

RETREAT

Retreat

ISSUE No.EIGHT

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SEEING WITHOUT EYES

**CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE
ANGELIC KIND**

**CREATING A VALUE BASED
CULTURE**

**PSYCHOTHERAPY &
SOUL AWARENESS**

**LEARNING TO BE
POSITIVE**

and

**THE DEITY IN THE
CORNER OF YOUR
LIVING ROOM**





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time to give nourishment to
the soul?



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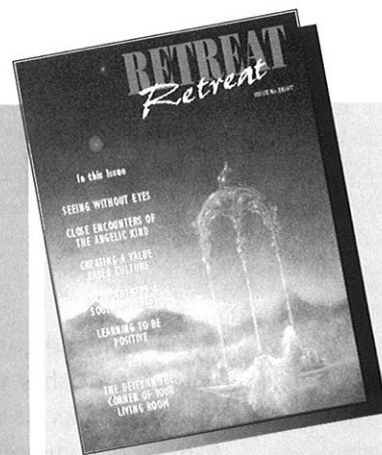
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PRINTED BY

Leighton Printing

London

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ISSN 1353 - 811X

Food for the Soul

Good food and good ideas feed body and mind. But what is it that nourishes your soul? Truth and love describe the highest forms of input (and output) and yet remain the scarcest of commodities.

Truth about what? What are the most important truths in life today? Is it about who you are - do you know who you are, beyond the many roles you play each day? Or is it why you are here - do you know what your highest purpose is? Or is it about what you care about the most - are you aware of what your deepest personal values are? Without the experience of who you are, clarity about what your purpose is and connection to your innate values, you may easily live your life by accident. And spiritual poverty will be your companion.

And what of love? In every interaction energy is given and received, or perhaps more accurately for this generation, taken and kept. Do you give and receive, or take and attempt to keep? Love is now synonymous with sex, the meeting of bodies, while the three other levels of love's expression are almost totally forgotten: the meeting of hearts, minds and souls. The soul remains continuously thirsty when it forgets these dimensions of love's equation. And it dies a slow, deep and agonising death when it forgets that the purpose of being here is to be loving as well as to be loved.

The rediscovery of eternal truths and the return to love are the challenges of the spiritual quest. Both are accessible through 'soul consciousness'. But what is the consciousness of the soul? In **Creating a Value Based Culture** Richard Barrett touches on the need for soul consciousness in business. Then Andrew Powell explores the nature and role of the soul in **Psychotherapy and Soul Awareness**, while **The Story So Far** draws all the threads of the Foundation Course in Meditation together to provide a rich and balanced diet for the soul on its eternal journey. Each article in this issue of Retreat offers clues and insights into the nature and needs of the soul.

But remember as you read, you do not have a soul, you are a soul!

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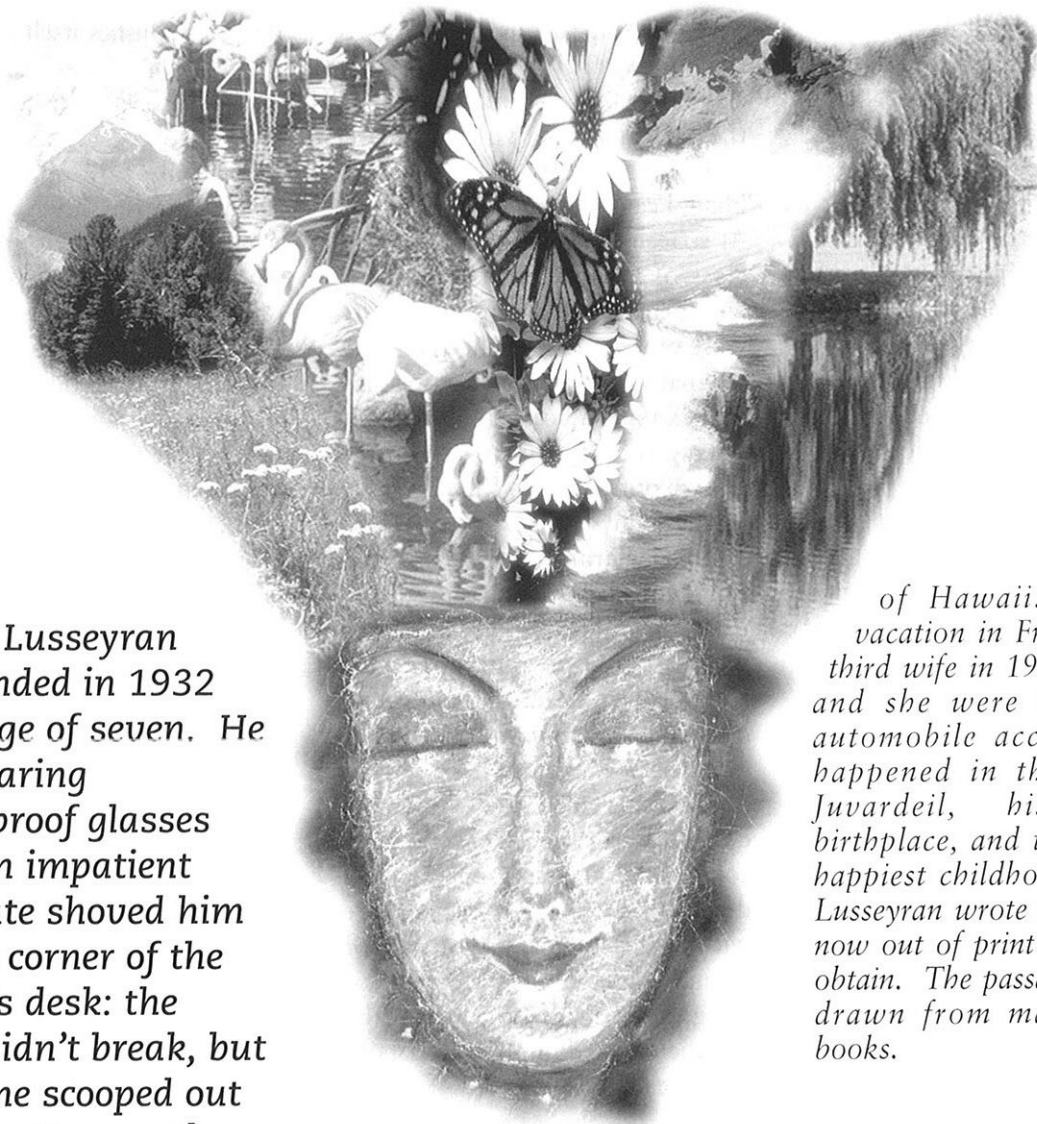
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Jacques Lusseyran was blinded in 1932 at the age of seven. He was wearing shatterproof glasses when an impatient classmate shoved him into the corner of the teacher's desk: the lenses didn't break, but the frame scooped out his eyes. He was thus totally blind for life.

But his parents did not ship him off to a special school. Besides learning to use Braille books and typewriter, he had a richly normal childhood within a cultured, sympathetic, religious family.

After World War II, Lusseyran completed masters and doctorate at the Sorbonne, becoming a full professor at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris at the age of twenty-six (as ever, over objections to his blindness). In 1958 he emigrated to the United States, teaching at Hollis College in Virginia, Western Reserve in Cleveland, and at the University

of Hawaii. During a vacation in France with his third wife in 1971, Lusseyran and she were killed in an automobile accident. This happened in the village of Juvardeil, his mother's birthplace, and the site of his happiest childhood memories. Lusseyran wrote several books, now out of print or difficult to obtain. The passages below are drawn from many of those books.

Seeing Without Eyes

Jacques Lusseyran
Translated by Wayne
Constantineau

I. INTERIOR SIGHT

I was long ago impressed that blind people never speak about the things they see to those who see normally. In order to accommodate themselves to a sighted world, the blind must declare themselves handicapped. All too often I was forced to play out this hypocrisy, even when I knew better. The blind can see! Seeing takes place inside of me. I see all things immediately; see, not touch or hear. Each thing that comes to meet me draws itself, takes form and colour on a malleable 'inner screen.' I need only take a new direction within myself to notice them. Inside of me every sound, every scent, and every shape is forever changing into light, and the light is changing into colour

like a kaleidoscope. From the first there was light, in all of its forms, in all of its nuances. I could even illuminate myself: I could create inside of myself a light so intense that my physical eyes, or more precisely what was left of them, vibrated, were almost injured exactly like a sighted person's would be if he stared too patently at the sun. I could play with it, and even extinguish it. For me the variations of light no longer depended on external phenomena.

Being blind I thought I would have to go out to meet things, but I found that they came to meet me instead. I have never had to go more than half way, and the universe became the accomplice of all my wishes. I soon realised that everything in the world has a voice and speaks. Not just the things that are supposed to speak, but others, like gates, walls, sand, and even silence. I discovered that different species of trees did not all have the same presence. The shade of an oak, the shade of a pine, or the shade of an acacia, did not provide the same sensation. I could identify the tree under which I was passing, by its volume, arrangement, the noise of its shade. The tone of a tree indicates a certain order in space, zones of tension and zones of free passage. When I was in the presence of mountains I had never known, even when some kilometres from their summits, I could generally indicate the outline. I could see!

These perceptual images are vastly different from the images made in memory or imagination. I see memories too, but as if in my forehead and my brain alone. Present things, the things of here and now, I notice the whole body. The centre of the 'screen' situates itself close to my throat, my chest, and my heart. The images of memory or imagination require a mental effort on my part in order

to enter my awareness. I have to evoke them, to push a door, to expend energy to make them appear. But things present themselves to me without effort. Sight for me is involuntary; being blind, I cannot even 'close my eyes'. At sixteen, I heard in a philosophy class of a psychic process called 'compensation'. Deprived of the sense of vision, I had unconsciously internalised sight. You can imagine my exasperation when I kept having this flourishing of forms and colours in me. 'It will pass,' I'd say to myself. But I still resisted. These declarations about 'blind' sight not only surprised, they also irritated many people. I learned this when I wrote my autobiography. Some spoke of courage, of infirmity overcome by the force of will. They made of me a sort of hero or poet. Others declared that sight couldn't be conserved and continued in the face of accident or destiny. But we are not dealing here with a physiological mystery, nor an unhealthy or supernatural or exaggerated sensitivity. The experience of 'blind' sight is both concrete and ordinary.

If you are attracted to me through friendship or interest, your shadow moves towards me. It tends to integrate with mine. On the other hand, if my conversation teases you, your shadow dislocates.

The eyes are responsible for many misperceptions. They only 'half sight' and they never weigh. They are satisfied with appearances, and for them the world glows and slides by. The most supple of our senses, we rely on them the most. We know that with the eyes we can scan in an instant several locations, or many points on the surface of objects. We can go very fast. We can slide, we can skip. And inevitably we slide too quickly, and

we skip too much. This temptation soon establishes itself as a horrible habit. When I finally accepted the difference between 'external' light and inner sight, what we commonly call 'objectivity', was turned upside down, scattered to the four winds, not even like theories, but like whims. The objective outsider sees blindness as a deprivation. But God doesn't deprive us of anything. If He seems to withhold some things, they are always in essence only habits or appearances. And you, the sighted, haven't had, like me, the opportunity of losing these habits. The habits of the physical eyes stand between you and your interior sight. This sight: you have it necessarily, but you also have a bag over your head. To pass from the light of the sun to the inner light, it is enough in the end to believe. The rest comes of itself.

II. FORM & COLOUR

Is the world - yours and mine - similar? Yes, but not in the conventional sense. Do not ask me, for example, to tell you whether you are blond or brunette, skinny or fat, well-groomed or disheveled, raising your arm or lowering it. These questions do not concern sight but only reflections of light. I see you entirely differently. Sometimes, of course, I distinguish your physical body, your eyes, your fingers. But it usually occurs when your eyes, your fingers, the fold of your mouth, or the impatience of your legs speak for you. Most often I see you in a way that is hardly anatomical at all. I don't detail you. I capture or receive you at the instant where you stop the light I send towards you. You create a shadow. This shadow diversifies almost immediately. It puts itself into form, colours itself, but according to rhythms other than those of the eyes. If you are

attracted to me through friendship or interest, your shadow moves towards me. It tends to integrate with mine. On the other hand, if my conversation teases you, your shadow dislocates.

Mrs X, for example, sits at the other end of the living room. I hear her. I even distinctly see her at the other end of the room. Mrs X wishes to confide something to me. I see her approaching. I can remove all the inner obstacles that separate me from her until I begin to absorb her appearance. There are now two Mrs Xs. The one that others see, with her back to the window, and the one that I see, halfway from the window to my chair. Let us pick a different case. Mr. Z is domineering. He loves to wrap people in the web of his ideas and will. He likes to impose his power on them. Where do you think I saw him when he was trying to convince me? Mr Z did not meet me halfway, and leave me room to move. He came from several places all at once. From the four corners of the room, the four Mr Zs converged on me like barking dogs. All I wanted to do was flee.

Another case is a polished speaker. You see him, his clothes, his practised gestures, his serious face. You perhaps even admire him. Myself also: sometimes I see an admirable image as well. But not always. Sometimes, instead of noticing the persuasively arranged parts of the person that the sighted see, my sight notices a dislocated fellow, twisted and hunched with some sudden bump. Sometimes it is the head that eats the body, seeming to have it half swallowed. Sometimes the muscles or the nerves play it alone and speak for the man.

I was attending a lecture when, in the middle of a sentence, a man sprang up behind me. This man contradicted the speaker with

brusque, even maniacal anger. In a flash, I saw a skinned man, a reddish jack-in-the-box made of a canvas of nerves. That isn't the sight of the eyes. But it is sight in forms and colours. The physical eyes leave nothing out. But mine make jumps: with my 'blind' sight. I never saw my artist friend, Jean, in his entirety. I saw his beautiful peasant hands, and another part situated over his head. He came to me wearing a hat of light. This light enlarged when he painted or spoke of painting. It diminished whenever he was pained, and it generally guided his hands. People often say that blindness sharpens hearing. In truth my ears heard no better; I was simply making better use of them. Sounds gave me my bearing in space and put me in touch with things. That is why I couldn't stand racket, useless noises, or background music that went on and on. I also discovered that a sound we don't listen to is a blow to body and spirit, because sound is not something happening outside us, but a real presence passing through us and lingering unless we have heard it fully.

***When I place my hand
on one brick of a house,
I can know the house
entirely.***

To touch things is to tune in to them and allow the current they hold to connect with one's own, like electricity. To put it differently, this means an end of living in front of things and a beginning of living with them. My fingers felt the pulsation of things distinctly. When they went towards things, in a sympathetic vibration with them, they recognised them right away. All our senses join into one. They are successive stages of a single perception, and that perception is always one of touch. This field of

vibration shapes objects and reveals beings. To see things through touch, I couldn't allow the slightest inclination, the smallest wish to know them, to come between them and me. I could not afford to be curious or impatient or proud of my accomplishments. Only when I became really attentive and did not oppose my own pressure to my surroundings, then trees and rocks came to me and printed their shapes upon me like fingers leaving their impression in wax. To touch means to slow down. I must make my fingers follow a table in all of its parts, one after another, in order to know it as a whole. I will only know it when I come into tactile contact with it. Touching wants proof. But it is still possible, without eyes, to graze or brush a part of an object, and to know it instantly in its wholeness.

