



# RETREAT

*Retreat*

ISSUE No. SIX

**Angelic  
Presence**

**Clean  
Windows**

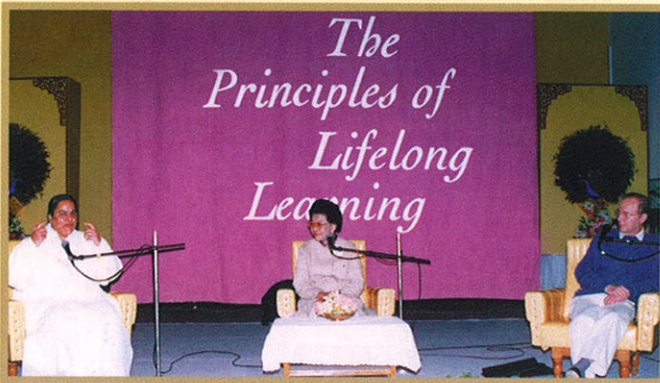
**Sports  
Report**

**Dancing  
Lessons**

**Mother's  
Cells**



# L E A R N I N G



Sister Mohini, Justice Romero and David Fontana in dialogue on stage.

## Mt Abu Dialogue 1995

### THE PRINCIPLES OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Earlier this year over 300 hundred delegates arrived from 59 countries to participate in the second Mt Abu Dialogue. Following Keynote Dialogues at the beginning of each day, participants then formed Learning Circles in which a more intimate and deeper dialogue could help define The Principles of Lifelong Learning, how those principles could be applied to a professional context and what changes were needed at a personal level in order to inculcate those principles.

Some of the conditions required for learning which emerged from the learning circles included; the need to unlearn false knowledge, old habits and wrong assumptions; the need for constant flexibility of attitude; the need to know ones purpose in life before appropriate learning can take place; the need for an open mind in order to discover; the need to perceive mistakes as an opportunity for growth; the need to develop the ability to listen; the need to see everything as a process and that nothing stays the same; the need to start the learning process with an accurate knowledge of the self.

The process of dialogue was based on an understanding of the need to balance advocacy (giving ones own ideas) and enquiry (assisting others to develop their ideas and insights) and to try to find shared meaning as an essential



Learning Circles in the sun, were stimulating and fun.

condition to the mutual re-discovery of truth. The main challenges to effective dialogue were the rich diversity of cultures, nationality, language and profession. While these factors often slowed the dialogue down, this was more than compensated for by everyone's patience, respect and desire to listen to others points of view. On frequent occasions the energy of the group transcended all these factors and this unique international gathering came together as one family of kindred spirits, on a journey towards the enlightenment which is always the destination of an authentic impulse to learn.

The 1996 Dialogue will take place from 1st to 8th February 96



Participants from 59 countries in the learning mode!

## L E A R N I N G

*After a while you learn the subtle difference  
Between holding a hand and chaining a soul,  
And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning  
And company doesn't mean security.  
And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts  
And presents aren't promises -  
And you begin to accept your defeats  
With your head up and your eyes open  
And with the grace of an adult,  
not the Grief of a child.  
And you learn to build your roads on today  
Because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain  
for your plans.  
After a while you learn that even sunshine  
Burns if you get too much.  
So plant your own garden and decorate your  
own soul instead of waiting for someone  
to bring you flowers.  
And you will learn that you really can endure,  
That you really are special.  
And that you really do have worth.  
So live to learn and know yourself.  
In doing so, you will learn to live.*

Anon

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## RETREAT



ISSUE No. 6

**COVER**

Angels from Sydney, Australia, uplifting souls to their home.

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# THE ONLY WORK OF VALUE

There comes a point in many, if not most people's lives when they are forced to stop and take a closer look at how they are living, and values they are living by. Whether through illness, loss or an increasing absence of meaning, sooner or later there comes a time to make a personal values audit.

Values are not easy things to grasp. 'Values' is not a word that is frequently used in most people's day-to-day vocabulary. Yet values are the intangible things which stimulate our thoughts, shape our emotions and motivate our actions. "Without vision the people perish", is an oft quoted and true insight from the New Testament, to which could be added ... "and without values they will kill each other." One glance at your morning paper or one ear to the six o'clock news and you will find ample evidence of an absence of human, moral and spiritual values in the world today.

Values are the things, people and processes (external and internal) which we care about most. Material things tend to define our lower end material values which is the most prevalent value-set in all countries in the world today. It is this lower value-set which creates a breeding ground for accumulation, possession, greed and ultimately conflict.

The missing value-set at the higher end are those spiritual values, which are also virtues or innate qualities of the human spirit or soul. Love, harmony, peace, generosity and spirituality itself, are only a few. Personal and collective crises are the result of ignoring such values within ourselves and in our relationships. Only when the pain becomes so great at the physical, emotional or mental levels do we stop to wonder what went wrong, what is missing in our lives and what needs to change. By then however, change can be too late, or extremely difficult.

Retreat No. 6 is all about rediscovering the highest values in our personal lives. Each article speaks to our innate sense of spirituality in one way or another. As you read each article see if you can identify the values shift, the rediscovery, the re-affirmation of spiritual values and the realisation that unless we get our values in order deep down on the inside, we might not have much longer to play together on the outside!

Only you can do this work. This is personal work. It is the work of self awareness, self learning, self management and self transformation. This is also the work of world transformation. In this work you are the student, the teacher, the manager and the leader.

Welcome to No 6, it's great to have you with us.  
Good luck.

## RETREAT



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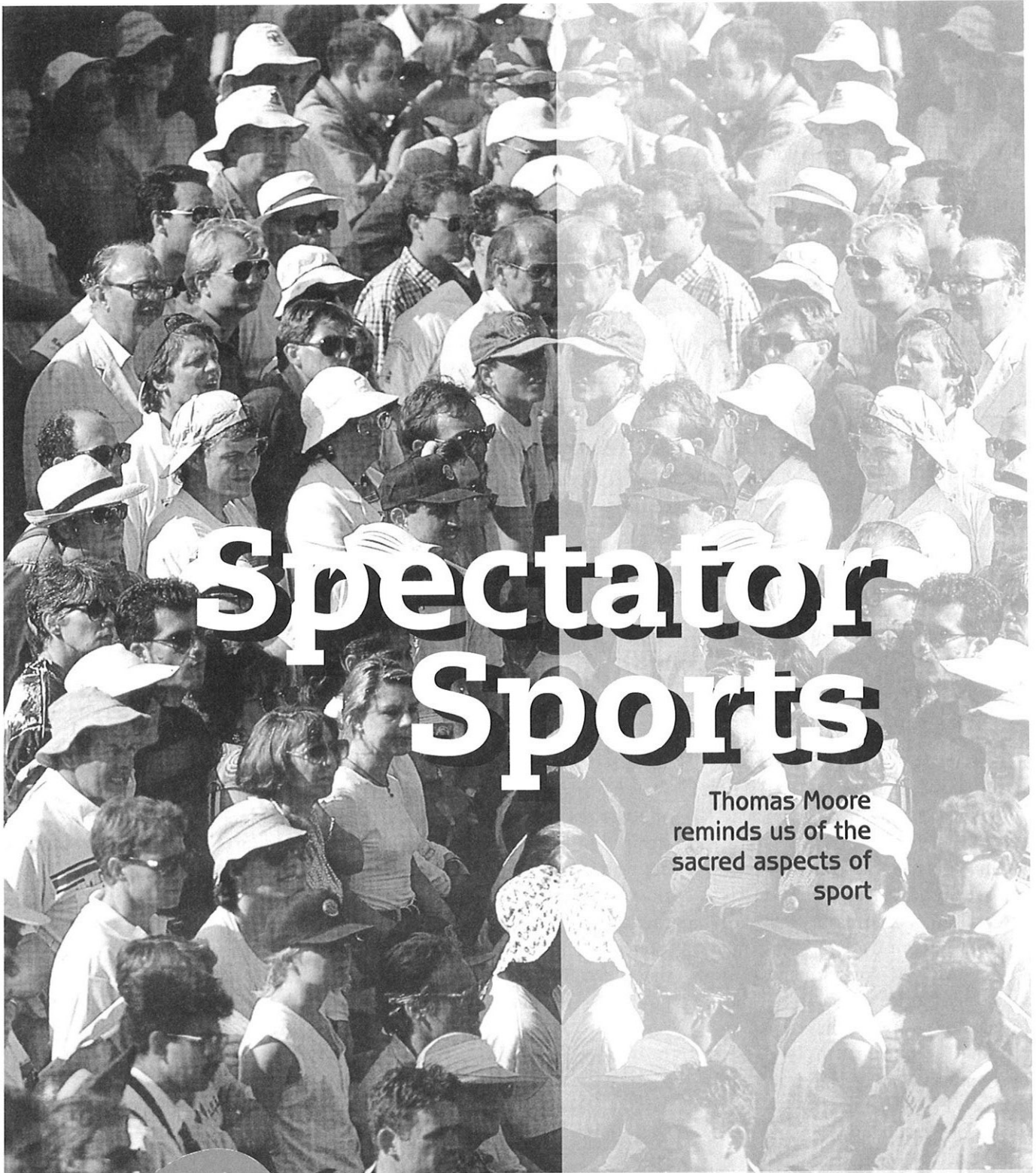
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# Spectator Sports

Thomas Moore reminds us of the sacred aspects of sport

*One day last summer I sat on a patch of lawn near a group of young people playing football. They were kicking the ball across great distances with astonishing accuracy, moving with preternatural agility and soaring into the air inhumanely when necessary. I was watching true, pure magic. I also knew that my role in that little piece of theatre was to be a spectator.*

*I engaged in genuine contemplation of the players' movements and it was clear that my watching was of great importance to them.*

Something in us wants to do things, but the soul, or whatever you want to call the deep seat of meaning and affection, loves to watch. To the soul, the world is present for our contemplation. We need especially to behold the extraordinary, the magical and the miraculous, perhaps because, as the fifteenth century magus Marsilio Ficino said, the soul is partly in time and partly in eternity. It

craves moments of eternity and displays that carry us beyond the laws of earthly limitation.

***For all the contamination of sport by politics and money, watching a game is a sacred act in the sense that we are glimpsing eternal concerns of the soul;***

I am passing over reasons why we all might like to participate in sports in order to appreciate the necessary role of spectator. Discussions of unusual states of consciousness and meditation tend to take a high spiritual road, aiming towards the transcendence of ordinary life. I am more interested in mundane forms of contemplation and in attaining lower levels of consciousness. I would like, at least once in a while, to get down out of the clouds and mountain peaks and discover the infinite mysteries and depths of worldly life - a spirituality within, rather than one beyond.

The word contemplation is related to 'temple' and 'temenos' and, according to the Oxford Dictionary, refers to an open space for observation. Churches and meditative states offer certain open spaces

for observation, but so too do arenas of sport. In many sports the spectator is at least as important as the player. When contemplation is the primary element, as is the case in most public sporting events, then the player serves the spectator, giving visions of unworldly capacity. Whenever I go into a modern stadium and have my first breathtaking sight of the green field, even if it's Astroturf, immediately I sense 'temenos', the feeling of being set apart from ordinary time and space and ready for the observance of rites.

As some philosophers have pointed out, life is a game and culture a serious form of play. When we watch sport and games as spectators, we are seeing life stripped of its practical details. We are watching pure play - the rituals that ordinarily hide behind the façade of daily life and the strategies and movements of sport that are embedded in business and politics. We are seeing the goals

and losses, the wins and defeats that give life its dynamics. At the stadium we are observing these dynamics contemplatively, not as participants, but as watchers.

For all the contamination of sport by politics and money, watching a game is a sacred act in the sense that we are glimpsing eternal concerns of the soul; eternal verities such as struggle, contest, and self-transcendence. Quite properly, games are surrounded with pomp and festival, for they are a religion of the soul, satisfying a profound need for a vision of eternal issues that animate and give intimate meaning to everyday life. The soul requires this kind of watching and contemplating as much as the body needs food and exercise and the mind needs information and ideas.

We live in a world that has lost much of its natural religion - natural in the sense that the sacred is a dimension of ordinary life and not aimed outward or beyond. We don't observe holy days, we don't celebrate and ritualise our public buildings, we don't offer sacrifice in times of war or social distress and we don't consult auguries and



divinations in order to bring holy imagination to our decisions. For millennia people have done these things. We believe we have outgrown them, so we are left with precious few sources of public religion.

Sport is one of the rare communal

activities devoted almost entirely to contemplation, often performed on days of rest from routine life and animated with elevated emotions. The beauty of sport is that its sacred role of offering unworldly visions is not as separate from profane life as is the holiness surrounding church and institutional religion. One of the great and crippling cultural schisms in our time is the separation of the sacred and the profane. As enthusiastic spectators of sport, we can view profound structures, themes and dynamics of human life without getting caught up in theories, applications and interpretations. Sport offers pure, genuine, felt contemplation.

As a window through which we can regard the eternal factors in human life, sport is similar to theatre and the other arts. Both sport and art offer vision and contemplation, but sport, especially the competitive kind, emphasises conflict, identification with a

contestant and extreme emotions of success and loss. In art, beauty is the conveyor of pleasure and the signal of divinity, while in sport, prowess and physical capacity are paramount and victory an intimation of immortality.

Because we have lost the religious sense that gives

every piece of life its ultimate meaningfulness and weight, we have created a life that is neither profoundly serious nor profoundly playful. Church tries to keep the serious in mind, while sport, perhaps in danger of becoming a vestige of true festival games, keeps our attention on the absolutely playful.

As sacred structures deteriorate, deep values are often transferred to lesser objects. A piece of art once honoured through its placement on a high altar, now takes its value from monetary assignments at an auction. Sport has its own intrinsic emotional values, but in its decadence this value may shift to players' salaries, owners' profits and high stakes betting.

As we witness sports falling into such decadence, we might see this as a sign not to dismiss sport as such, and especially the needs of spectators, but to restore sport to its important place in the soul life

of our communities. We might resist the temptation to contribute to increasing decadence, and instead do what we can to revive sport as a soul activity. It may be more fruitful for contemplation, for instance, to watch a local game on a common playing field than to patronise a new extravagant stadium.

More than ever the world needs its temples of religion, art and sport, where the eternal verities and archetypal themes can be meditated upon, and where we can learn vicariously, as contemplative spectators, the very nature of the soul. Feeling this deep need, we could insist that our stadiums be filled with play worthy of our contemplation. We need magical display and not manipulation. We need real heroes of sport who can sustain our imagination of grand personality. We need festival and grandeur, colour and fantasy because we turn to sports in the hope of beholding magic, drama, theatre, spectacle and miracle. For eternity breaks through in the playing field in those moments of an impossible save, a brilliant kick or an astonishing manoeuvre. Momentarily we see the limitations of literal, secular life defied, and the soul leaps into sight.

®

*Thomas Moore is the author of Care of the Soul and Soul Mates, both published by Harper Collins. This article first published in I to I magazine.*



# A Brief History of Angels

Jillian Sawers begins a trilogy of articles exploring the phenomenon of angels, one of the western world's most abiding fascinations.

***A journey through the history of angels will take you into a landscape where reality, myth, fantasy, legend, dream and supernatural visions sometimes appear inseparable. Throughout history, nearly all religions have held beliefs of spiritual beings that mediate between God and those of us abiding on this earthly plane. These beliefs can include anything from nature spirits and fairies to extra-terrestrial beings, but perhaps the most popular of these supernatural beings is the Angel.***

These winged messengers of God have a particularly rich and complicated history within the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam, who share the



*The angel au sourire at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, France.*

view that the cosmos is divided into Heaven, Earth and Hell which are populated accordingly with angels, humans and demons. In contrast with the Eastern Religions of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, who have no belief in Angels as the revealers of truth, within the western traditions God's word and will is communicated through these celestial messengers who are dedicated to the service of the Almighty. Angels from the days before modern science were kept even busier performing the functions of moving the stars and the elements.

