strengthens his or her resolve to abide fully within it.

By acknowledging from the start that it makes sense to put thoughts to good use within meditation,

rather than to try and ignore their distraction, Raja Yoga can thus be a surer (and sometimes) quicker path to knowing and controlling the mind and to ultimate self-realisation than many other systems. No major meditation tradition with which I am acquainted actually tries to stop thoughts. It is recognised in all of them that thoughts are powerful things, and when properly used constitute a natural activity of the mind. But Raja Yoga lays particular emphasis on how this natural activity can be directed and encouraged as part of the meditation process itself.



A second quality of Raja Yoga meditation is that it is done with eyes open. It is not alone in this. In my experience all traditions prefer the eyes to remain open, even if only partially, although it is acknowledged that they can be closed if preferred (clearly one should eventually be able to meditate equally well with eyes open or closed, just as one should be able to meditate in any body position). But Raja Yoga makes a point of the fact that by keeping the eyes open it becomes easier to continue to control and direct the thoughts on rising from meditation and returning to the world (just as it is easier to do so if one meditates in a sitting position rather than lying down). We live our waking lives with eyes open, and Raja Yoga teaches that meditation should be a continuous activity of consciousness, a constant awareness of our true nature within

the bustle and activity of the outside world, and not just within the stillness of the meditation hall.

And the third quality of Raja Yoga? In all traditions, the biblical instruction that “by their fruits so shall ye know them” is one of the most valuable guidelines we have. And the fruits of Raja Yoga meditation are plain to see and to taste. Let me name two of them, those supreme manifestations of the spirit: peace and unconditional love. In a troubled world, these divine manifestations shine through the practitioners of Raja Yoga. One need not go to Mount Abu to find these fruits. They are given as

gifts at any BK centre. But it is in Mount Abu that one comes closest to the source from which they arise. At Mount Abu, within the sweet soul of India, one lives in a continuous meditation of divine awareness, and is touched in each moment by the boundless grace of God. At Mount Abu one sees the direct result of properly

directed spiritual practice, and of the personal revelation to which it gives rise. More even than this, one sees the power of this spiritual practice to transform the physical world and all those with whom one comes into contact. For the fruits of meditation manifest themselves not in withdrawal from the world, but in enlightened action within it. This action is living proof that by truly experiencing the peace and love that sustains one’s inner life, one becomes a channel through which peace and love can flow freely into the hearts and minds of others, prompting them in turn to follow the inner path of soul-consciousness.

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# Hi Tech Consciousness

Dean Radin predicts a radical change in the relationship between the human mind and machine

*Advancements in human-machine interaction technologies reveal a growing trend towards increasingly intimate modes of communion. The trend suggests that a new mode of deep interdependence may soon arise - technologies of direct mind-machine interaction. Based upon what is presently a little-known and poorly understood laboratory curiosity, new technologies will emerge that directly couple human thought with the accuracy, memory, and calculating speed of computers, and at the same*

*time extend 'human qualities' such as intuition and emotion into computers. This article discusses why we are much closer to developing mind-machine or consciousness technologies than many people realise.*

## BEYOND HIGH TECHNOLOGY

**T**here is a fast-growing trend in human computers interaction (HCI) theory and practice. The evolution is away from isolated telephones and computers and towards a more intimate union among people and a host of info/communication

technologies. I perceive that this developing interdependence with HCI may soon extend to realms previously imagined only in science fiction. I shall call this 'deep interdependence'.

Deep interdependence refers to advances in hardware used to couple people and machines. The evolution from keyboards to pointing devices, eyetrackers, virtual displays, speech and gesture understanding and even brainwave analysers, shows that HCI development is continuing to blur the boundaries between humans and machines.

I envision a time when we will witness a subtle yet direct

interaction between mind and the operation of machines. This will be accomplished without deciphering brainwaves or other conventional physiological signals, as is currently being explored. Instead I mean the “ghost in the machine”, that is, machines that respond to and directly interact with human consciousness.

I suggest that these direct interactions between mind and machine are even now associated with rare, spontaneous computer failures. I also suggest that what is currently viewed as annoying or delightful coincidences, depending on whether your machine mysteriously fails or recovers at precisely the right (or wrong) time - will eventually be harnessed into a new technology of direct mind-machine interaction (DMMI).

DMMI technologies offer the promise of solving several problems that are presently intractable in economic or human terms. And, although it may seem unwarranted at this point, I suggest that primitive versions of these DMMI technologies can be built today.

### **WHY DO SYSTEMS FAIL?**

Considering the interdependence of human activities and computer based technologies in virtually all domains of modern life, it has become vitally important to understand why these systems sometimes fail. Great strides have been taken in the design of fault tolerant computers and the causes of the great majority of computer system failures can now be traced to either human factors or machine factors. Human factors include poor user interface design, stressful work environments, logical and functional design errors and software bugs. Machine factors include circuit board failures,

power surges, and electromagnetic interference.

### ***When failure categories fail***

However, it is not always possible to assign failures to known categories. While some unexplained failures can be resolved with sufficient detective work, as computer systems become more complex, distributed, and interdependent, assigning the ultimate cause of a failure becomes much more difficult. Indeed, non-linear dynamic systems theory indicates that there are severe limits on our ability to predict the future of completely deterministic systems, including computers. Even redundant, fault-tolerant computer systems sometimes fail in mysterious ways. Therefore, besides examining the known categories of human and machine factors for possible sources of system failures, it is also productive to explore all well-understood intermediary: gremlins.

### ***Gremlins?***

Some people are renowned for their ability to fix machines. Others are prohibited from even being in proximity to electronic equipment during important demonstrations, for fear that the equipment will fail. This phenomenon has been referred to as the “gremlin effect”. In fact, the apparent tendency of things to go wrong at the worst possible time is so prevalent that Murphy’s Law is half-seriously regarded as a “first principle” in engineering and scientific circles. Many such superstitions undoubtedly arise as a result of psychological factors such as selective human memory, and some are related to factors such as personality traits associated with high versus low accident involvement or personality

mismatches between system designers and end-user.

However, after sifting through all the odd coincidences and unexplained glitches, a residue of anecdotes and a growing body of laboratory research suggests that the ‘lab lore’ may arise from something else.

### ***Something else***

Among the many anecdotes about unusual human-machine interactions, Gamow describes the “Pauli Effect” as follows:

It is well known that theoretical physicists are quite inept in handling experimental apparatus; in fact, the standing of a theoretical physicist is said to be measurable in terms of his ability to break delicate devices merely by touching them. By this standard, Wolfgang Pauli was a very good theoretical physicist; apparatus would fail, break, shatter or burn when he merely walked into a laboratory.

Other experimenters, such as Edison, were legendary for their ability to get complex laboratory apparatus working with extraordinary speed.

Such anecdotes arise in every technical environment and give life to the nervous laughter associated with Murphy’s Law. Can such things be explained? Are they related to what I have called DMMI effects? When I was with AT&T Bell laboratories in the early 1980’s, I decided to explore these questions by putting Murphy’s Law to the test.

### **EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE**

#### ***A thought experiment***

How can we test if human thought (intention, will, wishes) and

computer operations are deeply interdependent? Specifically, how can we objectively test whether conscious mental intention interacts with sensitive electronic circuits such as those found in computers.

Consider the following thought experiment: An electronic circuit is devised which produces sequences of random bits, similar to circuits used in electronic gambling games and digital encryption key generators. The source of randomness in the circuit is either electronic noise or radioactive decay, as both provide truly random events.

