

## Chapter Twenty-four

### HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS III

*We are unconscious of Reality because we are unconscious of the ways in which we obscure Reality. We divide reality, forget we have divided it, and then forget that we have forgotten.*

Ken Wilber, *Spectrum of Consciousness*



#### **O Daydreams: A New Civilization**

Since we're already in the mountains — Yosemite's only 13 miles north — Sonia and I can simply drive up the road, set up our tent in a quiet place by the beautiful Merced River, and settle in for a good night's sleep. In the morning, we can step out, stretch, yawn, welcome the dawn, and set about creating a new civilization. That should be a pleasure, of course, because it will be based on love, life and laughter, just the way you and I like it.

There will be lots of dancing, music, picture painting, joke telling, love making, weaving, sculpting, flower gardening and mutual assistance on all practical levels. There will be no profit motive, no money, no political parties, no isolated nations, no geographical boundaries, no armies, no churches, no leaders, followers, authorities, saviors, or priests.

We could recognize our shared humanity — one humanity living in one world with psychological and spiritual unity, with all differences treasured and all diversities honored. In joy and love we will trade whatever we have in abundance with other places and peoples for whatever they have in abundance. If we grow wheat and they grow rice, we will trade. Those who have much will share with those who have little. The only rule will be love; the only value, understanding; the only treasure, peace.

Of all of humanity's gifts, the greatest will be the gift of laughter. Instead of wallowing in envy, desire and their resultant miseries, we will treasure the present, appreciate every living moment, see the sacred in the mundane, and base our lives on celebration.

When we return to the tent, we will sit outside in a rocking chair and enjoy the late afternoon, while all around us we will hear the music of the mountain stream and wind in the trees. We will listen to the music of people talking and laughing and making love, and of little children squealing in delight as they slide down a slick rock into the streampools. We'll listen to the birds in the pines, the bees buzzing 'round the flowers, and the voices of long-lost loved ones whispering inside the breeze. After dinner cooked over a campfire, we'll drop off to sleep in our sleeping bags and rest peacefully, knowing our human potential to create a paradise has been fulfilled.

## **JSor                      Wavering on the Question of Change**

Perhaps my deepest concern is not a personal concern about either you or me, but about a certain question that nags me to no end. Why do some people change, grow,

develop and evolve, while others do not?

Why do some people remain locked in their conditioning (religious belief systems, dogma, handed-down notions of gods, goddesses, heavens, hells, saviors, etc.; political values, Democrat, Republican, Socialist, Communist, whatever; nationalism, racism and all the other isms), while others seek and find psychological and spiritual guides who help liberate them from the chains of religion, political egocentricity, geo-political isolationism and other psycho-spiritual concepts, images and emotion-laden baggage that keep them separated, in conflict, imprisoned, deaf, dumb and blind?

Why are some people capable of dying every moment to the psychological accumulation of past imagery, while others remain totally hypnotized and shackled by it? Why can some people free themselves from deep-seated patterns of psychological fears and drop mechanical behavior so they can daily greet the new in their lives, and daily create not only new works of art, but new lives, new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, perceiving, behaving, relating?

Why do some remain brainwashed and imprisoned by the past and their socio-parentally conditioned mechanical thoughts, while others seek and find and utilize tools of perception that help them escape into creative psychological and spiritual authenticity?

In talking with Sonia, I realize that I am beginning to waver on this question of change. For over 25 centuries now, enlightened masters from Buddha and Jesus to Osho and Krishnamurti and Ken Wilber have been showing and telling us how to accomplish these changes. And, to a person, they insist that *it can be done*, not by believing in a savior or a book or a methodology, but by certain kinds of direct experience that produces insight, understanding, clarity, love, compassion and inclusive joy.

They insist that they are not exceptional; they are not "freaks of nature"; they are human, and they have attained these heights. If they can do it, we can do it too. And so they walked, and talked, and lived their lives and left us their extraordinary insights and teachings, the wisdom of the masters.