Pressure is the common ground of the senses. All the objects that make up our world, even those that we consider immobile or dead, produce a sound. Gates, walls, the shade of a tree, sand, and even silence, produce a trembling, a gentle sensation, repeated endlessly. I eventually noticed that most sensations, even hearing and even smell, always were in essence pressure. The universe has weight, and weighs on me forever. Perception, then, means entering into an equilibrium of pressure, into a force field. The oneness of the world is then experienced as a physical event, not a mystical one. Objects exert pressure on us. We exert another pressure on them. The real images in our experience are produced suddenly at the meeting place of these two movements. When one knows this, the proportions of the universe change with new resonance. There are echoes and presences everywhere: hollows, voids, bursts and responses. Armed with these 'new' proportions, with this force field, I no longer need to touch all

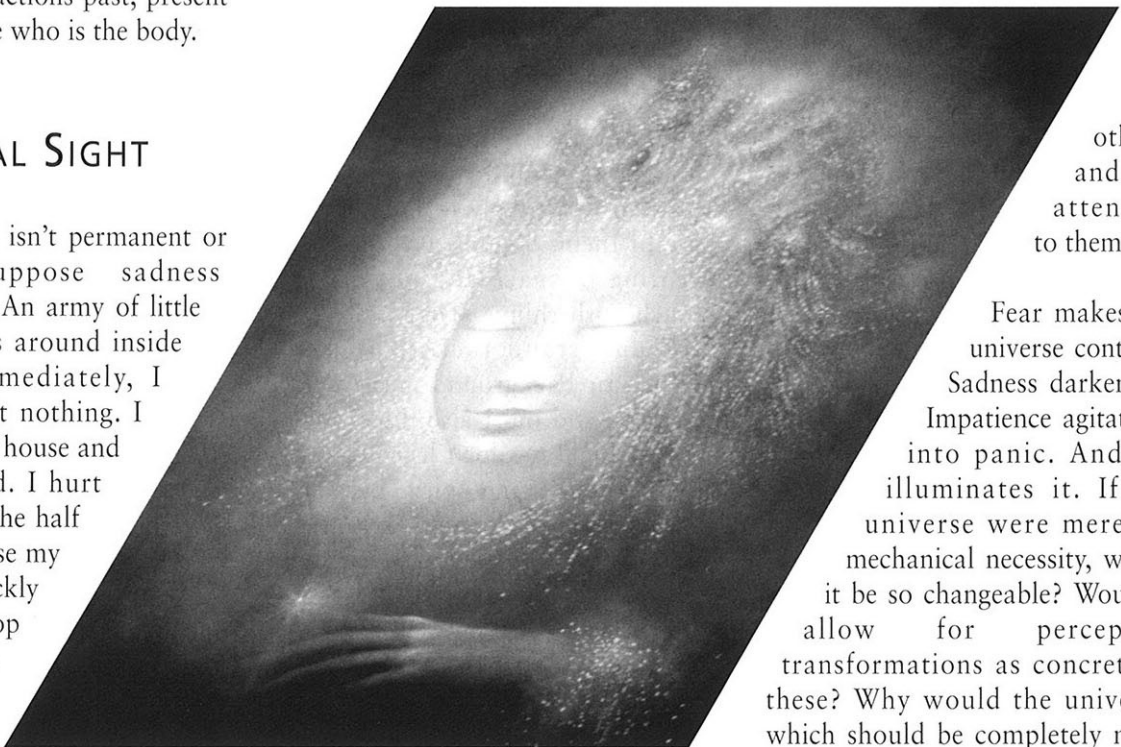
the statue to know it completely. When I place my hand on one brick of a house, I can know the house entirely. In the very first glance, in the first brick that my hand falls on, or the first tone of a melody, I find a progression in which all the elements are predictable. A brick makes the whole house, the first steps into the vestibule creates the living room, the first sound of the voice makes the man. The part equals the whole. The body announces the actions past, present and future of he who is the body.

III. MORAL SIGHT

Sight, however, isn't permanent or absolute. Suppose sadness overcomes me. An army of little afflictions runs around inside my head. Immediately, I perceive almost nothing. I move about the house and bump my head. I hurt myself against the half open door. I lose my bearings. I quickly learn that to stop being blind in this particular way, I have to stop

being sad. Obvious, at the age of ten, I didn't tell myself these things in exactly this way. But I know that when I was gay and confident, when I experienced the passing current of joy and curiosity, I had fewer accidents. Instead of breaking my face on obstacles, I had the impression of knowing them in detail. I also discovered the same thing about impatience, which is in many ways a form of sadness. When impatience overtook me, when I wanted everything to go along faster, the objects around me immediately became agitated. They changed places, and I could no longer rely on them. Impatience displaces objects exactly as sadness dims them, or surrounds them with

fog or smoke. By contrast, joy illuminates everything. Likewise, boredom bound and gagged all my senses. And I could no longer afford to be jealous or unfriendly, because as soon as I was, a bandage came down over my eyes and I was bound hand and foot and cast aside. Armed with such a tool, why should I need a moral code? I had only to look at the bright signal which taught me how to live.



others,
and pay
attention
to them.

Fear makes the universe contract. Sadness darkens it. Impatience agitates it into panic. And joy illuminates it. If the universe were merely a mechanical necessity, would it be so changeable? Would it allow for perceptual transformations as concrete as these? Why would the universe, which should be completely made before we are born, consent to expand, shrink, shine and sometimes darken its light? The thought borders on the absurd. But what happens is more like observing a hand shaping the universe, giving it its shape inside of me. I sense someone inside of me offering me their hand, or that a ray of light comes to me and touches me. When one knows these things from the age of nine or ten, one easily believes in God. He is

I have often noted that someone's fear, anger, or sadness is visible to me while it hasn't yet appeared at body level. I see the body being suddenly move back, collapse, or vibrate in a dissonant way. The colours turn red, almost reddish brown. They scream. I turn around. The anger has visually begun, but on the face and in the gestures - as the physical eyes see them - there is still serenity. Some people think of stage fright as a professional sickness when actually it's a moral fault, a lack of good sense. We often call it timidity. But who can't see the direct road from timidity to pride and from pride to the refusal of others? Stage fright

Fear makes the universe contract. Sadness darkens it. Impatience agitates it into panic. And joy illuminates it.

there, simply alive, and as luck would have it, in a non-religious, non-intellectual, and non-sentimental form. This source at my root, this profound spectator that I sometimes call joy, allows me to see or not see according to my disposition at that moment. Light and joy constitute the central fact of my experience. I positively swim in the light and in all of the forms it bears.

IV. MEMORY AND ATTENTION

To help me explore my inner world, I went to work on my memory. Not to evoke memories, but to work behind them to see what they had hidden, what they had announced, what they had awkwardly represented. I found that one must not judge, one must only look and wait. My past must be left to tell me its sense in its own time and terms. If I force it, my work no longer has any reward.

Eventually it made order of my life. I quit seeing things as disconnected and absurd, without direction. Everything prepared and announced everything else. I re-found, in the 'depths' of myself, God's calculations. Saw my life organised by a master's hand. Those who deny this spiritual aspect (of sense and memory) are either distracted or, if you wish, have a bad memory.

At each instant I know just what I deserve to know about the world. The measure of my knowledge is the measure of my desire, my attention. Attention alone commands. For each one of us only attention makes the universe. By attention I do not mean a

What prevents me from reading another person's thoughts isn't his silence, or even his lies. It is the noise that I make, in my thought about him.

sentimental or metaphysical stage of expectancy or waiting. If I speak of being attentive to reality, I should also make it clear that this reality isn't external. To affirm that it is external is to empty it of its substance. Attention is a movement that I can make from the heart of myself towards things and people. So the idea is to try to make myself more attentive through the hand or through the body. To do that, first of all, I must not transport ideas from the head into the hand or body. My ideas are doing a job that isn't theirs to do. They throw themselves in our way, bar the path, hurry in as unnecessary third parties in all our encounters. Our encounters are first with reality and not with intelligence.

On this theme one could write many books of the most learned new psychology. But all this writing would add nothing to the experience, to the doing, which alone counts. If I make myself attentive enough through my hand, if I wait for the answer to my question, however small it may be, if I am patient, I will understand the mobile interlacing of all things.

What prevents me from reading another person's thoughts isn't his silence, or even his lies. It is the noise that I make, in my thought, about him. Before going to him, I calculate, I weigh and counterweigh his merits and faults and I draw a conclusion. This

conclusion then shouts into my ears. Why should I be astonished that I don't see this man that I have buried in my preconception. I surround myself with an armour of habits. I defend myself against others in hostile solitude. I regard myself as a great unfortunate, forgotten by the universe. I prefer my ideas of the world to the world itself. And so I suffer a completely artificial misery. How much easier it would be just to pay attention.

When I achieve a direct encounter with reality, my perception of the universe is shaken to the roots. I no longer recognise the old world. It stops being tired and incoherent. I lose this incurable distancing of spirit that can be so easily seen on the faces of people watching TV. Attention and inner peace create a state of universal communication, a state of reunion. The wise men who make of serenity the condition to all knowledge are right again, because inner peace puts us in an attentive state.

The operations of attention resemble memory. Just as the first notes of a melody, picked up haphazardly, hook themselves to the next ones and recall the whole piece, the first attention perception provokes is the return of an entire portion of the world. Yes, the return. The universe reappears in the same way as a memory does. The landscape that I discover was already waiting in me since the beginning. The present perception actualises it, renders it real. Attention reveals this pre-existence, this co-existence, of all parts of the world in me. It explains everything, even the instantaneous replacement of my visual sensations by all the others, my seeing without eyes.

®



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE ANGELIC KIND

In the final article Jill Sawers tells the untold story of the guardian angels

Do angels really exist? And, if they do, is it to serve the purpose of delivering God's message, delivering us from evil, delivering us an empty seat on a crowded train, or waking us up without an alarm clock? The ancient belief that each of us receives a guardian angel at birth - though the Talmud speaks of every Jew being assigned eleven thousand guardian angels - could be compared to kings giving their children a tutor and an attendant from his court. So, the King of Heaven has given men, his adoptive children through grace, guardian spirits from His own court.

In Moslem lore, each human is allocated four angels, two who guard the soul during the day and two after sunset. A person is considered most vulnerable to demons during the time when the angels change their shifts. Apart from protecting, angels have also been known to keep records of our merits and demerits and present

these to God on our behalf. In Leigh Hunt's poem about Abou Ben Adhem, the hero 'awoke one night from a deep dream of peace' to discover a recording angel by his bedside writing in a golden book a report about him to present to God. Abou suggested "Write me as one that loves his fellow men", which gained him a place in God's

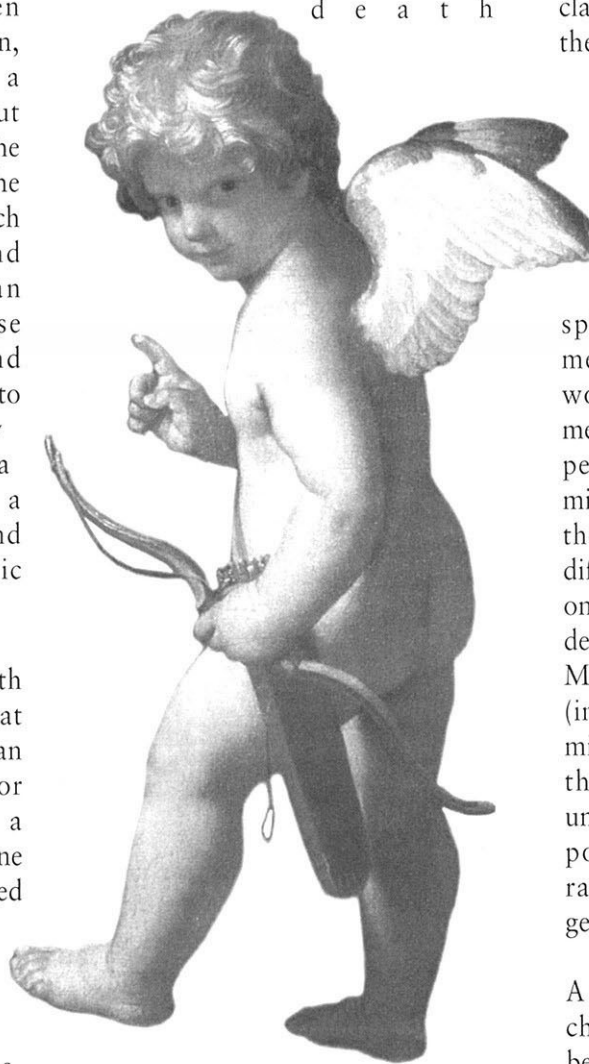
Honours List. A modern interpretation of this poem could point to the fact that our own minds do a perfect job of record-keeping within our memories. Brain Surgeons and Hynotherapists have proven it. The experience of a person's whole life flashing in front of them has become a cliché. However, it does illustrate the

amazing capacity of the human memory. In 60 BC, Pythagoras taught that, when death comes, the soul 'sees, over and over again, its earthly existence, the scenes succeeding one another with startling clarity'. Perhaps this all proves that the 'recording angel' is part and parcel of our own psyche.

Another angelic phenomenon which has recently gained attention within a different context is that of the halo. Painters have often stylised the angel's halo as a thin, luminous ring over the head, or a solid golden disc behind it. But many people are now aware of the not-so-angelic phenomenon of the aura; a field of light energy which not only surrounds saints and angels, but all of us. Kirlian photography shows how these auras vary in size, shape and colour. Psychics claim to be able to tell a person's emotional state by the colour of their aura; an aura of white light perhaps indicating a state of harmony, positivity and purity - the presence of angelic consciousness within the human?

People who have had near-death experiences often encounter what could be interpreted to be guardian spirits. Near-death investigator Raymond Moody reports that a near-death victim was told by one such guardian that, "I have helped you through this stage of existence, but now I'm going to turn you over to others." Some near-death survivors have described what they thought was 'a first Heaven' as glowing with light. Within that light, spirits 'talk' telepathically and 'move' with the speed of thought through beautiful, colourful scenery created by their own memories and thoughts - as we form scenes in dreams. Others have also said that on their way to the light, they

glimpsed a dark zone, halfway between earth and the light world, jammed with huge numbers of grey, dull, miserable spirits apparently clinging to our physical world. These stories agree with long-standing reports of mediums and psychics that some souls, especially those who are greatly under-developed morally, just don't want to 'move on' from earth's physical life, and 'stick' around as 'ghosts'. Near-death

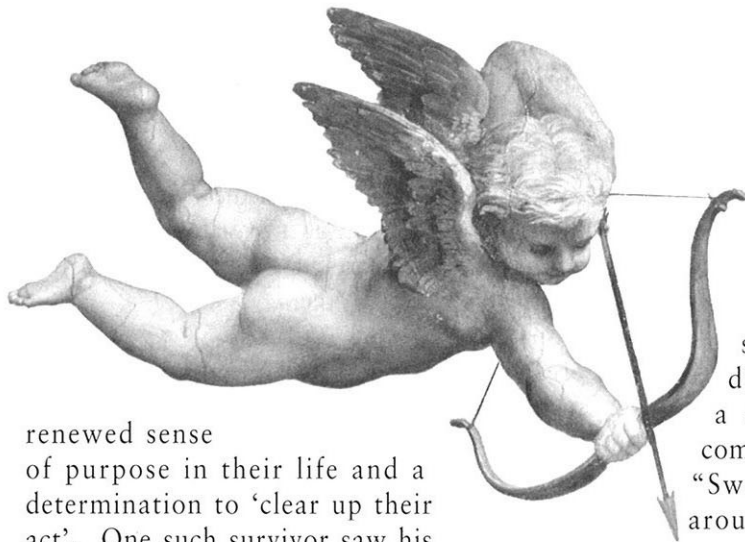


experiences such as these may indicate that the soul, separated from its gross material body, may have another spiritual body; the light and beauty of which depends on the purity and spiritual development of the individual. In which case, angels could simply be described as highly-developed

souls. Near-death survivors have often mentioned that 'angelic-like beings of light' had questioned them about whether they had spent their life in a worthwhile manner, and particularly if they had learned to love others.

Emmanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish mystic and scientist of the 1700's who went into trance for days on end, supposedly on out-of-body flights to spirit worlds, claimed that souls having departed their bodies voluntarily go to the 'place' that suits their way of thinking, elevated or degraded. Interestingly, one near-death survivor told a researcher that while 'dead' or 'bodiless' they were too embarrassed to be around spirits who had different mentalities. Space in the spirit world seems to be dependent on mental attitude, so that like-minded people are 'close' and different-minded people tend to be as 'far' as their thinking, noble or petty, is different. The kind of thinking that one would need to be an angel was described by the authoress Daphne Mould as, "The higher the angel (in the series of better and better minds leading up to God Himself) the fewer concepts he needs to understand the world, just as more powerful human minds grasp a range of conclusions from a few general principles."

A common opinion of the Christian church is that angels sprang into being with their knowledge built in. Near-death survivors repeatedly reported that in their spirit bodies they could think much more clearly and comprehend meanings behind events. This flash of insight or enlightenment is usually lost upon returning to the body and everyday life. Others who have returned to the body have done so with a



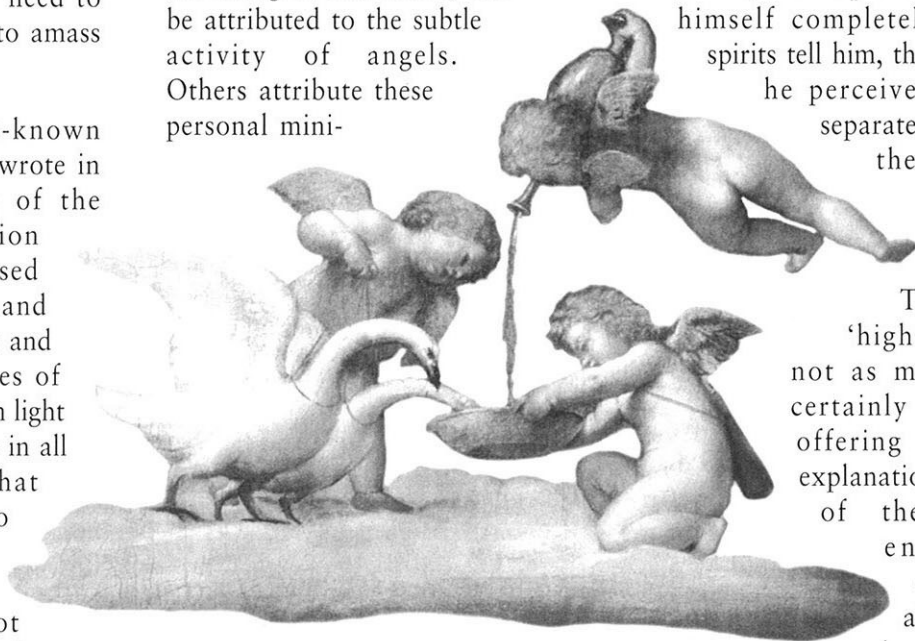
renewed sense of purpose in their life and a determination to 'clear up their act'. One such survivor saw his whole earthly life, good and bad, flash before him as an angel-like being looked on. The being asked the person if he could love others despite their faults as he was being completely loved at that moment. In many similar accounts angelic beings have stressed the need to learn to love others and to amass knowledge.

Dr John Lilly, a well-known experimenter with LSD, wrote in his book 'The Centre of the Cyclone' of one occasion when he became a focused centre of consciousness and travelled into other spaces and met other beings, entities of consciousness. "In a golden light which seemed to permeate in all directions", he met, what appeared to be, two guardian angels, "They say they are always with me, but that I am not usually in a state to perceive them. I am in a state to perceive them when I am close to the death of the body. In this state there is no time."

Whilst LSD 'trips' and near-death experiences have provided many with the chance of a divine encounter, how can those of us whose feet are firmly on the ground and in the living go about meeting an angel? An excerpt from the book 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' reveals a

subtle dimension to angelic communications. "Sweet souls around us watch us still / Press nearer to our side / Into our thoughts, into our prayers / With gentle helpings glide."

Many believe that flashes of insight or intuition, creative inspiration, the biting of conscience, can be attributed to the subtle activity of angels. Others attribute these personal mini-



miracles to the angel-like original nature of our own self. Whatever the case may be, as author Theodora Ward puts it, "Those who are sensitive to the movements of their own inner depths find there is a seemingly separate personality to whom they turn for wisdom greater than their consciousness is capable of." The idea that guardian angels are in fact our 'higher self' has not arrived with the New Age movement, but for centuries

mystics have claimed that human personality is just a fraction of the whole person, that the higher self has tremendous power and wisdom which is only available in the spiritual dimensions.

Some ancient religions held that part of the soul remains separate from the physical body and becomes like a personal guardian spirit. The 'Vikings' had a similar concept of 'The Second One' or 'The Follower', a half-ghostly soul-twin who could appear in human form and give advice. Scientist John Lilly describes a near-death experience in which he encounters two overwhelmingly loving and accepting guardian spirits. As they move closer they become more part of him, but stop before he loses himself completely. These spirits tell him, that although he perceives them as separate from him, they are in reality one.

The idea of 'higher self', if not as mystical, is certainly helpful in offering an explanation to many of the angelic encounters described above. The journey

through a history of angels has brought us from a hierarchy to a place a lot closer to home, a place in our own subconscious or 'higher self'. It could be argued that both are equally difficult to know! And so, angels remain an enigma, which is, after all, why they are so appealing.

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Jillian Sawers is a teacher with the BKWSU based in London.



Insights into the mind and personality

from
Anthea Church's
new book
entitled 'Angels'

of an angel

An angel is a human being who is in love with God. Not just loves, but in love, for love can be shared; but when one is in love it is exclusive and total.

The Personality of an Angel

An angel is a guest, for he cleans up behind him. Where there has been misunderstanding, he returns to clarify; where there has been hatred, he offers love. He is never without gifts and always without burden.

An angel is a protector. He sings such songs that the danger averts, and a fortress is built from his thinking. Come close to an angel and you feel you are safe and can rest.

An angel is a sanctuary in which you can sit. The atmosphere inside him is of long-standing peace and the door is open. But only to those who are honest.

An angel is a mirror that reflects the truth kindly. So that you can see in his face what you are, but if it showed you were poor you'd still dance, because on the other side of poverty would be the image of what you will be.

The Intellect of an Angel

The intellect of an angel brings newness, wealth and warmth to what is thin and complex. It is a resource of quality like a well. To take your fill from it, you need only bend a little and come close. It is vast and simple, with the knowledge of what is to come and the memory of what has been inside it. And these in equal intensity so that, with unflinching feelings of love, it can show the good and the bad, the ugly and the beautiful. It also understands what is happening in the present so that, touching it, you know what to do next, however strange the suggestion may be. In it is the wisdom to see connections that a human intellect misses: connections between people and places, moments of value and moments of weakness. It is an eye that sees everything and everyone as they are, as they have been and as they will be.

The Face of an Angel

An angel's face is clear and calm. And that makes it a paper on which you can read your future.

An angel's face is so cool so that, when you see it, the energy spreads evenly through your mind and body and you are ready to accept it.

An angel's face is refreshing because its senses are not abused but lived through gently. To see it is like taking a walk beside the green

of mountain or the blue of sea.

An angel's face is still because there are no lies inside. Truth makes it a straight, simple face whose beauty lies not in its form but in the feeling it gives you.

An Angel's Brain

An angel's brain is a machine whose work stretches way beyond the body it lives in. For as many branches as there are on a tree, there are parts to a brain; and as many parts as there are to the brain, there are parts of the world to sustain. An angel's brain sustains.



The brain of a human being looks after the body. It is shaped by what the soul has felt and loved through life upon life, and the messages it sends come out of those feelings and make the body act accordingly. The brain of an angel looks after

everybody. It no longer works for itself alone. The messages needed to make the legs walk in the right direction, the messages needed to make the lips speak go out to someone else's words and fill them with the value they'd forgotten they had. A human brain is dead without a soul to move it, even if in its compacted oldness, the brain doesn't directly do the soul's bidding. The brain of an angel is itself alive with energy.

The Mind of an Angel

The mind of an angel is a place of rest. Thoughts arise in the mind of an angel naturally and easily. They are thoughts apparently insignificant and yet the basis of visions that stretch way into the distance. Just as the sea is constantly there but its waves move in and out, so too the intelligence of an angel is constantly settled and deep, but the thoughts in its mind rise and fall like the waves.

The mind of an angel moves tunefully. It works at the heart of all that is physical and yet is unbounded by it. Instead it is bowed to. Where an angel's mind is at work, possessions, circumstances, the elements softly answer its needs and serve it. So that if you come close, you too feel a comfort that is born of everything you want being there without asking.

The mind of an angel makes its own body glow and those of others also, however tired and ill they may be.



The Heart of an Angel

The heart of an angel is a heart trusted by God not to hurt. Whatever happens, whether it is insulted or loved, it never hurts.

The heart of an angel gives others courage to do what they have to do. It doesn't say 'maybe'; it says, 'yes, yes, you can do it'.

The heart of an angel gives out to the world and takes only from God. It is the pivot point between the two. It is a place in which to recover, for in it is nothing but love, and love heals. It is the crux of the soul and, if there is any ranking order in angels, it is based on the quality of the heart, for in the heart are the secrets that can make or break an angel's fortune.

The Form of an Angel

The form of an angel is simple and yet every limb of it speaks, every

bone serves. It is not just the soul of an angel that works, but every nerve of the body has a task inside it.

When the feet of an angel work, the ground is cooled. Where the hands of an angel touch, a current is set up that finishes the old and begins something new. Where an angel stands tall and still, an atmosphere of courage and stability is there.

The Life of an Angel

The life of an angel is a life whose every move, every breath is loved by God. God has his hand on an angel's life, because he knows that one slip can damage, one step can serve - thousands.

An angel's life, so looked after, is a life of luxury. It is so because it is studded with treasures and yet there is none of the stress one normally associates with looking after wealth. It is a life of leisure because, though every move is a

service rendered, it is as natural and unconscious as sleep. An angel's words and everything he does is already determined and so he doesn't have to create anything. God moves him, dictates to him, and the dictation is never dull. It is a story, entertaining and profound.

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Anthea Church is a Teacher and Author of several books including *Firefly* and *Inner Beauty*. Her most recent book - *Angels* is available from Brahma Kumaris Literature Tel: 0181 830 0317



Creating a Value based Culture

Richard Barrett reviews the value systems which are not working and suggests an alternative way forward.

The World Bank is seen as a conservative international bureaucracy promoting capitalist values around the world - a far cry from anything spiritual. But the truth is that the basic values that drive the Bank's work are the values that we all embrace: eradication of poverty, a cleaner healthier environment, and a focus on human development through education and health.

Unfortunately, I believe, these values have got lost in the economic dogma and the imperious posture that the Bank sometimes adopts. However, things are changing in the organisation. And like all change, it is occurring from the inside out. In a few moments I will tell you the story of how these changes are coming about.

First, I want to speak to you about the most fundamental issue that our civilization has ever faced and is totally pertinent to our discussions at this conference. The topic I want to address is the destruction of our environment, and with it the potential destruction of life on Earth.

I believe the value system of our western civilisation is destroying the Earth and condemning hundreds of millions of people to poverty. We are living in a world where the environment is seen as an economic resource to be plundered and discarded; a world where species are becoming extinct at a faster rate than ever before in the history of humanity; a world where the gulf between the rich and poor continues to grow; and a world where the basis of every negotiation is, "What's in it for me?"

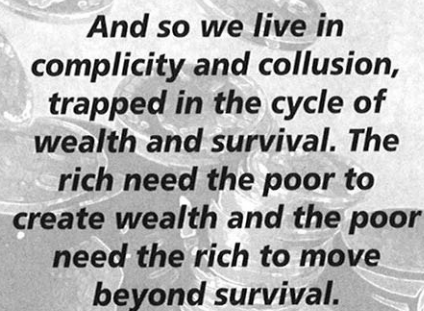
Self-interest and the single-minded pursuit of the accumulation of wealth are at the heart of this situation. Nowhere is the destructive impact of self-interest more apparent than in the world of business. Fuelled by the greed of their owners, corporations around the world are engaged in a wholesale exploitation of the Earth and its populations. What is extraordinary is that they are doing it with the full collusion of our society. Millions of fair-minded citizens, concerned over the future of their families, feel obliged to embrace the values of business because they have no alternative. Survival is everyone's concern. But, the plain fact is that it need not be this way.

We are collectively living out a cultural myth that stems from our inability to grasp the multi-dimensional nature of consciousness. Our perception of who we really are is clouded by our obsession with physical reality. We are trapped in a fear-based belief system that values self-interest above all else. We are driven to accumulate wealth because it has become our only guarantee for survival. It is unconscious fear for our survival that drives so many of our values.

Once we have sufficient wealth to meet our daily needs our fear shifts

to the future. Now our goal is to accumulate enough wealth to make sure that we can survive in comfort for the rest of our lives, especially when we will be unable to work. The poor achieve this by having many children. The affluent accumulate surpluses so they can educate their children and live off their investments. If we are amongst the fortunate few that have accumulated enough wealth to ensure a comfortable old age, then theoretically we have no need for more money. We should be able to stop accumulating - but we don't know the meaning of enough, and the glamour of wealth is too appealing.

We see that life could be easier if we had more money. We buy more time-saving gadgets and bigger and better cars. Now we can afford to get others to take care of our chores, which gives us more freedom. We buy a second home and more cars. We find we become



And so we live in complicity and collusion, trapped in the cycle of wealth and survival. The rich need the poor to create wealth and the poor need the rich to move beyond survival.

more popular. We are treated with more respect. People's heads turn when we go by, and it makes us feel good. "Who is that?" they ask. We begin to feel important. We notice now that we have power. People rush to perform services for us. We get what we want, when we want it. Nothing can stand in our way. More wealth means more power. Let's get all that we can.

Now we are obsessed with wealth accumulation. We seek to place our surpluses where they will get the

highest returns. We don't care how they are created. Just give us more. This is where business obliges. It responds to these incentives. Business gobbles up surplus wealth to create more. The bigger the business can become the more wealth it can create and those that own it become richer.

Meanwhile the workers - those that create wealth for business - still fear for their survival, or trying to make provision for their children's education and their old age. They need employment. Even if the business they work for is exploiting people and their environment they cannot afford to have different values from their employer. So they develop two sets of values. Those that they use in their family life and those that they take to work.

Conserving resources and preserving the environment for future generations are not values that interest investors. They want the largest and fastest returns they can get, and to hell with the business that can't provide it. We quickly learn that the values that sustain our families, such as truth and integrity, are not welcomed at work. It is not a place where you can be your true self. This schizophrenic existence combined with our fear for survival creates an impossible burden that tears us apart at our soul.