The device is designed to generate 100 bits when a button is pressed. As each bit is generated, it is matched against an alternating "target" bit, i.e. 0 1 0 1..... (Alternating the target bit eliminates possible first-order biases within the generator from introducing artifacts into the experimental results.) When a generated random bit matches the target bit, it registers on a counter and, at the end of the 100 bit sequence, a display shows the number of matches or hits. Chance expectation predicts that the display number of hits will be of 50 with a standard deviation of 5.

Now you ask a person to do three things: First, simply press the button and wish that the display number is greater than 50. This is called a trial. On the second trial, the subject wishes for the number to be less than 50 and on the third trial, the subject just presses the button and thinks about some distracting task as a control. This sort of "tri-polar" protocol is repeated thousands of times with many different subjects, and the outcome is evaluated statistically to see if the cumulative wishes are associated with biases in the electronic device's output.

To avoid misunderstanding, I must emphasise that the person and the machine are not connected in any way, nor is the machine deciphering the subject's brainwaves or physiological responses.

These experiments produced statistically significant results, confirming my previous observations. A decade of research demonstrated to my satisfaction that under strictly controlled conditions one could show that mental intention was predictably correlated with the behaviour of a machine. In other words, Murphy's Law seemed to be more than mere superstition.

**THIS MACHINE IS SUBJECT TO BREAKDOWNS DURING PERIODS OF CRITICAL NEED**

A special circuit in the machine called a 'critical detector' senses the operator's emotional state in terms of how desperate he or she is to use the machine. The 'critical detector' then creates a malfunction proportional to the desperation of the operator. Threatening the machine with violence only aggravates the situation. Likewise, attempts to use another machine may cause it to also malfunction. They belong to the same union. KEEP COOL and SAY NICE THINGS to the machine.

**NOTHING ELSE SEEMS TO WORK.**

While Western science and technology has more or less dismissed or ignored the DMMI effect as a minor laboratory curiosity, Japanese electronic giants are taking it more seriously, including DMMI R&D efforts at NEC, Uniden, and Matsushita. The Sony Corporation recently (late 1992) established two laboratories in Tokyo specifically devoted to exploring ways of creating DMMI applications.

Some physicists see strong parallels

in both the observational and influence-at-a-distance nature of DMMI phenomena with the enigmatic non-local effects predicted by and observed in empirical tests of Bell's Theorem in quantum mechanics. However upon realising that these phenomena fall somewhere in the cracks between psychology and physics, caution is essential. As physicist Nick Herbert says,

*"Science's biggest mystery is the nature of consciousness.... About all we know about consciousness is that it has something to do with the head, rather than the foot."*

Given the evidence for DMMI phenomena, combined with the rapid development of sophisticated digital signal processing techniques and artificial neural networks capable of identifying extremely subtle patterns, suddenly the notion of developing technologies that can detect delicate DMMI-type impressions no longer seem so fantastic.

The physicist Sir James Jeans once said, reflecting on the startling implications of quantum mechanics theory,

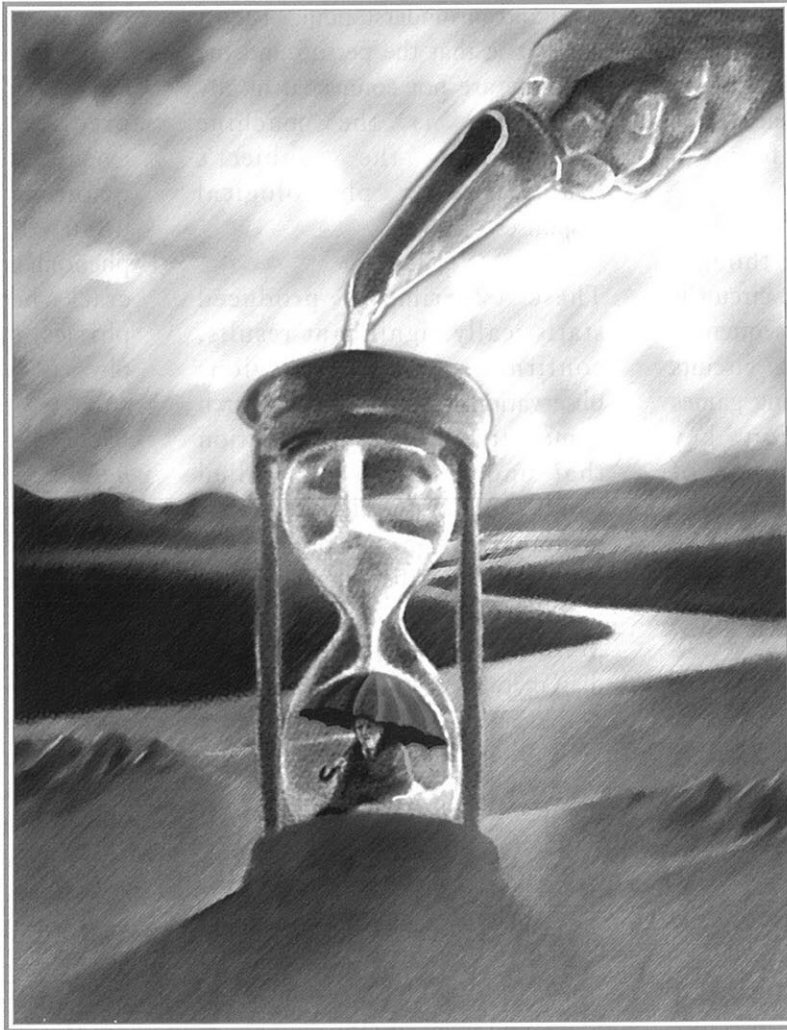
*"The concepts which now prove to be fundamental to our understanding of nature... seem to my mind to be structures of pure thought, ... the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine."*

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*This is an edited extract of his paper presented at the IV International Symposium on Science and Consciousness in January 1994.*

*References and complete text available on request.*



# Making Sense of God's Time

Russell Stannard reflects on God's perception of Time

*The theory of relativity describes space and time as integrally bound up in a unified space-time. As Einstein once said, it is now more natural "to think of physical reality as a four-dimensional existence, instead of, hitherto, the evolution of a three-dimensional existence".*

Accordingly, in some sense at least, we must regard all time - past, present and future - as being in existence together, just as we are accustomed to think of all space

existing together. Each temporal instant has the same status as any other. Relative to each there are earlier and later times, but the distinction is relative only.

Physics itself recognises no special moment called "now" - the moment that acts as the focus for the process of "becoming" and divides the "past" from the



“future”. In four-dimensional space-time nothing changes, there is no “flow” of time, everything simply is.

So, where do the additional features of time - now, becoming, past, future and flow - originate?

To answer this, we must leave the domain of the physical and enter that of consciousness. Here we find a set of mental states (consisting of sensations, thoughts, feelings, etc.). These momentary states of the mind are arranged in sequence. What separates one from another? We say they are separated in “time”. In a way that is not well understood, we can estimate and compare these separations, or intervals, of time.

But although we call this separation “time”, it is not the same as that which appears in the physical world. For one thing, thoughts occur in time but not in space, and we have seen how indissoluble is the link between space and the kind of time that appears in the physical domain. It is only in consciousness that we come across the particular time known as “now” - the time that is distinguished from all others by the way it marks the end of the sequence of mental events. It is only in the context of mental time that it makes sense to say what all of physical space-time is. One might even go as far as to say that it is unfortunate that such dissimilar entities as physical and mental time should carry the same name!

