

Awakening your Soul or: Becoming aware that you are a Spiritual Universe

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Experiments designed to expose quantum physics principles have shown that observing nature depends on choices made by the observer. These experiments lead to new concepts describing the relation between an observer and the thing observed. These concepts also can be applied to subjective observation and hence to observing and awakening the soul. The popular aphorism, *what you see is what you get*, appears to apply to the world we experience as “out there.” However an equally appropriate maxim appears to be, *what you see is what you expect*. When applied to observation of the soul, the two maxims show that you also have two complementary ways to observe your subjective reality: spiritually and materially. In this article National Book Award winner Dr. Fred Alan Wolf shows us how this most modern perspective of quantum physics can be applied to the questions: How do I awaken my soul consciousness? How do I become aware that I am (not just have) spiritual nature? By learning to invoke both aphorisms the soul can be awakened and you can feel its presence in every thing you do.

INTRODUCTION

The old adage *what you see is what you get* appears to apply to the world we see all around us. However, we little appreciate that a different way of observing complementary to the adage exists. It states *what you see is what you expect*. These adages may appear to be saying the same thing, but the two are really quite different. That difference arises from understanding some principles of quantum physics and spiritual practice. Our appreciation of these principles will help us to grasp conceptually what it means to awaken our souls.

To accomplish soul awakening, we first look at how and why the world is not as it seems. This helps us grasp the quantum physics principles involved, particularly how observation changes the world. Next we see how and where we lose our soul awareness, and why this naturally occurs as a result of our desire for objective or “out there” stimulation. This helps us grasp the spiritual practice principles involved. Next we explore three simple secrets of awakening our soul. Finally after reviewing the three secrets, we conclude with an imaginary dialogue with our soul.

THE WORLD IS NOT AS IT SEEMS

Most of us take it for granted that we see the real world. Of course we know that much more of the world exists than what we see with our eyes. There are worlds of sounds, smells, tastes, skin sensations, and thoughts. Although those worlds may appear to be distinct because they appeal to different sense organs, we nevertheless take it for granted that each sense organ only picks out from the world-in-total a particular aspect of that world that registers on that particular sense organ. We rarely consider that any other

world exists, although we have learned from the practices of science that the world consists of far more than just that world we sense with our normal senses.

How different is the world of quantum physics from the everyday physical world that we experience using our normal conditioned senses? As a physicist I have learned that it is very different, however the difference may not be easily appreciated by nonscientists. The quantum physical worldview leads to observations often very dissimilar from the world we ordinarily see. Usually the dissimilarity is difficult to see in everyday life. According to quantum physics principles, there is no reality until that reality is perceived. This means that the world cannot simply exist independently from the means used to perceive that world. We call this *the observer effect*.

This effect, long unsuspected in the physics before quantum physics, first came as a big surprise to the early scientists who discovered it. They saw, at times much to their dismay, that any time they attempted to perform an observation on an atomic or subatomic system, the tools they used to make the observation appeared to introduce uncontrollable errors into their measurements. They were as the adage pictures, “bulls in the china shop” when they attempted to make such refined measurements. However, they soon realized that it wasn’t the tools that made the errors in their determinations, but that they had stumbled on a very stubborn part of nature herself. Like a mysterious fan dancer, she always kept part of herself hidden. But when asked to reveal herself, she demanded that each observation, regardless of the measuring tool employed, make its mark on the thing being observed in a completely irreversible and often unpredictable way. Whether they liked it or not every observer ended up disturbing the thing he or she sought to look at. This observation went far beyond eyes alone, and included any sense a human being used to observe from listening to tones coming from an instrument such as a Geiger counter, or watching dots on a flashing oscilloscope. Since anything revealed by observation depended on the observer’s choices, nature demanded that we must be an integrated part of herself, even though our minds sought to believe that a natural and physical world existed objectively separated from us.

Because we usually don’t pay attention to ourselves in the perception processes involved in observation, our immediate experience will not appear to show that our actions of perception changed anything. To our unsophisticated minds it just seems we make errors. However, if we construct a careful history of our perceptions they often show us that our way of perceiving indeed changes the course of our observations and even our personal history. Further examination shows that by making different choices, not only would our perceptions of the outcomes change, but also the very things we were observing would also exhibit traits that would not have appeared had we not looked for them.

That may make sense to you when looking at something new and deciding what it means. But you may wonder, “I’m not actually changing reality, am I? I’m just changing my interpretation of reality.”

The answer is often difficult to appreciate, but as surprising as it may seem, you are changing reality simply by observing it. In the world described successfully by quantum mechanics, ultimately and fundamentally observers affect the universe whenever they observe it or anything in it. If we refine our ability to see by looking at atomic and subatomic processes with sophisticated instrumentation the differences would

be quite magnified from our normal way of seeing and would appear astonishing to our minds.

THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPLEMENTARITY

Physicists' observations of nature taught us a new principle of physics exists in the world. As I simply put it the principle states, *what you see is what you expect*. By choosing one way to see the world, another equally likely aspect of that world becomes hidden. Physicists have carefully made a map of the way our expectations alter our perception of the world. They noticed that there were always two complementary ways of seeing.

Let me give you an everyday example. Suppose you are a student of music. Undoubtedly you learn how to listen to music, particularly how to hear rhythms, motifs or themes, and the notes different instruments sound. While listening to a particular piece of music, you can find yourself listening to particular instruments, say the violins or the trumpets, and by focusing your mind you can pay attention to each note played, and to the beat of the music. Or if you wish you can pay attention to the theme or the blending of the music into a whole. You find from your listening experiences that you can't do both at the same time. In fact paying attention to themes alters your ability to hear notes, while paying attention to notes alters your ability to hear the melodies. This alteration in your observing ability illustrates a principle of complementarity that exists in listening ability.

Take another example. While you are speaking to someone, you most likely find yourself not paying attention to the individual words, consonants, or vowels you use, while you focus on the meanings and nuances of your sentences. However, at times, you find that you must stop speaking and momentarily search your memory for a particular word. Maybe you notice that once you find that word you have to go back and reconstruct your sentence all over again. This illustrates how a principle of complementarity exists in your thought processes.

Probably the most astonishing fact that emerges from a quantum physical study of matter and energy is that a complementarity of our choices effects the results we do observe in a manner similar to the examples shown above, yet somewhat differently. In other words what you choose to observe can not only nullify your ability to observe another complementary aspect, it can render it nonexistent. The difference tells us that what you observe not only hides the complementary aspect from your sensory awareness, it renders it imaginary altogether. It would be as if when you listened to a symphony's melody being played by a grand orchestra, the individual orchestra members disappeared into a sea of sound. But when you decided to listen for the violins, they popped out of the sea while the symphony's melody stopped to make room for your appreciation of the violin's parts.