And so we live in complicity and collusion, trapped in the cycle of wealth and survival. The rich need the poor to create wealth and the poor need the rich to move beyond survival. Meanwhile from the sidelines we watch the world die slowly before us, and we feel helpless to stop it. How do we correct this situation? We must fully engage in the paradigm shift that is already under way. It is time to get off the fence. No longer can we accept, "What is in it for me", as our unconscious world view. We

must consciously embrace, "What's best for the common good."

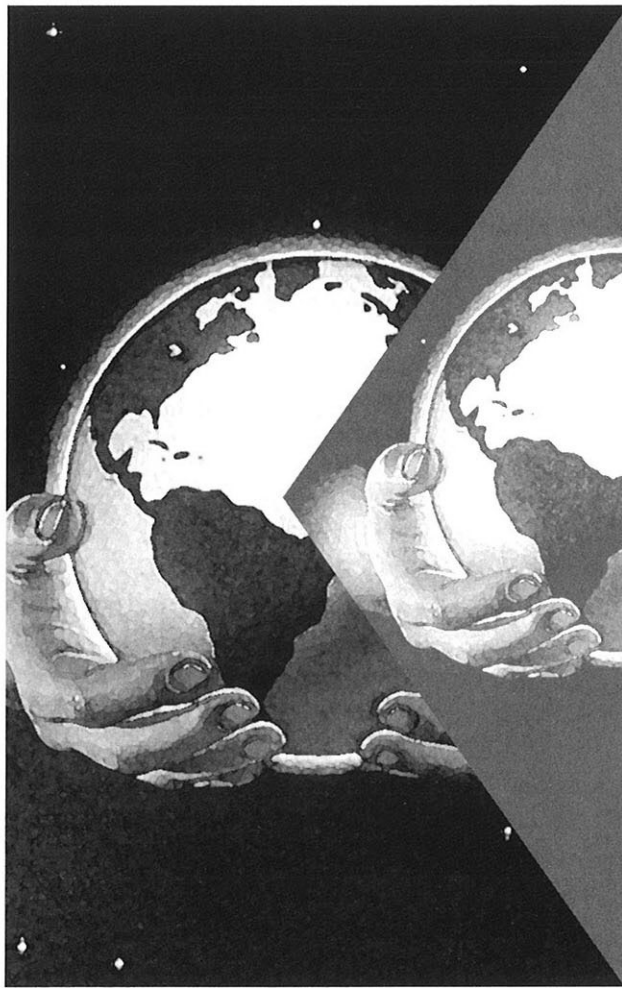
The environmental crisis is a crisis of values. The message it brings is that we are all totally interconnected. The decisions we make individually and in our organisations, and the economic policies that our governments embrace, have repercussions around the globe. We don't live in separate units. The earth is like the human body. It is composed of millions of human cells. If groups of cells are allowed to become weak, then the strength of the whole body is affected. Therefore, it behoves the strong cells to help the weak cells. By doing so the strength of the whole body increases.

When you take this larger world view you realise that giving becomes the same as receiving. You can only give to yourself. In the smaller world view you are stuck in separation. You build barriers between you and the rest of the world. The pie has to be divided, and you join the rush to make sure you get the biggest piece. My vision is of a world made up of responsible individuals living in soul-consciousness, where every decision is driven by the question, "What is best for the common good?"

A long time ago I decided I wanted to embrace connectedness and eliminate all forms of separation from my life. I began to think of myself as a world citizen. I decided to become a member of all religions. I realized I couldn't change my sex, but I could break

down the gender barrier by recognising my own feminine energy and embracing it. And finally, I could transcend my Anglo-Saxon racial characteristics by thinking of myself as a member of the human race, or as I prefer to say, as a soul having a human experience.

This new world view demands that each one of us sees ourselves as part of a larger whole. We are all totally interconnected and



interdependent. We are our brother's keeper and we are the stewards of the planet. Life on earth will not survive unless we individually understand and integrate this message into our every aspect of our lives and particularly in business. To do this, each one of us needs to embrace soul-consciousness, to eliminate

fear, and take our deepest values into the workplace where we live them out fearlessly. In Gandhi's words, "Your life must become your message."

Up to the 17th century Kings and Queens ruled all the lands and were a law unto themselves. Today, autocratic control has practically disappeared. We are living in an age of democracy and human rights. Freedom, equality and justice, and the values that go with them are expanding everywhere. Everywhere that is, except into business. This is the last bastion of those who seek to overcome their fears by accumulating wealth. There is no democracy in business. Business leaders still act as if they are tyrannical rulers. However, I believe their days are numbered. The democratic movement and the shift in values from "What is in it for me" to "What is best for the common good" is an unstoppable force. For the common good to flourish there must first be freedom. Freedom promotes responsibility and leads to equality. Equality leads to a recognition of the importance of sharing. Responsibility and equality promote accountability and justice, and justice leads to caring. In responsibility, sharing and caring, we have three values that lie at the very heart of spiritual philosophy. As we embrace these values we begin to fulfil our destiny as human beings.

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Richard Barrett shares his time between speaking and writing on spirituality in business life, and the World Bank, where he is part of the Change Management Team, bringing a new culture and values to the organisation. He is also the Founder of the World Bank's Spiritual Unfoldment Society. To obtain a copy of Richard's book, *'A Guide to Liberating Your Soul'* call Avanti Resources in the UK 0181 861 2461 and in the USA call 1 800 879 4214.

HEALING PARTNERSHIP



Craig Brown is a General Practitioner in a group practice of 12,000 patients on the South Coast of England. He averages around 120 consultations in the surgery per week. He recounts his growing partnership with healers to help his patients return to full health.

About eight years ago I became interested in working with complementary therapists and asked the National Federation of Spiritual Healers if they knew of a healer who lived locally. By chance a healer had

just moved house to about 200 yards from our surgery and was willing to work with me. He began by sitting in on my surgery and we explored what healing was and if it had a place in the General

Practice. After some time I began to refer some patients to him and of course was curious as to what kind of results we would be getting. I can remember two of the early cases.

AGITATED STATE

There was a young lad who came into my surgery having freaked out after smoking Cannabis. I gave him some Valium and some Beta Blocker drugs to calm him down. He was in a very agitated state and I felt he needed to be signed off from work for two weeks. When he returned to see me he said that the Valium and Beta Blockers hadn't helped. I then referred him to a healer and after two sessions he felt that his anxiety had completely gone and was able to return to work. His girlfriend came to see me especially to tell me how much better he was.

RECURRING TONSILLITIS

A young lad aged five had recurring tonsillitis. He had had three attacks that year and it is good clinical practice if you have had three attacks of tonsillitis that you should have your tonsils removed. He went for only two sessions of healing and didn't have an attack of tonsillitis for 18 months, which meant he did not need his tonsils out.

RESULTS OF HEALING

There were other cases of healing success but I wanted to get an overall impression of what the benefits of healing were as seen by the patients. After about six months I sent a simple questionnaire to everyone who had been attending the healing clinic to ask if they found healing was of benefit and in what way. Of the 30 people sent the questionnaire 28 said they felt better. Some said that their symptoms had improved but others that they felt more relaxed and more content and even that they had found meaning in their illness. This was both interesting and surprising. The healers were

maintaining that they were operating on a spiritual level and so the outcomes of the spiritual intervention occur on a spiritual level first and then mental and physical changes follow. In other words when patients reported feeling more peaceful, finding meaning in their life, being more content and having more vitality, this was a spiritual result.

STUDY ON HEALING

The next step was to try and undertake a clinical research project to look more closely at the results from healing. The healing was by laying on of hands, where the healer in a meditative state connects with a higher source and channels this energy of peace and love through himself to the patient. We were offering 20 minutes of this type of healing for eight weeks consecutively. Patients referred were mainly those with a chronic illness who had had the symptoms for an average of approximately three years. We still had to answer the question of how to measure the outcome and who measures the success of the outcome, the patient or the doctor, and at what point is the outcome measured? These are some challenging questions which not only psychotherapy and counselling have to face but complementary therapists who are beginning to work in the traditional medical field.

USING A PATIENT ASSESSED QUESTIONNAIRE

We opted for a well used, standardised questionnaire called the Medical Outcome Study Shortened Form 36 (MOS - SF - 36). These are 36 questions which test physical functioning, social function, role limitation due to physical and emotional problems, general medical health, vitality, bodily pain, and general health

perceptions. We gave this questionnaire to the patients before they entered the healing trial and after completing eight sessions and then again at six months. We were able to demonstrate consistently that there were improvements across all dimensions of health and that these results were sustained after healing. This has been published in the journal of Complementary Therapies in Medicine 1995.

SPIRITUAL OUTCOMES

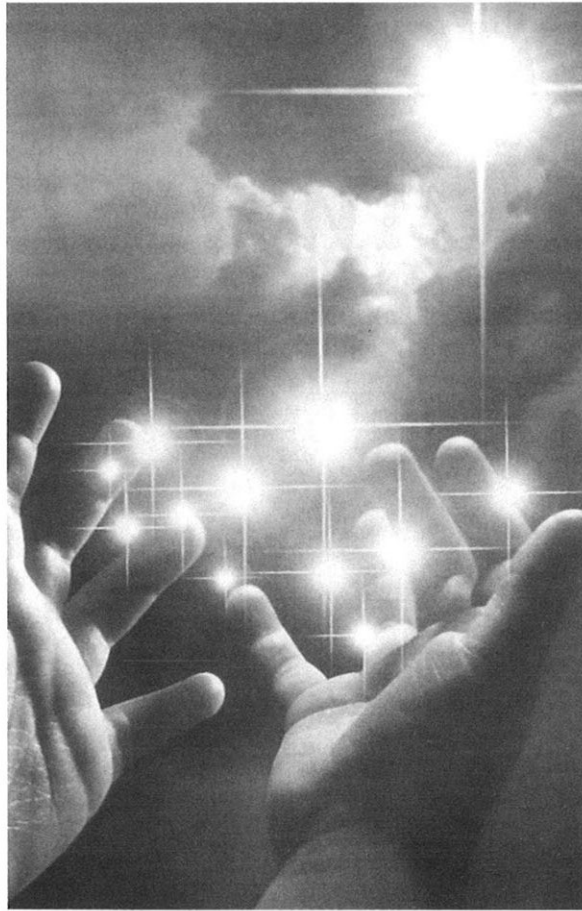
The problem about science is that we tend to measure things we can measure and may fail to recognize more meaningful but also more subtle changes. As mentioned, some of our patients admitted to feeling more content, which may be even more important than the degree of discomfort. One patient, who had visited many specialists unsuccessfully for her mouth ulcers, said that after healing although her mouth ulcers weren't any better she felt a lot better about having them. This critical change of attitude was the first step in her healing process. The ulcers cleared six months later. I am sure psychotherapists would also recognise that attitudinal changes are the foundations for long term improvements. We know when it happens but how can we prove it? The question remains how is it measured and when?

SPIRITUALITY IN HEALTH

Apart from now running his own two afternoon clinics the healer sat in with me on one of my normal morning surgeries. We were not only interested in integrating healing into clinical practice, but asking where does spirituality fit into the nitty gritty of general practice? In the holistic health model of mind, body and spirit,

what is meant by the spiritual dimension? Is it possible to make a spiritual diagnosis and even offer a spiritual treatment? Patients may present you with physical complaints, mental symptoms and even emotional upsets but what are the spiritual symptoms?

Being a practical sort of person I decided that over two weeks I would write down the spiritual diagnosis on every patient that I saw. Some were easy but others were more a kind of guess work or using intuition. Such words as loneliness, attachment, guilt, resentment, jealousy, depression were typical examples. The key to making this diagnosis is first of all listening to what the patient is saying to such an extent that you actually feel you are 'working in their shoes'. Then adopting what is called the



You visualise the energy coming from that source through yourself, through your heart, to give the patient the opposite quality. So for anger it would be tolerance, guilt - forgiveness; attachment, generosity; pride, humility. I found this particularly useful once with a patient who was suicidal and as she related her story to me I began to feel her depression and how hopeless not only was her predicament but how little I could do to help her. Knowing that the spiritual diagnosis was despair I momentarily detached myself and connected with the Supreme Source of Peace and Love. I felt warmth and love enter me and transmit to the soul in front of me. I didn't say anything but something happened. She knew, and I knew. From that point she was on the road to recovery.

There is much more to spirituality. The challenges of death, change, old age, the study of Chakras and Karma. Yet really it is all so simple; that is bringing compassion into our work.

With so many doctors suffering from burnout, where it seems they take on their patient's negativity, this kind of healing has so much to offer the doctor as well. Healing is very much like meditation. It is linking to a higher source, the highest form of light and love you can perceive. It is experiencing that source coming through the crown of your head, filling you up from your heart and sending that to the soul opposite you. It is that simple. It need only take several seconds and can easily be fitted into the ten minute consultation that General Practitioners usually have with patients. It is not drifting off into a daydream, but it is working with positive energy. The thing about this work is that it does not exhaust you, but

it invigorates you. Healers enjoy their work because they feel revitalised after it. They say when they bring down the energy from the Supreme Being and channel it through to their patients they take 5% off the top. It is something you can do at any time not only in the therapy situation but even when you're sitting on the tube. Try bringing down Light and Love to the person opposite, and there is enough to fill the whole carriage. It is an inexhaustible source and enjoys being used.

I feel it is important for those in the medical profession to look seriously at the outcome from healing in a scientific way. Yet on the other hand I am saying let's free ourselves from any expectations of outcome and just offer compassion, in the knowledge that it is action in a spiritual way for the better.

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Extracted and edited from Dr. Craig Brown's presentation made to the Psychology and Spirituality Seminar held at the Global Retreat Centre last year.

... when they bring down the energy from the Supreme Being and channel it through to their patients they take 5% off the top.

beginner's mind where you are curious and open to intuitive insights. The spiritual diagnosis finds the root cause of the illness which is perhaps manifesting as physical, emotional or mental symptoms. Identifying these negative spiritual qualities as a source of illness is the first step to spiritual treatment.

SPIRITUAL TREATMENT

Having identified the negative quality and experienced it in yourself, then you connect with the higher source, the Supreme Being.

Psychotherapy & Soul Awareness

Andrew Powell views the soul, God and almost everything through the eyes of a psychotherapist

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

To begin this presentation with the Gospel of St John may be rather presumptuous, but I do so because, for me, these few words assert the Truth from which all spiritual hopes and ambitions flow.

It follows that mind came before matter, thought before physical substance and, while the body is but a temporary thing, the soul exists beyond all time.

If this is your deeply held conviction, as it is mine, then what we do as therapists and the part we play in the lives of our patients, must surely be influenced accordingly.

I began as a physician with the working of the body. When I started out as a psychiatrist, I treated the mind and brain as much the same thing. Later, as an analytical psychotherapist, I moved into the sphere of the mind as seen from a humanistic standpoint. In the years that followed, the greater meaning of birth and death could not be held back and exploded into another realm altogether, that of the cosmos in which the relationship with God had to be given first place.



This entailed a reversal of figure and ground. Human relationships and all their attendant problems are no less important. But the frame of reference is changed forever.

If I contemplate an apple, it is surely a miracle of sorts; aesthetic, tasty, nourishing and, if I carry out a scientific analysis, it yields a treasure trove of enzymes, organic compounds, metabolic reactions and the rest.