The reason they do is that there is close correspondence between them. A sensation that is part of the mental sequence (e.g. the hearing of a shot now) is correlated to a feature of space-time (the firing of a gun at a certain place and time). The “now” of mental time is correlated with the

particular instant of physical time. A short while later (according to mental time, that is) the “now” correlates to a different physical time.

The difference between the two physical times, judged on a clock, when compared with the perceived lapse of mental time, gives rise to the “flow” of time. Without the two distinct types of time, there could be no flow - one cannot compare something with itself.

A homely analogy might help: You are at home listening to a story on the radio. You hear the voice of the author narrating a particular incident. You remember what he has previously told you, and anticipate how the story might develop in the future. You are caught up in a story that is evolving in time.

But in the radio studio, it is different. The author is not making it up as he goes along: he is reading it from a book. There in front of him is the page from which he is currently reading - a page that is correlated with what you at home are hearing at this particular moment.

But the other pages of the book are



also there - earlier ones and later ones. For the author the story is written in the book - the entire story exists. It does not evolve: it does not change; it simply is.

The book represents the four-dimensional physical world; its pages are the successive instants of physical time; the process of listening is our own progressive conscious experience of life. The story is to be equated with the history of mankind etched into the four-dimensional reality. Contained within it is our own individual life history - the history we are still progressively experiencing a little at a time.

In the realm of consciousness we are forever changing and developing through our interactions with the world and with God. But neither the world nor God change; our effects on them are already part of the story being revealed to us.

As you might expect, the author of the book stands for the God for whom the beginning and end of all things are equally known. Just as an author does not write the first chapter and then leave the others to write themselves, so God’s creativity is not to be seen as uniquely confined to, or even especially invested in, the event of the Big Bang. Rather, his creativity has to be seen as permeating equally all space and all time: his role as Creator and Sustainer merge.

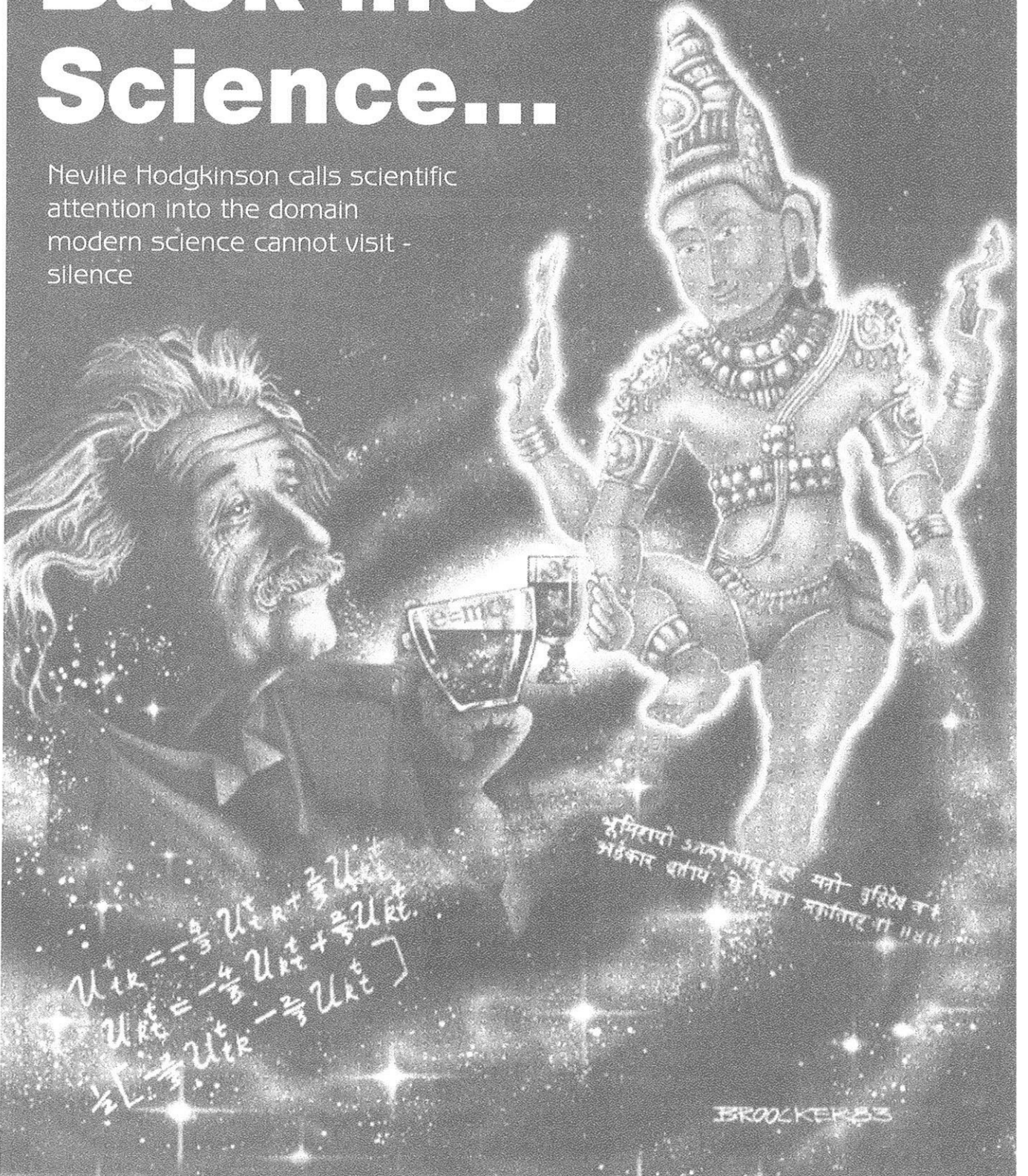
God’s relationship to time remains deeply mysterious. It defies commonsense. But that notwithstanding, it appears strangely in tune with the possibilities now opened up by a modern scientific understanding of time.

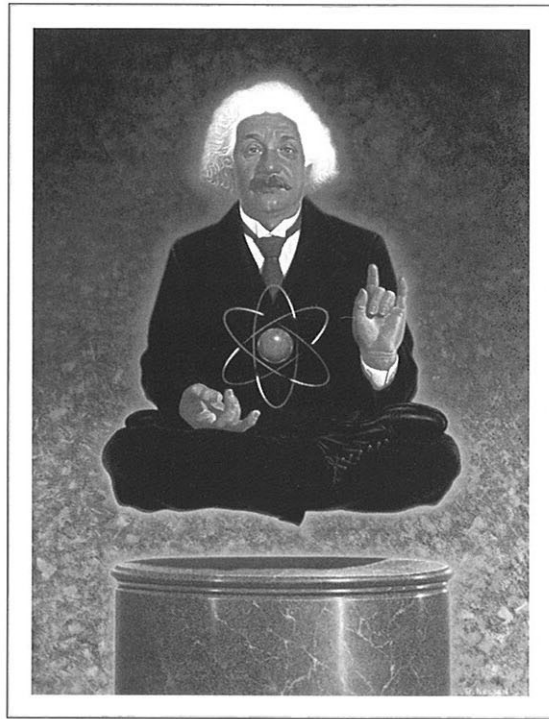
®

*Russell Stannard is Professor of Physics at the Open University*

# Putting the Soul Back into Science...

Neville Hodgkinson calls scientific attention into the domain modern science cannot visit - silence





*Good science requires silence. Not just physical silence, as an aid to concentration, but inner, spiritual silence. Some scientists like to consider themselves pure observers of objectively acquired fact, but they neglect the fact that what and how they observe are likely to be influenced by their state of mind. Inner peace improves the ability to see and think clearly.*

Along with addressing the spiritual needs of human beings, the great religions of the world have also been concerned with the strengthening of character. A sound character, spiritually and emotionally fulfilled, is stable. Such stability frees the scientist to observe the world with reduced interference from unmet and often unconscious needs and desires. It

also frees him the better to work with others, co-operating in the team efforts that may be necessary for the full completion of a task.