This quantum physics complementarity principle was made well known nearly eighty years ago by the wave-particle duality that showed up in quantum physics and equally mystified its discoverers. That mystery persists to this day and provides a basis for our understanding of modern technology particularly a whole new breed of devices based on it called quantum computers.¹

¹ These computers are able to perform extremely rapid calculations in an imaginary space not within the devices themselves. See David Deutsch. *The Fabric of Reality*. NY: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1997.

Briefly, if you look for matter to behave with a wavelike nature it does (as if listening to a musical motif), but if you look to see matter made of individual units, particles, or quanta, it appears that way (as if attempting hear the individual notes of the music). Matter waves behave in a manner completely in opposition to particles of matter. A wave of matter can and does appear to be in several places simultaneously while a particle of matter can only be at one place at one time.²

The wave-particle choice was always yours, and the results were consistent with your way of looking. However matter itself could not possess both wave and particlelike behavior simultaneously; one always precluded the other.

Thus the world is really not as it seems if it seems to you that it exists independently of your observations. It certainly *seems* to be “out there” independently of us. The world hardly appears to depend on any choice we might make. Yet quantum physics destroys that idea. What is “out there” depends on what you choose to look for. The world isn’t made of objects as our common senses tell us. The world’s apparent objects are linked to our minds in surprising and often mysterious ways. By our observations in the world, we influence it. To account for everything we see and do, all that humans observe, we must take into account the act of observation and the choices made by the observers during those acts. We do this by watching our thought processes and considering in those thought processes that whatever we observe about the world, no matter how consistent we believe our observations to be, another equally likely way of seeing may exist that would give entirely different results for that observer. We call this tolerance.

You may ask, doesn’t the observer effect violate all the normal laws of cause and effect? Yes it does. We usually think of cause and effect in terms of an action we take on an object to start something off and the consequences we observe as a result. We usually think that the relation between cause and effect has everything to do with the object and the physical laws it obeys and nothing to do with us once we set it in motion.

Quantum physics has changed all that. It has told us that we count as observers in the world. Mere observation suffices to alter the history of an object. That history, in other words, will be changed by the manner in which we observe its course. By observing an object in the universe, each observer disturbs the universe and as a result, disturbs her or himself in the process.

MIND IS NOT IMMUNE TO COMPLEMENTARITY

Mind is not immune to the principle of complementarity. Mind and therefore memory are affected by it as well. As you construct a memory you must use the same tools of awareness as you use to look at the world “out there.” In other words you must construct

² Subatomic electrons for example, “wave” whenever they are inside of the atoms they come from but the minute they pop out of an atom, they are only observable, when they are observed at all, as particles in one place at any given time. If subatomic electrons did not “wave” inside of their atoms, no atom could remain stable for long. Waves appear to be spread out through space at any instant of time and they can interfere with each other often canceling themselves out or multiplying in strength. Because of this wave property electron-waves form stable patterns much like a whirling propeller makes a disk pattern. In this way the electron-wave provides structural integrity to atoms making them appear solid and somewhat impenetrable. Electron-particles can never do that. They must appear to be at specific places at any time, hence they can not provide patterns of structural stability.

a memory in the same way that you construct a view of the world. Each observation tends to create a memory of the world as existing “out there” and the role we play by choosing tends to become obscured. By observing the world or one’s thoughts as one constructs a picture of the world or a memory, each observer separates into a self and a thing (out there) or mind object (in here). And in either mind object (in here) or sense object (out there) the complementarity principle rules.

Consequently, by observing, the observer gains specific knowledge, but also pays a price. He or she loses an alternative way of constructing the world or one’s thoughts. Since the observer always loses alternative information as he or she gains objective information, the price appears as an incomplete transaction or an imperfection in one’s knowledge. The most important imperfection that arises comes about in the observational process itself. Just as the objects of the world must be seen in wave or particle modes, so too must the individual see her or himself as alone and isolated or part of humanity. By focusing on the individual accomplishment that arises through objectivity and the absorption of the thoughts of others, the observer becomes more and more alone and isolated from the humanity he or she is equally a part of. Perhaps this is what the apple on the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden represents. The first bite of the apple is sweet, but costly. Our eyes are opened and we see a world “out there” and we see ourselves alone, separated from everyone else and everything else.

HERE IS WHERE WE LOSE OUR SOUL AWARENESS

Gaining objective knowledge has been costly from that very first bite. Each chomp, each bit of knowledge gain, results in a brief “aha” followed by an immediate “so what.” And by becoming conscious of the universe, by paying attention to it, we do change it. Since the universe includes you, the boundary between you and it also changes whenever you observe anything. Simply put, it changes because you change and you and it are parts of a greater whole. You are invisibly connected to the whole universe, so the change not only occurs within you but outside of you as well.

What happens when a change occurs? We call each occurrence of this the “I/it” split. When the split occurs an act of consciousness always takes place. The occurrence of the “I/it” split as you experience it is identical to your consciousness of the “it.” Hence whenever you become conscious of anything, the “I/it” split arises. The split has no unique location in space or time even though it appears as objects “out there” and your inner experience of cognition or perception that you feel “in here.”

Consciousness is what consciousness does. There are many different forms that consciousness takes depending on the sense organ accompanying it and the object or the “it” that consciousness responds to. Each act of consciousness creates a momentary split, a quick division between “I” and “it.” Any object can be reflected upon by consciousness, including the “I” part of the split. When that occurs, self-consciousness takes place. But note that the “I/it” split is different for each object and for each of the senses employed, including the mind sense that reflects on thought, feeling, sensation, and intuition. Just as the sense organ and object differ, so does the “I” change so that the “I” that smells a rose is quite different from the “I” that feels the prick of the thorn. And just as the objects of consciousness are different, that rose-smelling “I” in turn differs from the “I” that smells the rotting fruit in a neighbor’s garbage or hears the ending note of *taps* at sunset.

Before we knew quantum physics we thought that consciousness simply was an

accompaniment to the objective world, that it played no role other than taking notes, mapping the external world, and storing data as memory. The “out there” was indeed out there and had no connection with mind. But with quantum physics we found that consciousness actually acts on the physical world. It makes its mark so that the world is not and cannot be the same without consciousness present.

Hence consciousness performs a dual role in the universe. In the world of quantum physics, it forms at once both the awareness and the creation of experience. Each act of consciousness not only marks for memory the event of awareness noted but through the principle of complementarity—namely that the observer changes the observed by the way the observation is performed—it creates the event noted.