Traditionally, the scientific investigation of this apple is confined to asking 'what' or 'how'. What is the sugar content of the apple? How much rotational force was required to pluck it from the tree?

Mainstream psychiatry has adhered to this kind of investigation and it is the one on which the biological model of mental illness is based. Freud too saw himself as unveiling a scientific psychology; his model of the mind bears the same stamp of mechanistic explanations of human behaviour.

Yet what is it that makes all good scientists toe the party line and restrict

themselves to the 'what' and 'how' but never to ask themselves 'why'? It can hardly be impartiality, for we know now that the supposed neutrality of science is riddled with assumptions and prejudices.

Perhaps it is because to ask the question 'why' means to look for the truth within, and by this I mean not the mechanism but the motive. Subjective experience would then have to be taken as valid. As it so happens, the virtue of scientific objectivity is under siege from

quantum theory. And far from there being any fixed reality 'out there', relativity theory informs us that it is none other than ourselves who through our sense organs manufacture the very dimensions of space and time which we take for granted.

So, before the millennium is out, let us wait no longer in putting consciousness right in the middle of the map. I feel there is some urgency about this, given the precarious condition of mankind.

Returning for a moment to the apple, what happened was that I decided to eat it. At the base level of human appetites, my motive was simple enough. I was hungry, the apple was ripe, so I pulled it off the tree and consumed it.

In the case of Eve, a more complex psychological situation arose. The serpent played her false, saying "Eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil". How could Eve know that the duality of good and evil only appears as a feature of limited consciousness, in which separation from the divine source has taken place? She was soon to find out. The transgression took her and Adam away from soul-consciousness into body-consciousness, into the turbulent world of appetites, sensations, desires, conflicts and attachments.

In our century, this is the domain of psychological theory, in which consciousness is given over to the push and pull of human relationships. At their best, such relationships do embody spiritual values. But at their worst, human relationships are capable of the most appalling violence, as we all know. Unfortunately, the technological by-products of modern science lend themselves to just this kind of abuse.

Now, it so happens that just as the human race is busy sinking itself in the swamp of science-driven materialism, quantum mechanics and relativity theory come along and give us one last chance to find out more about what heaven is made of. It cannot be the same as before, because our consciousness has been through the mill of incarnate life and we do not have the innocence of Adam and Eve. On the other hand, we can begin really to comprehend what we are seeing, when we step back and take account of the tree which bore the apple, before it was twisted off the bough. As T. S. Eliot puts it in *Little Gidding*,

*"We shall not cease from
exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first
time"*.

This is what it means to be conscious of ourselves in a participatory universe. We have the freedom to use our subjectivity and to respond with the heart as well as the head. The questions we want to ask and the answers we seek take us to a new kind of relationship which goes beyond the drama of human affairs. It is to feel the connection with the whole, the source from which we came, and of which we are still part. Most important of all, this is a living, spiritual universe.

We also know that the privilege of incarnation carries with it an obligation to undergo the trials and tribulations of human life and to stretch ourselves in the doing. We are compelled to recognise the paradox of having to go through physical birth, life and death in order to get anywhere spiritually. With my psychotherapist's hat on, I am accustomed to thinking in object relations terms. It means

seeing the infant as actively seeking the other (usually mother) from birth onwards. This is why the late Donald Winnicott said "There is no such thing as a baby, only a nursing couple!".

An understanding of object relations allows us to make sense of a whole range of developmental phenomena concerning relationships, how we internalise significant others, employ defence mechanisms against threatened losses and so on. But the one thing psychoanalysis has never explained is why we were born object-seeking in the first place.

I would like to propose something rather different, what I am going to call spiritual object-relations.

Let us accept for a moment the possibility that the primary relationship is that between the individual soul and God, the Supreme Soul.

This can be experienced intuitively, or by way of the perception of angelic forms, or in states of samadhi, tapasya and much else that science has for over three hundred years been trying to rule out of court. But other subjective evidence may also now be included, such as the near-death experience which is systematically being reported and studied.

People looking for intellectual evidence have a harder time of it, having to make do with inferences drawn from the physical sciences. There are plenty of these. For example, particle physics shows that two electrons which once shared the same quantum field remain connected even when sent off to the opposite ends of the universe. Stop the spin on one and the other will instantly stop. The message doesn't take time to travel, as down a beam of light. It really is

instantaneous. Everything is connected with all else.

Another case involves Newton's inverse square law, which states that the gravitational pull of one object on another lessens with the distance between them. But certain sub-atomic particles called gluons work the other way round. The pull gets stronger the further apart, hence the name. This is turning out to be a coherent universe indeed.

A further line of enquiry suggests that the universe functions as one giant hologram, called the 'holoverse' in which the smallest part contains the information of the whole. Is this so surprising if we recall the singularity which gave rise to the big bang? According to $E = mc^2$, the same energy gave rise to all matter, however finely differentiated.

There is much more that could be said along the same lines. The point is that there is no reason to suppose that God is a long way off, as the clockwork universe of Isaac Newton implied. God is much more likely to be right here in this room and only a thought away.

So, coming back to spiritual object-relations, this connection with the very core of the universe of our being is eternal, a kind of spiritual umbilical cord which reclaims us at every death. We cannot know how this is experienced after death or between lives. But the near-death experience points to a state in which the relationship with discarnate beings is clothed in familiar form. As the subject has lived to tell the tale, perhaps this is only to be expected. It suggests that in discovering God to be Father, Mother, Companion, Friend and Teacher, we are availing ourselves of the variety of loving relationships which we know in our corporeal form. But in no way

does this mean the whole thing is a mere projection.

I am suggesting that this fundamental connectedness is the bedrock on which our human object-relationships are laid down, expressed in our innate tendency to form attachments, seek intimacy and find repose.

At the same time, no human being can be God and this is where our problems begin. Spiritual or soul love is not servant to the ego. It is dispassionate, pure and unsentimental. Provided we ask for it to be given us, it streams down from that high place like a veritable waterfall. It is natural to want to pass it on, indeed what else could we do with it!

If we are lucky, we experience something very like it when we lie as infants in our mother's arms, when for a time mother is, if not God, at least an angel. This is why the icon of Madonna and child moves us so, being a wonderful confluence of sacred and human love. Once such a child has been filled with love, its soul remains open forever to spiritual replenishment. The demands it goes on to make as an adult on others, kith and kin, will be moderate, realistic and capable of standing frustration.

In contrast, the poor child who is starved of love suffers not one blow but two. The lack of human nurture brings with it a wound to the soul so that the experience of the connection with the Divine is severed. Yet there remains an intense longing for that connection once known before the incarnation into birth.

This is where the danger lies for the well-intentioned psychotherapist. What are we doing each time we indulge a patient's fantasy about

us, so that the attachment to us is encouraged to deepen? What kind of illusion is this, in which the patient is encouraged to see us not as we really are, but as we think it would be in his or her interest to see us?

We need to remember that not only may we be activating the longing for mother and father. We may be setting in motion a deeper longing for the Divine. Perhaps we have been taught simply to respond to this as the 'idealised transference'. But if we allow ourselves to be confused with God instead of accurately highlighting what may be going on, we are surely setting up ourselves over and above that person and sooner or later there will be a price to pay.

I like to bear in mind a comment of the Dalai Lama's: "If you can help others it is very good, yet if you cannot do this, at least do not harm them!"

I have spent a number of years studying and training in the area of what can be called spiritual medicine. It has only been possible to the extent that my own spiritual practice has developed alongside. It is not for everyone, but what every clinician can do, no matter if it never finds words, is to aim for soul to soul contact with his patient. And if, at the same time, he quietly asks for divine assistance, it will undoubtedly be given. Not only the patient feels the difference. Instead of crawling home exhausted at the end of the day, the therapist finds there is still a spring in his step. And if he spends a few minutes in prayer, or relaxing in the company of the Divine, the next morning will find him up and ready to start all over again.

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Dr. Andrew Powell is a Psychiatrist and Consultant Psychologist in the Health Service. He is a Council Member of the Scientific and Medical Network.

Professor David Fontana highlights our failures and what might create greater success in education

EDUCATION

for Being



The great American educator, John Dewey, once wrote that "education is its own end". When I first came across these words in my days as a postgraduate student of child psychology, I wasn't sure what they meant.

Only later did I realise that Dewey was insisting that the education of children isn't just about paper qualifications and preparing for the future; it is about the refining of sensitivities and awareness within the precious moments of childhood. He was also reminding us that childhood is just as much an authentic part of living as are the years of adult life. Seventy years after Dewey wrote these words, his reminder to us is more salutary than ever. We live in a society that firmly believes childhood is simply a prelude to the real business of living, an

inconvenient curtain raiser to be got over and done with as quickly and with as little trouble as possible.

Notice how even the word 'children' is out of



fashion these days - boys and girls as young as five and six have suddenly become 'school students'. This urge to hurry children through their most formative years arises partly from a cynical urge to turn them into consumers as early as possible; but it comes also from a profound misunderstanding by society of the crucial importance of

these years. Not only do the experiences of the early years go a long way towards forming the enduring personality, and determining the emotional tone of much that is to come, they are entered in an intensity, a freshness, and often a depth of perception frequently absent in adult life.

The failure of our society to honour children is apparent not only in the decisions we make about the kind of formal education we should offer to the young, but in the informal context of daily adult-child relationships. Listen for example to the way many adults speak to their children, and hear the extent to which the young are denied the right to express their feelings and their interests and their needs, to have their questions answered fully and honestly, and to have their sense of wonder at the mysterious business of being alive accepted and cherished. One can hardly blame adults for this. They are simply passing on to the next

generation the emotional misunderstandings under which they themselves once laboured. For the same reason, one can hardly blame adults for failing to listen and learn from children, and to recognise that in a very real sense children are our teachers, and a constant reminder to us of all that we have lost in the process of becoming adult human beings.

We psychologists are sometimes criticised for making these points, and are accused of arguing that children should be given licence to do just as they like. Nothing could be further from the truth. We live in a social world, and children have to learn the value of sharing, and of consideration and sensitivity for others. Or rather, they have to be given the environment in which the potential for these things can be developed, an environment in which they are able to see adults practising these qualities themselves, and in which there is openness, fairness, and unconditional love.

Which is really a way of saying that in the home and in the school children should be offered an environment and an education concerned with that elusive factor called quality. As it stands, our education system, like our science, is very good at teaching children and young people about quantity, that set of techniques for conveniently measuring, weighing, categorising and labelling, and for analysing phenomena and reducing them to their constituent parts. It is much less effective at teaching them about quality, and the wholistic processes that determine how we experience our lives and relate to others and to ourselves. For much of the time, it fails to recognise that it is quality and not quantity that leads to personal

growth, to psychological health, to spiritual awareness and to the refining of our inner being.

If it is to facilitate an awareness of quality, education has to focus upon what I and others have referred to as being and not just upon knowing. The latter has to do with facts, skills, techniques and objectivity, processes which are largely the same thing for each person who learns them. The former is about self-understanding, and the precious uniqueness of each person. Another way of expressing it is to say that the latter is about knowledge and the former is about wisdom. Knowing things doesn't necessarily make us wise.

Our educational system, both informally within the home and formally within the school, has in a very real sense failed us. It has not produced the caring, compassionate culture for which we all yearn.

Wisdom has more to do with the way in which we appreciate and apply knowledge, the sense we make of it, and the way we use it to better the lives of those around us.

An education for being is essentially an education of the feelings, the emotions and the spirit, rather than just of the intellect. It is grounded upon a recognition of the existence and the authenticity of these dimensions, and an awareness of the way in which they can be guided and developed in a life-affirming and life-enhancing way. It is taught by adults (and this is crucial) who have recognised and sought to cherish and develop these dimensions in themselves, and who

understand the importance of helping children love themselves in order to be able to love others.

An education for being must accord due status to the teaching of religion (in its broadest sense) and to the creative arts, as it is these areas of the curriculum that deal most intimately with what makes us human. But the sciences, humanely and wisely taught, are also essential vehicles for learning about being, particularly when they are approached in the context of quality (and therefore of values), rather than presented as if divorced from a concern for the sacredness of life and of the environment. This concern for context is in fact vital in all that we teach to children, for a true education for being arises not just out of the material that is taught, but out of the way in which that material is communicated to children.

Of course, it is much easier to be a teacher of quantity than of quality, of knowledge than of wisdom. And I do not minimise the difficulties faced by parents and by teachers at all levels (and especially by those living and working in areas of social deprivation) when trying to focus upon being. I have been too long involved in education in schools and universities for that. But our educational system, both informally within the home and formally within the school, has in a very real sense failed us. It has not produced the caring, compassionate culture for which we all yearn. The history of education shows that teachers and parents cannot alone be responsible for this culture. They need the support of a society that cares about being as well as about knowing, that cares about childhood as well as about adulthood, and that demonstrates this caring both in its philosophy

and its allocation of time, energy and practical resources.

Carl Jung, a man to whom like Dewey modern psychologists and educationalists owe a debt of gratitude, once wrote that from middle life onward, the main problem of the clients who came to him for psychotherapy was a religious one. He meant by this that such clients were searching for some meaning in life beyond the purely material. According to



recent official estimates from the Office of Population and Census and Surveys, one in six adults in the UK is currently suffering from a mental disorder of some kind - most commonly depression or neurotic anxiety. These figures are truly appalling, representing as they do a vast weight of human misery. The Buddha referred to this misery as *dukkha*, a Sanskrit term variously interpreted as suffering, sourness or unsatisfactoriness, and taught that we are all affected by *dukkha* to some degree until we find the true meaning that lies behind our time on earth.

The poet William Wordsworth suggested that this meaning may lie closer to us in childhood than at any other time. Whether this is so or not, there is no doubt that unless the right opportunities are given to us in the early years, we may find ourselves progressively more

confused and unhappy in our search for it. We may find we have been denied the chance to listen freely to the subtle promptings of our own spirit, and to develop the activity of mind that probes perceptively and courageously into the mysteries of being. The result on the one hand is the sense of purposelessness, of alienation from ourselves and from the world around us, that characterises much depression, and on the other the existential insecurity and fear that

lies behind so many anxieties.

Christ spoke of "receiving the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child", no matter what our age in years. Thus at any time we can, given the necessary openness, sensitivity and innocence, repair the omissions and the mistakes met with during our early life. Change, development, revelation remain always possible. But Kenneth Graham, that master storyteller, wrote of childhood as "the golden age". How sad that we condemn children to pass so much of that age in the vain pursuit of knowing and so little in the true quest for being.