The higher the scientist's goal - the more refined, subtle or complex the phenomena observed - the greater the need for inner silence. A high-powered microscope needs exceptional stability to allow its user to obtain reliable observations. Deep-space observation such as through the orbiting Hubble telescope is the same: the smaller or more distant the phenomena sought, the less the interference must be.

Great scientists, those who have pushed at the boundaries of human knowledge, have often spoken of this. Albert Einstein must have had it in mind when he commented that "science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind". It is not an accident that Newton, Faraday, Maxwell, Pascal and many of the other greatest names in science were devout Christian thinkers. The strength that they drew from their religious convictions helped to make them great.

It isn't just that a scientist who neglects his or her spiritual development will run the risk of working in a moral vacuum, although that is certainly true. The point I am stressing is that an increasing capacity for inner stillness brought by spiritual growth is likely to enhance the scientist's professional functioning.

Why, then, are some scientists so scathing about religion? Recent discussions in "Nature", the British Science Journal, have revealed fervent anti-religious feeling in some, including the magazine's editor, who commented that "it may not be long before the practice of religion must be regarded as anti-science". He was disturbed by the fact that: "many professional scientists are deeply religious, often justifying their belief on the grounds that 'science cannot know everything'". It was good to see a letter responding to the editorial that asserted that "science as a way-of-knowing is not furthered by witch-hunting, rooting out of 'non-believers' and paranoia about other ways-of-knowing that challenge the received wisdom of the scientific establishment".

Some scientists have a natural sense of spirituality, feel nourished by life and by God, and are able to work with love. Peace comes to them easily, and with that, powers of stability, concentration, discrimination and insight. Others work to restore such powers in themselves through religious practices, including determined thoughts of faith in a fundamental benevolence in creation, despite events that would sometimes appear to argue to the contrary.

Still others, hardened perhaps by bitter disappointment into a state where neither giving nor receiving love is easy, develop a view of themselves as no more than a

biophysical system that contains all the ingredients of its own evolution; Godless, soulless and purposeless except that, for some unexplained reason, the system seeks to survive and propagate.

It is possible that the very success of science, in helping human beings to gain a degree of mastery over the physical world, contains the seeds of its own decline. By directing our attitudes and vision and values more and more to the external, material aspects of life, including our physical bodies, such success can hasten our forgetting to draw

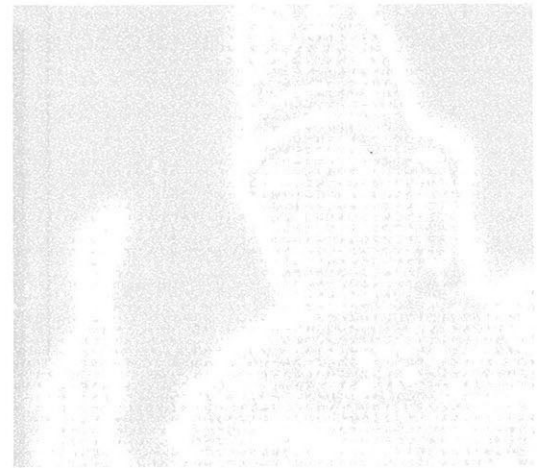
on the well of love, peace and happiness which comes from knowing the true self, the "I" within, and its relationship to wider, spiritual realities. Such loss of happiness causes us to look at the world with jaundiced vision. We do not see beauty when we have lost the ability to feel beauty. Since beauty is an important pointer to truth, the scientist who sees the world with such distorted vision is indeed lame.

**Experience tells me that it is possible to learn to fill oneself with thoughts and feelings that end the spiritual vacuum in the self.**

It is of course true that, just as science can degenerate into dogma and intolerance, religion can do likewise. In both, I suspect the root cause is the same: a fossilisation of

the intellect, an inner dryness and hollowness, a disappointment, arising from a lack of true love. Love is essentially a quality of the spirit, not reducible to mechanistic analysis. If the elevation of science into an ideology can further the process by which we become drained of love, so too can the worship of false prophets: those who claim to be able to carry us from falsehood into truth, but who have lost their own connection with God, the ultimate benefactor.

Experience tells me that it is possible to learn to fill oneself with thoughts and feelings that end the spiritual vacuum in the self, and restore a sense of substance, wholeness and truth. But there is a sort of Catch 22 to the process. For as long as there is the lameness through which the self says there is no God, and no soul, and no purpose to life other than brutish survival, and that the world we can see and touch and analyse is the only reality, it will be hard to find a channel of communication through



which God can speak to the soul and give it what it needs. The arrogance that led to such unfounded assertions may have to take a considerable knock before we open the door to a different way of thinking and feeling.

Similarly, for as long as a soul continues in blind adherence to some religious dogma, insisting it has all the religious or spiritual guidance and sustenance it needs, even though that belief is increasingly at odds with the facts, it will continue to decline in peace and happiness - and that will take it still further from the peace of God. Many are afflicted by this kind of spiritual entropy.

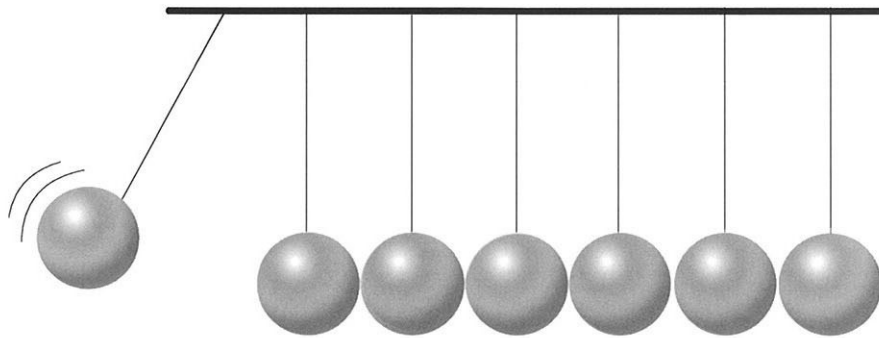
Sometimes circumstances - a sudden bereavement, the loss of a precious job, a disappointment in love at the physical level - push the individual into going within, in such a way that the inner light is rekindled automatically.

But a more royal method of reversing the decline is to seek out silence for the self by going to a place where it is possible to detach from everyday worries and concerns and where the pure and loving atmosphere helps create a safe haven through which God can speak to those ready to listen.