The I/it split experience at once becomes the mind in the act of knowing and the thing being known. The experience occurs in the mind and “out there” in the world. In fact since there is no scientific evidence that the mind even exists in the body. (Yes I know we have nervous systems and brains, but where, O where, is the “I” in all that neural wiring?) We can just as well take it that your mind is just as much “out there” in the world as it is in your body.

Philosophers say mind and matter interact. They say there is a problem in this interaction between mind and matter or knowing and being. Is the act of knowing something a physical act? Is mind a tangible thing? They call questions like this the “mind-body problem.” Descartes was probably the first to call our attention to it, but I am sure that many philosophers can claim originality. In fact it is probably “the” problem of philosophy.

Is there a mind-body problem? If no separation really exists then why is there any problem at all? Most likely the problem arises in our minds when each of us puts into action any desire we happen to feel. What is the problem with this? This problem has to do with each person’s awareness of will or intent. Many philosophers, Taoists for instance, consider “will” the source of the problem. They speak of “non-volitional” living—that is living one’s life as it comes. In this manner thought or mind simply arises as an accompanying property to the physical world, much as sharpness arises when a knife is used to cut something.³

How do you will something to happen? In other words, when you choose to do something, how does it get done and how do you know that you are doing it? This is perhaps the heart of the mind/body mystery. If one had no experience of will or intent it is problematic that one would pay any attention to a mind-body split. In my latest book, *Mind into Matter*,⁴ I describe *intent* as an alchemical force in nature. I point out that the world we perceive “out there” and the world we perceive with our mind’s eye “in here” connect in an imaginal realm—a world of ideas, dreams, and desires.

Is this realm real? Does it exist? Henri Corbin, the noted scholar of Islam and European author, coined the term “imaginal realm” to describe it. In his view, this realm is ontologically real, and as the Australian Aborigines and my research into the nature of

³ This was Aristotle’s view of the soul—namely it arose in relation to the body as sharpness arose in relation to the knife.

⁴ *Mind into Matter: A New Alchemy of Science and Spirit*. NH: Moment Point Press, 2001.

shamanism⁵ and dreams suggest, it may just be more real than the reality we perceive. It is however, a reality that usually exists beyond our normal waking perception, though it does appear to us in the form of lucid dreams, prophetic dreams, and other related phenomena such as near-death experience (NDE) and possibly UFO abductions⁶.

In the imaginal realm relationships are paradoxical and even contradictory. An object can appear both upside down and right side up simultaneously. And since a self-concept also exists within its boundaries, you can exist as both good and evil, short and tall, light and dark or within any pair of opposites you care to imagine. Not only that, but the relationship between the “out there” and the “in here” can be observed in complementary ways. An object can appear to be moving and standing still, and in terms of the complementarity discussed by Jung, you can perceive yourself as having a feeling and a thought at the same time. By changing your internal perception, you can shape each experience to give rise to thought or feeling. Ancient alchemists knew this very well when they realized the maxim “as within, so without.” Shaping an experience meant using one’s powers of intent and intention.

INTENTION: BELIEF IN THE SELF

Here I make a distinction between “intent” and “intention.” Intention is the common or garden-variety use of will. It usually helps us deal, by reaction to the world, with survival issues. We use our intention to learn to grapple with the world we commonly believe is “out there” separated from “in here.” For example, we learn to ride a bicycle using intention. We go to school and learn our “ABCs” using intention. What we usually fail to see is that intention is a choice, a way of observing, and complementary to it is another way of observing—one that is not based on survival or skill mechanisms needed to cope with a universe of “out there” stuff. When we use intention we foster the I/it division into what I label as the “particle” mode of behavior. We see the world as composed of separated parts. We become aware of the “I” within as if it were a separate entity, an ego.

When I describe myself as *I* using my intention, I mean an instinctive survival-based sense that you and I both have that we are individual beings, that we exist separately, and that we see ourselves as distinct human individuals with diverse and seemingly specific, airtight, conscious minds. That innate sense appears so personal that we hardly suspect that it really is a universal survival mechanism, part of the soul/self complementarity of nature.

However, as I wish to point out, intention only arises as one way of existing in the world. It is as if you were taught to hear music by only listening to the notes and never to the melodies. What we often fail to see is that all sentient life forms experience this intention “I” sense just as you and I do. We call this suffering.

⁵ Fred Alan Wolf, *The Eagle's Quest: A Physicist's Search for Truth in the Heart of the Shamanic World*. New York: Summit Books, 1991.

⁶ See for example, Peter M. Rojcewicz, "Signals of Transcendence: The Human-UFO Equation," *Journal of UFO Studies*. (New Series, 1989): Vol. 1, p.111.

INTENT: BELIEF IN THE SOUL

When we use *intent* we foster the melding of the “I/it” into a single composition, a joining or unity experience—one that enables you to feel a part of the whole universe by not separating yourself from it. You become aware of your soul (see sidebar) and the unbroken wholeness of the universe to which your soul is intimately joined with no boundaries.

Intent arises through the most basic recognition that the egoic *I, myself*, exist paradoxically and selflessly at a boundary between *real* and the *imaginal* realms.

Where does this “recognition” come from? If you look deeply enough within yourself you will find that it has always been present. You could say that it exists at your deepest level of being. You recognize it as love or compassion. You feel its presence whenever you become aware of anyone suffering in the world.

By recognizing this and learning to use our selfless intent, we are able to take the three steps necessary to awaken the soul.

A SOUL DEFINITION (SIDE BAR)

I use, as models, metaphors based on my understanding of how the physical world works. Using metaphors allows me to explain things that are unfamiliar in terms that are familiar. For example, the concepts of soul, matter, spirit, self, and consciousness can be defined by imagining two basic physical objects: one is a vibrating string as you might see on a violin; the other is a mirror which reflects back images of the real world. In my model, both are placed in the context of quantum theories. Spirit would be akin to the vibrations of the string. We can imagine that the string is infinitely long and, due to random inputs of heat, air, or just the fluctuating vacuum of space, it vibrates. Its vibration represents the movement of the spirit.

This constant movement of energy—or life—provides the *modus operandi* of the string or spirit. In modern science, physicists understand that we can model the vacuum as if it were filled with an infinite number of vibrating strings, and thus the vacuum itself becomes vibratory and a natural place to look for a metaphor for spirit. The soul, then, appears as the reflected vibrations of the vacuum within the domain of time. The soul (and time) extends from the beginning and ending points of time, known respectively as the big bang and the big crunch. The vibration reflects from these end points, just as an image reflects from a mirror. The reflection from the ends of time gives the soul consciousness in the same way that we become self-conscious when we gaze at our own mirror reflection. Our mirror-image consciousness arises in space and becomes the self. The soul consciousness arises in time. The soul therefore embodies in matter as the “self,” or the “self-process.” The soul relates to itself continually in the body and therefore it involves itself with the survival of the body. The soul isn’t necessarily embodied to begin with, but the self must be.