The term angel actually derives from a Greek translation of the original Hebrew mal'akh, which originally meant the 'Shadow side of

God,' but later came to mean messenger. And so the identity of angels is strongly linked with what they do, especially in terms of their relationship with God, rather than their individual personalities or being. How angels were supposed to have been created is predictably uncertain. Early Hebrew sources recognised Angels as material beings created every morning through the breath of the Almighty; the early Catholic Church claimed that Angels existed even before the Creation, though now the official stance of the Catholic Church is that angels are "purely spiritual and non-substantial".

Historically speaking angels are a cross-breed between original Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian and Persian supernatural beings. This produced the popular image of the Angel which we have today of a winged and haloed messenger of God. Angels were at their most popular during the late Middle Ages in Europe where there was the new vision of the Renaissance and the rise of Humanism. This Golden Epoch ended abruptly in the middle of the 14th century





Angel at Warsaw, Poland.

with the horrors of the Black Death. Interestingly enough, but not perhaps surprising in the 200 years following the plague, the Church turned its attention away from the Golden Hosts towards the fallen host of devils and demons. However, in their heyday the complexity of the various orders, hierarchies and heavenly heads within the ranks of the Angels was unbelievable, with the different authorities disagreeing over who the Archangels were and how many heavenly orders there were. The orthodox hierarchy of the Angels contained within the Celestial Hierarchy of Dionysius and the Summa Theologica by Thomas Aquinas described nine celestial orders which orbit the Throne of Glory, rather like the planets orbiting the Sun. These nine orders are divided into three groups. The highest contained the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, the middle group contained the Dominations, Virtues and Powers, and the lowest contained the Principalities, Archangels and Angels. It was the Hebrews who saw the universe as a hierarchy and later the Christians also adopted this model of the Cosmos in which God is at the centre of the universe and at the highest point within the hierarchy.

Radiating out from His Presence are different entities, some being close to the centre, while others move further and further away from the Divine Source of Light and Love.

The highest order of angels are in direct contact with the Supreme and receive His unfiltered illumination. The next order receive the illumination from the first order and then transmit it to the third order who then convey it to human beings. The Divine Core of this vast sphere of angelic beings can be described as an emanation of pure thought of the highest vibration, whose subtle rays appear to change frequency the further they travel from the centre.

It may come as a surprise that the famous Archangels are in fact in the third league. However in the light of their role as the mediators between the Divine Source and humans, their fame is understandable. Most people know at least a few of the Archangels by name. There are

seven Archangels mentioned in Revelation. However, the Koran recognises four and names but two, Jibril (Gabriel) and Michael. Four names which appear most regularly in the Bible are: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel. The singular 'el', which completes the names and is of course contained in the word Ang-el, is found in many ancient languages and generally means Shining or Radiant being.



St. Michael, Archangel of Brussels, at the Cathedral of St. Michael.

In Christian lore it is Michael who is the greatest. His name means 'who is as God', and it is he and Gabriel who are the only angels mentioned in the Old Testament. Michael is usually shown with an

unsheathed sword signifying his role as God's great champion, and it is Michael who actually defeats Satan in the first war in which Satan is thrown down out of heaven. Michael is also known as the angel of the last judgement and as "the weigher of souls".

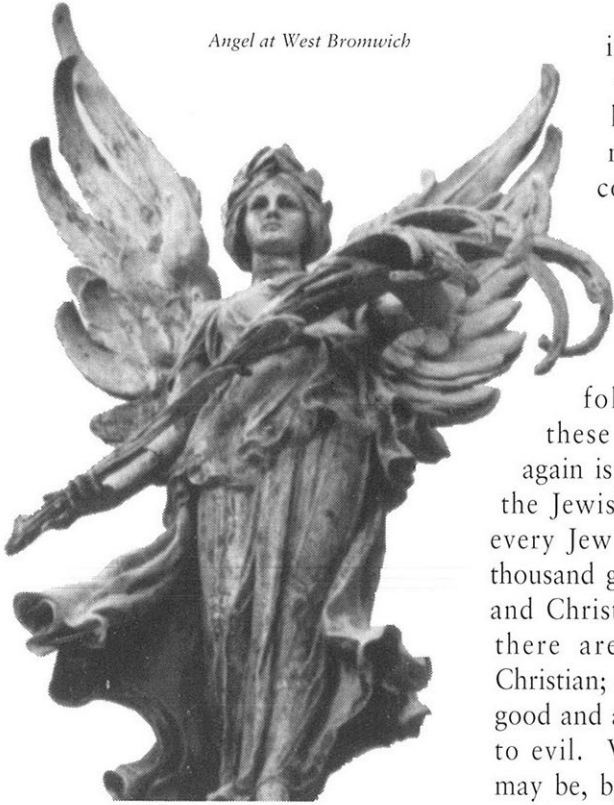
Gabriel is unique amongst the Archangels in that she is the only female, and she is said to sit at the left hand side of God. Gabriel/Jibril is the angel who dictated the Koran to Mohammed and she is considered the Angel of Truth. However, she is best known in her role as the Angel of Annunciation.

Archangel Raphael, "the Shining One who heals", is often associated with the image of a serpent. He is known as the guardian of the tree of life, and is said to be the



Holy Angel at Sevilla, Spain.

Angel at West Bromwich



chummiest and funniest of all the angels. Uriel, “Fire of God”, is perhaps the angel you would least like to meet as he is said to preside over Hell. In the Apocalypse of St Peter, Uriel appears as the Angel of Repentance. Perhaps the most interesting account of Uriel is in an incident when he wrestled with Jacob, because Uriel reportedly said, “I have come down to earth to make my dwelling among men, and I am called Jacob by name.” Thus Uriel is the first recorded instance of Angel becoming a man.

The last order of the celestial hierarchy is the ‘Angels’. In Sanskrit they are known as ‘angeres’, divine or celestial spirits, in Persian they are ‘angaros’ meaning courier and in Greek they are called ‘angelos’. Whatever the name, it is this order which fits our picture of angels as intermediaries between the Almighty and human beings.

One of the sub-classes of angels is the Guardian Angels who are in charge of nations, states and cities and have Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel at their head. It

is this group of angels, working so closely with humans who are the most vulnerable to corruption. In Job 4.18 we find that God appears “to put no trust in his servants” and later “His angels He charged with folly”. The numbers of these guardians of mortals again is subject to debate, with the Jewish Talmud speaking of every Jew being assigned eleven thousand guardian angels at birth, and Christian records suggesting there are two to guide each Christian; one who inspires him to good and another who tempts him to evil. Whatever the numbers may be, by the 4th Century A.D. at least nine-tenths of the guardian angels were said to have fallen, including their leaders. This however didn’t prevent Angels from regaining popularity during the era of Angel Fever in the 12th and 13th Centuries. By the 14th Century there were said to be 301,655,722 angels protecting the earth, though their effectiveness if so many had fallen is questionable.

It seems that time has not left the angels unemployed by any means and a survey done in the United States in 1993 showed that 69% believed in the existence of angels and 46% felt they had their own guardian angel. From surrounding the Golden Throne, angels now surround our architecture, they decorate our Christmas Trees and we even wear them as badges. In Publishers Weekly’s religious best-seller list, five out of the ten paperback books were about angels. There are angel-only boutiques, angel newsletters, angel seminars, Harvard Divinity School has a course on angels, Boston College has two.

From the mighty angels in Genesis who guarded the east gates of Eden with flashing swords, history has reduced angels to plump baby-like creatures with tiny wings, which tend to be used more for decoration than divine intervention. In the past anyone who experienced an encounter with an angel was in for a radical change in life and so perhaps it’s time once again to invoke such angels who offer a glimpse of a larger universe and issue a challenge to our priorities and settled way of being. Whoever the angels are, and whatever they do on heaven and earth, the idea of angels has been around as long as recorded civilisation, and if their durability and adaptability is maintained we should be seeing angels around for a lot longer.

Next issue: Fallen Angels - the unknown tale.



*Jillian Sawers is a student and teacher with the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University based in London.*



Angel of Amsterdam.

# Transformational Leadership through the Moral Recovery Programme

MARGE ENRIQUEZ finds out exactly what people are doing in The Philippines Government's Moral Recovery Programme

**The Moral Recovery Programme (MRP) is a government training course which maintains that the way to abolish corruption and speed up reforms in The Philippines is to be close to God. To do that, citizens are given the knowledge and tools to revitalise themselves through a meatless diet, therapeutic exercises, deep breathing techniques and short hourly breaks that affirm one's religious convictions.**

The Moral Recovery Programme (MRP) imparts the importance of developing the spiritual and ethical dimensions within the individual. If The Philippines wants to achieve the status of a Newly Industrialised Country by the year 2000 the spiritual and ethical foundation must be built upon, the importance of which is imparted by the MRP.

It aims to bring about a reinforcement of values and virtues by identifying personal blockages and social ills and coming to terms with them. The final goal is for the participants to experience "God-centredness", one of the core Filipino values identified by President Fidel Ramos. According to a press statement, "MRP envisions a government that is visionary, reflective and graft-free."

When Ramos mandated all sectors of society to join the Moral Recovery Programme in 1993, the people who responded were Human Resource Development managers of government agencies,

and provincial and regional executives of the education department.

In its first year some 2,500 professionals at middle-management level have taken the course. The majority belong to the 40 to 60-year-old bracket and hold masters and doctorate degrees; more than half are females. These people are capable of multiplying the effect of MRP in schools and government offices.

An average of 40 delegates undergo an intensive five day training programme of body-mind integration exercises, group dynamics and experiments with various meditation techniques.

Refraining from stimulants and acidic foods like meat, they eat plant-based meals throughout the workshop to make it easy for them to meditate and exercise. The workshop includes a lecture on the benefits of a plant-based diet.

*Current Reality workshop. A participant demonstrates how a tree is chopped by illegal loggers.*



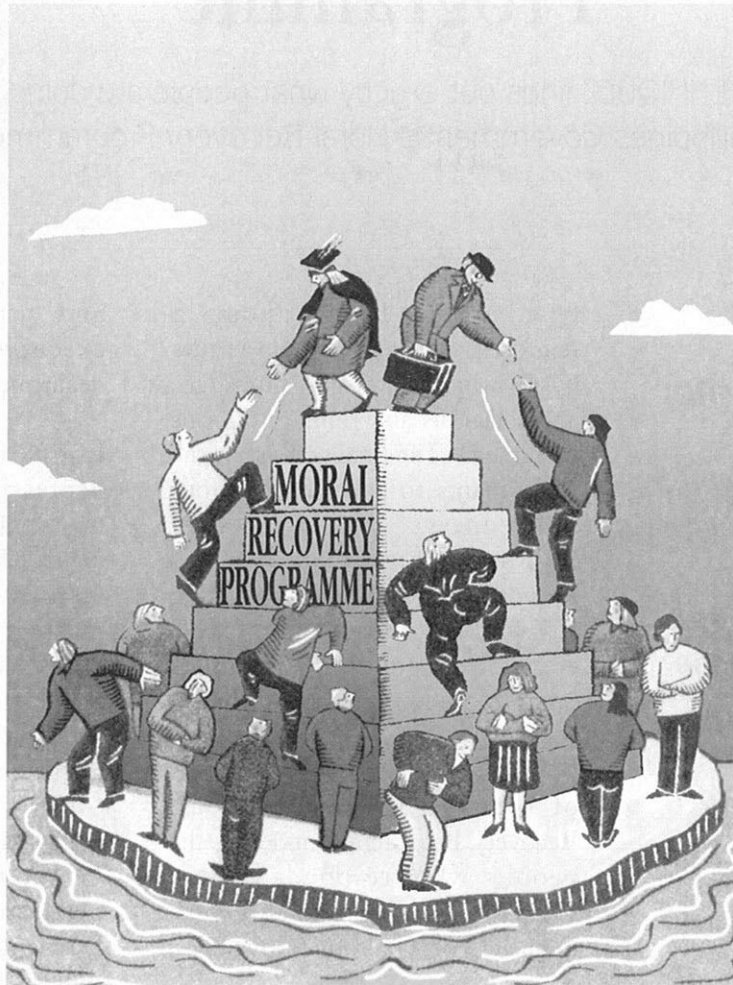
Professional facilitator Maria Asuncion Chebat designed the methodologies based on the principles of raja yoga and holistic health disciplines.

The delegates are divided into groups of eight or ten in which each one is given a chance to relate inspiring and heroic anecdotes from their own lives, citing the underlying values they found. When asked by the facilitators who had empowered them to perform such commendable tasks, and to name the source of that power, the majority usually replied the self and God. This process, called Tribal Storytelling, not only initiates self-empowerment but also revives the ancient tradition of fellowship around the fire.

In the workshop on Current Reality and Creative Tension, teams present their perceptions on difficult situations in society. The facilitator invites them to express their angst and to change that energy into enthusiasm for taking action. The groups assemble symbolic collages. One featured a great wall to symbolise greed, oppression and prejudice. The team burned the wall to show the dissent of the peace-loving citizens. An octopus symbolised social maladies such as illegal logging, kidnapping, rape. Each arm was tied with an antidote of peace, love and justice. Another group denounced deforestation due to illegal logging which has resulted in floods and shortage of potable water.

Ms Chebat demonstrated through the use of a rubber band that there is a path of least resistance. "For as long as we hold onto our vision and our current reality, we shall, by natural force, attain our vision. So hold onto it," she said.

Through Creative Visualisation participants are asked to project their visions of the Philippines in



the year 2005. Then, to actualise them, they must co-operate, contribute and "co-create", by pledging "bite-size commitments" to the movement for God and country.

"I will plant 100 forest trees every month for five years," wrote Filomeno.

"I shall share what I have learned here with my companions in the office and rouse their spirituality by offering five minutes of prayer to

God every morning," said Minda.

The participants sang a local song which is loosely translated in English as "I am just a point and I will return to that point." In this exercise of the Power of Silence, P.S. for short, participants reflect on being a conscient point of energy. They concentrate on the "I" whose power is to think, to decide and to feel. Through Integrative Imagery, all their thoughts and experiences are merged in the point form of God.

The Anatomy of Consciousness exercise not only explains how the mind, intellect and latencies work but also how to accept oneself, manage feelings and leave some space to let God in one's awareness.

In the Power of Thought session, the participants write three positive and three negative thoughts about the self, the father, the mother, the significant other, food, money, sex and God. They examine the similarities or conflicts in their thoughts to discover patterns in their thinking. They make affirmations converting negative thoughts into positive ones. Throughout the workshop, they maintain a journal of their realisations.

Dream Work entails remembering a dream, analysing it, resurfacing hidden feelings and decoding the symbols. Every dream carries a message. For instance, Betty recalled an image of a station which is an archetype of a stopover, a wall which symbolises separation

and a high plot of soil with someone saying "He left me, I will go home." The analyst asked Betty personal questions until it became clear that the dream forewarned her husband's death. He died five days after her dream.