®

*Neville Hodgkinson is former medical and science correspondent of The Sunday Times.*

# The Philosophy of Karma



## FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION IV

*At the end of the last session we found ourselves back home in the soul world. A place of total peace and tranquillity, where nothing changes and there is no sense of time, where there is rest and completion. But we cannot stay like this forever, otherwise life would not exist, consciousness would not be conscious, there would be no relationship, and no expression of our creative ability.*

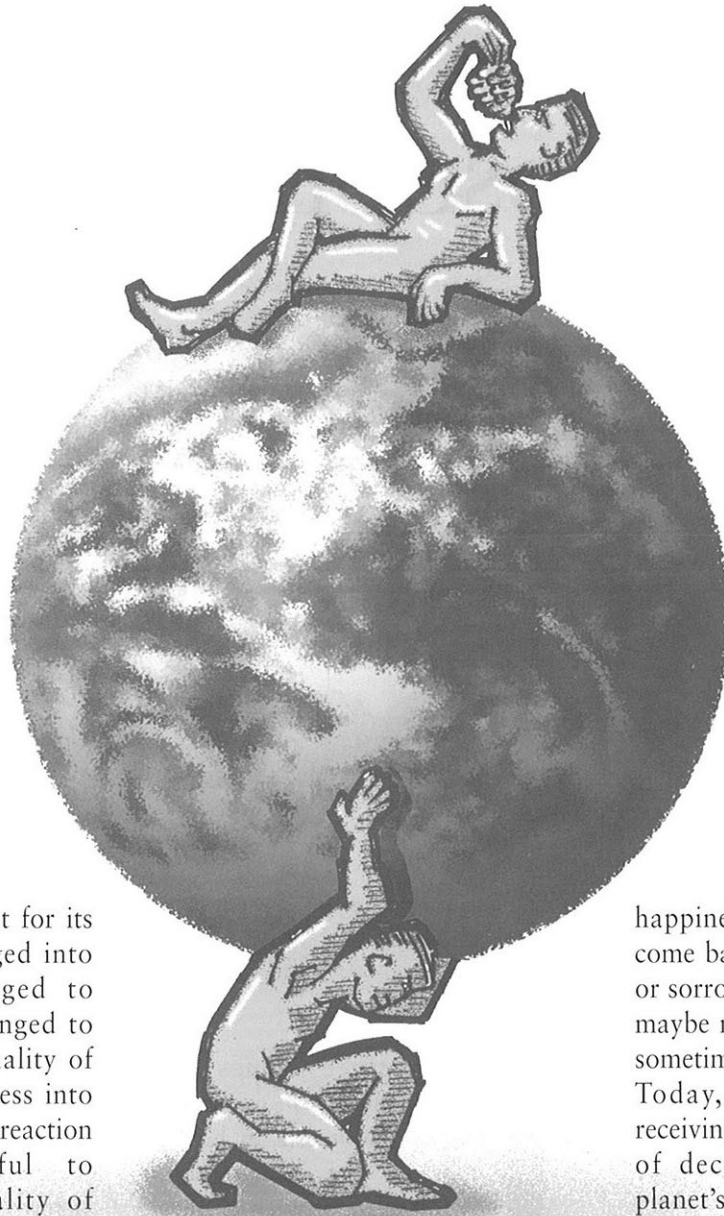
**T**hese three things all humanity has in common; *consciousness* - in being aware of ourselves, *relationship* with others (no man or woman is an island), and *creativity* to produce thoughts and feelings and express them.

The purpose of life is nothing more than life itself - awareness, relationship and expression. But this cannot happen in the silent, still soul world. These characteristics of life require action, and a stage on which to act.

The physical world provides that stage on which we can move, animate, relate, create and express all that is inside our consciousness. Consequently we are constantly doing one of three things once we come to live in physical form: we are either acting, reacting or interacting.

When you first arrived here and took your first physical form you were aware of yourself as a spiritual being and your consciousness was pure. The quality of your actions was at its highest and you enjoyed expressing your natural attributes of love, harmony, and joy. You gave freely of yourself in your relationships, not your physical self, but the energy of your spirit. As a flower grows to express its beautiful form, colour and fragrance, so the soul expressed its beauty through the dance and play of its actions, always with the purpose of giving, never desiring anything in return. Such are the actions of beings in harmony with themselves, with others and with nature.

But gradually the consciousness began to change and the soul began to identify with its form, becoming



dependent on sensual input for its happiness. Giving changed into taking, receiving changed to desiring, and having changed to needing. So often the quality of action changed from selfless into selfish, and the quality of reaction changed from peaceful to aggressive and the quality of interaction changed from unconditional to dependent.

When the soul didn't get what it wanted it became angry and the anger led to violence. When many souls come together in this state of consciousness the result is war, and the result is pain and sorrow. This is not the purpose of life, which is to create life, not death.

There are certain laws which are intrinsic to action and interaction. They are not man-made, requiring lawyers to interpret and police to enforce. They are natural laws, which are constantly operating in every relationship. They are often called Laws of Karma (or action); acknowledged in the Christian

**There are certain laws  
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saying "as ye sow so shall ye reap"; described by Isaac Newton in the Law of motion, where "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction".

In other words, whatever you give out you get back. If you give

happiness to someone else it will come back to you, if you give pain or sorrow it will come back to you, maybe not today or tomorrow, but sometime.

Today, for example, we are receiving the uncomfortable return of decades of plundering the planet's natural resources for our own physical comfort and well-being, polluting the atmosphere and poisoning the ocean in the process.

The same applies to our relationships. You will be able to tell with whom you have had negative interaction, or karma, in the past. They will trigger some unhappiness in you. But be aware, they are not the cause, because you are just getting back whatever you have given out. And here is the first step to real freedom: freedom from blame. If you have the consciousness of blaming or hating then you are enslaved to the object of your blame. But now you know that whatever comes to you, whatever circumstances you find

yourself in, the feelings you experience, are thereby the return of what you have initiated. This teaches you to take full responsibility for your every individual action.

But what is action exactly? It is the expression of the energy of your consciousness through the body. And at most times we are either giving out that energy or taking in energy from someone or something. This giving and taking

**If you have deposited a lot of pain and sorrow with someone, if your actions have caused them suffering, eventually that must be repaid.**

is the same as taking a loan, or making a regular deposit from a bank. You either have a debt, or you will have accumulated money plus a little interest. And so we have accounts in our relationships. If you have deposited a lot of pain and sorrow with someone, if your actions have caused them suffering, eventually that must be repaid. The same happens if you have become dependent on another person for their support, in which case that "loan" will eventually have to be paid back.

In all relationships there is some give and take and the greatest interaction takes place with those who are closest. To get a sense of the value of your interactions, consider the three kinds of action which the soul carries out through the body.

*Positive action* arises from being soul-conscious. The action is purely benevolent and there is no motive or desire for any return. Actions carried out in soul-consciousness will help others rediscover their own soul-consciousness.

*Negative action* is motivated by

body-consciousness. In this state I seek self-gratification or I get angry at someone because my desires are not met. These are the actions which accumulate karmic debt.

*Neutral action* involves routine tasks which do not affect others;

washing dishes, driving the car, etc. However, even these actions, if carried out in a state of body-consciousness, can become negative

At this present time, therefore, we all find ourselves with debts to settle - debts also

accumulated from previous births. These prevent us finding true freedom and are always interrupting our peace and happiness. If someone keeps coming into your mind, interrupting your concentration, or triggering feelings of frustration or depression, you can understand that you have some outstanding karmic debt. There are three methods of settling your debts and setting yourself free.

First, now that you have a clear understanding of the difference between soul-consciousness and body-consciousness, you can stop performing action in a state of body-consciousness, i.e. taking from others.