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Prof David Fontana is a Reader in Educational Psychology at Cardiff University and author of several books including *The Meditators' Handbook* and *Growing Together: Parent-Child Relationships as a Path to Wholeness and Happiness* (Element Books 1994)



Anger finishes all wisdom

Ego finishes regard

Worry eats away your life

Bribery finishes all justice

Greed finishes all honesty

Fear eats away a human being

The greatest jewellery in the world is your own nobility

Your own best companion in the world is your determined thought

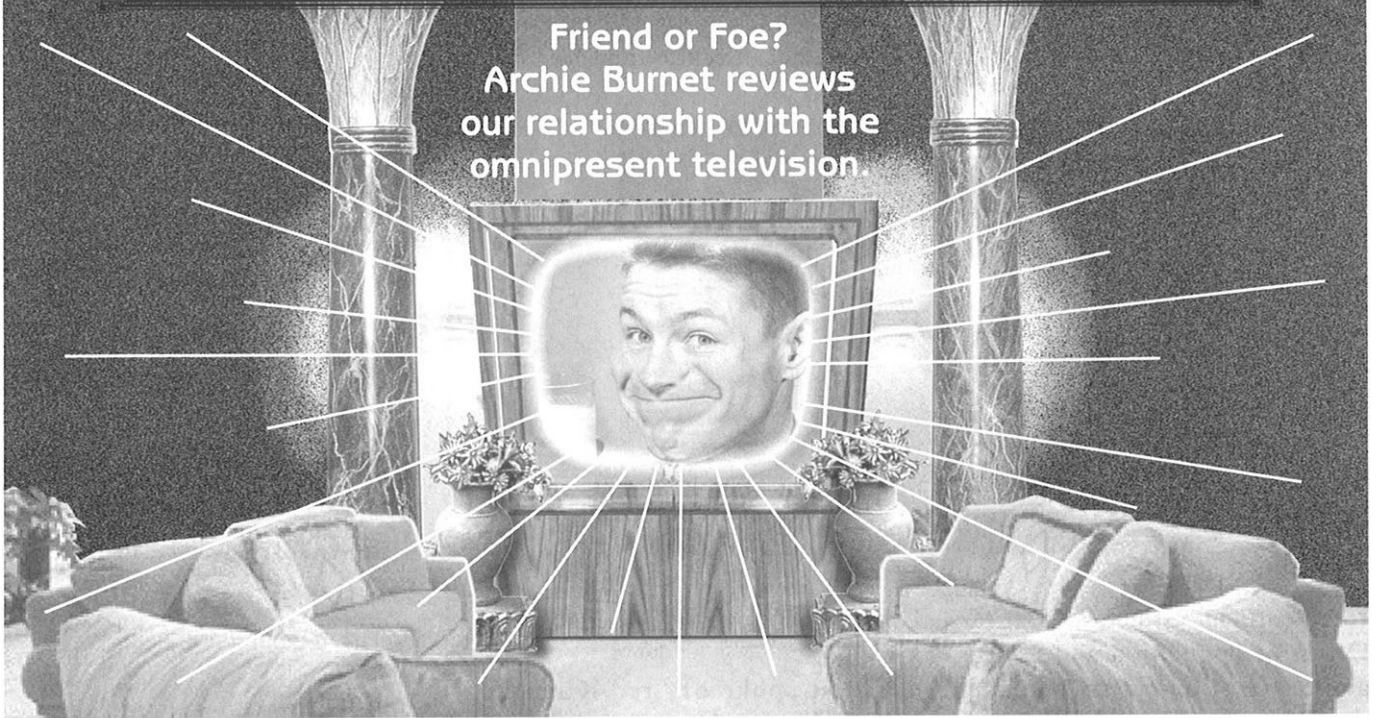
Those who do not wish for anything receive everything

Renounce that happiness in which there is sorrow for others

Dadi Janki

The Deity in the Corner of Your Living Room

Friend or Foe?
Archie Burnet reviews
our relationship with the
omnipresent television



Much has been said in the debate about the effects of television on human behaviour. Its power is obvious, influencing whole cultures and shaping people's values, perceptions and needs almost overnight. India is a classic example of television as the primary weapon of a cultural invasion and the consequent transformation of people's desires and lifestyles. For the past three years Star Television has broadcast largely American programmes to nearly one billion people, most of whom still live in poverty. The baseball cap can now be seen on the heads of thousands of young Indians nationwide.

Contradictions abound as to the effect of the deity in the corner of the world's living rooms. On the one hand those with a vested interest in the entertainment industry will hotly deny that violence on TV affects human behaviour. While just across the road, there is a global industry called advertising that demonstrates every day how to influence the behaviour of millions with only 30 seconds worth of seductive sounds and images.

Is TV good or bad? Are we fooling ourselves when we think that almost constant mental emotional and physical violence can be consumed in the name of entertainment and not have a profound effect on the personalities of young and old alike? Are we, as Neil Postman pointed out with exquisite clarity, simply 'Amusing ourselves to Death' in his book of the same title? Is television simply the most potent, addictive and legitimate drug in the world? Are we all too hooked to see the light?

The evidence is gradually mounting that television certainly plays a major role in shaping the personality and potential of every new generation. Concerned for the well-being of their children, a TV Action Group was formed over 20 years ago in the UK by a group of concerned parents. After making their own observations and conducting their own research they were quite convinced about the effects of the 'magic box'. While their research is not 'scientific' in the traditional sense, their findings make essential reading for every parent. Read it through your intuition as opposed to your rational process - does this feel right?

'IT'S NOT WHAT YOU WATCH...'

Television watching itself affects child development regardless of the programme content. It affects children's thinking, speaking, imagination, senses, physique, feelings and behaviour.

TELEVISION WATCHING AS AN EXPERIENCE

Television watching puts children into a passive, trance-like state where they become 'TV Prisoners' - a condition quite different from their active, playful state when not watching. Some parents observed that:

"My five year-old goes into trance when he watches TV. He just gets locked into what is happening on the screen. He's totally, absolutely, absorbed when he watches and oblivious to anything else. He watches in a real trance."

"My children are cross and irritable after they have been watching; often nervous, bored, disagreeable, slowly coming back to normal."

TV ADDICTION - 'THE PLUG-IN DRUG'

Not unlike drugs and alcohol, TV watching allows the participant to blot out the real world and enter into a pleasurable and passive mental state where worries and anxieties cannot intrude. The typically vacant stare of someone on drugs or alcohol is very similar to the stare of the TV watcher.

The eyes need to be completely passive in order to watch TV; that is a fixed focus, no voluntary eye movements and a fixed head position. It is as if instead of the imagery arising from within, as with daydreaming, it is produced mechanically for the watcher by the television.

HOW LONG DO CHILDREN WATCH TELEVISION?

Two in three school age children watch TV 3-5 hours daily or 21-35 hours weekly, according to the recent PYE survey. This is as long as children are in school. One in three children dream about late night programmes. In the US, surveys show an average of 30 hours per week, and up to 54 hours a week for pre-school children. In West Germany, 80% of children state that TV is their favourite hobby.

CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Children learn so much in their first

three years compared to the rest of their lives. They learn to walk, to speak and experience the awakening of thinking as they grow from being babies to infants. Through play, children develop their knowledge of things, their relationships with other children, their physical control and their imagination. Playing is a child's work, and channels energy constructively into the learning processes. It is essentially active.

Children learn through imitating other children and the adults who tell stories, nursery rhymes, and who can provide everyday activities such as baking or making pictures.

TV RETARDS BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND BLUNTS THE SENSES

The brain is patterned by the senses, by movement, speech, thought and imagination. As the brain develops, children shift from a non-verbal 'right hemisphere' dreaming consciousness to a verbal, logical 'left hemisphere' state. Television watching prolongs children's dependency on the right hemisphere.

The 'brain strain' on children of forming 625 lines composed of over 800 dots appearing 25 times per second into meaningful images must be considerable. With the lack of eye-movement, this strain can produce sleeplessness, anxiety, nightmares,



headaches, perceptual disorders, poor concentration and blunted senses. TV watching can produce sensory deprivation.

TELEVISION AND SPEAKING

Children learn to speak by talking with real people, not by listening to mechanically reproduced speech. Real people communicate the meaning of words, whereas television only reproduces the sounds, a subtle but vital difference, confusing for toddlers. Television, by emphasising the visual, reduces the need of children to learn how to speak; no verbal response is required of the child; thus speech is discouraged.

Members of a working party on reading agreed that children know nursery rhymes much less well than previously, largely because of television, which was a 'look and forget' rather than a 'look and learn' medium.

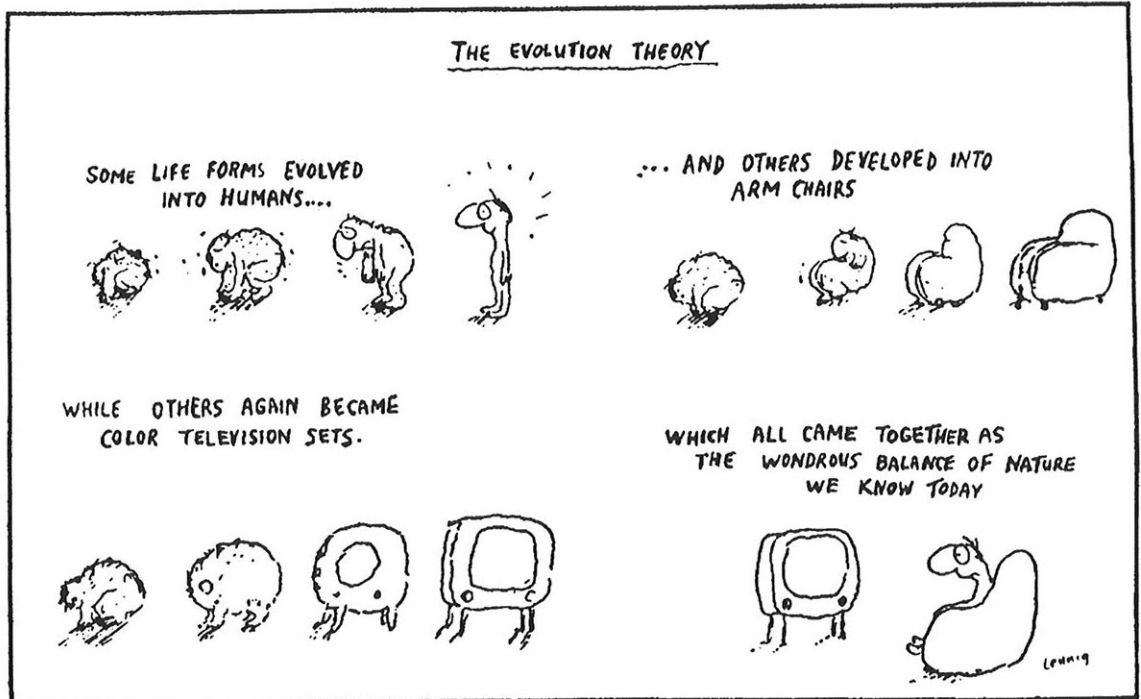
TELEVISION ENCOURAGES LAZY READERS

Reading involves concentration, accurate perception, imagination, the comprehension of a story line and the freedom of the reader to vary the pace. Television, by causing the 'vacant stare' undermines concentration, by an overwhelming visual impact stultifies the imagination; by blunting the senses, interferes with the mechanics of reading; and by emphasising the non-verbal reduces children's enthusiasm for words.

TELEVISION DEPRIVES CHILDREN OF PLAY

Before television, there was a children's culture rich in games, songs and rhymes. Children could play longer, sustain interest more, play

regardless of programme content may cause anti-social behaviour. Relating to others more as objects than as human beings, a result of TV watching, can contribute to violence. Also, the television experience gives an illusion



dramatically and were more active - according to experienced nursery teachers. Television watching puts children into an untypically passive state in which they are deprived of their true work which is their play.

A REDUCED SENSE OF IDENTITY

Children develop their sense of identity, of saying 'I' to themselves in meeting real people. The people on TV are unreal, impersonal images which do little or nothing to awaken a child's sense of identity. But remember, if you are hooked yourself, then you might feel a resistance to some of these observations.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The content of violent programmes may affect children's behaviour, for children learn by imitation. However, the nature of the TV experience

of participating in an activity when in fact one is totally passive, so that children who are heavy viewers are less able to judge the feelings, expectations and problems of others in real life social situations.

.....
 Apart from the scientific statistic that young people watch on average between 20 and 26 hours of television per week and that children see 8,000 killings and 100,000 other acts of violence before they enter high school at the age 12, there is in America today a disturbing new phenomenon. Doctors are now prescribing anti-depressant drugs to thousands of children nationwide between the ages of 8-12. You don't have to be a genius to work out where the images and ideas, in both saturating quantity and violent quality, are coming from to weigh heavy and deep in the psyches and subconscious minds of those who will soon inherit our precious planet earth. ®

Archie Burnet is a freelance writer based in London.

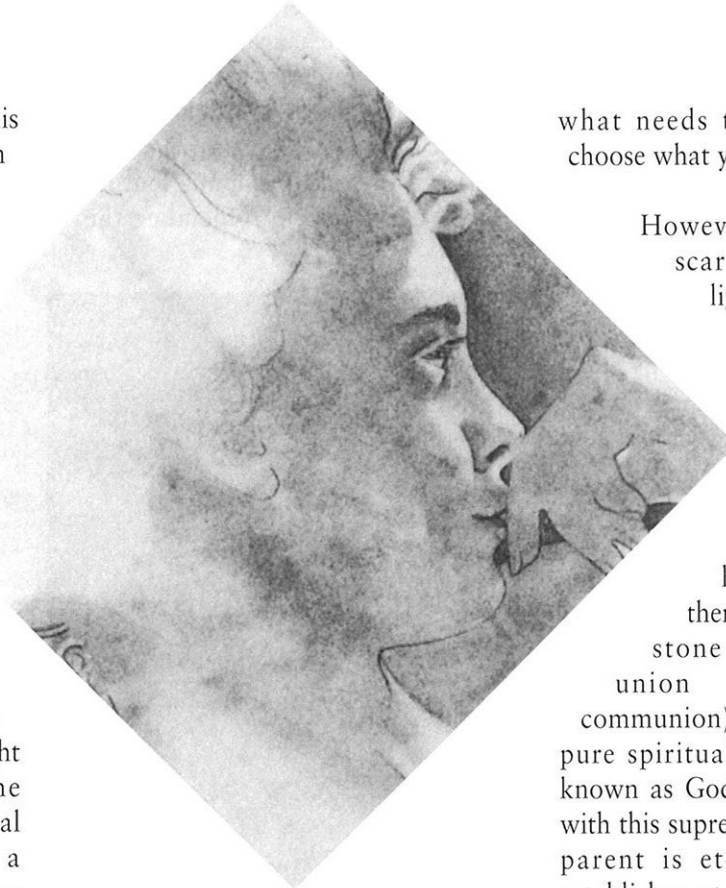
THE FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION

The Story So Far

THE PURPOSE AND PRACTICE OF MEDITATION AND YOGA

During the first six sessions of this Foundation Course in Meditation we have seen that the practice of meditation is not confined to a certain time and place. The purpose of meditation is more than just a technique to achieve some sense of calm. Meditation reconnects and repairs your relationship with yourself. It is a way of experiencing yourself as you truly are; a being of spiritual light (soul), and to overcome the mistaken identity of your physical form (body) which has made a deep-rooted impression on your thoughts, values, attitudes, behaviour and consequent relationships.

In a state of consciousness known as 'soul consciousness' you are able to experience your innate qualities and virtues such as peace, love, generosity, freedom, joy. These virtues cease to be ideas, or momentary experiences tied to some physical pleasures, they become accessible whenever you choose to move into 'soul consciousness'! Meditation is therefore not something 'you do' but more a 'state of being' - hence the importance of being in soul consciousness during your interactions with others and the world.



Meditation also becomes a personal method of learning and transformation. As you turn within and become soul conscious you begin to see the habits, or *sanskaras*, which you have created on your journey through this and previous lives. These are like grooves in a record, laid down over many births, which contain memories and impressions of past actions, feelings and thoughts. Mostly beyond conscious awareness, these *sanskaras* stretch deeply into your subconscious and form your unique personality. Meditation makes you aware of both the positive and negative *sanskaras*, allowing you to see

what needs to change, and to choose what you want to change.