Consciousness or mind in general arises whenever a reflection in time occurs. That means something reflects from points in the present or the future and the past, or even both past and present, or future and present. What reflects depends on the form of the consciousness. If we’re talking about primal reflections from the beginning and ending of time, then the reflection produces a conscious and cosmic soul. I would call this the one Soul that inhabits each and every being.

THE SECRET OF AWAKENING YOUR SOUL: STEP 1, BELIEVE

Step 1 is simple to state but for some hard to do: simply believe you have a soul. Or to put it another way, believe that you can experience the world from a complementary intent point of view, not just from an intention point of view. This notion cuts into our whole modern society fabric of belief. However, as I have attempted to show in my writing, as for example in my book, *The Spiritual Universe*,⁷ there is a good basis for such a belief. Namely that our modern technology is firmly based on an invisible world of quantum physical principles, including the principle of complementarity, that are themselves almost impossible to believe. These principles show that mind must enter matter, as I have been pointing out, whenever an observation occurs, and does not appear to be a mere side dish to the meal of life, but the main course. Hence to believe you have a soul is no more difficult than believing that you are made of electrons.

However, as you know many scientists question whether the soul exists. Many others in our Western culture question, even if it exists, whether the soul has any relevance in a scientifically oriented, technologically trained modern society. In a certain sense, using intention as the only way of experiencing the world, they are quite correct. Because science is largely responsible for portraying the world as merely a collection of mechanical parts acting on each other, there appears little or no use for a soul or for an intent way of seeing. Indeed some people feel a little uncomfortable when a quantum physicist such as myself attempts to define anything like the soul in scientific terms. Nevertheless, more and more people *are* concerned with questions dealing with the soul, the human spirit, and spirituality. But what is it they should be concerned with?

What is the soul? (See the sidebar.) This is really a very old question, one that has fascinated scientists and philosophers for millennia. Hence it is not really surprising to have me look into it. Probably the very first observation of the soul took place when beings in ancient times noticed that at death another fellow being stopped breathing. It would have been natural to associate the breath with the soul or spirit. Indeed, the word *spirit* leads to the words *inspire*, *respire*, and *expire* quite naturally. Just as the breath leaves the body at death it would have been quite natural to associate the soul with the breath and observe it also leave the body at death.

Today we see this idea as a simplification of quite complex processes occurring at death. Yet it certainly seems true when are witness to the moment of anyone's death. However, I should point out that the soul really has no where to go, that is, nowhere in any ordinary sense of the meaning of place. It is more likely that it remains while other processes of degradation simply take over. These processes are going on all of the time, its just that the soul has the job of keeping them at bay, reversing the direction of entropy so to speak, and providing for the soul within the body a sense of presence in space and time. At death, that provision ends and it ends gradually, not suddenly with the last breath.

What the soul was started off a great debate thousands of years ago in ancient Greece between the followers of Plato and his student, Aristotle. In brief both philosophers saw the soul as an agent of reality. However there were significant

⁷ *The Spiritual Universe: One Physicist's Vision of Spirit, Soul, Matter and Self*. NH: Moment Point Press, 1999.

differences in their viewpoints.

Plato believed the soul existed in a more abstract manner. It dwelled in a higher space than the body. He taught this higher space was a more perfect, non-material realm of existence. He believed that the soul entered the body and when it did so the physical senses were always going to cloud the soul's perception of the universe. According to Plato, the mere fact that we are embodied makes our perceptions somewhat distorted, somewhat inaccurate, somewhat of an illusion. While working at the level of the body and the senses, Plato thought that we could never quite experience things as they are "in reality," where reality meant this higher space.

Plato recognized this as one form of the "I/it" split that I labeled above as intention—preoccupation with survival issues and the self as body.

In contrast to Plato and along with the notion of intention given above, Aristotle taught there is no world outside of our senses. Plato's world was mere imagination and did not really exist. Consequently Aristotle may have argued that the soul was a way of speaking, an artifact of our human condition. He would have presumed that if a soul existed at all it was a consequence of the body in much the same way that sharpness is a consequence of an ax. For Aristotle, seeking the soul would have meant finding the inner body processes giving rise to it.

Nowadays, scientists have invented sophisticated scientific instruments such as microscopes and telescopes to extend the power of our senses, but I suppose that the majority of scientists still share Aristotle's basic worldview. For Aristotle and them, the soul would merely vanish as the last breath was expired.

I believe that the findings of quantum physics increasingly support Plato. They suggests the existence of a non-material, non-physical universe that has a reality even though it is not clearly perceptible to our senses and scientific instrumentation. When we consider out-of-body experiences, shamanic journeys, and lucid dream states, though they cannot be replicated in the true scientific sense, they also point to the existence of non-material dimensions of reality.

Within these realms, manifestation does not occur, however all possibilities arise in much the same way that ideas arise in your mind. The notion of self and ego also arise, hence the issue of survival as body also arises, but only as a concept. The soul I point to as that which can be felt in selfless intent is transpersonal and ego-less and lives in that realm. In fact it is at once within that realm and the whole realm itself.

Now most of us were not trained to look for and experience a transpersonal soul. If we are Buddhists, we long ago gave up to notion of any soul existing at all. If we are Christians, Moslems, or Jews, we usually refer to the soul as the individual self and perhaps pray for its survival after death. We hardly know how to deal with an abstract world such as envisioned by Plato or quantum physics. We've been more or less trained to look for things that can be grasped—things that are physical and solid. But the soul is not tangible, physical or solid. It doesn't even belong to you. It's more that you belong to it. You cannot just reach out and touch the soul. Yet, according to quantum physics principles and Plato's vision, the soul as an animating principle in the universe is ultimately more important than anything that is physical or tangible.⁸

⁸ Aristotle took it that the soul was an animating principle of life one that formed the body. For him the soul was the unmoved mover of the body.

Consequently to awaken the soul, it will be necessary for you to believe in this imaginal world of quantum physics and Plato.

Now as science continues to advance, it may indeed be true that a newer physics will replace quantum physics. However, whatever that replacement might be, it certainly won't regress to anything like Aristotle's material-based viewpoint. So even if you can't grasp quantum physics, don't despair. The imaginal world is real regardless of what science one uses, now or in the future.