When the facilitators and the participants have warmed to each other, they explore "gut feel" body-mind processes. Core Energy is a means of reverting to one's inner self and releasing suppressed energies through bodily manipulations, vibratory movements, stretching, infant postures and deep breathing; exhaling negative energies and intaking oxygen for wellness. Based on the premise that one's physique is a reflection of one's attitudes, it corrects imbalances through a series of exercises where one listens to signals from the body and the mind. The series is climaxed by a cathartic experience which usually results in new-found confidence. Soft music is played and the participants are asked to go into silence and to surrender their burdens to God.

After the release from blockages, each one dances his or her new life as a role-playing exercise in Psycho Synthesis.

At the end of the training, participants make a Strength Deployment Inventory on their nurturing, assertive and analytical energies - normally in times of crisis, the analytical and assertive energies increase. Then they list ten things wanted and needed in their lives. The usual list comprises:



*Core Energy participants lie down on mattresses and do warm-up exercises in preparation for their catharsis.*

peace, happiness, fulfilment, satisfaction, love and freedom. Finally they examine the current situations in their lives, make resolutions and cite ethics they will apply, in terms of what they can Re-value, Re-Structure, Re-use, Recycle, Reduce, Rebuild and Redistribute.

"As a general policy, I commit myself to the highest standards of morality, integrity, and honesty as a citizen and government official. I commit myself further to serve God and the country," wrote Dave.

The groups present an action plan on how to implement the Moral Recovery Programme in their region.

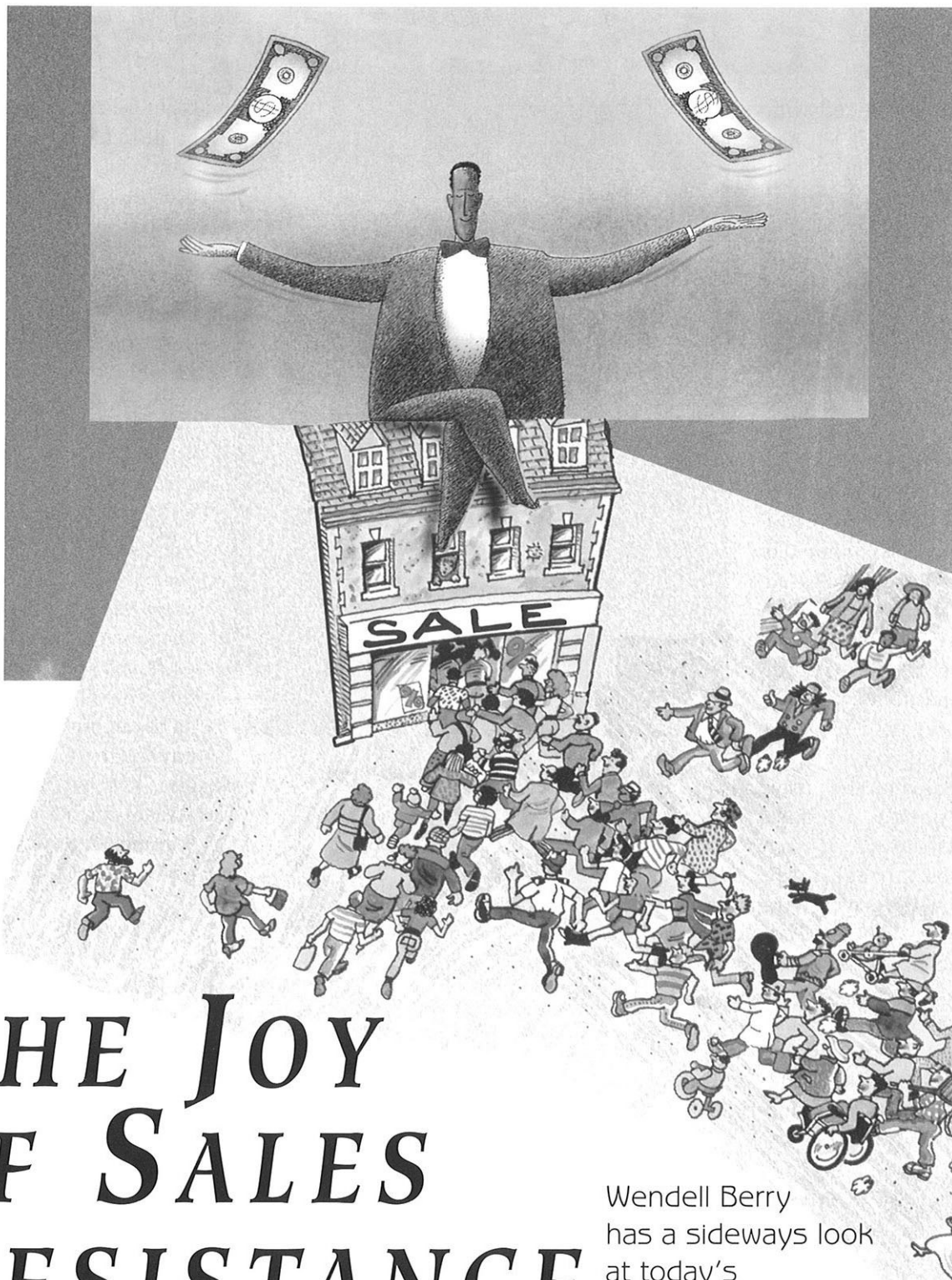
Lydia Udaundo commented, "The (vegetarian) food was a demonstration of simplicity, practicality and discipline. Why do we have to take so much when less is enough and sustaining? For

Islam believers, this wouldn't be difficult to emulate and apply in our daily lives because we can even afford to fast for 15 hours for 30 days ... We realised that we had denied our bodies the rewards they had long deserved ... Before we thought that God was far away from us. But in MRP, we feel that He is not even a breath away."

"After those enlightening exercises, we have come up with the consensus that we are to take the first step in instituting change among our peers not just in ourselves. If this is done, I shall be serving as medicine to the disease confronting our society nowadays. It is our belief that the ultimate solution to our moral decay is complete surrender to God Almighty," said Sol Lomancgo.

A study called Policy Research on Values Transformation and Moral Reconstruction reveals the effectiveness of the holistic approach of MRP. There were reduced complaints from the public regarding government services; commendation from satisfied customers, increased simplicity in lifestyle, fewer human rights violations; better interpersonal relationships; better understanding of and respect for human rights; deepened appreciation for the country's heritage; more spiritual commitment; improved attendance and work performance; reduced energy consumption; increased awareness of Filipino values and interest in sportsmanship. ®

*Marge Enriquez is a freelance writer based in Manila.*



# THE JOY OF SALES RESISTANCE

Wendell Berry  
has a sideways look  
at today's  
commercial culture

**W** *We live in a time when technologies and ideas (often the same thing) are adopted in response not to need but to advertising, salesmanship and fashion. Salesmen and saleswomen now hover about us as persistently as angels, intent on "doing us good" according to the instructions set forth by persons educated at great public expense in the arts of greed and prevarication. These salespeople are now with most of us, apparently, even in our dreams.*

The first duty of writers who wish to be of any use even to themselves is to resist the language, the ideas, and the categories of this ubiquitous sales talk, no matter from whose mouth it issues. But, then, this is also the first duty of everybody else. Nobody who is awake accepts the favours of these hawkers of guaranteed satisfactions, these escape artists, these institutional and commercial fanatics, whether politically correct or incorrect. Nobody who understands the history of justice or of the imagination (largely the same history) wants to be treated as a member of a category.

I am more and more impressed by the generality of the assumption that human lives are properly to be invented by an academic-corporate governmental elite and then either sold to their passive and choiceless recipients or doled out to them in the manner of welfare payments. Any necessary thinking - so the assumption goes - will be done by certified smart people in offices, laboratories, boardrooms and other high places and then will be handed down to supposedly unsmart people in low places - who will also be expected to do whatever work cannot be done cheaper by machines.

Such a society, whose members are expected to think and do and provide nothing for themselves, will necessarily give a high place to salesmanship. For such a society cannot help but encourage the growth of a kind of priesthood of men and women who know exactly what you need and who just happen to have it for you, attractively packaged and at a price no competitor can beat. If you wish to be among the beautiful, then you must buy the right fashions (there are no cheap fashions) and the right automobile

(not cheap either). If you want to be counted as one of the intelligent, then you must shop for the right education (not cheap but also not difficult).

Actually, as we know, the new commercial education is fun for everybody. All you have to do in order to have to provide such an education is to pay your money (in advance) and master these few simple truths:

*\*Educated people are more valuable than other people because education is a value-adding industry.*

*\*Educated people are better than other people because education improves people and makes them good.*

*\*The purpose of education is to make people able to earn more and more money.*

*\*The place where education is to be used is called "your career".*

*\*Anything that cannot be weighed, measured or counted does not exist.*

*\*The so-called humanities probably do not exist. But if they do, they are useless. But whether they exist or not, or are useful or not, they can sometimes be made to support a career.*

*\*Literacy does not involve knowing the meanings of words, or learning grammar, or reading books.*

*\*The sign of exceptionally smart people is that they speak a language that is intelligible only to other people in their "field" or only to themselves. This is very impressive and is known as "professionalism".*

*\*The smartest and most educated people are the scientists, for they have already found*

*solutions to all our problems and will soon find solutions to all the problems resulting from the solutions to all the problems we used to have.*

*\*The mark of a good teacher is that he or she spends most of his or her time doing research and writes many books and articles.*

*\*The mark of a good researcher is the same as that of a good teacher.*

*\*A great university has many computers, a lot of government and corporation research contracts, a winning team and more administrators than teachers.*

*\*Computers make people even better and smarter than they were made by previous thingamibobs. Or if some people prove incorrigibly wicked or stupid or both, computers will at least speed them up.*

*\*The main thing is, don't let education get in the way of being nice to children. Children are our future. Spend plenty of money on them but don't stay at home with them and get in their way. Don't give them work to do; they are smart and can think up things to do on their own. Don't teach them any of that awful, stultifying, repressive, old-fashioned morality. Provide plenty of TV, microwave dinners, day care, computers, computer games, cars. For all this, they will love and respect us and be glad to grow up and pay our debts.*

*\*A good school is a big school.*

*\*Disarm the children before you let them in.*

Of course, education is for the Future, and the Future is one of our better-packaged items and attracts many buyers. (The past, on the other hand, is hard to sell, it is, after all, past.) The Future is where

we'll all be fulfilled, happy, healthy and perhaps will live and consume forever. It may have some bad things in it, like storms or floods or earthquakes or plagues or volcanic eruptions or stray meteors, but soon we will learn to predict and prevent such things before they happen. In the Future, many scientists will be employed in figuring out how to prevent the unpredictable consequences of the remaining unpreventable bad things. There will always be work for scientists.

The Future, as everybody knows, is a subject of extreme importance to politicians, and we have several political packages that are almost irresistible - expensive, of course, but rare:

**1. Tolerance and Multiculturalism.**

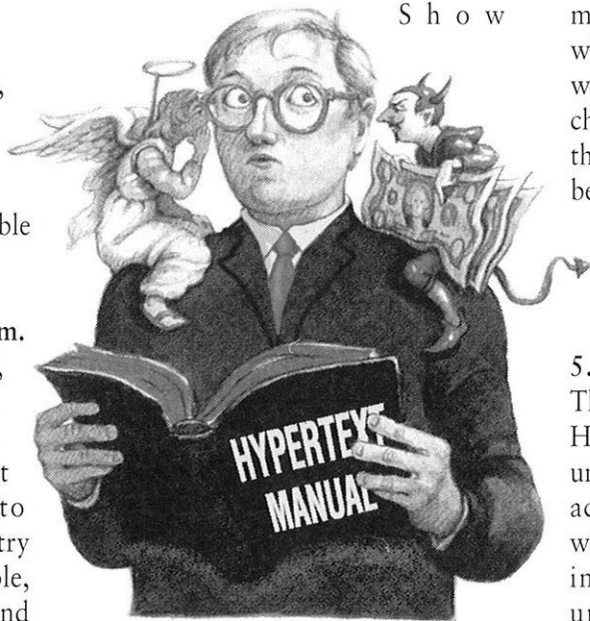
Quit talking bad about women, homosexuals, and preferred social minorities, and you can say anything you want about people who haven't been to college, manual workers, country people, peasants, religious people, unmodern people, old people, and so on. Tolerant and multicultural persons hyphenate their land of origin and their nationality. I, for example, am a Kentuckian-American.

**2. Preservation of Human Resources.**

Despite world-record advances in automation, robotification and other "labour-saving" technologies, it is assumed that almost every human being may, at least in the Future, turn out to be useful for something, just like the members of other endangered species. Sometimes, after all, the Economy still requires a "human component". At such times, human resources are called "human components" and are highly esteemed in that capacity as long as their usefulness lasts. Therefore, don't quit taking care of human resources yet. See that the

schools are run as idea orphanages or as idea jails. Provide pre-school and pre-pre-school. Also post-school. Keep the children in institutions and away from home as much as possible - remember that their parents wanted children only because other people have them, and are much too busy to raise them. Only the government cares. Move the children around a lot while they're young, for this provides many opportunities for socialisation.

S h o w



them a lot of TV, for TV is educational. Teach them about computers, for computers still require a "human component". Teach them the three S's. Sex can be Scientific and Safe. When the children grow up, try to keep them busy. Try to see that they become addicted only to legal substances. That's about it.

**3. Reducing the Government.** The government should only be big enough to annihilate any country and (if necessary) every country, to spy on its citizens and on other governments, to keep big secrets and to see to the health and happiness of large corporations. A government thus reduced will be almost too small to notice and will require almost no taxes and spend almost no money.

**4. The Free Market.** The free market sees to it that everything ends up in the right place - that is, it makes sure that only the worthy get rich. All millionaires and billionaires have worked hard for their money, and they deserve the rewards of their work. They need all the help they can get from the government and the universities. Having money stimulates the rich to further economic activity that ultimately benefits the rich. The cardinal principle of the free market is unrestrained competition, which is a kind of tournament that will decide what is the world's champion corporation. Ultimately, thanks to this principle, there will be only one corporation, which will be wonderfully simplifying. After that, we will rest in peace.

**5. Unlimited Economic Growth.**

This is the pet idea of the Party of Hard-headed Realists. That unlimited economic growth can be accomplished with limited space, with limited materials and limited intelligence, only shows the unlimited courage and self-confidence of these Great Minds. That unlimited economic growth implies unlimited consumption, which in turn implies unlimited pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth, only makes the prospect even more unlimited.

Or, finally we might consider the package known as:

**6. The Food System,** which is one of my favourites. The Food System is firmly grounded on the following principles:

- I. Food is important mainly as an article of international trade.
- II. It doesn't matter what happens to farmers.
- III. It doesn't matter what happens to the land.
- IV. Agriculture has nothing to do with "the environment".



V. There will always be plenty of food, for if the farmers don't grow it from the soil, then scientists will invent it.

VI. There is no connection between food and health. People are fed by the food industry, which pays no attention to health, and are healed by the health industry, which pays no attention to food.

VII. It follows that there is no connection between healing and health. Hospitals customarily feed their patients poor-quality, awful tasting, factory-made, expensive food and keep them awake all night with various expensive attentions. There is a connection between money and health.

Last summer I read a newspaper article announcing, in the awe-stricken voice of the science journalist, "a new generation of technological inventions - most of them involving some variation on the home computer". The two inventions specifically described in the article were electronic newspapers and something called "hypertext".

The benefits of the electronic newspaper apparently all have to do with convenience: "These screens will display a front page with an index. The user can tap a pen to the screen to call up a story, flip a page, turn a still photograph into a TV news scene, or even make a dinner or theatre reservation from an ad."