However, just as a cut or scar on the skin needs light to fully heal, so those scars on your consciousness, caused by negative thinking, need spiritual light or power to heal. Meditation then becomes a stepping stone towards yoga, or union (communication, communion) with the source of pure spiritual energy, otherwise known as God. Your relationship with this supreme being or spiritual parent is eternal, yet the re-establishment of that relationship takes time and conscious but gentle effort. Through a silent conversation with God, or in deep yoga, you are able to receive this pure love, light and power. This light purifies your nature by healing your bad habits at a subconscious level, strengthening your spiritual values and releasing your innate wisdom. As you become more experienced at making this personal link with God you begin to see your responsibility to bring God's light into the world as a service to others.

This connection with the spiritual parent (neither he nor she) also helps you to change your perception of the world around you

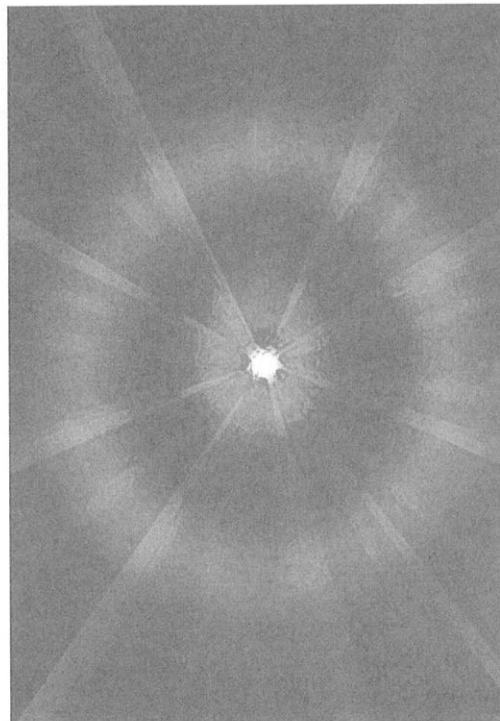
and thereby rediscover both meaning and purpose to what were previously meaningless events. The self-perception and consciousness of an actor on the stage of the world allows you to accept that each and every soul's part is unique and that it is not possible to write or change someone else's part - no matter how extreme their actions are. You can only create and develop your own roles.

You begin to realise every soul has a common purpose, although few are aware of it. The soul's highest purpose (your highest purpose) is simply to live; that is to express your own spiritual beauty and uniqueness, and to experience these qualities in others.

On its own, outside the body, the soul does not experience contrast or change, only stillness. The original starting point of every soul is in a dimension of light beyond the physical world where there is no movement or action. However, even in this 'soul world' there is an innate desire within the soul to express its own beauty and to experience relationship with others. And so we descend into the world of form, onto the stage of the Earth, to act and interact. In our relationships we give and receive energy. In its purest form this experience is positive and harmonious. However, through time this process deteriorates and we begin to interact with negative energy in the form of anger, blame or other negative emotions. This is due to the loss of that original soul consciousness and the gradual influence of body consciousness. The karma (action) of the soul through the body becomes increasingly unhappy and eventually painful on spiritual, mental, emotional and physical levels. This karma accumulates

and the pain increases until the soul is made aware of its 'mistake' (body consciousness) and reawakens its true sense of self (soul consciousness).

In the true state of soul consciousness there is no such thing as linear time (there are no straight lines in the universe). Time is our attempt to measure the space of our experience in this physical world. The movement and change in this world is constant, never ceasing with no beginning and no end. Can anyone remember the



beginning and does anyone know the end?. All events and changes which denote the movement of time are connected and continuous at all levels of existence, from the Universe to an atom. The cyclical periods we call a day, a year and the seasons, are all defined by the relative position of Sun and Earth. Ultimately, when perceived and understood from a spiritual point of view it is a journey of the soul into matter and through many lifetimes. A journey which begins in perfect consciousness and returns to perfect consciousness,

and repeats eternally. This is not an easy concept to understand with a mind accustomed to linear thinking. Hence the need to approach and 'see' this truth through a meditative process.

Beyond the physical world, the original eternal nature of consciousness is unchanging, undisturbed silence and therefore timeless.

This rediscovered awareness of self as soul, innately pure or good, still and silent, is the highest state of consciousness which is always available, just one second away. However, due to our mistaken identification with our body we move out of that silent and still state as our attention is drawn and controlled by an external world of constant change, which we then allow to create and sustain perpetually changing internal images and ideas. Hence the ceaseless chattering voices in our minds, with no real focus, and our desire to find inner peace.

This awareness of ourselves as spiritual beings also liberates us from labelling and categorising others according to their physical appearance and allows us to see them as they truly are - spiritual beings. And even if their actions are not harmonious we know they too have fallen asleep to the reality of their spiritual identity and this understanding forms the basis of our compassion. We now have the ability to hold every soul, on every corner of the planet, within a vision of one spiritual family.

Stand back and you will see the complete drama of life in its historical context. You will see the gradual disappearance of natural wisdom in favour of scientific knowledge and the eventual explosion of superficial

information. You will see the fragmentation of the human family from one nation to over one hundred and eighty nation states; from one religious belief to hundreds of belief systems where the attachment to these beliefs often causes conflict. Evolution seems an illusion in the face of widespread breaking down of the systems, structures and relationships which have been built on the basest form of consciousness, that is body consciousness and its implicit set of material values.

However you can also see the inevitable breakthrough into soul consciousness and the establishment of spiritual values. In meditation the power is developed to let go of the past and focus only on the present. Then a future is revealed of one world and one human family united by spiritual relationship and not divided by physical differences.

The consciousness of soul, power from the spiritual parent, the awareness of being an actor playing many roles, access to your innate spiritual qualities, the truth about time and a new vision of your companions on the journey of life, all combine to form the basis for personal transformation. Not simply a few minor personality changes or attitude alterations, but deep, ground-shifting change in identity, perception and vision, which gradually transforms your being and returns it to its original beauty, freedom and joy.

No drugs, no gurus, no belief system, no special locations are required. Simply the daily practice of meditation and the cultivation of a conversation with God are practices which take you from theory (belief) into experience (knowingness).

®

THE FOUNDATION COURSE

Meditation is seldom associated with history or the concepts of time and space. It is seen rather as method to escape the details of such things. Raja Yoga Meditation (the Foundation Course outlined in this series) 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 surpasseth all pleasure' can be achieved through the technique of meditation itself.

The Foundation Course in Raja Yoga Meditation is taught at all Brahma Kumaris Centres worldwide and consists of the topics below. If you would like to find the nearest centre to you, or would like copies of the series of articles on the Course please send a stamped addressed envelope to:

The Editor, Retreat Magazine, Global Co-operation House, 65 Pound Lane, London NW10 2HH

ONE SELF-REALISATION

Understanding and realising yourself as a soul, a tiny spark of spiritual light, eternal, imperishable, innately peaceful and loving. Letting go of the consciousness of the body results in self-realisation, 'I am the soul' not 'I have a soul'

TWO THE MECHANICS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The three faculties of you the soul or consciousness:

- 1) mind, as the arena of creation of thought;
- 2) intellect, as the ability to make decisions, discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad;
- 3) sanskaras, as the impression left from your past actions and which together make up your unique personality.

Re-awakening and empowering the intellect is the key to self-transformation.

THREE YOGA OR UNION WITH GOD THE SPIRITUAL PARENT

Moving beyond belief and belief systems, where is God to be directly experienced? How do we communicate with our spiritual parent and what should be our relationship with Him/Her? The most powerful force for healing and transforming is the unconditional love of God.

FOUR THE PHILOSOPHY AND LAW OF KARMA

'For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction'. 'As you sow so shall you reap'. Both are expressions of an understanding of the immutable Law of Karma. Understanding this law sets you free from wondering why me, why now, why this! In the context of your relationships with others Karma explains everything.

FIVE THE CYCLE OF TIME

A new and at the same time ancient view of Time as a cyclical process and therefore eternal. The four key ages which all humanity moves through and why your destiny is in your hands now.

SIX THE TREE OF LIFE

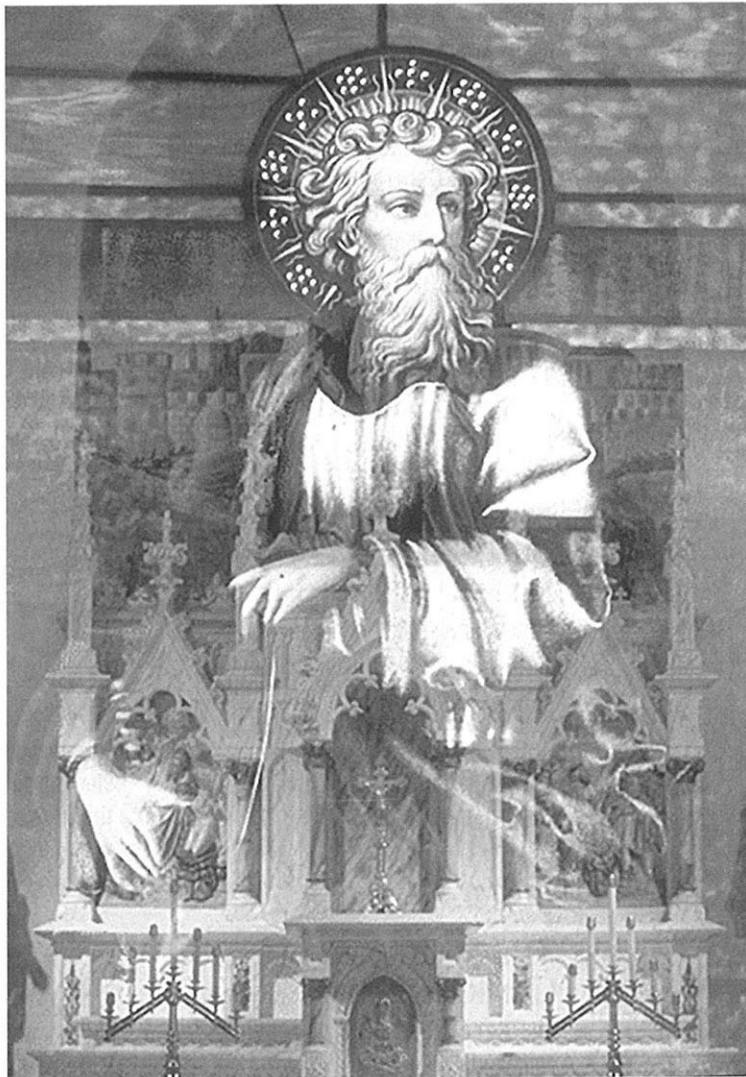
Insights into the truth about evolution and creation. Why the world is so fragmented and how all religions are born... and die.

In future articles on the Foundation Course in Meditation topics will include Spiritual Power, Principles of Spiritual Life and the Development of Spiritual Values.

The Significance of the Transfiguration

The Bishop of Jarrow

A few years ago there was a rather interesting and remarkable Roman Catholic Dominican, a man called Matthew Fox, who hit the headlines because he was silenced by the Roman Curium. That meant he couldn't preach officially as a Roman Catholic theologian. Two of his very influential books were "Original Blessing" and "Creation Spirituality". In them Fox drew a distinction between two mainstream traditions of Christian thought and practice.



The major traditions, said Fox, went through the line of St. Paul, St. Augustine and Luther, and stressed very much the seriousness of the human plight and the depth of the Fall. In that tradition, which is the mainstream tradition in Christianity, the world is utterly lost, without hope, until a saviour comes. The fall is enormous and the effect of Adam's sin is passed on through generation to generation to every creature by the act of procreation.

MINOR STREAM OF THOUGHT

Then Fox goes on to say that there was a minor stream of thought that came through Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, in about the year 100, down through St. Francis of Assisi. They thought of original blessing, almost original goodness, original righteousness, as the most important feature of being human, not original sin. Irenaeus maintained that the Fall, far from being a cataclysmic disaster, was a necessary event in the maturing of Adam. St. Francis took this similar theme up in his understanding of the beauty of nature and the beauty of the world.

JESUS' ROLE

Depending on which of these stories you follow will determine the kind of second story you tell. Did Jesus come to redeem a fallen world or did he come to unite and complete what, prior to his arrival, was still only partial? Fox opted for the second story. The doctor who said, "*Diagnosis determines treatment*" is absolutely right. How you read the story of Genesis II and III will determine the kind of New Testament story you tell. We fit Jesus to the need, recognised in Genesis. So Fox was silenced because he took the minority view. I believe that the Church, in nearly all its history, has not been generous in its acceptance or sharing of the Gospel. I think Jesus came preaching the good news of the Kingdom. I think he came preaching the unconditional love of God and from the word go, both the disciples and the Church couldn't accept it. The news was too good.

THE DISCIPLES

For example in St. Mark's Gospel, the shortest of them all, we find that every time the disciples say or do anything, or respond to anything that Jesus has said, they invariably get it wrong. When they find that Jesus has gone out onto the mountain early in the morning to be quiet and to pray, they go racing after him saying, "No don't do that, come and talk to the crowds". When it came to the feeding of the five thousand, they say, "No we can't do anything". And you can plot the same thinking throughout the betrayal, the denial and the running away of the disciples at the very end of the Gospel. Jesus told the disciples to go out, proclaim the good news and heal the sick, and then, Mark tells us, they went out and preached everywhere that men should repent. What a let-down! You're told that the kingdom has

come and all you can do is play back the same well-worn record that has been proclaimed from generation to generation and say and stay just the same.

REPENTANCE

I believe that repentance is a very real thing and a very necessary thing, but I believe that repentance always comes after forgiveness, not before it. In other words, repentance is a consequence of being forgiven not a condition for it. So I'm very much on Matthew Fox's side, though he made one mistake in putting too much trust in nature without grace, and nature without grace can be very cruel, just as religion without reason can be very dangerous.

TRANSFIGURATION

The story of Transfiguration is told in Matthew, Mark and Luke, of Christ going away to a mountain, praying and being transfigured. Metamorphosed is how it is described in Greek. In prayer he was seen to have a radiant face, his garments shone whiter than snow, and in the middle of all that Moses and Elijah appeared to talk with him, and the disciples were very afraid. They were afraid in the same way that they were afraid at the risen Christ. It was something they couldn't understand or cope with. But the significant thing about the Transfiguration is that the event comes in between two very human conditions. The incident immediately before the Transfiguration is the conversation of Caesarea Philippi at Philippi, "Who am I? Who am I?" Jesus asked the disciples, "Who am I?" And again in the wilderness, when Satan came to him saying, "*If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread. If you are the son of God, jump down*". The scene immediately after the transfiguration was of descending from the mountain, finding a

crowd in chaos because his disciples could not heal an epileptic boy. So, far from the Transfiguration being just a beautiful experience that Jesus could enjoy, it was surrounded by the sarx* of human living.

JOHN

Interesting to note that while Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell the story of the Transfiguration, John doesn't. That, on the face of it, is very odd because of all the evangelists John is the most spiritual. But the reason why John doesn't tell the story of the Transfiguration, is because he sees it happening all the time. Transfiguration is on every page of John's Gospel. It starts with the wedding at Cana of Galilee, and the turning of water into wine with the words, "*This was the first sign that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and showed forth his glory*". So the glory of the transfiguration, getting a glimpse as to his real character, shines through on every page in John, and only on the mountain in Matthew, Mark and Luke. So that's the story to have in mind about the Transfiguration, but what about its application?