Hence the first part of awakening the soul is to believe that the transpersonal soul exists and nothing more is required than to believe in an ethereal realm. You can call it Plato's ideal world, the imaginal monarchy of perfection, the quantum physics kingdom, or the soul realm. Once you believe in it, the next step is to learn to think of your soul as if it were living there and projecting itself into the world, rather than living here and imagining that imaginal world. In other words, you need to change your perspective view.

But this may be too hard to do. In spite of all that I said, how can you do that if you still don't believe your soul is real? It is simple enough, just act as if it were real. Act as if you expect it to appear. If you can do that you are ready to take the next step.

THE SECRET OF AWAKENING YOUR SOUL: STEP 2, DIALOGUE

Step 2 of awakening the soul is to begin a dialogue with your soul as if it were an old friend. For indeed it is the oldest friend you have ever had. Now by a dialogue I may not mean what you think. The dialogue I refer to can be wordless. It nevertheless is a dialogue, a communication between what appears to be separate beings your "self" and your soul. From the imaginal realm point of view this is no more than you talking to yourself—your mirror image. You all have dialogues without word before. It is the look of love between lovers; the silent prayer at sunset; the feeling of ecstasy arising when music enlivens you. This experience occurs for me a number of times in my life as I have described in my earlier articles and books.⁹

You may have spoken about such communication with your friends. Perhaps they were as skeptical as you may be. Doubts may still linger. The question then arises, "If the soul is real and anyone can dialogue with it, how is it that more people do not directly experience the presence of their soul?" They may read about the soul, they may believe in the soul, but if the soul is a reality, why do they feel a sense of soul loss, an absence of the soul in their lives?

I go into the matter of soul loss in more detail in my books, *The Spiritual Universe* and *Mind into Matter*. Briefly, the answer may be found in the nature of the soul itself: how it behaves when it is in dialogue with you. Since that dialogue most often occurs without any words spoken, if you aren't listening, the meaning may get lost. At times the soul can be experienced as "out there," but usually you will hear it in your mind and heart.

The transpersonal soul is alive, vibrant, and usually experienced subjectively.

⁹ "The Physics of Dream Consciousness: Is the Lucid Dream a Parallel Universe?" *Lucidity Letter*. Vol. 6, No. 2; December, 1987. pp. 130-135. Also see: *The Eagle's Quest: A Physicist's Search for Truth in the Heart of the Shamanic World*. New York: Summit Books, 1991. *The Spiritual Universe: One Physicist's Vision of Spirit, Soul, Matter and Self*. NH: Moment Point Press, 1999.

The world that we see with our everyday eyes—through the filter of our senses—seems to come from the “objective” world. Most often we experience the “out there” as material information—something to categorize—put in its place in our memories. Usually little soul or spiritual content comes into the process. We see a tree, a person, or a cloud and we associate what we see with our memories.¹⁰

However, there is always a sacred light around everything in the universe. Everything “out there” shines. That light or aura appears all of the time, but usually we lose sight of it. We can’t just see it with our ordinary material-seeking eyes. We need to use a complementary way of observing involving our hearts together with our minds to experience the aura at all. This aura is a remnant of our connection to all things. It appears most often when we become aware of our soul. We see it when our soul is awake within ourselves. We need to invoke a spiritual way of observing contrary and complementary to the usual material way of seeing.¹¹

Ancient spiritual wisdom teaches that the “out there” objective world and the subjectively experienced “soul world” are often in conflict with each other. This corresponds to what spiritual teachers say when living spirit descends into objective matter. There’s a battle, a “war with time” ensuing.¹² So, if we become too involved with the objective, external processes of life, we tend to lose touch with perception of our soul. It’s when we go within into an internal quietness, as in meditation or silence, we can begin to perceive something which is deeper and more meaningful than just the objective “out there-ness.”

Only then can we actually begin a dialogue. Don’t be concerned if the dialogue does not use words. Don’t be concerned if it does. So, it’s really important for those of us who have lost touch with our souls to spend some quiet time. Don’t use this time to think. Do not go over the day’s list of everything that has to be done. But allow the deeper inner well of well-being reality to bubble up from within your consciousness.

If you practice this you will “hear” a voice inside of you speak. Like any friend you may have not listened to earlier, that voice may be saying uncomfortable things to you, especially if you have not paid attention to it for a long time. Allow yourself to discourse with it without fear. You may wish to even write down what comes up for you as a written dialogue. Dialogue will begin if you are willing it so. To will it so you need to learn to choose a complementary way of experiencing your self and the world.

¹⁰ Just as your experience of the “out there” world depends on how you choose to go about experiencing it, so is it for your mind’s contents—your memories. As I mentioned in the article, memories are also not just “in here” like data files in a computer—although that appears to be a current metaphor. Instead they are potentially present and only “come alive” when you access them. And just as the rules of complementarity apply when accessing the outside world, so do they apply when looking inward. I discuss this more fully in my latest book, *Mind into Matter: A New Alchemy of Science and Spirit*. NH: Moment Point Press, 2001.

¹¹ Many people claim the ability to see auras. Perhaps they do so because of the use of this way of “seeing.” In other words, they see auras when they lose their egoic way of being in the world.

¹² This constitutes the main battle of the mind/body split. Identifying entirely with the “I” separate from “it” rather than the unity of the conjoined two, actually adds ammo to the battle.

THE SECRET OF AWAKENING YOUR SOUL: STEP 3, CHOOSE

The third step in learning to awaken your soul awareness is to realize that you always have a choice in everything you do. It's both a *what you see is what you expect* world when we use our intent or a determined already "out there" *what you see is what you get* world when we use our intention. I call this recognition of the complementarity of choice between intent and intention, *alchemical creativity*.¹³ It means to learn to become aware of the mind/body split and to become aware when your unconscious mind influences your body. This always occurs when a thought arises, for if you look carefully enough you will find its antithesis also accompanying the thought.

With each thought, you need to become aware each time that you feel resistance arising within yourself. That feeling of resistance is the awareness of choice arising within you. It is your awareness of the material/spiritual complementarity split. It can also be noted as the being/becoming split or the quantum physics wave/particle split. In general it's the flag of awareness telling you that you have a choice involving two complementary ways of experiencing anything. Thus when you feel resistance let it be, give it airtime so to speak. In so doing you won't transcend from intention to intent, but you will become aware that the stage for transcendence is present.

If you choose the material intention way of seeing, then once you have chosen, once you have made your path to be one of knowledge-being-particle, the resistance becomes inertia—a mind object that connects to a physical object "out there." When it arises, you experience your intention taking form and you experience your self as separate from the object of your awareness.