Hypertext "makes it possible to create all sorts of linkages and short circuits within a text." And this "is extremely useful in organising technical material so that the reader can efficiently select which parts of a text to read." The reason for this, according to a "consultant", is that "usually you don't want to read what you don't know." Hypertext "is reader-friendly and makes it easy to chart

a path to the desired parts."

Thanks also to this invention, "creative-writing professors are teaching courses about how to write hypertext novels that literally go in all directions." These novels are "interactive".

"In reading a hypertext novel you may follow the point of view of a chosen character, or you may choose the outcome you like best, or you may wander off into subtleties beyond anything James Joyce could have imagined. The possibilities - and the stories - may be endless.

This opens up new realms of choice and creativity. In many ways it frees the reader from being merely a passive receptacle of the author's genius (or lack of same)."

Dear reader, I hope you will understand at least somewhat the disgust, the contempt, and the joy with which I have received this news.

It disgusts me because I know there is no need for such products, which will put a lot of money into the pockets of people who don't care how they earn it and will bring another downward turn in the effort of gullible people to become better and smarter by way of machinery. This is a perfect example of modern salesmanship and modern technology - yet another way to make people pay dearly for what they already have (the ability to turn the pages of a newspaper or respond to an ad; the ability to read and write, to choose what to read, and to read "actively").

I read about these things with contempt because of the nonsense and the falsehood involved. For

example, no real comparison is made in this article between paper newspapers and electronic ones. The stated difference is simply that one is newer and somehow easier than the other. And what exactly is implied by the use of a machine that makes it possible to read only

"what you don't know"? Is this perhaps what we call "skimming"?

But how do you know, without reading, or at least skimming, whether you know or do not know what is in a text? And what of the pleasure of reading again what you already know? The assumption here is that reading is an ordeal, of which the less said the better. And don't we remember that television was once expected to produce a new area of general enlightenment? And how will we believe that the electronically stupefied will turn from their soap operas to "hypertext" and indulge themselves in "subtleties and complexities" beyond the powers of James Joyce? And are we to suppose that readers of, say, James Joyce have hitherto been mere passive receptacles of his genius? And haven't we known all along that the stories are endless?

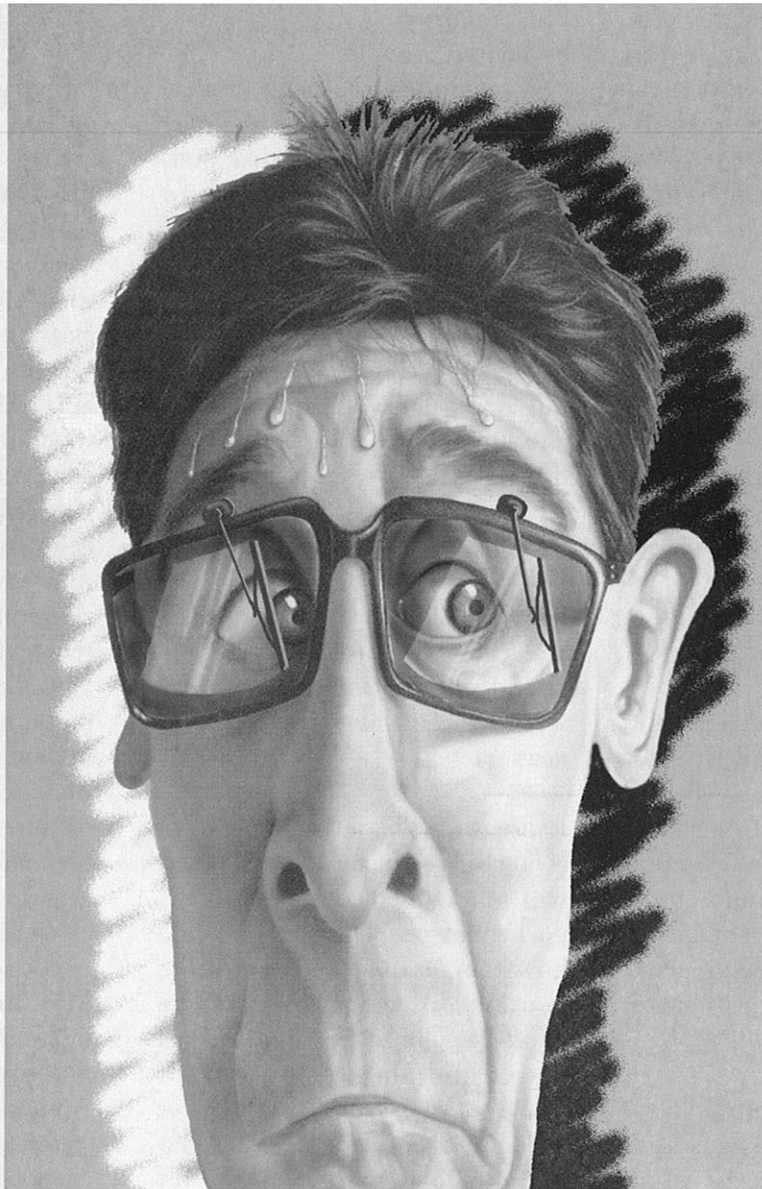
My joy comes from my instantaneous knowledge that I am not going to buy either piece of equipment. When the inevitable saleswoman comes to tell me that I cannot be up-to-date, or intelligent, or creative, or handsome, or young, or eligible for sexual favours of so fair a creature as herself unless I buy these products, dear reader, I am not going to do it.

®

*Wendell Berry is a poet, novelist and an essayist. This article is an extract from the introduction of the book *Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community* by Wendell Berry.*

# The Art of Window Cleaning

Charles Hogg presents solid reasons why we need to see virtues in ourselves and in others



**In every street there is a Mrs Judgement and a Mrs Honesty. One day Mrs Honesty decided to visit Mrs Judgement. As soon as Mrs Honesty arrived, Mrs Judgement began to complain about her new neighbours, a family of foreigners.**

“She is a terrible housekeeper”, said Mrs Judgement, “you should see how dirty her children are... and as for her house! It is almost a disgrace to be living in the same

neighbourhood. Just take a look at the clothes she has hung on the line, see the black streaks on the sheets and towels.”

Mrs Honesty walked up to the window to look, “Actually the clothes are quite clean, my dear.

The streaks are on your window!”

Like Mrs Judgement how often am I deceived by my own dirty windows, and then project my own misjudgement externally, fully convinced I am seeing the truth. The original seed of misjudgement colours everything I see, so each interaction with my neighbours reinforces

my attitude. Until a Mrs Honesty arrives ... Only then do I look closely at my eye-windows. As I begin the process of cleaning the dirt from the outside of my windows I notice something interesting. There is also dirt on the inside. The dirt outside is the

product of external influences, atmospheres, opinions and attitudes. The inside dirt is of past experiences, perceptions and assumptions unconsciously colouring my vision.

Just stop for a minute, and reflect on the feelings of judgement and self-righteousness that arise in you, as in all of us. We are aware that these feelings leave us more separate, more isolated, more frightened. And yet within all of us we have the great voice of the critic or the judge. Everyone is on trial. Whether we verbalise our judgemental thoughts or keep them for our own private consumption, others do feel their effect. Reflect again on their opposite. Remember the feelings of forgiveness or understanding. Remember how you wish to be treated when you have made a mistake. Remember how you felt when you let go of someone's past and offered them a fresh start. Just imagine the healing in relationships if I had the humility to let go of judgement.

My grandmother died a few years ago at the age of ninety-four. During her life she spent only one day in hospital at the age of ninety-two to have a cataract removed. She had a healthy, happy life and was loved by all. During one of my last visits, it occurred to me that much of her obvious contentment came from her ability to always tune into the good in others. They responded to her with the same feelings. In a natural way it created a life of giving and taking love. It seems there is a terrible price we pay for the eyes of judgement and criticism. We lose precious love from other hearts.

How do I feel when I see the specialities of others? I feel good

about myself. How do I feel when I see my own specialities? Even better. But is it easy? Many times I have taken part in workshops where all participants are asked to make a list of their positive qualities and also a list of weaknesses they would like to

***The most powerful tool of any leader is positive vision towards those he or she is working with.***

change. The list of weaknesses is easy, but when it comes to strengths, almost all of us find it difficult to write even a few. Can I say I really know myself? Often what we write down are talents and skills, what I do or what I have learned, rather than those character traits that are unique to me.

How do I discover my specialities?

Try an experiment. Close your eyes and gently drift beyond your body. Now through your mind's eye look back at yourself. As an observer of the person sitting below what do you see? What are your specialities? Think deeply about your inner motives, how you treat others, the things you value most. A list of specialities will begin to grow. Don't just leave them as one word. Expand on them so the depth of your specialities are revealed.

An interesting thing can happen as you go through this process. Perhaps a little guilt or embarrassment enters: "Am I deluding myself? Has my ego taken over?" Somehow we have created in-built barriers that do not

allow us to enjoy self-appreciation. Common sense tells me, if I can't see the specialities in myself it is almost impossible to see them in others. My in-built barrier emanates from a deep lack of self-worth that tells me that I have no value. Breaking through this barrier is at the heart of the spiritual process. As I set myself free from this inner paralysis my own intrinsic goodness becomes naturally apparent. Not only do my strengths become apparent, but my vision on my weaknesses is one of compassion. I am freed from the jail of hopelessness. I can change!

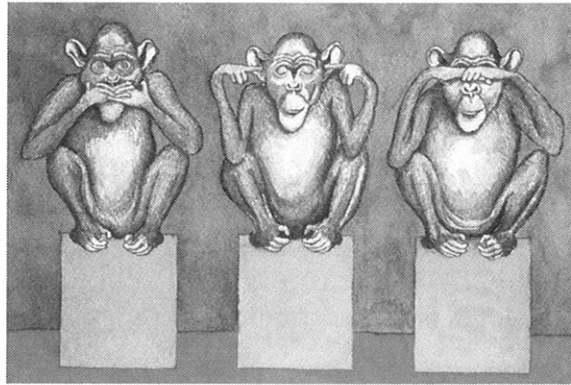
When I lack love and respect for myself, it manifests externally as arrogant disapproval of others' weaknesses and mistakes. My own flagging self-respect is bolstered through dwelling on the weaknesses of others. A friend of mine worked as a news reporter for one of the main TV networks in Sydney. He often wondered why we rush home each night to watch the evening news which is a litany of negativity, pain and tragedy. Research showed that when we watch others suffering from the comfort of our lounge rooms, we don't feel so bad about our own lot. It is unconscious, but a very strange way of feeling better about ourselves.

How many new philosophies and technologies appear on the market each year trying to encourage leaders and managers to improve their game. I feel the most powerful tool of any leader is positive vision towards those he or she is working with. Here positive vision means an inner attitude of trust and respect, and acknowledging the specialities of colleagues. If people receive a double message, what they hear

being different from what they feel, they will always trust their feelings. In other words, I can't hide my inner attitude. If I carry mental criticism of those I live or work with, no matter how much I verbally encourage them they will never fully trust me. If I see the specialities of those around me it is a natural form of empowerment.

In learning the art of seeing specialities in others we need to apply the first Law of Spirituality, which says we are responsible for our own experiences; if I see the negative in others I feel unhappy; if I see the positive I feel happy. It is up to me to decide. To justify the way we feel we have become highly skilled at the Art of Blame. It is a skill we have refined over a long time to escape our conscience. The Media often seems to encourage this skill by glorifying intelligence that analyses the aspect of weaknesses in others. With calculated intent the character of another is pulled apart. We learn this skill and pass it on. The great irony of the whole process is that I become the target. I am deeply hurt. We forget another Law of Spirituality, that of cause and effect. I will reap the fruit of my attitudes. It makes it even more important to consciously educate myself to see the specialities in the self and others.

It is often hardest to see the specialities in those I am familiar with; my family, friends and work colleagues. Below are some exercises that have helped me improve the Art of Window Cleaning.



### Exercise 1 Virtue Stocktake

In my diary I keep one section where I write the names of those closest to me. During a working day or at home when I notice a speciality or I learn something from someone, I make a note of it in my diary. It is like a stock take of their good qualities, and it can help me at a later date. When I become influenced by a negative quality I can then refer to my diary and rectify the balance. I am reminded of the good in the other and not consumed by their mistake or temporary weakness.

### Exercise 2 Acting not Reacting

If there is a person who has certain personality traits that upset or disturb me, I make that person my teacher. Why? Because their company will make me change. They make me aware of my own negative reactions. They teach me to act and not react.

### Exercise 3 Editing my Memory Tape

Before going to bed I replay the day's activities on the video of my mind. If I am carrying negative feelings towards someone let me resolve them by forgiving that person from my heart. I don't only erase the negative feelings, but edit in something positive, so I consciously remember a speciality

of that person, which will remain recorded in my sub-conscious. I then go to sleep and wake up much lighter.

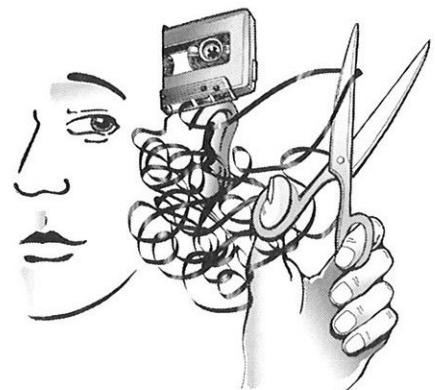
### Exercise 4 Seeing the Intentions

Another method of learning and holding the specialities of others in my mind is to see the intention and not the action. Sometimes people do make mistakes, or maybe I disapprove of the way they do things. If I focus on the activity then I will get upset. However, if I see a sincere motive, I can maintain an attitude of love or acceptance which will enable me to resolve disagreements respectfully.

Is this kind of thinking a bit naive? Do I see only good and remain blind to the negative? No, the art of seeing specialities means to see both the positive and the negative but then to let go of the negative. Why should I add to the negativity? Let my response to others' weaknesses be with compassion rather than anger or hatred.