Second, you can begin to repay your outstanding debts by serving those souls with whom you have a karmic account. This, however, can take time, and perhaps as long as it took to create the debts.

Third, the fastest way is to meditate; to establish that direct link with the source of spiritual power, the Supreme Soul, to pass on to others through your good wishes, positive thoughts and

vibrations. This union with the Supreme is the key to your own personal freedom from the bondage of karma with other humans. Not only does that power transform your old habits, which created the debts in the first place, but it is also the income you need to settle all your debts comparatively quickly. The quality of your action becomes higher. The beauty of the law of karma is understanding that, if your actions bring happiness and spiritual upliftment to others today, tomorrow will be bright - your destiny is firmly in your own hands.

**MEDITATION - THE METHOD TO SETTLE THE DEBTS OF YOUR PAST ACTIONS QUICKLY AND TO CREATE YOUR FUTURE PROSPERITY**

As you turn within, become aware of the relationship between you the soul, your body and the physical world. See how you animate and express yourself through your body in all your actions. Then consider your interactions with others and get a sense of the quality of your actions. Are they springing from body-consciousness, wanting something for yourself, or from soul-consciousness, your spiritual vision of others, and giving them what they need on a spiritual level?

Be aware of the relationships which are awkward and watch your thoughts in those relationships. Your negative thoughts and feelings tell you that you need to resolve something in relation to that person.

Then focus your meditation on the Supreme Soul, on God. Cultivate your relationship with Him and allow yourself to take spiritual power directly, which you can channel into your actions and into positive thoughts and good wishes for those around you. (R)

# MANAGING CHANGE

John Wilson presents his self-managing strategy to steer through the nineties



*As teenagers we used to surf along the south west coast of Western Australia. One of our favourite places was a spot called Sugar Loaf Rock. We would spend hours there, we loved it. Sugar Loaf Rock had a dangerous reputation, quite a few people had drowned there. It used to amaze us that a place we "Surfees" found so exciting was seen by many people (especially swimmers and fishermen) as so dangerous. I came to realise later that our differing experience was related to our particular surfer map. We expected "sneaker" waves that came from nowhere and "sets"- a group of very large waves rolling one after the other. We were not only ready for them, but looked forward to them, whereas other people went to Sugar Loaf Rock hoping that it would remain calm. They went there with inadequate maps and therefore found it dangerous.*



Managing change in the nineties is like surfing at Sugar Loaf Rock! - it depends on how you see it. It is hardly possible to hope that all will remain calm, to think that we can somehow control external conditions (like King Canute). We live in a world of change and surprise, where the waves get bigger and sometimes come out of nowhere. The emphasis is shifting towards managing ourselves and finding the world views, values and inner competencies that make us effective in this new environment.

**The paradox is that as change gathers speed and gets faster, it becomes more essential to develop a personal strategy to become increasingly more still.**

There is no turning back, we can't go back to the good old stable days of the past. As the old reference points fall away we need a new vision of ourselves in this world (and new values). We need skills to manage the future, to manage transitions and to manage the self to steer us, but we'll get to that later.

**THREE VALUES TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE**

Having developed a world view that we are "surfers in a shifting swell" or "actors in a suspense drama" or something that will help us in an unstable world, then what? What are the values that I need to support my world view in daily life? Here are three important values:

**Introversion:** A focus towards developing our inner awareness, drawing away from external orientation again and again. Nourishing ourselves and making self-management and self-mastery

our priority, on the understanding that in order to manage change we must first manage ourselves.

**Flexibility:** A commitment to adapting and responding to new environments; challenging our assumptions in seeing what is working and what is not working; accommodating high levels of ambiguity and paradox which arise as we move through transition.

**Creativity:** A priority on finding new ways to solve old problems; breaking obsolete patterns; taking the initiative to

change before time; taking first steps on the basis that as I change I affect the world; harnessing my inner resources and my thoughts, emotions and attitudes that are within my control so that I can increase the quality of my performance.

**A SELF-MANAGING STRATEGY**

The paradox is that as change gathers speed and gets faster, it becomes more essential to develop a personal strategy to become increasingly more still. We need to resource our original qualities again and again for stability and continuity. Frankly, we need to keep composed!

One of the best ways to do this is to focus on ourselves as a point of light energy. The point collects our attention back to a high state of mind. If the mind is powerful then everything is powerful. This is the foremost strategy to access our latent capacities and capabilities. This is strategy in motion.

**THREE SKILL AREAS**

The right world view, values and strategy aren't enough. We also need skills.

**Managing new ideas** - has to do with creativity, insight, and imagination, and with developing a sense of future as the catalyst. Many people are experts in what is wrong at present while very few can formulate a positive vision of the future and see their own contribution to it. To manage new ideas requires the visualisation skills which see how new ideas can be put into action.

**Managing transitions** - has to do with our ability to move through different circumstances. We might have a great vision, but can we tolerate massive change, criticism, conflict or upheaval? To manage transitions successfully we need to accommodate a great deal and this requires discrimination, patience, tolerance, sensitivity and adjustment.

**Managing continuity** - has to do with reinforcing a foundation of constancy and stability. We need strong self-confidence to remain calm in the face of any circumstance. To manage continuity we have to access our inner stillness and create whatever stage of awareness we need.

All three areas should be balanced, for example, someone may have wonderful new ideas and yet no self-conviction to underpin those ideas - this can lead to empty promises. Alternatively another may have great self-respect, or the transition skills needed to tolerate and adjust, but no vision to drive himself forward. Or another person could have great vision, but without transitional skills will certainly come unstuck as the inevitable troubles occur.

The essential art in the  
nineties is the art of  
finding space.

FINDING SPACE

The essential art in the nineties is the art of finding space. The pressures, uncertainties and upheavals of living in the nineties are wearing us out. So how can we continue to refresh and recharge ourselves in the midst? How to get the necessary power to really change ourselves? The method is to harness the power of the mind. A powerful mind is above situations and circumstances.

Peter Senge in his book *The Fifth Discipline* gives the following example: "When a person in a Japanese firm sits quietly no-one will come and interrupt. It is assumed the person is thinking. In America we think that if a person is sitting quietly they aren't doing anything very important".

There has to be a shift in our priorities from doing to being. It might seem incongruous to shift our emphasis to being when we need results. Yet results start from the inside. When this is clear it becomes easy to make the shift. The problem, especially in our western culture, is that we do not give any priority to meditating or finding space.

MEDITATION - THE  
POWER FOR CHANGE

Meditation is an important self-management technique. Those

who practise meditation regularly become masters of change. How can we recognise these rare phenomena?

\* *They are open and responsive to new ways of being and doing*

\* *They are free from tension and thrive on chaos*

\* *They believe in themselves, that they can access their inner powers to handle any situations*

\* *They trust that there is benefit in everything so nothing can disturb them*

\* *They have a sense of humour and don't take things too seriously*

We can't stop the waves ... we can't control the size of the waves ... but we can become wave riders. We may take a dumping or two, but if we go for it we may even learn a few new tricks like *hang ten* (dangling our toes over as we ride the wave) and *cutting back* (returning to the source of energy). If we get real good we may get *tubed* and reach that mystical point of flow where our abilities and external challenges are evenly matched and we become suspended in that *green room* in the middle of the wave where time stands still.