But I look around, not only at others, but at myself, and ask how many people do I know personally who have grown beyond the age of, say, 14 or 15? How many people do I know who have either expanded their views or altered them during the course of their lives? How many do I know who have actually evolved from one level of consciousness to another, who have left their parents and the parental context and its values behind, and climbed the "ladder" of consciousness from self-centeredness to all embracing compassion?

How many do I know who have *actually evolved* from their early reference points (whether Jesus or Shakespeare or Thoreau) into new domains (whether Buddha, Walt Whitman or Osho)? How many people of my acquaintance think or talk or act differently than when they first told me their story 20 or 30 years ago? Has anything at all changed? Or do they remain fundamentally the same, with a modification here or there, perhaps a shift of furniture (but still the same chairs and tables in the same psychological room)?

I find myself leaning toward the conclusion that very few people make any fundamental changes whatsoever. Even with psychotherapy, for example, they may still be saddled with a sense of self-loathing and inadequacy so profound that they will forever remain terrified of even the prospect of success of any kind. The fear of success is but the tip of an enormous iceberg that consists of primal conditioning that goes so deep it is virtually impossible to reveal, understand and dissolve, even with professional help. Freud himself said nobody changes. Nobody *can* change, he insisted. At the very most, we can become only normally abnormal and conventionally unhappy.

Even when people dare to pick up a book by a radically inspired, brilliant, insightful psychological/spiritual liberator such as Osho or Wilber, how many of those people allow themselves to follow through, get deeply involved with the readings, apply the teachings to themselves, do the work, and escape the bondage of their conditioned perceptions and belief systems? Almost nobody moves out and beyond what they already know. Hardly anybody steps outside of their own room or their own notebook or their own rigidly structured behavioral patterns. Was Freud right? Many well-informed people call him a pessimist. Was he in fact a realist?

In spite of assurances down through the ages from the geniuses of Higher Consciousness that we can *all* liberate ourselves, not through belief systems, but through direct experience of our own Universal Inner Being, almost nobody actually does it. Almost nobody learns, nobody grows, nobody changes. There are exceptions, which makes the situation incredibly interesting, but they are few and far between. I think it best to look for them and forget about the multitudes of others.

Nearly everybody remains locked into conditioned images about themselves and others, driven primarily by fear, which produces either inertia or greed, envy, and/or ruthless ambition and an insatiable lust for power, none of which expedites growth, change, evolutionary psycho-spiritual development or creativity at the most profound level of the essential Self. We remain asleep in cocoons and never see the light of who or what we could be and can be (and what, in fact, we *already are* — if only we awakened and realized it). Just about everybody wants to win the race, but nobody wants to leave the starting blocks and do the work.

So I go back and forth. Yes, it's worthwhile. Yes, change can happen. Everybody just has to go his or her own way at his or her own pace. Krishnamurti sometimes felt as if he were singing to the deaf — but he didn't give up. He kept on singing.

Sometimes I too feel that way — only I think I am the one who is deaf, not just others. Back and forth. Yes, we can grow and will. No, we can't and don't.

So, in my heart, I remain willing to work with individuals if they are willing to work with me, and if their questions spring from a deep ache in their heart, a deep thirst in their gut, a profound yearning to know who they are and how they can discover and fulfill the best and the highest in themselves.

As for the insane, hysterical masses out there in Crazyland, I've pretty much come to the conclusion that they will continue to snore, dream, rage, kill each other, and propagate themselves until they smother the earth and all life upon it. I feel compassion for them, but I will now direct my time, energy, effort and hope only to individuals who demonstrate to me that they have seriously embarked upon the great psycho-spiritual journey.

As for the rest, ah, well. No need to worry. We all do the best we can with what we have, don't we? In the long run, how much of it matters? As Elbert Hubbard once said, "Don't take life too seriously. You will never get out of it alive."

Maybe the only thing worthwhile is acceptance and celebration. Acceptance of reality and its limitations as well as its astonishing potential. And celebration of life, joy, creativity, and love. Many are the wise people who have embraced that point of view.

Perhaps "becoming" is just a subtle ego trip. Just be. Just be, and accept and respect who we are. And love all living beings.