APPLICATION

Arnold Toynbee once wrote in his "History of World Religions" that there were four different ways in which we all use religion. He said that at times we are archaists - we're glad of the tradition that we belong to, we can go back and we have got firm roots and we feel secure. And in a way it's a kind of going back to the nursery where we feel comfortable. Second, he said, are the futurists; those who say, "Well our task is to prepare for the end of the world, for the millennium, for what will happen in the days to come", and those who, in the Christian tradition, use the book of Revelation to try and predict what is going to happen in

* Sarx is the ancient Greek word meaning everything about human life - its ordinariness, frustrations, tensions and possibilities.

the future. Thirdly, he said, there are those who are escapist; those who just want to keep the Church as it always has been, "Please, Father, don't alter this, that or the other. We want it exactly as it was, where we can escape into our own familiar home". And fourthly, he said, there is Transfiguration: "*Transfiguration means to accept the situation as it is, and to place it in a larger context, which gives strength to grapple with it and grace to change*". What are the existing contexts in which we find ourselves, from which we would want to move?

CONTEXT OF INSIGNIFICANCE - HOW CAN I MATTER?

The first context is the context of insignificance, "How can I matter?" If the world truly is several million years old how can I possibly be of any significance against that time scale? When I take the dog for a walk at midnight and look at the sky and I see galaxy after galaxy, how can I possibly matter? And I suggest to you that one of our modern, contemporary, perhaps age-old questions of the context we are actually in is the context of insignificance. How can I matter?

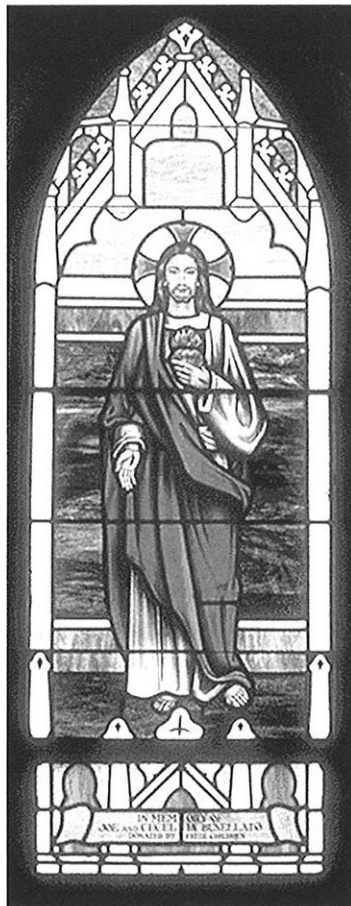
CONTEXT OF IDENTITY - WHO AM I?

The second kind of insignificance is the question of identity. Who am I? Am I the person that others think I am or am I just the person I know myself to be? Am I the brave person with a good presentation or am I the very frightened, anxious person inside?

CONTEXT OF CONTINGENCY - WHY THIS AND NOT THAT?

The third context is simply the question of, what I call, contingency; the way that things happen. Why me and not him? Why did God let Rabin be killed and not Hitler? Why did Martin

Luther King get assassinated and not somebody else? And all the things that seem to be about the contingency, almost the capriciousness, of life, why this and not that?



SIGNIFICANCE

The answer to the question of significance and scale is in a marvellous piece of writing by John Baker, who looks at a problem raised by the pebble and the stars and their infinity. By shifting the frame, transfiguration takes place and far from the pebble making me think how significant I am it actually makes me realise how unique I am.

IDENTITY

The question of "Who am I?" is the question of identity. Again

with a frame shift, Bonhoeffer considers, "*Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine. Whoever I am Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine*".

CONTINGENCY

The question of contingency, why things happen one way or another, is answered sometimes by those who say that every event has some significance. As it says in Ecclesiastes, "*There is a time to die and a time to be born, a time to feed and a time to refrain from feasting*". Perhaps there are many things that happen at random, but through the randomness God works a pattern and design that we cannot anticipate in advance.

GLORY

In summary, the transfiguration key is to accept the situation as it is, and place it in a larger context which gives 'strength to grapple with it and grace to change'. But what is the change about? What are we looking for in that change by placing it in a larger context? And if we take the transfiguration story seriously, what we are looking for is glory, and that opens another minefield of opportunity. Irenaeus tells us that *the glory of God is man fully alive, and the glory of man is the vision of God*. What a theme to have in mind when helping others!

ALL THAT IS

Which reminds me of the great vision that Julian of Norwich had of a great hand holding a hazelnut, which looked so comparatively tiny, she said she thought it would fall away. Then she heard a voice say, "*This hazelnut represents all that is. There are three truths: God made it, God loves it, God changes it.*"

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Extracted from the Bishop of Jarrow's presentation to the Science and Spirituality Retreat at Oxford in November 1995.

For further reading see Julian of Norwich 'Revelations of Divine Love', especially the Eighty-sixth Chapter.

LEARNING TO BE POSITIVE

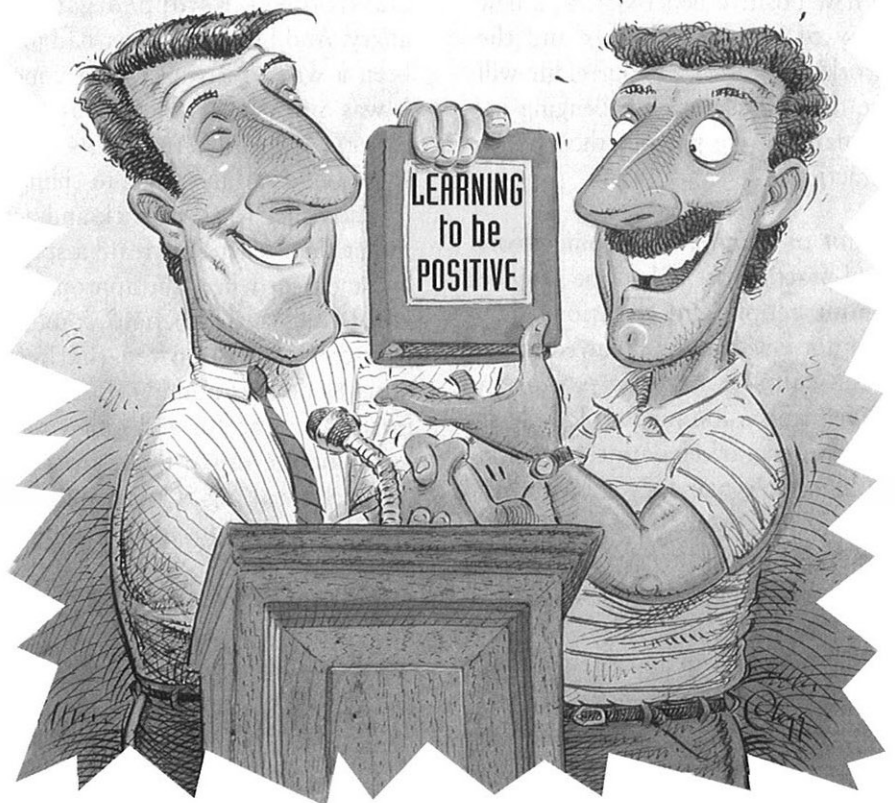
Lesley Edwards reveals why positive thinking is more than just...positive thinking!

Some time ago there was a Government inspection in the primary school where I work. The school had a reasonable report but there were some pointed criticisms and most teachers were left feeling demoralised and stressed by the experience.

The headteacher pinned a copy of the report to the notice board with a note that said encouragingly 'Think Positive!'. The next day I noticed someone had scribbled underneath it 'Like Turkeys do at Christmas!'

That really made me think, and confirmed for me that people do not like being patronised with the quick fix smiles and niceties that positive thinking can superficially seem to offer. Positive thinking is not a gloss to be painted over the cracks of life. It is not a panacea that makes everything okay when people's feelings have been trampled over. Positive thinking goes much deeper - it is an understanding and wisdom that sees things for what they are, sees the people behind the structures, the feelings and intentions behind the actions, and deals with things in the most appropriate way; with empathy if empathy is needed, with courage if courage is needed, or patience if patience is needed.

Real positive thinking comes from



a clear understanding of who we are. Inside each of us is an inner universe of beliefs, attitudes, feelings, memories, dreams, desires and past experience. We look out at the world through the lens of this inner universe, and it can appear to be heaven or hell! Two people can see the same scene in completely different ways: *"Two men looked out through the prison bars, one saw mud, the other saw stars."* If we want to see the stars, if we want to change the view, we need to make some internal adjustments, and a good place to start is with our thoughts. Thoughts are our tools - with thought we can gain new understanding, new insight, we can chip away at the blocks of our old limiting belief systems. Thoughts are also vehicles, they are our way through our inner universe. It's the energy of a thought that creates the impetus for understanding and change.

There is a part of us that can accept in one second that we are good, that everything else is good, that everything happens for a reason, and is ultimately beneficial. But the daily application of that understanding and the unfolding of that reality takes time. It is only through experience that we can learn the beautiful intricacies of what positive living, positive thinking, positive being and positive doing means. The intellectual acceptance of goodness and positivity gives the inner universe balance and equilibrium. This is a good start, but it is only the beginning. From my own personal experience I cannot separate positive thinking from meditation: times of still, quiet personal reflection where I feel my own inner positivity and get insights into my own strengths and weaknesses. Meditation fills understanding with power, truth and substance. We learn best

through being actively involved with our feelings, and meditation puts us in touch with our feelings. Gradually the feelings generated in meditation become the template of a new positive belief system, a new way of seeing ourselves and the world. And then, of course, life will be there constantly challenging us, demanding we put our theory into practice.

A lot of people, with some effort and practice, are able to be positive about people and situations they are not emotionally involved in; to keep calm in a traffic jam or to have compassion for the old lady at the supermarket counter who is holding everyone up. (Of course we can still have our bad days!) But for most of us our positivity is really challenged by those we are closest to, working with, living with, day in and day out. One of my personal challenges has been in dealing with some pretty serious behavioural problems in the classrooms of the inner city London schools I have worked in over the past eight years. There have been times when I have had some very painful experiences, but as Kahlil Gibran says in *The Prophet* "Your pain is a breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding". Perhaps another way of putting this might be that our difficulties and confusion are proportional to our illusions. I am now very grateful to those children for what they have taught me; in fact I am sure they taught me far more than I ever taught them! I had this fixed picture of how I wanted my classroom to be. And then a child, or maybe two or three children, would start behaving outrageously, violently, sabotaging my picture. For a long time my only way of responding was to get angry, however much I thought positively, or meditated! Slowly over time, with experience, as I became better

at doing my job, as I looked at what was going on inside my own head - the fear of lack of control, of losing face, of what others would think, the fixed picture of my 'ideal classroom' - I stopped getting angry. And I saw my anger had just been a way of saying I can't cope! It was a real relief when I was able to say I don't know how this should be and I'm willing to change it if need be. To stand back and act rather than react. To create a space and moment where the appropriate words and actions could come. I found that quite often the best thing to do was nothing. Just to be internally peaceful and quiet, and let someone move through their pain, not taking it personally. I have learnt that positive thinking is



powerful creative thinking; that means having the right thought at the right time, the thought coming from a clear perception of myself and other people. And that comes from keeping quiet, standing back and watching, observing how life works.

I have used this example because I know this happens to many of us in some form or another. We have expectations from those around us. We have ideas of how our parents should be, or should have been, how our children should be, how our careers should be, how our friends should behave. And often things are simply not how we want them to be. Whatever

misconceptions we have about the world, whatever the extent to which we don't understand ourselves or the way things are, will be revealed by those closest to us. The people closest to us are mirrors. They shatter our illusions! We might have negative thoughts and feelings towards someone for having power over us, yet they reveal to us the degree of our dependency. If it wasn't them it would be someone else. So we can choose to feel negative or positive about these revelations. We can love people or hate them for what we learn from them depending on whether we want to be positive or negative.

It would be good if we could put the power of positive thinking in a bottle, like a magic elixir and distribute it to all those in pain and confusion in the world. But we can't, because like creativity and happiness it comes from inside. There is a story I read to the children at school by Alice Walker called 'Finding the Greenstone'. It is about a place where everyone has a bright shining green gem. When they are good, have good thoughts, do good deeds, their gem glistens and glows. When they are bad, or selfish or hurtful, the gem turns to stone or they lose it altogether. If you lose your stone, nobody else can find it for you, but in the story the whole community come together, creating an atmosphere of love and support, to be there and celebrate when a lost stone is found.

It is certainly a reason to celebrate when someone finds their own positive world inside, because the magic elixir of positivity can work miracles, transforming anger, healing illness, overcoming fear, building self-respect and generating love in our lives.

Lesley Edwards is a Teacher in London. ®

Would You Die

For An Illusion?

BOSNIA • ISRAEL • RWANDA • IRELAND

BOSNIA • ISRAEL • RWANDA • IRELAND



Would You Kill To Defend Yesterday?

When one man kills another regardless of the reason, he kills a member of his own family.

Beyond national identity, beyond belief systems, beyond any difference defined by physical appearance and beyond all events of history we are all one human family.

If nationality is a fundamental, irrefutable truth why is it possible to change it with a signature on a piece of paper? If one set of beliefs represents ultimate truth why do people kill to defend it? How can truth be threatened? And, if almost all conflict is based on yesterday's events, how can you change yesterday. It's gone and it's dead, which makes revenge both immature and futile. As for appearances, have you ever seen two faces or two bodies exactly the same? Of course not. So we are all different and yet we are all human beings.

So, come on guys, let's get real! Nationality is a man-made illusion, beliefs are never truths when defended (including religious), the past is dead and gone, and we are each unique, yet together. We are all one...human family.

And if you say you kill for freedom perhaps you haven't realised you make yourself a slave to the object of your hate. Which makes hate the ultimate form of self dis-empowerment. Which means to kill another by thought, word or deed is to commit suicide. Can you see it?

Choose carefully!

Destiny is always in your hands.

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WHOLINESS

*All assertion seeks denial!
And Here is where to start.
By-pass the head and look instead
Inside your deepest Heart.*

*For Here is True Reality,
Where opposites dissolve.
Where Holy Light invades our sight
Our Whole Life must evolve.*

*The fearlessness of Holy Love
We find so wholly New,
So wHolly unmistakable
Our Heart is wholly True.*

*We only find this Peace of Mind
With Stillness in our brain -
The Silent Way! And gurus say
All others are in vain.*

*Wholly, whole attention
To nothing but our Being!
A child-like brain restores again
The Gift of Holy Seeing.*

*Call it yoga, call it Love,
Call it what you may!
Ego-free we're bound to be
The truth, the Life, the Way.*

*Seek Nirvana, Heaven, Tao,
Brahman - what you will!
The truth is that the Truth's the Truth
And that no man can kill.*

*We can't deny Reality
To things beyond the word;
For so to do denies Love too -
What could be more absurd?*

*All scriptures help us at the start,
But hinder later on;
In silence still the Spirit will
Live when the letter's gone.*

*This obscures and that distorts
But Silence in between
Reveals the New, the Spirit True
Beyond all said and seen.*

*In whole, whole mind each one must find
Spirit/matter One
The Whole of you is One Love too,
When all is said and done.*

FROM 'FLASHES OF SILENCE'
BY FRANCIS BOSTON