®

*John Wilson is a Management Consultant based in Sydney.*

GOD  
DID NOT  
SAY

*God did not say  
You will find me  
if you carry out  
a deep enough  
analysis.*

*I have made a tree  
To know me*

*you must  
cut it down*

*cut it up*

*pulp it*

*make paper*

*and write upon it  
Holy Words.*

*God did not say*

*I have made a  
butterfly*

*Don't let it flutter by*

*Get it*

*Net it*

*Set it*

*and hold it up*

*dead*

*in praise of me.*

*God did not say  
anything.*

*Silently*

*He made all things*

*all stones*

*all plants*

*all flowers*

*all animals*

*and man*

*as One.*

*And*

*without loudspeakers*

*without book*

*without script*

*without word*

*without letter -*

*even*

*without*

*a Little Bang Theory -*

*and*

*God*

*saw.*

*Francis Boston  
Flashes of Silence*

# Happy Ever After



Ray Billington wonders how we can find happiness

*'Without anxiety', wrote Heidegger, 'there can be no creativity'. In that case, this must be the most creative age in history. Daily we are bombarded with stories and images of human folly, viciousness and greed which must bring about in all but the most obtuse a dread for the future. No wonder many couples consciously resolve not to bring any offspring into this morass. All hope abandon, ye who enter here. The conclusion seems inescapable: homo sapiens is the experiment - or natural development - that failed.*

**O**ne must of course be careful when assuming the role of the gloomy prophet. A *Punch* cartoon years ago depicted one such Jeremiah bewailing 'Things aren't what they were'. 'No', came the reply 'they never were'. But it is hard not to conclude that we are now descending a spiral which is vicious in every sense of the word. True, there are those in positions of power and authority who are not using these assets solely for their own aggrandisement, or for the exploitation of their people: but they are so thin on the ground as to be virtually invisible. For every Mandela there are a hundred Husseins, for every Havel a thousand Andreottis. Hobbes's view of human beings existing in a natural stage of war with one another seems difficult to refute.

How then are we to cope with anxiety? For cope we must since it is psychologically impossible deliberately to court unhappiness. We could end it all by suicide, but since the anxiety Heidegger was discussing sprang from our awareness of the certainty of death, the encounter of being with non-being, this would be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the situation. A less drastic (that is, less permanent) recourse is to change the chemistry of our brains through drugs. That way we will see things differently for a while but, as every addict knows, the euphoria must end in the return to painful reality: either that or the big sleep of the overdose.

A more popular escape route

nowadays - in many ways not dissimilar to the previous one - is to take refuge in religious fundamentalism. It has a number of factors going for it. In its Pentecostalist guise, it provides the same kind of intoxication as is to be experienced via the bottle or the needle. In its Bible-centred form, it offers a source of comfort, counsel and above all, authority, which removes the need to worry any more about anything, spiritual, moral, or intellectual. And in general, it assures its adherents that they are delivered from present, or any future wrath (or Wrath). This recourse may well remove anxiety, but it is only illusion - the illusion of the madhouse.

**With the world's population increasing by three every second (try saying to yourself 'three more, three more, three more' as seconds tick by and you may begin to appreciate the awesomeness of this fact)**

We may take a less irrational form of escape by deciding to do something about the world's problems and dedicate our lives to some cause or other. We may adopt a slogan like 'Ban the bomb', or 'Down with poverty', or 'An end to Crime', and spend every spare moment trying to bring particular aspects of Utopia into being. Psychologically, this may do us good, and here and there we may discern what looks like a change for the better. But overall the effect is as illusory as the rest. With the world's population increasing by three every second (try saying to yourself 'three more, three more, three more' as seconds tick by and

you may begin to appreciate the awesomeness of this fact), anything we achieve is immediately overtaken by events. In the land of the lotus eaters some harmony between people may be found; but the only lotus eaters today are those created artificially by the inequalities of the world - inequalities which, through the 'three more' syndrome, are becoming daily more grotesque.

We may take a different tack and lose ourselves, and our personal anxiety, in a group. We may join a club or a gang, or a society, follow football, play bridge, keep fit and ignore the world situation by simply enjoying whatever we enjoy alongside others who also enjoy it. This may mean achieving only the bliss of ignorance (since we don't, of course, discuss serious matters in these groups) but it allows us to sleep at nights and we can kid ourselves that we get on well with people. But this route is as artificial as the rest: playing a game in a fantasy world, dancing on the deck of the Titanic, believing that news bulletins can (or should) be dominated by tales (or tails) of cats and dogs.

So it seems that however we go about seeking happiness, we involve ourselves in a process of illusion. In Hindu religion, this world is *Maya* - the belief that either possessing or improving the world has intrinsic value. This is not just because whatever we do will change very little, but also because the state of *Maya* blinds us to the deeper awareness that ultimately our personal egos - the

atman, in Hindu terms - need to be subsumed in the Brahman, or Ground of Being - the spiritual reality without which the universe would not exist.

The image I find most rewarding to explain this is that of the Tao: the basic way, or flow, of the world - both the world of nature and of homo sapiens. In the eternal balance of the yin and yang which proceeds from the Tao there is a harmony with which every individual may align himself, or herself. It is only through the power of the Tao that change can occur, so that any words or actions on our part will be effective only when spoken or done at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

This means being sensitive to the movement of the spirit that is in all of us; and it should be emphasised that spiritual awareness should be viewed not as a divine but as a thoroughly human activity, to be discovered through nature, or the arts, and in certain relationships, as well as via the more traditional contexts of mystical experience.

Those who have experienced this deeper sense of being know that the age-old distinction between divine and human, and between sacred and secular, is false. Anyone who has achieved enlightenment (the Hindu moksha) knows, first, that he or she has reached the pinnacle of experience and is at one with the Ground of Being, by whatever name this may be called; and that the way to achieve happiness is by ceasing to pursue it and instead seeking to lose the individual

consciousness, with its all consuming ego, through and within the mystical experience. And this can be realised, not only in worship or meditation, but also through music, or drama or in the world of nature which is the arena of our existence.

What, then, about the anxiety and the creativity? Have we proved Heidegger wrong? Far from it. The point now is that we have come to terms with the Hobbesian view of human nature through the realisation that, however grim existence may be for many

(perhaps most) of the world's inhabitants, this grimness is but on one side of the coin, of which the other side is one of infinite possibilities.

Not on any state of self-deception, but with the full flow of our faculties, we can recognise the world for what it is and come to terms with it; being prepared to take some action if the time is ripe; not expecting too much, if anything at all, from it ('if things can go wrong, they will'); above all, seeing the enlightenment which enables us to see everything around us in its real, transient, perspective. The quality I'm referring to is encapsulated in the ancient word *hope*, which - to contradict St Paul - seems to me a far more profound quality than faith or even love. It is expressed as a promise in these words from the Upanishads: 'He who knows thus merges his Self in the Self - yea, he who knows thus'.

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A report on the recent Conference on Advanced Ismology

*At the meeting I attended  
As far as I could see  
Every member was an -  
ist  
Except for stupid me.*

*And every -ist there had  
an -ism  
Which occupied his life;  
And each -ist spoke upon  
his 'ism -  
Ismology was rife!*

*At last I came on Mr.  
Love;  
He hadn't got an -ism.  
He didn't speak a single  
word -  
And somehow caused no  
schism!*

*So when they called on  
me to speak  
I held aloft a flower.  
Mr. Love looked Holy  
Sweet;  
And all the rest looked  
sour.*

# Diary from a Smarthouse 1995

*November 28, 1995*

Moved in at last. Finally, we live in the smartest house in the neighbourhood. Everything's networked. The cable TV is connected to our phone, which is connected to my PC, which is connected to the power lines, all the appliances and the security system. Everything runs off a universal remote with the friendliest interface I've ever used. Programming is a snap. I'm, like, totally wired.