Maybe so, maybe so.

Keep-keep-keepin' on, J.

All the best of light, love and laughter to you and yours,

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## — A FEW BOOKS —

**MR        Books and Music: Self-Exploration & Creative Evolution**

Because we met only recently, you cannot be aware of the fact that I rarely spend time discussing music or books with people, because the music I like and the books I read are very close to me. Almost never do I encounter someone such as yourself, who revels in the process of exploring himself through music and reading, who approaches listening and reading, not only as forms of deeply satisfying entertainment, but as transformational energizers.

Self-exploration through music and reading opens inner doors, which reveal new levels of psychological unfolding and spiritual ascension. To then actually walk through those doors, and personally engage one's self in the adventure of psycho-spiritual evolution, is the greatest series of leaps one can ever make — thrilling, and dangerous; challenging, and sometimes frightening; exciting, and all too often frustrating to the point of despair.





There is another version of that poem in a wonderful book of spiritual poems from around the world, entitled *The Enlightened Heart*, selected and edited by Stephen Mitchell, an enlightened fellow in his own right. Also included in that book, several of Mitchell's translations of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* Sutras.

I carry two books around with me in the car. One is Mitchell's *Enlightened Heart*. I dip into it every now and then while waiting for Sonia to do the grocery shopping. It's an amazing gem of a book. Terrific for brief readings and exposure to different poets from different lands (whether Lao Tzu from China, Blake from England, Rilke from Germany, Kabir from India, etc.), and exposure to Stephen Mitchell, too. He's quite a guy, very bright, a man of Higher Consciousness himself (which is why his translation of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* is so good).

The second is Buddha's *Dhammapada*, translated by Thomas Byrom. It's one of Buddha's most widely read texts, consisting of short chapters and easy-to-read brief sayings, and Byrom's translation is magnificent. I never cease to be amazed at how I resonate with Buddha's wisdom and insight.

## **MR**                      **Watts' *Taboo***

You mentioned how Alan Watts' *Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are* is a bit heavy going, but you will stick with it, and you keep re-reading passages. Great!

If by "heavy" you mean a little difficult, a little demanding or complex, and yet you are still enjoying it, getting something out of the content even though it may require a little more rigor and concentration than you are used to — all of that is good. It stretches your mind.



Anyway, found myself thinking about you while re-reading *A Brief History* and thought I'd mention it.

All the Best, L

## **AP Resonating With Great Minds: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern**

Hey, A, good to hear from you.

So glad to see you dipping into the Dalai Lama's works. You might also enjoy some of the writings of Deepak Chopra, and a marvelous fellow named Thich Nhat Hanh (whose writings are deceptively simple — smooth, uncomplicated language that imparts very sophisticated concepts).

I suppose the process of finding authors and books that feel relevant to one's life involves searching around, checking into this one, that one, until one finds somebody who resonates, and then spending time with him or her. There are some marvelous folks out there who can be enormously helpful and inspiring, great catalysts for development on many levels. And the search is itself a delight.

Personally, I looked into a number of good people, some of whom I have mentioned to you along the way. I now hang out with a small constellation of them as my teachers and helpers and friends. The best of them combine the wisdom of premodern cultures, with the naturalistic orientation of modernism, with the linguistic orientation of contemporary postmodernism. They honor psychology as

much as science and technology, meditation as much as action, empathy and heartfelt compassion as much as intelligence. They include all of the inner and outer dimensions without excluding any, and without reducing any to functions of any preferred one. They celebrate equality of fair treatment, without negating hierarchical value and evolutionary development.

That is (in Wilber's terminology), *all levels and dimensions have value, but they are neither equal nor the same. Some are better than others because some are more inclusive than their juniors. A spectrum of consciousness includes all of these inner/outer, psycho-spiritual/sensory-motor domains, each level with its own relevance and strength, each higher level including its junior level while transcending it with new qualities, relevance and strengths that are not available on prior levels.*

This perspective is not respected by numerous Baby Boomers, who would reduce all values and processes and cultural orientations to the same qualitative level in the name of compassionate pluralistic relativism. That is good as far as honoring subjective psycho-cultural experiences the world over, but not so good when it comes to understanding the nature of personal, intersubjective and objective *evolutionary development* of human consciousness, culture, and the emergent global society.