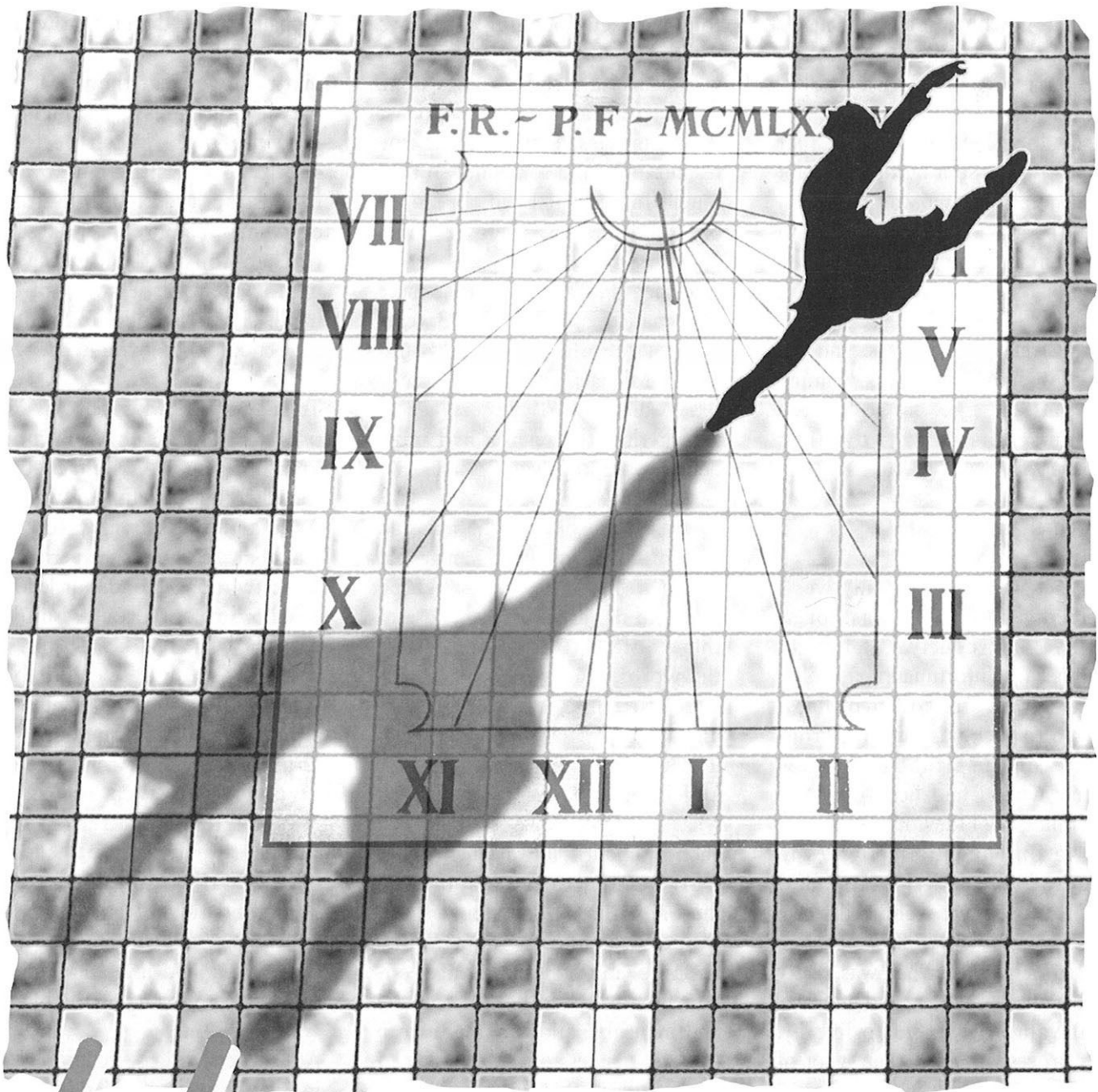
On the path of personal development and spiritual growth the Art of Window Cleaning is essential. ®

*Charles Hogg is Director of Brahma Kumaris Raj Yoga Centres in Australia.*



# Dancing with the Enemy

Carolyn Ward re-evaluates our relationship with time



**H** “Has the enemy approached?” and “The enemy is approaching” were constant catch cries in my house during my growing years. My father in particular set the pace for this fearful and adversarial relationship with time. Whether it was studying for a ‘life determining’ exam, racing against the clock in a game of sport or the speedy arrival of the last day of school holidays, I grew up believing that time was the ‘boss’ and it was I who must dance to its tune.

**...one race of people considered time to be a competitor, an opponent in a linear race, whilst another welcomed time as the opportunity to create a variety of possibilities**

As I moved beyond my teens and began my adult working life, there seemed to be so much to squeeze into such a short space of time; so many things I 'should' have been doing but which somehow never got done. I remember my days as one part of a team in a multi-national advertising agency. It wasn't long before I realised that the 7am until 8pm burden was not at all necessary, but was simply an attempt to appear clever and important. One's status seemed directly related to the battle with the clock. The busier I became, the more 'stressed out' I was, and the more obviously time was winning the battle, the more I was recognised as being a dynamic achiever.

Absolutely ridiculous!

The fact was that not only was I decidedly unhappy, I was not as creative or productive as I might have been. Unfortunately it took a rather severe stress-related illness for me to recognise the ludicrous nature of the situation. I saw clearly what I had been doing. I was filling my life with unnecessary and inconsequential activities in order to look and feel successful. I was trapped in a web of illusion and the first step to breaking free was to determine what was really important in my life - and get clear what values I wanted to live by. This process alone cut out a lot of extraneous activity which in turn created more time. This took a little getting used to as I had to re-programme myself to feel legitimate about 'time out' or even leisure time. But it was, and continues to be, a process.

A few years later, more relaxed and, interestingly enough, more

successful, I fell in love. Then there seemed to be all the time in the world. I

found myself spending lazy days wandering through busy, colourful market bazaars and strolling along beautiful harbour foreshores, seeing movies, eating out at fine restaurants - and some 'not so fine' ones. In general I did the things one does when one's in love.

And then the cogs in the time-piece of romance jammed. At 43 years of age, the alarm which would herald Michael's death was cruelly set. A diagnosis of terminal cancer meant that the enemy had most definitely approached!

As we moved beyond the fear and pain of 'what might be' and 'what could never be' we discovered solace in the present. We chose to think differently from the rest of the world. As the world outside was flirting with a future highlighted by the Gulf War and all its negative manifestations, Michael and I began to experiment with what it meant to live for the joy of each moment. It was then that I truly started to understand the illusory nature of time's power. No longer was it the enemy, time became my friend - my co-conspirator. She became elastic and malleable allowing me to reap the vast richness of life's present. I soon realised this present richness had been created by me in some other 'present moment' which had since passed.

I began to understand the power of my thoughts. I recognised that the seed of each future moment is being planted in every present moment. I made the decision that I

certainly didn't want to relive the negativity of the past - the sorrow and the

despair - and I didn't even want to repeat all the good times - no matter how great they were. A 'never-endingness of sameness'? How boring! Much better to create something new and interesting and rich and vital at every step; employ the past as my teacher, constantly learning and improving with the sweep of each hand. I was learning to swing on the pendulum of joyful living.

Tragedy is a word which was often used to describe my two month long marriage to Michael, but a tragedy it most definitely was not. As heartless as it may sound, I would never trade the experience of those two long months of learning and loving for even a hundred years of what had been before the cancer. Though we had been ignorant of the fact, we were simply filling in time. We had abused it and it returned the favour. However as we had reached the final ten days of Michael's life, time became a willing ally and generously expanded to embrace an entire lifetime of significance. With purpose we had used her well and our reward was unquantifiable.

After Michael died, I continued my journey through time and began to explore it further. I came to know the different perceptions of time in different cultures. I found it fascinating that one culture could perceive another to be lazy for not filling the day with the many activities of a modern civilisation, whilst the so-called lazy culture would be found relating

**When I see humanity's  
collective 'timeline' in terms  
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- finally - some of the  
craziness begins to make  
some sense.**

meaningfully with fellow human beings and the natural environment. I saw that one race of people considered time to be a competitor, an opponent in a linear race, whilst another welcomed time as the opportunity to create a variety of possibilities - synchronistically. Indeed as one culture could be found to bring its history of life into the present, embracing its dead ancestors as part of 'the now', other cultures seemed to flip between the angst of the past and the fear of what could happen in the future, to encounter a 'now' filled with pain.

It was then that I realised deeply that there is no such thing as the past or the future - there is only the 'now'. I came to understand that even memories are happening at the present time and that they are simply my inaccurate current interpretation of something I have experienced at some time past. And when I project into the future, it is in effect the same thing - only in reverse - I am creating a future memory. And whether it manifests in some future, present moment depends on how realistic I make it, and it is the degree of realism which determines whether or not I believe it is possible. But whichever way you look at it, there is only 'now'.

Or so I thought!

It was when I began to learn and practise daily meditation that I discovered a time beyond time, though that's an ineffective description. It is a space where there is no relevance to even think in context of the past, present or future except as an observer. Technically one would label the experience as 'atemporal', yet it is

infinitely more than a technical term. Beyond time is where I can experience the fullness of silence. It is the ultimate destination of inner peace and it is from this vantage point that I can know the truth of time - both personal and global.

In stepping outside time I can view my many present moments as they link together to form the line of my life, and, as a believer in reincarnation, that lifeline spans many lifetimes. As an observer of my personal 'timeline' I see my current present moment in the context of having been created by my past thoughts and actions (which of course were previous present moments). I also see how

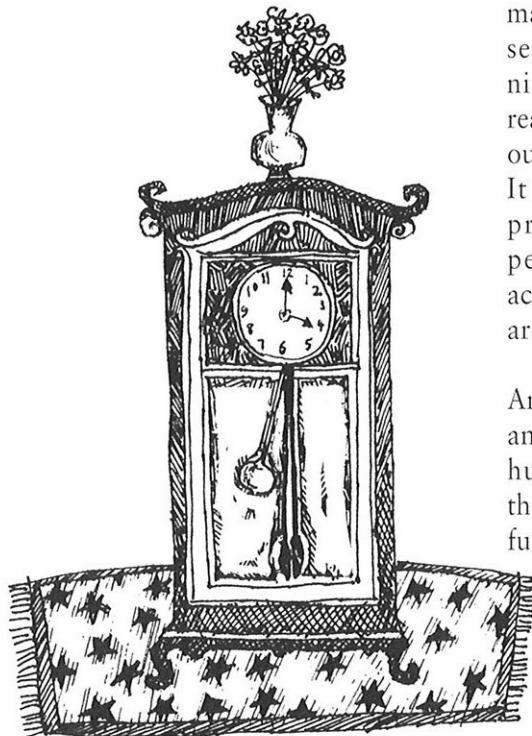
present behaviours are the seeds determining my present which is yet to come - my future. It is in the beauty of this silent detachment that I find the power to recreate my life, no matter what I see, according to the future I choose.

The other thing I have come to realise is that from this outside place I can see the history of the world as it has been written and as it continues to be written. I see humanity's collective 'timeline' in terms of actions and consequences, and somehow - finally - some of the craziness begins to make some sense.

And most of all, I no longer feel impotent because I recognise the power and the possibility to change the future at any moment. It is simply a matter of knowing, believing and then choosing.

These days I have managed to make the enemy my friend and it seems we dance together rather nicely. Though I know that the real clarity comes when I visit that outside place, the one beyond time. It is there that I recognise the profound relationship of my personal present thoughts and actions to the consequences which are defining our global tomorrow.

And in the silence, where only God and I exist, I rediscover my faith in human nature, and then I know that it is indeed possible to create a future present filled with wonder.



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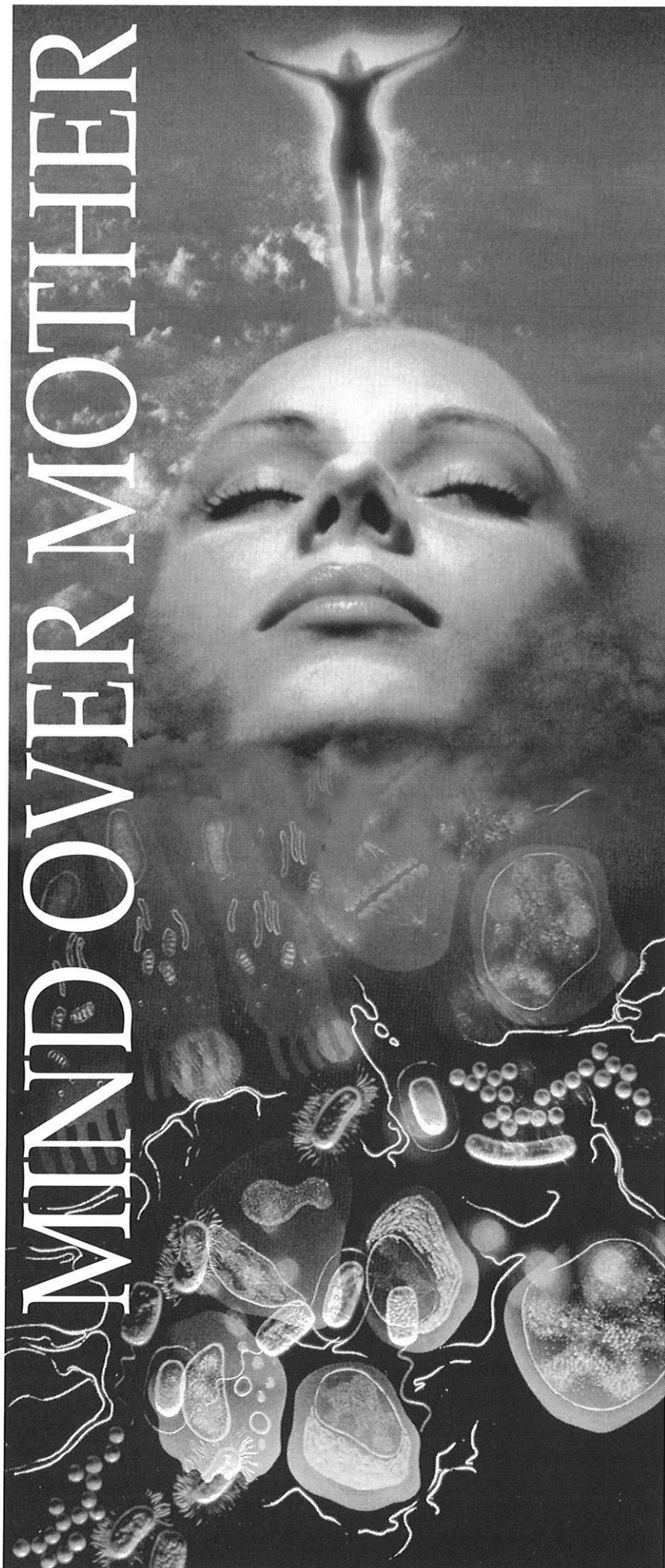
*Carolyn Ward is based in Sydney where she has her own company, About People.*

# Mind Over Mother

Defying our genes and  
reprogramming our cells;  
by Olga Sheean

*"A change in the state of  
the soul produces a  
change in the state of the  
body."*

*Aristotle knew what he  
was talking about,  
although his words fell on  
somewhat stony ground in  
the fourth century B.C.  
Now, more than 2,000  
years later, his philosophy  
is at the core of a critical  
new approach to human  
consciousness. It is an  
approach which gives the  
body/mind connection a  
new perspective,  
demonstrating our  
capacity for mindful  
change at the cellular  
level.*





For generations now, we have been led to believe that our health is determined by our genes. Cellular biologist Dr. Bruce Lipton believes otherwise. "Cancer cannot run in families," he maintains, "because there is no cancer gene. Cells become cancerous only when they are told by the mind to do so."

Proponents of the mind over matter theory have traditionally been metaphysicians, but now, according to Lipton, there is considerable scientific evidence to show that disease is not genetically inherent. Instead, he says, individuals have the ability to control their own well-being, and to re-program their cells by changing their beliefs. "Our consciousness resides in our cells membranes," says Lipton. "Although cells are programmed to respond in certain ways when we are young, or still in the womb, they can be reprogrammed to act differently." A person's propensity for a particular illness, then, is the result of an inherited belief or behaviour, rather than a genetic predisposition. Correcting our thinking can therefore eliminate the root cause of the diseases which plague us.

A change in personality can change the body's physiology, says Lipton, echoing Aristotle's words. Since our entire cellular community receives instructions from the life force itself - rather like a radio receiving broadcasts - any negative programming will produce a negative response. In this way, strong beliefs, or emotions such as fear, have the power to generate

fatal diseases such as AIDS and cancer.

Cells are willing slaves and will do whatever we want - even to the extent of dying for us. The mind pulls from the genes of the body to give form to the image it has mentally created. Thus behavioural programs are not selected by the genes; instead, particular gene programs are elicited in response to external environmental signals.

"On the surface of cells there are receptors, rather like TV antennae," explains Lipton. "If the antennae are cut off, the cells remains intact but becomes comatose and inert. Replacing the antennae, or receptors, reactivates the cell, demonstrating that external stimuli are the crucial factor in its behaviour."