*November 30*

Hot stuff! Programmed my VCR from the office, turned up the thermostat and switched on the lights with the car phone, remotely tweaked the oven a few degrees for my pizza. Everything nice and cosy when I arrived. Maybe I should have the universal remote surgically attached.

*December 3*

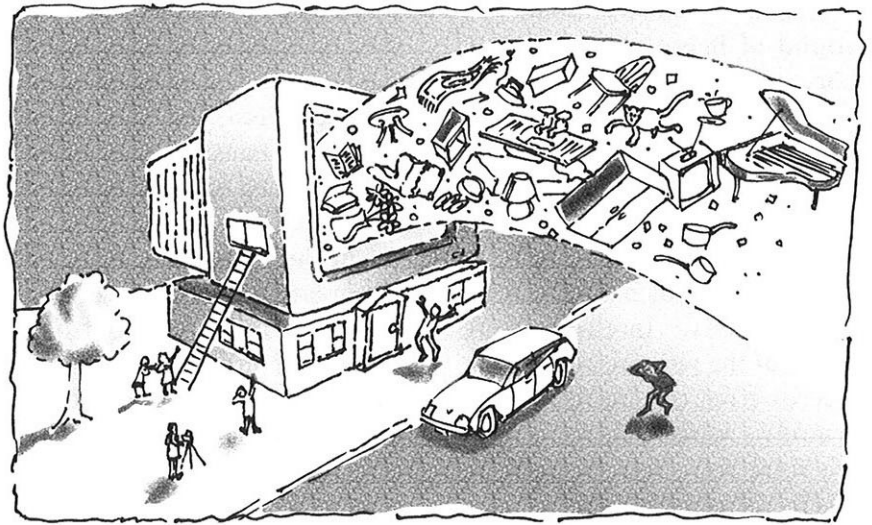
Yesterday the kitchen crashed. Freak event. As I opened the refrigerator door the light bulb blew. Immediately, everything else electrical shut down - lights, microwave, coffee maker - everything. Carefully, I unplugged and replugged all the appliances. Nothing. Called the cable company (but not from the kitchen phone). They refer me to the utility. The utility insists the problem was in the software. So the software company runs some remote telediagnosics via my house processor.

Turns out the problem was "unanticipated failure mode" - the network had never seen a refrigerator bulb failure while the door was open. So the fuzzy logic interpreted the burnout as a power surge and shut down the entire kitchen. But because sensor memory confirmed that there hadn't actually been a power surge, the kitchen's logic sequence was confused so it couldn't do a standard restart.

The utility guy swears this was the first time this has ever happened. Rebooting the kitchen took over an hour.

*December 7*

The police are not happy. Our house keeps calling them for help. We



discover that whenever we play the TV or stereo above 25 decibels, it creates patterns of micro-vibrations that get amplified when they hit the window. When these vibrations mix with a gust of wind the security sensors are activated and the police computer concludes that someone is trying to break in. Figure that one.....

Another glitch: whenever the basement is in self-diagnostic mode, the universal remote won't let me change the channels on my TV. That means I actually have to get up off the couch and change the channels by hand. The software and the utility people say this flaw will be fixed in the next upgrade - Smarthouse 2.1, but it's not ready yet.

*December 12*

This is a nightmare. There's a virus in the house. My personal computer caught it while browsing on the public access network. I come home and the living room is a sauna, the bedroom windows are covered with ice, the refrigerator is defrosted, the washing machine has flooded the basement, the garage door is cycling up and down and the TV is stuck on the Home Shopping Channel. Throughout the house lights flicker like stroboscopes until they explode from the strain. Broken glass is everywhere. Of course the security sensors detect nothing.

I look at the message slowly throbbing on my PC screen, 'Welcome to Homewrecker'!!! Now the fun

begins...(be it ever so humble there is no virus like homewrecker) I get out of the house fast.

*December 18*

They think I've digitally disinfected the house but the place is a shambles. Pipes have burst and we're not completely sure we've got part of the virus that attacks toilets. Nevertheless, The Exorcists (as the anti virus team like to call themselves) are confident the worst is over. "Homewrecker is pretty bad", one tells me, "but consider yourself lucky you didn't get Poltergeist. That is really evil".

*December 19*

Apparently, our house isn't insured for viruses. "Fires and mudslides yes", says the claims adjuster, "viruses, no"

My agreement with the Smarthouse people explicitly states that all claims and warranties are null and void if any appliance or computer in my house networks in any way shape or form with an uncertified on-line service. Everybody's very, very sorry but they can't be expected to anticipate every virus that may be created.

*December 21*

I get a call from the Smarthouse sales rep. As a special holiday offer we get a free opportunity to become the test site for the company's new Smarthouse 2.1 upgrade. He says I'll be able to meet the programmers personally. "Sure", I tell him...

# PROGRESS OR REGRESS



What is your Vision of the World?

If a person living in the 1890s were transported into the 1990s they would be stunned by the speed of our lives and the places to which we travel. Their eyes would pop at the range of gadgets and technological toys which have become our most intimate companions and comforters. As they sit and watch the world go by on a coloured piece of glass in our living rooms they would probably be filled with awe and wonder at such amazing progress.

But then, as they begin to absorb the reality of current human behaviour and human relationships they may begin to wonder in a different way. The raging conflicts in over forty countries, millions suffering incredible poverty, mindless violence and verbal assaults between people at all levels of just about every society may encourage them to rethink their first impressions.

They may in fact conclude that progress is an illusion, based only on the sophistication of technology. They may begin to see us deluding ourselves into thinking and acting as if things are getting better all the time. They may deduce that regression was closer to the truth. And it's highly likely they would want to return to the 1890s a little faster than expected.

What do you think, are we progressing or regressing? Do we need to re-define what we mean by progress or is it just too painful to acknowledge that we might not have made any progress at all - in over two thousand years? If that is the case what happens next? And what do you do now?

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# I N S I G H T S

*Peace of mind  
comes from not wanting  
to change others,  
but by simply accepting them  
as they are.*

*True acceptance  
is always without demands  
and expectations.*

Gerald G. Jampolsky  
Love is letting go of fear

*A tree that can fill the span  
of a man's arms  
grows from a downy tip;*

*A terrace nine storey's high  
rises from hodfuls of earth;*

*A journey of a thousand miles  
starts from beneath one's feet.*

Lao-Tsu

*Why destroy  
your present happiness  
by a distant misery,  
which may never  
come at all?*

*For every substantial grief  
has twenty shadows  
and most of the shadows  
are of your own making*

Sydney Smith



*Great Spirits  
have always encountered  
violent opposition  
from mediocre minds.*

Albert Einstein

*Everytime we say  
"I must do something"  
it takes an incredible  
amount of energy.*

*Far more  
than physically  
doing it*

Gita Beliin

*One cannot conquer the evil in  
himself by resisting it ...  
but by transmuting its energies  
into other forms.*

*The energy that expresses  
itself in the form of evil  
is the same energy  
which expresses itself  
in the form of good;  
and thus the one may  
be transmuted into the other.*

Charles Henry MacKintosh  
I looked on Life