So I look for teachers who understand these things. If I run across a premodern Indian guru of genius (such as Buddha and Lao Tzu), that's great; but I don't kid myself about their limitations (e.g. lack of knowledge about pre-egoic/rational development and post-Enlightenment scientific validation methods). Buddha may be a whiz in understanding Higher Consciousness, but he would be an even greater

whiz if he understood Western developmental psychology, physics, and the nature of global communication technology as well (impossible in premodern eras).

So I search through the eras, finding this teacher, that guru, this wise man, that scientist, this meditator, that psychologist, and enjoy and incorporate as much as I can that is of value to me.

Modern and post-modern intellectuals tend to be scientists and academicians dismissive of the premodern wisdom traditions. They often value science and material external facts alone, and very often deny any value or validity whatsoever to interior experiential development. Objective notions about measurable quantities trample subjective qualitative realities ("scientism").

On the other hand, Eastern wisdom tradition teachers tend to be ignorant of post-Enlightenment objective empirical scientific methods, and even deny their validity in some cases, separating inner/outer domains with equal zealously.

I look for very bright post-modern people who are fully aware of contemporary development in science, its technological extensions, and of the developing global infrastructure, even as they are fully aware of the Buddha and Higher Consciousness as well as Western explorations of the pre-egoic and egoic mind from Freud and Jung to Maslow.

As one friend of mine put it, the new man will be Zorba the Buddha. Another described the links as a wedding between Freud and Buddha.

I would call it a dance around the Maypole with Freud, Buddha, Krishnamurti,

Osho, Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, and Ken Wilber!

**JK**                      **Osho, Harris, Krishnamurti, Wilber**

Am now plunging into several books, including Osho's *Discipline of Transcendence: Discourses on the 42 Sutras* (four volumes); Sam Harris's *Letter to a Christian Nation*, the follow up to his great book, *The End of Faith*; Krishnamurti's *Journal*, a small, beautiful book, the only one he wrote instead of speaking; and Ken Wilber's most recent work, *Integral Spirituality*. Each day I read a chapter from each of these books, plus a few saved articles from papers and magazines. Wonderful to explore great writers and interesting subjects!

**DS**                      **Eckhart Tolle**

Not to be tooting Eckhart Tolle's horn — I still haven't read the whole of *The Power of Now* —but as I browse through it, I find he's so accessible to such a wide range of otherwise closed, or small, or overly sophisticated minds that I have for the second time found him useful.

I have a friend who is stuck at the level of the rational mind, and yet has recently found himself dissatisfied with analysis, scholarship, research, etc. He also finds himself ultra-skeptical of transrational domains, regards revelation-without-documentation as being simplistic hoofey-spoofey nonsense, and more or less insists that the rational-analytical-mental-scientific-Enlightenment mind is the only reality.

In other words, he blocks himself both ways: He remains victimized by *scientism* even though his long-established approach isn't working any more, and yet he rejects the notion of developmental evolution into more expansive psycho-spiritual unfolding.

Well, I took a chance and suggested Tolle's *Power of Now*, just to see what might happen, which, lo and behold, my friend is now reading. He's finding it relevant to his life and needs and is surprised to view himself in this new light.

I think if he can get a foothold here, he might be willing and able to step up the ladder another notch, checking into some of the other people I mention along the way.

Drop me a note when you feel like it, yes?

## **SA                      Wake Up and Dance!**

I have often noticed that my appreciation of beauty *happens* when I am not thinking about how lovely the sunset or the painting or the music is. In fact, my experience of beauty takes place when "I" am not there at all. It takes place when I am not thinking, not analyzing or "wording." That is, when I am not drifting and dreaming and "dialoging behind my eyes," but when I am fully present.

Then I ran across Eckhart Tolle's "The State of Presence" (*The Power of Now*, Chapter Five), and especially the section entitled "Beauty Arises in the Stillness of Your Presence."