If you choose the spiritual way of seeing, the intent way, then once you have chosen, once you have made your path to be one of heart-becoming-wave, the resistance dissolves—a mind object no longer connects to a physical object "out there." When this choice is realized, you experience your intent dissolving, taking no form at all, and you experience your self as one with all objects. In fact no object appears separate from you. Choosing to experience intent may appear difficult. For some of us it is difficult. It actually arises through surrender to your soul, a letting go of intention, and a trust in what you may call a higher power.

The process is universal. You can think of the universe as having this choice as well. When the universe chooses to be matter and energy, to see itself materially, it becomes aware of the arising resistance called material inertia. Hence matter and energy come into being through the intention of the universe—the desire to see things separately. This was the desire that made the big bang. Material inertia is for the universe the same resistance that you and I experience when we discover a new idea. Just as you and I have the potential to choose to see the universe using intent or intention, and with such a choice being made have a different experience of ourselves in the universe, so does the universe. If the universe had not chosen to see itself materially, it would have remained empty but potentially able to make that choice at any time.

When it does make the alternate choice, seeing itself with intent, nothing actually

¹³ Although it may not seem so, the intention way of seeing is also creative, you really need to train yourself to see the world that way. The alchemy comes about through the transformative processes that are involved when you use either way of "seeing." I discuss this more fully in *Mind into Matter: A New Alchemy of Science and Spirit*. NH: Moment Point Press, 2001.

manifests. For no objects come into existence. In this “universal frame of mind” the quantum physics underlying the universe manifests, and through the process the universe recognizes itself as a single, but nonmaterial entity. By alternating the intent/intention choices the universe becomes self-aware. As an intention material-choosing universe, it transforms information into matter, giving rise to physical objects. As an intent spiritual-choosing universe, it transforms matter into information, giving rise to a mental universe that models the physical. Resistance arises in each intention transformation. It also arises as doubt in each intent transformation. This is the order of the transformational process and the reason that each action always creates an equal and opposite reaction as Newton, the alchemist realized.

As a spiritual-choosing universe, it becomes what it is called a one-verse. All space-time-matter remains undifferentiated. We could call this state the Mind of God. No resistance arises. Nothing transforms. No information actually passes from one thing to another because nothing is separated from anything. Everything just shines.

But the world seems so disordered you might argue, hardly ever shining in the above manner. Yet, of course, physical light appears everywhere we look as a reminder of the “shining” to which I refer. Consequently disorder really doesn’t exist, only nature playing her hide and seek game with you. So any disorder perceived lies totally within you. It arises as a result of your choice to see the world intentionally. As Einstein once said, “God doesn’t play dice with the universe.” We might say that God’s will is exercised in the world of the ideal causal intent world of exact mathematical accuracy, but there is no matter present. It is a world of paradox and utter confusion for human, limited intelligence. For it is a world where a thing both occupies a single place at a single time and occupies an infinite number of places at the same time.

Yet there is an explicit order to the intent world of paradox. There is a pattern to the many positions, a symmetry that appears for physicists when they study the quantum physics structure of matter. People with great spiritual insight into God’s universe also experience this order. Physicist David Bohm called it the implicate order.¹⁴

But we, who exist in the world of conventional intentional mind and matter distinction, can only disrupt that perfection of paradox by attempting to observe the pattern. We pay a large price for a material world. By losing awareness of the intent choice, the price is our sanity. We cannot make total order of our intentional observations. This leads to suffering and anxiety. With the perception brought forward by intent we gain our sanity, we see the world is perfect just as it is, in spite of its many problems.

This is certainly paradoxical to many, so I won’t be surprised if you have difficulty grasping what I am saying here. There always appears to be something missing in the intention-driven world. This disruption of God’s order appears to us in an intention-driven world as the quantum physical Principle of Uncertainty.¹⁵ Thus we

¹⁴ David Bohm. *The Undivided Universe*. NY: Routledge, 1993.

¹⁵ The Uncertainty Principle is a concept that reflects the inability to predict the future based on the past or based on the present. Also called the principle of indeterminism, it arose from the ideas and thoughts that were first stated by Werner Heisenberg around 1926 or 1927. It forms the cornerstone of quantum physics and provides an understanding of why the world is made of events that cannot be related entirely in terms of cause and effect. It lies at the root of all physical matter and may manifest for human beings as doubt

become helpless, feel inadequate, and long for the order we are helpless to create in the universe.¹⁶ All we can do is go along with it.

On the other hand, we are free to choose. Our very helplessness to create a perfect order allows us to create. Our helplessness invites us to surrender and to recognize that perfect order as we attempt to picture it cannot exist in the material world. You might say that the Uncertainty Principle is a two-edged sword. It frees us from the past because nothing can be predetermined. It gives us the freedom to choose how we go about in the universe. But we cannot predict the results of our choices. We can choose, but we cannot know if our choices will be successful. By choosing to see spiritually we are no longer interested in prediction anyway. We become one with our soul.

REVIEW

Let me review:

- **Step 1: believe**
- **Step 2: dialogue**
- **Step 3: choose**

STEP 1 BELIEVE.

You can't awaken what you believe doesn't exist. So you need to believe that your soul exists. For me it is helpful to have a model of my soul (see the sidebar). In quantum physics we deal with the imaginal realm. We imagine waves. We never see these waves, but we use them to successfully predict the many things we do see. These waves may be imagined to be real waves, and as far as we know if we do think of them as real, no harm is done, nothing absurd results. In fact, there is no difference between thinking of these waves as purely imaginal or purely real.

A similar reasoning applies to the soul. I use imaginal waves to make a model of the soul by imagining them to be waves of spirit. I do this because I see spirit as a deep vibration existing even before matter and energy come into being. So I conjecture that spirit consists of these imaginal timeless, spaceless, waves. Hence for me a model of the soul encompasses it as a *process* that arises from reflections of imaginal waves of spirit. I picture the imaginal world to be a giant hollow cube stretching from infinity to infinity in all directions. I imagine it contains air or any medium that will support wave movement. I imagine that these waves behave like sound, fill that medium, and bounce back and forth from the walls. The walls act as a form of resistance bouncing these waves back in the direction from which they came. I imagine one of the cube's spatial dimensions to be time. Hence when a wave travels from say the left wall toward the right, it travels forward in time; when it travels from the right wall toward the left, it

and insecurity. If this is so, once it is fully understood, it could create a condition of enlightenment in which the world appears as an illusion and as a product of mind or consciousness.