The cell membrane is considered to be the physical interface between Self and Non-self and, as a result, is the receiver of information from both. Lipton likens the body to a computer system, with the cells acting as programmable chips. We are born with a Read Only memory - our instinctual memory - and are then provided with formatted disks from which we mould our thoughts and behaviour.

But although the formats are learned and can therefore be unlearned, they become wired through a network of neurological synapses which make rewiring difficult.

***You must establish a new behaviour and repeat it enough times so that the new synapses override the existing ones.***

"It's not enough to decide that you no longer want a particular thought or pattern of behaviour," says Lipton. "You must establish a new behaviour and repeat it enough times so that the new synapses override the existing ones. Doing this for a minimum of 21 days creates a new synaptic wiring and leads to the death of the old system."

Healing through drugs is born out of the same foundation of belief, explaining the many successes achieved through the use of placebos. The mind over matter mechanism works because the patient firmly believes in what he is taking. His faith in the power of the medicine therefore overrides his own belief in ill-health, and he becomes well. Ironically, the success of placebos demonstrates that individuals have the power to heal themselves.

"Once we realise that we are already infected with every organism in the arsenal of virulent diseases," says Lipton, "we can begin to understand that it is only when we create a favourable environment for them that they can take over our system."

Yeast, for example, exists in everyone, yet only a small percentage of the population suffers yeast infections. You cannot get rid of the yeast, says Lipton, without killing off almost all other life in your body. So, when someone gets a yeast infection, it stands to reason that something has changed - either the yeast, or the individual. Since the yeast is ever-present the infection can only be due to some environmental change which, in turn, is the consequence of mental attitude.

The body's immune system is triggered by our mental attitudes, becoming strengthened or exhausted, depending on the mental messages it receives. Therefore, Lipton maintains, AIDS can be brought into existence by the mind, and not necessarily as a result of contracting the virus. And it can, similarly, he says, be cured with a thought.

The problem, however, lies in most people's inability to grasp the power of thought since, as a society, we are part of a belief system which creates dependency on external assistance.

"You can change your life today or tomorrow, and you can change your physiology in one minute," says Lipton. "But that requires the ability to manipulate yourself - and the unshakeable belief that you can manipulate yourself. It also means using more of our receptors, most of which are shut down. We do not need to create new receptors, we merely need to start using them."

Yet modern medicine does have its value, says Lipton. If a person becomes ill, they may need medication to kill bacteria or a virus until such time as they are ready to understand the message behind their symptoms. Disease in the body tells you that your mind is not in harmony with nature and that some aspect of your mental attitude needs to change.

Penicillin will not create this harmony, but it may help to combat dis-ease until you can re-establish harmony yourself. In this way, all healing methods act as a crutch, buffering us from the pull of disease until we reach the point of self-healing.

"The systems of ill-health act as the signposts to our state of mind," says Lipton, "while the body serves to enhance our awareness by



translating environmental influences into sensation. We are lucky; through sensation, we not only have a vast potential for understanding, change and personal empowerment, but we can also enjoy ourselves in the process."

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*Olga Sheean is a writer based in Vancouver. This article first appeared in 'Shared Vision'*

## Journey Into Silence

*Watch and wait, wait and watch -*

*It's all that you can do,*

*Words breed words breed words breed words*

*And these words breed words too*

*Silence breeds Reality.*

*That's all you need to know.*

*Whole truth's beyond, beyond beyond.*

*Beyond beyond let's go.*

*Watch and wait, wait and watch -*

*As you to Love draw near*

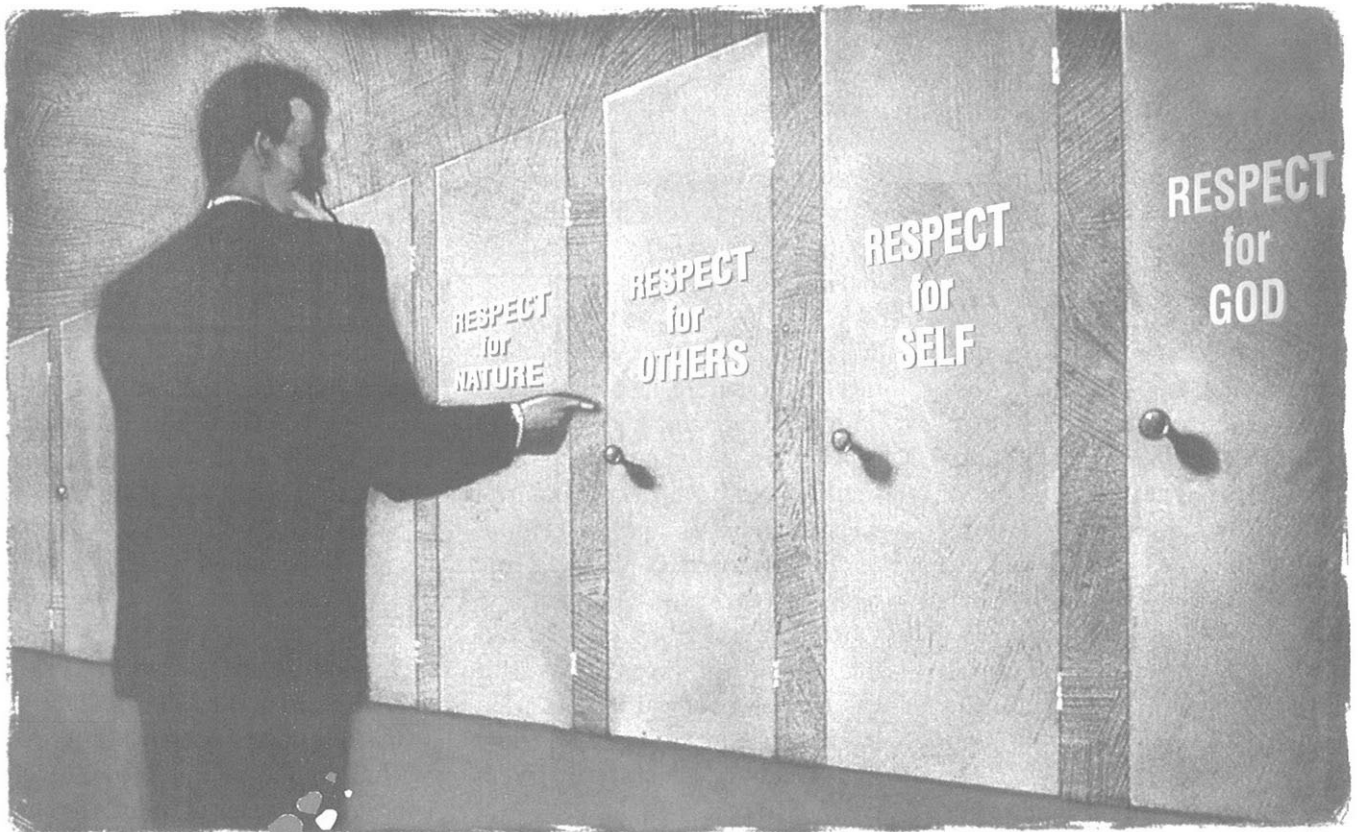
*You'll find 'twas you who were beyond*

*And Love is ever Here.*

**Francis Boston  
Flashes of Silence**

# The Nature of Respect

Anthony Strano reflects on an increasingly scarce human virtue



**V** *Valuing one's own existence and the existence of others, as they are, is respect. True respect is not connected to a person's social position or role, nor simply to their capacities or talents, it is directly related to the uniqueness which they contribute to life. So to respect someone is to give them a space to be, and a space within my heart, appreciating their value as a unique human actor on this world stage.*

To value or respect myself involves a process of acceptance and evaluation of myself, as I am and as I would like to be. But, for that to take place successfully, without fear or pressure, there is a need to see myself from a spiritual perspective, for that is the point of reality from which it is easy to

develop my specialities and diminish my weaknesses without negativity towards myself or becoming egocentric.

In ancient Greece, one of the greatest spiritual directives was "know yourself"; this did not simply refer to name, form or

position but to know the innate, non physical aspect of being.

Respect comes when there is faith in the self, a faith which gives internal peace and stability - very creative and necessary assets in the modern day. Where there is such faith, I am automatically freed

from fear, jealousy or irritation despite another's difference. Where there is no respect for the self, any difference creates intolerance and chaos, whereas for those with self-respect, difference offers means to appreciate others' roles and significance - it is a basis for harmony and unity.

**Through silence we are thus able to come close to ourselves, to nature and to the universal being...**

Humanity is in dire need of respect, for both the self and others. Then communication could happen at a deep and fulfilling level. Talking is not communicating. Communication is the art of creating and extending friendship; an art quite lost today because of firstly, our dependence on pseudo communication techniques, and secondly, our inability to move beyond ourselves and listen to another; we are often too busy to stop, be quiet and listen; in fact we do not even listen to ourselves but rush, work, talk and become overloaded by a jumble of noise and relationships which do not permit communication.

The purest fruit of genuine communication is love. Love listens, understands and heals, but only if it is clean, non-possessive, unattached and unconditional. Those who respect themselves know how to love. They do not think about the how of it, as it is as natural to them as the rays of light emanating from the sun.

One who genuinely loves, shares himself without losing, without compromising and without imposing, since one can love properly when there is completeness within. This completeness, or harmony of being, is called self-respect and people arrive at such a state when they accept to learn and change themselves for the better. Of

course, only those who realise the necessity for personal change can perform this miracle. This miracle within is the achievement of a spiritual consciousness which enables me to balance myself with all things and all people, maintaining my innate dignity and purity.

When human beings are trapped in desires for pleasure and power, every thread of respect for the self and others is lost because no allowance is made for the natural and rightful order of things.

We can see this more clearly when it comes to nature. Now there is a concern for the environment because humanity and nature have reached an obvious crisis point at which it must escape disaster. A return to respecting the laws and needs of nature is taking place. Obviously this respect, to a large degree, is not the ardour of a genuine love for nature but what has come about of necessity. Love and necessity generate different types of respect.

The religion of nature is a rhythm of balance and order. Her patterns and laws could

sustain our lives, but disrespectful human interference has produced sicknesses of all kinds - physically, environmentally and psychologically.

We realise that respect for nature should not be borne merely out of fear of the consequences, but from a humility which humans need to properly understand. Humility provides the openness to learning that makes us flexible; it makes us

egoless enough to realise that there are laws above mankind which are the standards of life and in turn protect human life.

It is good to realise that we do not know it all; that there are still things to discover; we cannot own the earth or the sky or sea; they are ours when we respect them and do not seek ownership. In fact, everything comes close to us, whether people or nature, when we do not seek to possess or manipulate.

When I maintain a genuine respect for myself, others and nature, automatically any attitude of exploitation will be quite foreign to my way of thinking.

And finally, yet of supreme importance, is the significance of respect for God. Not necessarily the traditional concept of God which, with its fear and punishment and guilt associations has alienated mankind from Him, but a God who is the divine giver, the co-ordinator of spiritual harmony, the One who eternally holds within Himself the universal spiritual values of human life. Not a manipulator, but the one who facilitates the inculcation of values

to anyone who, with honesty and respect for their fellow beings, wishes to be and do that which is right.

**The religion of nature is a rhythm of balance and order. Her patterns and laws could sustain our lives**

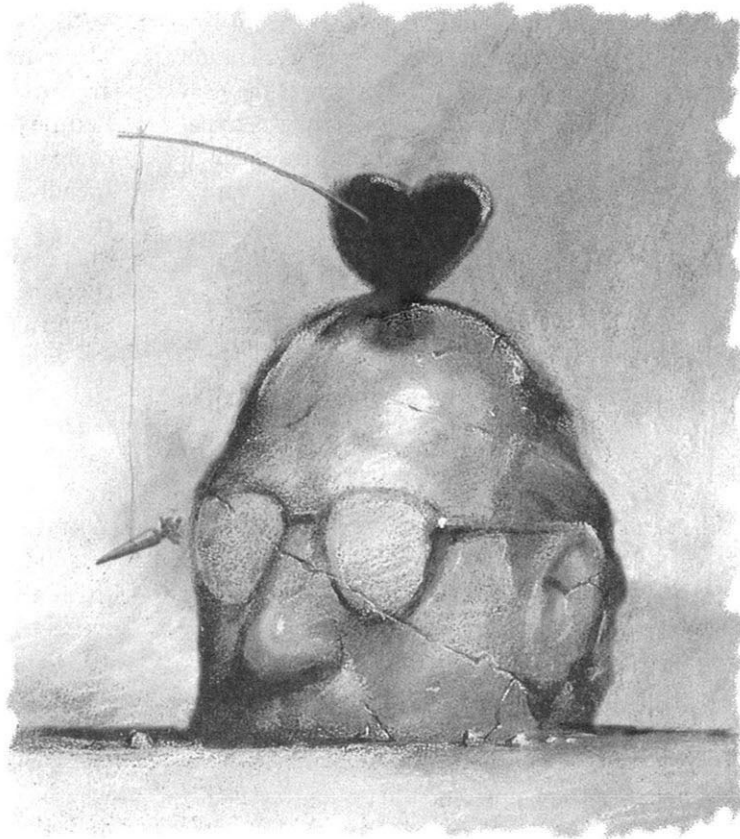
Through silence we are thus able to come close to ourselves, to nature and to the universal being, and are thus able to gain the understanding and the divine strength to integrate and realise our spiritual values of life by consciously bringing them into our life and actions.

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Anthony Strano is Director of the Brahma Kumaris Centres in Greece.

# Combining Will and Heart

Lawrence Bloom reflects on inner transformation and outer change.



***“I’ve discovered the importance of vision and to know with certainty that the path (I’m on) is correct and to follow that path. Also, when the will and heart are combined, nothing can prevail against them.”***

For me the changes now occurring in society at an almost exponential rate are not just “things out there”. They are a reflection of an increasing inner recognition that we need to reassess and change our present course. Change is a great equaliser, because

no one quite knows where they fit into the structure. Nothing is guaranteed; nothing is sacrosanct any more.

We live in interesting times. One can see a shift from what I call will-dominated values towards heart-dominated values. Thus we see the movement from competition to cooperation, from science to spirituality. I don’t know another word for it but what I mean is a place where we feel interconnected with the whole of life. The recognition of that interconnectedness makes us perceive things in a different way.

With that shift we can perceive a movement from activity to

contemplation. Until recently there was a premium placed on activity and objectivity and achievement in some circles. And sometimes, having got to where we wanted to go, we wondered, “What the hell are we doing here?” Now I think there is a great sense of trying to find out who we are and what we really need as opposed to what we want. I think we are moving from rational thought to intuitive awareness.

I was brought up to believe that riches equated happiness. At age thirty I was very successful, very rich and very unhappy. As head of a real estate firm bearing my name, I was a familiar figure to London investors. I drove a Mercedes, went on several holidays each year and lived with my

wife in a seven bedroom home in a fashionable neighbourhood.

I couldn't understand why with all of that I wasn't happy. For a short time I thought I just needed a bit more. So I tried for a bit more, but it didn't make me any happier. So I went into a long and deep inner search to find out what it was that was missing, that wasn't being nourished. It took me fourteen years of incredible difficulty to find out. It's what I call my wilderness experience.

After trying a variety of external remedies which were unfulfilling, my depression slowly lessened as I developed a new view of reality based on my readings of mystic Judaism, esoteric Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. I learned many new rules along the path. I learned about money. For example, there was nothing ennobling about poverty unless you chose it. I also discovered that there is nothing enriching about wealth unless you share it and use it as a creative vehicle. Then you yourself become a channel for that creativity.