It is a well-articulated passage about my own experiences of beauty and my own observations about it. There are a number of passages like that in the book. As I leaf

through just now, I spot another section talking about some of the very same things I have often addressed (also Chapter Five, in the passage beginning with the words, "When consciousness frees itself from its identification with physical and mental forms. . .")

You might be feeling a bit resistant to his using Jesus as an example, for which I would not blame you. However, guys like Tolle (or Osho or Thich or Wilber or numerous others) don't view Jesus through the eyes of dogmatic evangelical Christianity, most of which is superstitious, mythological, fear-driven, pre-rational twaddle.

Tolle and others mentioned above recognize Jesus as one of many enlightened beings who have walked this earth and done whatever they could to help us wake up. Great masters have come and gone throughout humanity's yesterdays. Jesus was one of them. New masters are here among us today. And after today's sages are dead and gone, new seers will appear and do whatever they can to serve developmental psycho-spiritual evolution as well.

All of these people speak to us from that heightened level of expanded consciousness mentioned earlier. That is why their language is much the same from one individual, culture, and era to another. They've also managed to push through the seductive curtain that knowledge tempts and deludes us with, into direct clear-light perception. That kind and quality of clear-light awareness is an inherent part of the human being. There's nothing supernatural about it. It's natural and it's already in us, but for most of us, it's asleep. It is there, but dormant. And that's the only difference. We are not essentially "other" than the world's sages or they from us. They are awake, and we are more or less asleep. And they're doing everything they can to help us open our inner eyes and *wake up* from our slumbers and see clearly.

Some people don't want that, of course. They burp and roll over and snore. Others think they might want it, but they're not sure. They're hesitant, possibly a little confused. They feel restless and dissatisfied and have a tough time making it through the night, even as you have indicated. Still others thirst for it, seek it with

all their heart and mind. With luck and skill and work and enough time, they eventually find themselves wide awake and bursting with creativity and joy. They love their body, they love their mind, they love themselves and others, and they celebrate existence every day.

It's the human dance, isn't it? We're all on the journey, we're all dancing, we're all laughing, crying, wondering, loving, aspiring, dreaming, hoping, trying, doing our best. Indeed, we're all on the exact same quest, even if we don't know it. And as I said, all we need to do is *wake up to our authentic self*.

What a great life, do you agree? Keep on dancing, guy! Talk w/you soon —  
All the very best — L

## **SA                    The Mental-Egoic Springboard**

Can't tell you how much I admire your perspicuity on the one hand, and your courage on the other. You see clearly how your strong, logical, analytical mind distrusts and almost automatically rejects "the allure of the spiritual, the sympathetic, and the nonjudgmental," and how that same mind, almost with an autonomous will of its own, deems "these trans-intellectual ideas" as "daffy," and beckons you back into the comforts and perspectives of our good ol' Greek rational/scientific Eighteenth Century Enlightenment roots.

However, you also intuitively notice how your "deaf, uncomprehending ears" instantly activate themselves when you encounter one of Eckhart Tolle's ideas in *The Power of Now* that smacks into what you already understand and agree and feel comfortable with. Do you also notice that those "uncomprehending ears" of yours are not necessarily protecting you? Do you see how they are protecting the rational egoic mind's power and position in your makeup?

The egoic mind feels terrific as the king. It loves to be in control and does not like to be threatened by concepts and perspectives it cannot dominate. It insists on remaining your master. It fears the very things you sense "are much deeper" (and they are), and feels nervous as hell that you are sticking with your readings in spite of mind's complaints —and that is where your courage comes in, for which I sing your praises.

Creative inner change is not easy. It is not for the weak or the timid. It takes *cajones grandes, señor!*

A few Westerners have touched the heights Tolle is talking about (and which already exist within yourself — it is THAT aspect of your being which urges you to continue, to follow through with your readings, to absorb as much as you can. Its voice is not as strong as your well-developed mind, but it's there, it's hopeful, and it is quietly calling to you).