¹⁶ I believe human beings and all living creatures have a natural need for order. Without order in our lives we suffer. I suggest that this need for order is at the heart of spirituality. While it is certainly true that we suffer from poor physical conditions, it appears that our mental suffering arises from a lack of spiritual order in our lives and that once spiritual order is achieved, many physical handicaps can be overcome.

travels backward in time. Thus these imaginal waves travel both backward and forward through time “simultaneously.”

I call these walls the initial and final *nodes of time*. According to quantum physics, the beginning and ending nodes of time, known colloquially as the “big bang” (when all matter burst forth from the primordial vacuum) and the “big crunch” (when all will collapse again into nothingness) exist simultaneously beyond space and time. It matters little whether the universe will crunch or just go on expanding. Eventually a final resistance will come into being reflecting the waves back through time.

Then, the soul arises when these imaginal vibrations reflect from these two walls which symbolize the beginning and ending of time. In this manner the soul is an imaginal process, however since it exists throughout all of time, and since it reflects from both the ending and beginning of time, I take this to be tantamount to primal consciousness. I do this because I see that within in our own brains, something similar to this must occur in order that a conscious experience arise.¹⁷

Next I imagine that the cubical space is now filled with dust floating in the medium. The dust also acts as reflectors of these waves. Consequently as the wave bounce from the dust particles, the dust responds and moves in the cubical space. The dust is my metaphor for matter, and the waves moving the dust around is the activity of the soul acting as an animating principle. Thus the soul involves itself both within and without the presence of matter.

Consequently, though in human terms the two nodes of time events may be separated by twenty billion, billion years, the notion of linear time is an artifact of perception and it is possible for spirit to bounce between them. So soul is the reflection of spirit between these two nodes.

When the material dust responds to the directing movements of the soul, the dust begins to act as if it were self-motivating. It then reflects on itself, for the process of moving the dust around also involves both waves coming from the future as well as waves coming from the past. This self-reflection of the soul movement is recognized by the matter-dust as the self. The boundaries attributed by the reflecting dust form the ego—the boundary separating I from it. Through this reflection process my body spirit

¹⁷ Benjamin Libet of the University of California, San Francisco Medical School, in a series of remarkable experiments, established that sensory information is also projected from the brain backwards through time. He showed that sensory information appears in the consciousness of the observer “referred backwards in time.” By this he meant that although the subject’s brain didn’t actually indicate awareness of that stimulus occurred until some period of time after the stimulus (roughly a half-second), the subject experienced the stimulus as if it happened very nearly at the time the stimulus was applied (roughly about ten milliseconds later).

Libet believes that space-time projection is essential to the human mind-body connection. As he put it in a conversation I had with him some years ago, “Referral in space is, in principle, similar to referral in time. We discovered referral in time. There is referral all over the place.” Thus the sensation of feeling something “out there” in space or backwards in time is then comparable to the sensation of seeing something “out there” in normal vision or feeling that someone is out there when you can’t see a thing. In fact, in physics today we believe that space and time may not be primary concepts. This indicates that, in some way, we project space and time as well as the spatial and temporal extent of objects. Perhaps we do both at the same “time.” See Libet, B.; E. W. Wright; B. Feinstein; and Dennis Pearl. “Subjective Referral of the Timing for a Conscious Sensory Experience: A Functional Role for the Somatosensory Specific Projection System in Man.” *Brain*. Vol. 102, Part 1. March, 1979.

becomes aware of itself as soul. Fundamental to this concept is that there is just one soul, which we all share. Perhaps our individual births and deaths are just reflections of the universe's beginning and end.

STEP 2 DIALOGUE

The reflection/resistance process continues whenever we wish information. Spirit will always reflect from the space that binds it. Confining spirit may seem a strange idea. The notion here is that the bounding of spirit creates space, time energy, and matter. Matter is the confinement of spirit in space, and soul consciousness is the confinement of spirit in time. When the Big Bang occurred space was smaller than atomic dimension. Waves of spirit got caught in the initial bubble, became confined to this space and reflected within it. Pieces of reflected waves got caught up within themselves. These "strings" became particles of matter and when they exchanged waves of spirit, they formed atoms, then molecules, and in time our very bodies. Spirit also exists unconfined, and indeed spirit by nature resists confinement. An information exchange between confined and unconfined spirit makes up the dialogue of the universe and the same dialogue exists within you. Through this dialogue process a reflection of the soul within the body takes place. This reflection is felt as your "I." It is your center of being. To dialogue with your soul you need to let this center expand outward by relaxation, deep breathing, and quiet time-spending. To do this requires you to go into silence. Just stop speaking.

STEP 3 CHOOSE

We live in a *what you see is what you expect* and *what you see is what you get* world. By becoming aware of the complementary choices in observing the universe, each observer is either disturbing the unbroken wholeness of the universe or becoming one with it. When you become aware that you always have a choice, to be or to do, you are awakening your soul as a partner in your cosmic dance. By observing materially, each observer is separating himself or herself from the rest of creation. By observing material being, the observer is gaining knowledge, but also paying a price of becoming more and more alone and isolated.

But by becoming conscious of our choices in the universe, by paying attention to *what you see is what you expect* and then choosing the spiritual way of seeing, we change the universe in a way not predictable. We call this soul consciousness. When we awaken the soul, we see through the illusion of our senses.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, consider the following words spoken by people throughout recorded history to aid you in making a spiritual choice.

Seeing into Nothingness—this is the true seeing, the eternal seeing.

—Shen-Hui (8th century Philosopher)

In appearance I'm a thing moving about in Space. In reality I'm that unmoving Space Itself.

–Douglas Harding, *On Having No Head: Zen and the Rediscovery of the Obvious* (New York: Arkana, 1986),

He who knows that he is Spirit, becomes Spirit, becomes everything; neither gods nor men can prevent him . . . The gods dislike people who get this knowledge . . . The gods love the obscure and hate the obvious.

–Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (seventh century BCE.).

To see through the illusion that the universe is just matter and energy, the soul must be included in *everything* we do. Every transaction must be compassionately soulful in awareness of the suffering in each sentient life form. I don't mean anything gloomy by this. Simply remember the soul is present in every human being, in every animal, and in all life forms including our own planet, our own universe. To me, this is the right answer to every question: remember, *your soul is everywhere*.