I learned that money could buy you medicine, but it couldn't buy you health. It could buy you pillows, but it couldn't buy you sleep. I also realised that money was a great servant but a very poor master. I just had not known how to use it.

When this wilderness experience finally ended, I quickly became very successful but this time it was different. Now I feel fulfilled and content every single day of my life. And the fulfilment comes in the use of my skill and ability to help others, to share with and inspire others, to be a part of their dreams and their successes and even their failures. Like many I have come through the fire to get to where I am.

At the age of thirty when I saw someone in distress, I could feel pity easily enough. After those fourteen years, I could feel compassion. I have developed compassion for myself as

well. I have discovered the importance of vision and to know with certainty that the path I'm on is correct and to follow the path. Also, when the will and the heart are combined, nothing can prevail against them.

Reflecting upon my own experience, I observe that people have a difficult time changing from within unless there is some external pressure to change. I believe that the acceleration of change in the world over the next ten years, and the resulting external pressures on every individual, will provide the opportunity to explore

***Joy has to be a viable alternative. Joy doesn't come from outside, it comes from inside us, from how we see things.***

who we are and what really is the nature of the world in which we live. For example, are we here as some kind of demigods who are able to take until the earth is exhausted, or are we here as trustees?

At another level, I believe that the most powerful energy on the planet today belongs to the business community. Major multinational corporations are really more important today than governments in sustaining democracy in the world. If business decides to support the revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union then that revolution will be a success. If Western business does not assist in a massive way, then it will fail.

Two economic systems have evolved in the world: one that was based on power and another based on greed. The power system has collapsed, and the greed system, Western capitalism, is deficient in so many ways that it cannot be sustained unless it is transformed.

The capitalist business system can begin to transform itself by initially

recognising that although profit is important, it ultimately cannot be the most important aspect of what business does. There is a growing awareness of the need to balance the external responsibility of business for the natural environment and its internal responsibility to create a culture of opportunity for the participation, growth and fulfilment of its employees.

The external pressures and realities are forcing business to transform. People are demanding that companies produce environmentally-friendly products. I think eventually the best brains coming out of universities will only work for companies that provide them creative opportunities to make a difference in the world. And ultimately investors will only support 'green' and ethical organisations. I continue however to wrestle with the question of whether human transformation can be achieved by means other than responding to external pressures or through pain. When I look back through history it is quite clear that all the major shifts, both personal and communal, have come through outer pain, outer pressure, outer energies. My focus presently is on whether it is possible to grow not only through pain but through joy and, if so, how does one follow that route?

Joy has to be a viable alternative. Joy doesn't come from outside, it comes from inside us, from how we see things. My joy now comes from the application of this transformation to how I view others and I see myself.

What I am beginning to learn is that we ask the wrong questions. The questions we ask are, "Is this good or is this bad? Does this give me pain or does it give me pleasure?" And that becomes the limit of our thinking. I suspect that what we should be asking is, 'What do I have to learn from this?'

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*Lawrence Bloom, FRICS, is Managing Director of Forus Investments Ltd.*

# Creating the Dance of Life

Melaine McManus compares  
the beauty and elegance of  
dance to that of our spiritual  
journey



path. Each day presents a new opportunity to create a new dance.

The beauty, ease and elegance visible in a ballet performance or the ease with which someone leads their life are the final product of learning a set of movements that, when put together, form a desired image. A young dancer will learn basic movements. Bending and straightening the legs and arms, stretching and strengthening the muscles for flexibility and endurance, turning, jumping and landing correctly, teach the dancer to create and maintain physical balance while in motion. The combination of these skills is the dance. An infinite number of movement combinations can be created. In living a healthy life, mental skills can be honed to ensure success in creating a spectacular dance of life.

This kind of healthful living is available to anyone who is willing to respond to life. An increased understanding of responsibility brings freedom in thinking, and the perceived highs and lows of life disappear into the constant forward motion of growth and soul progression. For such a person, the physical changes still occur rapidly. It is the inner peace and calm within that is constant, producing a healthy individual. As each new experience is embraced and action taken, balance is maintained mentally, emotionally and physically. Ease in creating continuous motion is produced. Fluidity and continuous motion are inherent in dance, of which ballet is an excellent example. A ballet is a beautiful orchestration of a story, depicting someone's life or some portion thereof. Daily life can be fluid, in perpetual motion and balanced, a dance revealing the story of one's life as each step is taken towards her ideals. Responses to stimuli received from daily experiences determine how smoothly life flows along a desired

To learn balance, a dancer is taught to imagine a string attached from the sky to the top of the head on which the body is suspended. For a predetermined period of time the dancer practices being poised in time and space. There is an imaginary single thread holding the body in place. With hours of practice this state of physical balance can be maintained while in motion - running, turning, jumping - as well as standing completely motionless while another dancer is performing. The mental skill comparable to holding the body in a balanced position is stilling the mind. This is created first by practising undivided attention and concentration on a single item or thought. The single thread becomes the metaphor for singular mental attention. As concentration of attention is practised, efficiency is developed in accomplishing ideals. One task flows to the next. You run towards your ideals, jump to the next step in awareness and make turns in the direction of your life without losing your balance

**One quality that those individuals who are the epitome of health, well-being, and longevity share is the ability to flow with and adapt to the changes that are continually occurring around them. Their detachment from the results of experiences gives them the freedom to respond to each new situation or set of circumstances.**

and falling on your face. In meditation the mind is poised, held in place awaiting the answer to your prayers, insight into a desired understanding, or the voice of God.

Developing strength and flexibility in the body is another important key in learning to be a dancer. Developing strength is accomplished through practising specific movements over and over again. This creates repeated tension in one set of muscles while others are relaxed. Individually the movements are small, such as repeating a bending and straightening of legs with control or lifting the straightened leg in each direction again and again. With each repetition the muscles become stronger from continued use. This prepares the body for the upcoming task of performing on demand. In the dance of life, the comparable skill is the development of will and will power. Will is the ability to make choices. Will power is making productive choices that will feed the soul. A strong will is developed in the same way that a strong body is developed - by exercising it. Making choices over and over again builds the will. The choices may seem small at the time they are made, but the resulting strength is undeniable as time progresses. When a new experience is presented, precise and productive choices to a desired ideal are quickly made.

Combining acquired skills together to form a dance requires knowledgeable creativity. During a performance, dancers flow around the floor interacting gracefully. Each has their place. No two are in the same place at the same time. Groups will move about together. Lines, circles, squares and triangles and other geometric patterns are formed and reformed. Sometimes seemingly random patterns are formed and then resolved into an end design. In order for this to

occur, someone has imagined what the whole dance production will look like. The various elements of costume, set design and selection of the dancers and the movements they perform have been created first in the imagination of the choreographer, the creator of the dance. The choreographer utilised the skills that were built by the dancers, combining them in new and unique ways to form the desired outcome. We are the creators of our lives. We imagine and create our life each day by drawing upon information stored in the brain from each experience and creating images of new experiences we desire. A writer imagines himself writing then draws upon his skill and understanding of language for



creation. A carpenter imagines himself building a structure then draws upon skills learned from those who taught the best basic methods of creating objects with wood. An executive officer of a corporation imagines himself leading effectively then draws upon increasingly effective communication skills gleaned by learning from one experience after another. Each successive step is imagined to move us through life. A well-developed imagination ensures ease in movement from one step to the next without bumping into the other dancers in life. The patterns created are harmonious and co-operative resulting in new understandings for the soul.

In dance, the movements are choreographed to meet a specific need in order to illustrate the story.

Everyone has their part in the action and everyone performs according to a previously designed plan. This same kind of plan exists for the spiritual maturing of every individual. As we learn to create the dance steps of life in response to our inner urge towards soul progression, the people, places and things filling our lives play important roles in the manifestation of life's grand performance. The environment we choose and how we respond to it reveals the story of our lives. A stilled mind provides the opportunity to perceive what is on the horizon. The directed mind will bring the ability to respond to what is perceived. A developed imagination enables us to imagine how to respond productively. The dance of life grows smoother each day as we develop and utilise these skills inherent in man, the thinker. There is an ever changing cast of characters moving in and about us. Each offers their own addition to the story. Some characters appear over and over again providing additional opportunities to change how we identify ourselves and how we interact with others and, ultimately, with ourselves.

As awareness grows, the importance of creating our own unique dance of life becomes more and more a part of our daily thinking. We are developing the skills to accelerate learning. With this in mind, embrace each step of the dance. Each variation provides another opportunity to create the next dance step, each flowing in a graceful motion. Continuous forward motion is joyful to experience. When joy is missing in life it is high time to create the next dance. Yield to the motion of the dance, leading your Self towards a greater awareness of the freedom in your ability to respond.

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*Melaine McManus is a writer based in the United States.*





## FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION V

Understanding the cyclical nature of time

**T**he first three sessions concentrated on ourselves: reaffirming our identities as spiritual beings and our original natures as peaceful, truthful and happy. Exploring these aspects is very much the aim of

meditation, drawing power and further understanding from the Supreme Soul. This exploration takes place not just in some quiet corner, but can be your continuous waking practice as you observe your own thoughts, feelings and interactions with others. Meditation is therefore not just something

you do, but a way of being. In modern society, where the emphasis is on constant doing, meditation helps restore the balance between being and doing; that is, meditation helps you to “be” in the right state of consciousness, before you “do” and while you “do”.

In the last session (Four) we saw how the result of all our doing, all our karma, comes back sooner or later. We reap what we sow, whether it be positive or negative. This simple piece of knowledge explains why certain things happen to you and not to others. And this understanding releases you from the tension, anxiety and frustration of “why is this happening to me?” It also places your destiny back into your own hands, as whatever you do today creates your tomorrow. And so, to ensure your actions are good today, see how important it is that you “be” first. Be in the right state of consciousness, i.e. soul-consciousness.

Looking farther than your immediate circumstances, there are many positive and negative happenings in the wider world. And most are negative. They may seem very distant, but all scenes and events touch us in some way or another. They challenge our state of being, disturb our meditation and give us reason to regurgitate old feelings of anger and frustration. So we need to find an overview of the larger picture both historically and geographically. To do that we need to revise our perspective of the story of our journey as one human family up to this point in time.

Time has been a subject of fascination for many seekers of truth, through the ages. It has been stretched into millions of years by scientists seeking the origin of the universe. It has been squashed into one life by those who think we only have one chance to take what we can get - regardless of the effect on others. And today it has been given monetary value, as we rush headlong into the future with our professional knowledge and highly specialised skills. “Time is money” is the ethic of business.

To the eternal soul, time is a paradox. It is, and yet it is not. We are “in time” and yet we are immortal, beyond time. To the soul that has come to think of itself as a body, time means the pain of being trapped, imprisoned by limitations and the desires and perspectives which stem from identifying with the body.

In the physical world there is another law that is inescapable. It is so obvious, with evidence all around, but we don't recognise its significance. It is the law that “Everything new becomes old”. Nothing ever goes the other way. Everything, from cars to carpets, philosophy to religion, moves from a state of newness to oldness. Translate this process onto the world physical plane and we now see an old world, over-used, mis-used, tired and worn out.

And then translate this into your attitude which has become so physical and you will see why you also feel worn out, tired, old... even while you still may be relatively young.

Accepting this movement from new to old evokes a very different picture of time. In almost every scripture, mythology or legend, from the ancient Greeks to the Aborigines, from the Incas to the Hindus, there are extensive references to a time, some three or four thousands years ago, when the earth was paradise. The Garden of Eden, Atlantis, Dreamtime, are references to the time when the world was beautiful and new, perfect and paradisaical. There was heaven, on earth, not up in the clouds, when matter was brand new, rich in colour and sound, beyond our imagination. And there we were, walking the earth, as divine beings who had come to play, to sing and dance like children, in the garden.

At that time, we souls were also fresh and new, so our consciousness was pure and totally positive. Joy, happiness and harmony were our natural experience and expression. There was a small population of less than a million, an abundance of natural resources and the complete absence of division, fear and conflict. This was the Golden Age of mankind. One land, one people, one way of life.

As time moved on, the population grew, and gradually each soul lost a little of its pure, conscious energy. After just over a thousand years of this “heavenly” existence, the degrees of newness and spiritual purity were slightly reduced and the world moved into what could be called a Silver Age.

Still a time of harmony and oneness, still an age of no conflict or division, still a time when we expressed our highest and purest personality through a culture of natural love and truth, but the purity of this second season of humanity was slightly less than of the Golden Age.

More and more, as time passed, the power of the soul and the purity of consciousness reduced while the population increased. And then there came a critical moment when the first soul lost its spiritual awareness, and identified itself with the human form. This was the first moment of body-consciousness which quickly spread, like a virus, to other souls whose spiritual power and identity had also weakened. The result was a pervasive attraction to others' bodies, reliance on the physical senses for happiness and the wish for separation and division. This in turn led to the first experiences of conflict, of fear, of greed and of the first wave of sorrow within human consciousness.

This began the third period “the fall”, or Copper Age. Spiritual power was quickly shed as body-consciousness became widespread. The sense of separateness resulted in the travelling and establishment of different communities, cultures and beliefs. Eventually nation states were formed, which then came into conflict over land and resources.

The proliferation of conflict and sorrow, unnatural to human consciousness, sparked the search for meaning and purpose. Philosophy and science become the agents of that search. As different parts of the world were occupied by wandering and conquering humans, special souls incarnated with a message of truth and incited people to return to a spiritual way of life. Abraham, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed each brought spiritual guidance and lived by the principles they preached. But only a few had the power to follow, the rest merely listened and admired.

The atmosphere and conditions throughout the world darkened as the earth moved into its fourth season, the Iron Age.

Our libraries are stocked with accounts of the past thousand years. From cover to cover books record the explosion of division and conflict, plundering and pillaging in all four corners of the world. But it is especially in the past one hundred years that the greatest darkness has swept across human affairs. Never before have there been so many wars, so many divisions (there are now 183 nation states), so much greed, so much anger (across borders and the breakfast table), so much racial tension, so much exploitation of resources. While we appear to be progressing technologically, human behaviour, human relations and human consciousness appear to be regressing. These are signs of souls losing their power and thus the ability to live in harmony.

The prospect of what must happen next is alarming. Unless we revise our concept of time. A consequence of physical identification has been the assumption of time-linear thinking, implying that the death of the body is the final moment. "Take what you can now" is a philosophy which stems from this. People speculate on when time began and there is great uncertainty about when it might finish. Yet there is evidence all around us that suggests time does not move in this way.

Time is our measure of change. So in a sense, time and change are synonymous. We measure time against the changing position of our planet around the sun and one day becomes our basic unit of measurement. One year is measured by the cyclical movement of the planet around its own axis while orbiting the sun. And here lies the key to understanding the movement of time. The cycle of the day from dawn to daylight to dusk to night is a movement from new to old which repeats with absolute constancy. The larger cycle of the seasons from spring (dawn) to summer (day) to autumn (dusk) to winter (night)

revolves in the same way. It is also a cyclical movement that repeats.

Stand back from the enormous picture of history and you will see yet a larger cycle: Golden Age (dawn/spring) to Silver Age (day/summer) to Copper Age (dusk/autumn) to Iron Age (night/winter).

And here we are now, at the dark zenith of human affairs. We have lost

**The cyclic movement of time means the past is also the future, and future is the past. From such a perspective we can joyfully expect the dawn.**

our spiritual power. We search for some truth or else squabble over resources which have been fragmented by our ideologies. All this, however, is just part of the larger movement in time: a few scenes from the complete story. It is also of our own creation, because we have forgotten who we are and why we are here. Like children playing all day in the woods and as night descends they realise they don't know where they are or how to get home, we feel an overwhelming sense of being lost. Our cries for help take many forms of expression - from drugs to crime, from outright violence to the inner breakdown of mind and body.