I am thinking of folks like your good buddy Yeats, plus some of my good buddies, like Heraclitus, Plotinus, William Blake, Walt Whitman, Thoreau, Emerson, Rilke, Osho, and dozens of others.

And here's a delightful secret: you don't have to give anything up.

The mind, by its very nature wants to dominate, control, compete, accomplish, assert, and otherwise fulfill the needs of the ego. Mind and ego walk hand-in-hand. Some people have therefore cursed the mind, trashed the ego, and told everybody to leave the marketplace, disappear into the forest, wear a loincloth, eat roots and berries, and sit in meditation until birds build nests in their hair.

But here's the good news: It's true that the mind makes a terrible master, but it's equally true that it makes a great servant. You can use the mind and all of its

strengths to look outward, cope in the marketplace, earn a living, feed and protect your family and pay the bills, while at the same time looking inward, understanding yourself more fully, becoming more aware of who you are inside, expanding transpersonal consciousness, deepening empathy, widening compassion's embrace, and opening your heart's receptivity to include not only your mind, ego, family and nation, but all peoples of the world, all plants and animals, the physiosphere, and, yes, ultimately attuning yourself with the whole of existence: matter, life, mind, and spirit.

There are pre-egoic stages of psychological development that lead upward from unconscious fusion with nature, into the perception of images, the development of an egoic self, the distinguishing between self and others, and the rational/analytical capacity to cope with people and things in the objective world. We are great at this in Europe and America, which has enabled us to become technological giants. Ego is not "bad." It's "good," and in fact it seems to be essential if one is to evolve further up the ladder of consciousness.

Using the mental-egoic self as a secure *springboard*, one can start the ascension of consciousness from the psychological domain into transrational, transpersonal, wholistic unity consciousness — and ultimately, through this developmental process, become what I think of as fully human. Each level of development in this schema transcends the limitations of its junior level but also includes that junior level and preserves its strengths.

It is also true that every stage of this spectrum of psycho-spiritual development has its strengths and its potential pitfalls. Most of us get stuck in one pitfall or another along the way and thereby stop growing. As a culture, for example, we're stuck at the mental-egoic analytical power-based level, but at the same time more and more people the world over are perceiving many of the things Tolle and a number of other people are talking about.

Human social development is slow. In writer Ken Wilber's terms, we evolve from

instinctual primitive tribes, into magical-mythological groups, into reason, science, nation-states, and global unity; from egocentric, to ethnocentric, to anthropocentric, to worldcentric, to the wholistic mind of fully awakened, infinitely compassionate loving consciousness — people like Thich Nhat Hahn, Sri Chinmoy, Wilber (a scientist, scholar and meditator all-in-one), and many, many others (including the historical figures mentioned earlier).

As you see, you're tapping into something you are ideally suited for at this middle stage in your life. You sense the need for it, do you not? And you recognize the value of what you're reading, if not in all instances, then certainly in some. No question but some of Tolle's ideas or images might not sit right with you. (I've always shied away from other peoples' use of the word "God," for example; you might feel the same way about that or some of his other reference points.)

But as I suggested previously, it's entirely possible that some of the things you object to, or don't understand, or that you simply flat-out disagree with, might also be among the very things that might open new doors for you in significant evolutionary ways. Ideally, we keep our hearts and minds open, knowing that whatever is needed and good for us will stick this time around; new stuff, as you pointed out, can be gleaned if we re-read earlier passages later on; and some of it is simply irrelevant or unacceptable, and it's best to let it slide off and not be distracted by it.

Normally, I don't like to give opinions, but I suspect that if you embrace and cherish the strengths you have already developed, and continue to expand your awareness and self-understanding, beginning with Tolle and moving onward and upward from there, you will find much of the sense of stasis that afflicts you to be diminishing and a new sense of energy growing inside like an inner mountain flame (an image guitarist Mahavishnu John McLaughlin plucked from one of Sri Chinmoy's writings and used as the title of his first Mahavishnu Orchestra album). I think it's great you

recognize Tolle as a compelling writer and a smart guy, and I respect the heck out of you for letting him guide you for a while.