AN IMAGINED SOUL-AWAKENING CONVERSATION

SELF: *So what is my relationship with You? How do I become aware of any relationship with You? In other words, how does my self become conscious of my Soul?*

SOUL: *You have a very intimate and imaginal relationship with Me. I come to you at various times, particularly when you are considering earth-shattering questions about the meaning of life. These can be extremely troubling time or periods of exaltation. Most of the time you live on what you might call automatic pilot. But then things happen that you can't account for. All of a sudden, they happen again and something within you gains a definite opinion about it. You may not like it. Or you may become quite attracted to it. In fact, there are times when you become positively addicted to the things that happen to you.*

For example, you are very interested in yourself. You like to look at yourself in the mirror. You love to hear your own voice. You enjoy the smell of your body even when it doesn't smell too good to others. You really delight in you. In fact, if a day goes by when you haven't been able to enjoy your self, you get frustrated and a little despondent. If several days go by, it gets much worse. Finally when you get a chance to luxuriate in your self again, you feel better, particularly if you think that your enjoyment feeds Me as well as your body. You guess it's I, your Soul, that you feed, perhaps it's really just yourself. You're not sure at all.

You see there are also days when you hate yourself. You don't know who or what to turn to. Nothing you do for yourself seems to make any difference. You feel lousy. You then feel that I have left you, and you doubt if you ever had Me inside.

You see you don't believe that you have an involvement with Me as if I was a real person. If you were involved with Me, you wouldn't constantly be swinging from elation

to despair, either stuffing your face with everything nice—and scouring the planet to do it—or denying your humanity by putting your body on a starvation diet. Or, even worse, if you felt My presence, you wouldn't attempt to kill your humanity by asking one part of yourself to destroy another. It's I that save you from all of this self-reflective destruction.

SELF: *I don't quite get it. Do I have a Soul, or not?*

SOUL: *It is a bit difficult for anyone to get. I am a reflection of you, or rather, you are a reflection of me. I am not there right now, but you are. Or, in a way, I am there but I speak through you, if you let Me. Often I'll speak to you in your dreams, sometimes when you are meditating. Sometimes you hear Me when you are traveling. You always know when I am present because you feel worthy inside, really good, and you've done nothing physical to your body to make yourself feel that well. You may also learn to know me when you are downhearted.*

I, your Soul, always have your best interest at heart and know about everything you do. I don't make you suffer, but you make yourself suffer at times, and you don't know why you do that. When I speak to you, you don't hear words, you have feelings. When you feel My presence, you generally feel as if a great weight has been taken off your chest. I have lifted it. You feel as if you have expanded your awareness. I have made you aware. You know after a Soul-to-self talk, you are more than you think you are and you also know whatever you think you are is always an illusion.

SELF: *Let me see if I understand you. I feel my Soul, but I don't see it, speak to it, or hear it. Is this correct?*

SOUL: *You see Me whenever you see a newborn child. You talk to Me whenever you speak to a five-year-old. You hear Me speak when you listen to an old woman tell you about her life. You hear Me sing to you in a Beethoven symphony, in a Philip Glass composition, or a song by Ray Charles. You read My words in the lines of Hamlet, To be or not to be, or in the words of Eldridge Cleaver in his book, Soul On Ice. you hear Me in a child's poem. You feel Me whenever you sense the beauty of the world or its sadness. You feel me present at moments of great tragedy such as the loss of child or parent.*

SELF: *I certainly understand what you are saying, but this still doesn't prove that You, my Soul, are anything more than a romantic illusion. Could you explain how I can know You exist?*

SOUL: *You can if you change your way of seeing. You don't know that I exist as long as you continue to see the world materially. You know Me when you feel the presence of something sacred within you that can't be explained by mere satisfaction of physical sensation. You like all of humanity feel My presence when you feel compassionately aware of each other.*

SELF: *So, if I hear You correctly, You are more than comforting thought. I have never seen You. In fact I have never even heard You speak to me as You are now.*

SOUL: *I do not appear to you as an object in space. Nor do I speak to you with a voice separate from your own. In spite of all that, I exist. To call Me an illusion may be correct from a certain materialistic position. But according to your understanding of such things as quantum physics, the material world stands on shaky grounds and so cannot be trusted to provide the complete foundation of reality anyway. It certainly should not be used as the basis for the evidence of My presence.*

SELF: *Do you have any advice you can give me to help me cope with the world, life, death, and all of my problems?*

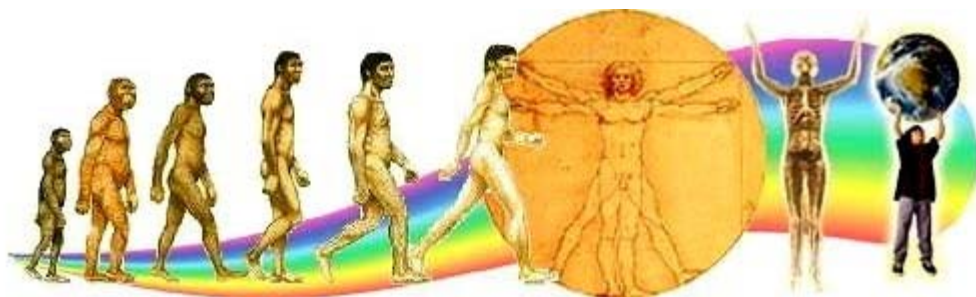
SOUL: *I do not have a material form. I am imaginal and therefore the basis for all of reality. Learn to listen. Take some quiet time. When all of humanity learns to do this My voice will be heard throughout the universe as the voice of compassion and reason that*

has always existed. When this occurs, all of humanity will be truly free and I will sing until the end of time.

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Why Do Personal Development?

Part of the nature of humans is to be constantly developing, growing and moving toward a balanced and mature way of being. Our present personality is determined by both who and what we have been and by the person we strive to become. The goal of personal development is to learn and apply that which enables us to attain emotional wellbeing, understanding and effectiveness, and to share this knowledge with others.

Personal development is the conscious evolution of human nature, and yet throughout history it has been sorely lacking! Although it is in our nature to learn and grow, we are held back by our culture, which is predominantly focused on survival needs, each of us in competition with others, and our spiritual inner nature is repressed. The animal rules. We make no room for unconditional love.

Even though the culture may have evolved with technological advancement and administrative complexity, human nature has not moved forward as it might. We are now paying the price for human selfishness and inconsideration. Going forward, the quality of our lives on this planet - even our survival - now depends on each of us taking responsibility for our personal growth.

The human being needs to awaken to the soul that inhabits each body and is our true self and source of inner knowing. Awaken through a process of self-discovery, leading to one's own, self-directed spirituality. We need to become mindfully conscious instead of ruled by the dictates of instincts, past habits and fixed beliefs. We need to throw away dogma, open our minds and reconsider. Instead of fear about our survival and competitive angst, we will then be motivated by compassionate understanding and creative love.

For those that do move forward, the next epoch - that is almost upon us as we move into 2012 - will be a celebration of human cooperation and shared love. It's our best hope for the future - and it's in our hands.

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