It is at this point that the spiritual parent, God, hears that cry and responds. He intervenes, at the only time during our entire journey to tell us the whole story. He tells us who we are, what has happened to us and how to find our way home. His love is unconditional. He reveals the absolute truth of our history, our present stage and offers a vision of the future. He restores our sense of context of where we are and what we have to do in the context of time and space.

The cyclic movement of time means the past is also the future, and future is the past. From such a perspective we can joyfully expect the dawn. Yet for this to happen, great changes must take place in the context of human affairs to invoke the new dawn and the beginning of a new Golden Age. The old must give way to the new. It is a change process however, which must begin from within the individual. It

cannot be focused from or on the outside.

Understanding the cyclical nature of time and change, and the principle that everything new becomes old, helps us to interpret and understand the obvious breakdown of society today. Our systems, boundaries, structures, institutions are all in a state of phenomenal flux and disintegration. Nations are destroying each other, either by outright warfare or by creeping exploitation. And nature itself is reacting to decades of human violence and abuse.

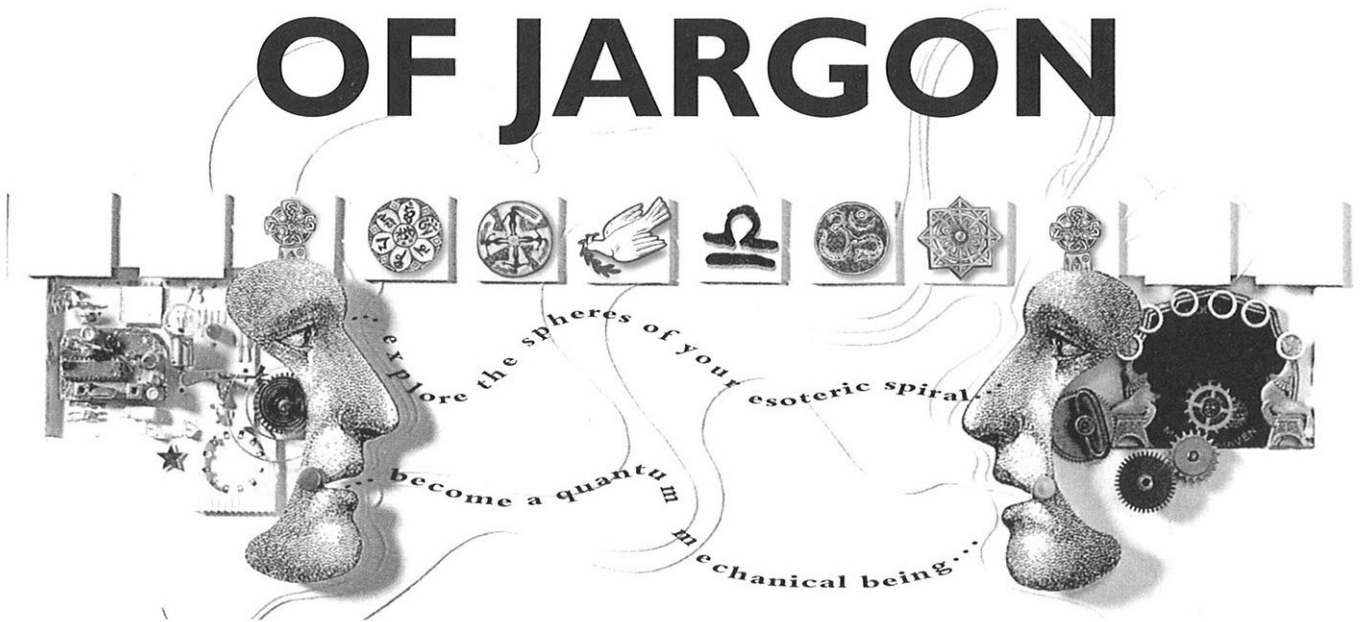
This period of transition is called the Confluence Age, where the night of human affairs meets the new day. A meeting of two ages, or the transition from one cycle into the next, provokes extreme and sudden change. If you are unaware of the significance of this time in relation to the larger picture, these changes and upheavals will disturb you, and meditation will have little effect on maintaining your inner peace. But realising the uniqueness of this time, seeing that night must transform into day, you can be free of the tension and fear caused by the unknown. Only then will you be able to see clearly your own role and know what you have to do.

Stand back and observe the picture of life on earth. Meditate on it. See it through your third eye, the eye of spiritual awareness. Do you apprehend the real journey of time and your own journey through it as an eternal soul or spark of conscious energy? You are in the cycle and the cycle is in you. Do you remember?

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*Note: Meditation is seldom associated with history and concepts such as time and space. More it is seen as a method to escape or be free of the concepts and details of such things. Raja Yoga meditation however recognises that the natural thirst of the soul for truth and understanding, for meaning and significance, for purpose and identity must be satisfied before the "peace that surpasses all pleasure" can be achieved through the technique of meditation itself. If you would like copies of the previous four sessions of the Foundation Course please send a stamped addressed envelope to The Editor, Retreat Magazine, Global Co-operation House, 65 Pound Lane, London, NW10 2HH*

# A MOUTHFUL OF JARGON



Jim Ryan combines a number of syllables in his perspective on the increasing jargon of New Age spirituality

**When we want to make an impact and say something special, we become very attentive and careful with our words. We deliberate, pause, purse our lips, look to the heavens and then dive in to select what we hope is an effective package of ideas.**

We then frantically jumble, re-jumble, arrange and ship about our grandiose adjectives and imposing nouns in long lines, like carriages of a train, packed heavy with wordy dinosaurs and operatic stresses.

After the delivery of these mental missiles, we sit back and watch the

fallout, bathing in the afterglow of our wonderful pronouncements, as they impact on our hapless victims.

As a result, we then start to feel a great sense of satisfaction and self-importance, a feeling of being part of a special order to beings, those having a privileged access to the inner sanctums of profound understanding. And thus, with compassionate beneficence, we decide to enshrine and immortalise our hallowed progeny in the printed word, so that others may benefit from such elevated vision.

So thus, we start to find ourselves ascending the temple to the great god Jargon - a temple full of altars, alcoves and shrines, all uniquely stylised and dedicated to opinions, ideas, philosophies and matter-of-fact processes and each shrouded by their own particular brand of mystery, mysticism and myopia.

And within this mazy, monumental

citadel, there is the great, high altar dedicated to the highest and greatest god of Jargon, that of Religion and Spirituality. From this place, the messengers, missionaries and acolytes of this imperious deity have poured into the world to irritate, confuse and at the same time reassure.

These purveyors of spiritual ideology, I'm sure, could easily be mistaken for aliens from another cosmos, such is their seemingly complete lack of any connection with present reality. Drawing on analogy, simile and structure, as if from some distant sphere, they become cocooned in the bubble of their fervoured zeal and enthusiasm as they strive, strain and push to make and prove their ideas clearer, better, stronger and higher than any other. Unfortunately, what they want to say often becomes so encrusted with their mental molluscs, that their original thoughts and ideas become

overturned and sink below the surface. What we have left is a barge sailing upside down, festooned with the barnacles of old adage, cliché, pat phrases and obscure usage. "It is as it was, when it shall be", "From all these according to tradition it is revealed in accordance to tradition", "In agreement to that therein lies the revealed mystery of its divine perception". And we are left scratching our heads, thinking "And I'm a monkey's uncle".

It's a fact, of course, that most have no understanding and probably no real interest in the knowledge of the higher realms of God, His Angels and the spiritual ways. Thus, for Tom, Dick and Mary there is a marked preference to leave all that sort of thing to hairy old professors or a few old odd bods to conjure up explanations, ideas and convoluted causeways to salvation.

In fact, the majority of us have grown up surrounded by these familiar and well-known symbols, and highfalutin concoctions; they are as much a part of our world as the corner shop, old toys and games, familiar places, faces and smells of our past, giving us a kind of surety, warmth and a sense of continuity and feeling that all's well with the world.

For in fact, being conditioned from an early age, as most of us are, by the numerous external agencies of induction, such as the media, education, old adages etc., it is of course no surprise that we generally accept unquestioningly, the dogmatic pronouncements of the guides and gurus of this world. There is almost a feeling that it's not right for us to know precisely.

We feel these things of the metaphysical world should rightly be shrouded in the fogs of pedantry and incomprehension. As a result, the great mist of Jargon falls on the



There seems to be an obsession today in modern spirituality for continually creating new effects and using terms and expressions from differing contexts to show meaningfulness.

"Become a quantum mechanical being! ... Experience the primordial sound and mechanics of creation and interact with the transcendental energy field ... It's an authentic cosmic energy science to work on your evolutionary growth and vibratory frequencies ..."

Claims and counter claims become greater and greater and more off the planet.

"expand the undreamt made visible... Transmute the upward psyche from the negative psychic sub-luminary manifestations of primordial earth... Centre in life affirming nourishments and explore the spheres of your esoteric spirals..."

Whatever happened to good old fashioned peace and love?

minds of all and sundry, leaving us trapped, and unable to move.

Observing this predicament, it's quite easy to pour scorn, giving in to the current fashion of knocking and criticising anything that is old and idiosyncratic and dismissing it as misguided and irrelevant; however with this there's a great danger of throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water.

When it comes to the form and content of spiritual teachings, whether they are framed using obscure, linguistic mouthfuls of simple monosyllabic phrases, I believe, it all comes down to whether the focus is on the message or on the messenger. If one is mainly concerned with the effect of what is said and what people will think of you and the resultant kudos gained, then I'm afraid you'll end up sitting right up there on Jargon's jolly old high altar, inflating the balloons of pomposity and verbosity.

However, if on the other hand the aim is to impart solely the spiritual significance of one's understanding for the benefit of others, without any strings; so enabling others to share in one's own personal interpretation of truth, then we begin to tug and pull at the columns and walls of the old icons and temples of ego and obscurity.

Yet, at the end of the day, we could be faced with the paradox that what is today's clear and direct terminology could well be tomorrow's fuddled and muddled linguistic jungle. Heads you win, tails you lose.

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*Jim Ryan is a former Headmaster and is currently teaching in London.*

# NUCLEAR VISION

Peter Russell speculates on two alternative future scenarios.

***The following scenario is presented only as a possibility. I am not out to maintain a position, and am making no prophecies. But I do wish to flex your thinking, for we too easily assume that our view of the world is the right one. To consider alternative views can be very healthy, particularly when they contradict our cherished values. What follows may initially feel uncomfortable, and even heretical, but I would like you to suspend judgement for a moment and consider the possibility that nuclear holocaust may be right on track.***

We are not short of evidence that the world is spiralling towards disaster. The global megacrisis is a complex crisis with many facets. Humanity and its demands are continually growing, while simultaneously the environment is becoming sicker, resources less plentiful, economies more shaky, and the future less certain. With so many crises coming to a head, and with no ready solutions in sight, international friction seems set to increase, and with

them the likelihood of major fighting. Given the weaponry we have standing by, nuclear wars appear virtually inevitable.

Yet, at the same time, we are discovering untapped wisdom and immense power within the human mind itself. The profound truth and value in the timeless wisdom of the human soul is taking on a deeper significance. We are becoming aware that each and every one of us is in essence divine. Pushing back the inner frontier, we are realising that the root of our difficulties lies not so much in the world around, as in our perception of it, and our limited appreciation of ourselves. And with each new inner discovery we are learning more and more about how to be what we truly are.

Let us suppose that these two trends continue to increase; that year by year the potential triggers for international conflict proliferate and become more severe, taking us closer and closer to nuclear conflagration ... and simultaneously the exploration of our inner selves leads to new discoveries and awakenings, taking us closer and closer to a widespread spiritual rebirth.

Month by month the possibilities of collective breakdown increase, and so do the possibilities of collective breakthrough.

To a dispassionate observer it would seem that the game could go either way. It becomes a race between self-discovery and self-destruction; between enlightenment and annihilation.

However, there comes a time when the momentum of the collective ignorance and insanity appears to take the lead. Within days we move into the inevitability of global nuclear holocaust. And overnight a billion

souls mourn to the depth of their being the end of a fine and beautiful experiment. In their final acceptance of the inevitable many decide to spend their last few minutes, not in consummate sex or the avid digging of fallout shelters, but in applying all that they have learnt from life, from teachings, and from the inner self, to letting go and opening one last time to that greater reality.

And for the first time in history, a critical mass of souls simultaneously touch. The inner connection is made. And the power of their union sends a wave of awareness washing through humanity. In a chain reaction all the others awaken and are drawn together into the One.

They unite in light. And the planet is bathed in the inner light of a thousand suns. In a flash the fire of knowledge consumes the basic error of perception. Certainty radiates. Freed from self concern and domination by the material, humanity proves ready for its next evolutionary step.

Having looked collective death in the eye and returned, the spirit of humanity looks back upon its planetary womb in gratitude and love. And, with deep compassion for the millions of species which have been its nurture and support, it unanimously and unhesitatingly makes its first decision. It resets the microcircuits aboard the nuclear arsenals now raining upon the planet. And down below flowers lift up their heads to watch the weapons fall, not with a bang but a dull thud.

Remember, I do not believe this will happen.

Nor do I believe it cannot. ®

*Peter Russell is author of White Hole in Time and The Awakening Earth. This article is extracted from Passing Thoughts Vol. I.*





# DEATH

## *Reality or Illusion*

Have you ever noticed how skilled we humans have become at avoiding and delaying death?

Half our lives are spent in thoughts and activities which are designed to stop the aging process, disguise wrinkles and grey hair and prolong our personal presence on the planet.

It is of course all in vain, for there is nothing more inevitable than the five elements which compose our bodies returning as compost for the earth. But is that *death*, is it

the end? Is it not curious that there is no single human being who can tell you what it is like to die. Can you? Have you ever experienced death? Do you know the death experience? No! So why are you, how can you, be afraid of something you do not know? A little absurd don't you think?

There is of course absolutely no evidence for the loss of awareness at the moment the body ceases to function and there are many accounts of "out of body experiences". Does this not warrant a little investigation? Are you creating an illusion and

making yourself afraid of it? How much of your life is motivated by that fear?

How would you feel when the moment comes to leave your body and there isn't the expected blackness, but a transcendence and a lightness, which simply signals your onward journey? How would you look back on a life spent in fear of an illusory ending and loss of all you know? Why wait therefore, for death to come to you? Why not die now ... to the illusion of death, and the possible absurdity of non-existence!

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# Spring Trap

*As I walked down Cornish lane  
One beautiful spring day,  
The flowers bedecked the hedges  
On both sides of the way*

*Primrose, wild daffodil  
And lovely celandine  
Shone forth a new-born golden light,  
Which made the world divine*

*A sweet and blessed Silence  
Lay all along the route -  
Then suddenly a daffodil  
Let forth a DEAFENING HOOT*

*What was this awful horror?  
Whatever did it mean?  
The one flower in the Universe  
That wanted to be seen!*

*Of course my whole attention  
Was drawn at once to it;  
I tore the plant out roots and all -  
I did not care a bit*

*But as I walked on down the lane  
And silence was restored,  
I prayed to God, my father,  
"Why did you do it, Lord?"*

*"Hitherto," the Lord replied,  
"Man's heard my silent voice;  
Now, as he's ceased to listen,  
I contemplated Noise*

*"But now you've smashed my daffodil,  
There's nothing I can do,  
But show my Love in Silence -  
The rest is up to you."*

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