

Invoking The World Soul

by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

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What I want to talk about this evening is the *anima mundi* -- the soul of the world. And actually I don't want to just talk about the *anima mundi*, I want to see if we can invoke Her presence -- this living spirit of creation. This is really divine consciousness within matter. I will begin by just giving a little history of the *anima mundi* in our Western culture. In the East, it is really very evident, as in Taoism, which is really a constant relationship to that living spirit in nature, in which one aligns one's whole life, one's whole way of being, one's whole understanding of life, in relationship to this living spirit. The Tao -- it's the same -- it is the divine within creation. In the West we have a kind of more conceptual understanding of it and this is really the Western tradition of what we call now the Gaia Principle -- the understanding that the Earth is a living being. And all I would add at the beginning in order to understand this, in order to relate to this, is that it is a living *spiritual* being. And just as we are a physical body with a soul, so is the world a physical body with a soul, and that soul *is* its spiritual essence. And as far as I can understand, unless you make a relationship to the soul of creation, to the *anima mundi*, you are just scratching the surface of life. Just as if somebody relates to you purely physically they are just scratching your surface, they are not relating to you as a living breathing spiritual being -- as a soul incarnate in this world.

So one can go back, for example, to Plato who understood the cosmos is a single living creature, which contains all living creatures within it. So from the very origins of our Western civilization there is this deep understanding that the Earth is a living spiritual being. And there are the alchemists who regarded the world soul as a pure ethereal spirit diffuse throughout all nature, the divine essence, which embraces and energizes all life in the universe. So it is this living spiritual, not just principle, but substance, within creation. And one of the great tragedies of our Western culture was that this tradition was, in a way, exorcised by the Catholic Church. It was there, it was there in the very early days, it was there in the Gnostics and some of their teachings -- and it reappeared for brief moments throughout the history of the West. There was this beautiful expression of it in the gothic movement in the 12th and 13th centuries, and those of you who have been to the great gothic cathedrals in Europe, like Chartres, you will see that the cathedral itself is like a tree and in the sculptures, and in the stained glass windows are all of the aspects of creation. There aren't just saints there; there are also living creatures. And the whole esoteric design behind it is all of creation is contained within these geometric forms that reflect the divine ordering principle within creation. If you were a medieval, not scholar, but if you were really interested in the depths of the spiritual understanding in the medieval time you would explore that relationship, that understanding of that divine ordering principle within creation that was expressed in a way in a microcosm in the gothic cathedrals.

And it lasted for a while, like many spiritual flowerings that come, in a way, from the soul of the world. One of the interesting things is that Chartres Cathedral, which was the ideal gothic cathedral -- there was an esoteric school at Chartres as many of you know- is actually built on a site sacred to the Black Madonna. Which is, again, the Earth spirit -- the feminine divine Earth spirit that gave birth to this understanding of the mystery of matter -- of the divine expressing itself within creation. And it was there for a while but then part of the patriarchal oppression of the Church was to split heaven and earth. God is in heaven and on earth everything is sinful. And there was, of course, no understanding of the divine feminine -- of Sophia -- and of that divine principle within creation. The earth was seen as a dark prison that trapped the soul of man rather than a place of divine expression. And so after the 12th-13th century flowering, it got lost again. But like many true spiritual understandings it is like a

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stream that goes underground and it reappeared in the Renaissance. Which of course went back to Plato, back to the sacred teachings of Greece and further East. And, as some of you know, there is a tradition that the whole of the Renaissance was actually started by a master who came from Constantinople on a donkey to northern Italy. And there he founded the esoteric school that Michelangelo and Leonardo and others attended. And he brought with him this esoteric knowledge of the divine within creation. How that works, how She manifests Herself, how She holds the divine proportions. And you see that, for example, in Leonardo's Man in which heaven and earth are brought together -- and the whole esoteric understanding of that.

In the Renaissance, the world soul animated and formed nature according to divine proportions. And once again the garden of the world was enchanted with magical power and transcendent meaning -- implicit in every part of nature. This was this wonderful relationship in the Renaissance between the imagination and the creative principle in life. And there was this extraordinary flowering that really came from the divine feminine within the imagination, within life, and it was celebrated. Once again the garden of the soul was here in this world. It wasn't just after you died in heaven, in paradise; it was here in the art that the Renaissance masters created. And this is why, for some of us, the Renaissance touches the soul now so deeply and why there has been a revival of understanding of what happened in the Renaissance. Because it had to do with the divine feminine and the divine feminine within life and that really is an expression of the *anima mundi*. She once again expressed herself in the West in that beautiful flowering that touches us very much. But then of course the Church repressed it again, sometimes quite brutally. And the only tradition that was really left carrying that- after the tradition of sacred geometry got lost -- was the alchemical tradition, which Jung, in the last century, rediscovered for us.

In the alchemical tradition the *anima mundi* is the divine spark in matter. And while the Church looked upwards towards heaven, towards the ethereal world, the alchemists looked into matter. And part of their whole work was how to liberate this spark within matter, how to liberate the light hidden within matter -- which is the secret within creation. This divine spark is in every cell of creation. And really, the mystery of turning lead into gold is revealing what is hidden within the darkness of matter. And so they kept alive, in this underground stream, this principle of the *anima mundi* -- this soul of the world. They understood that there is a direct relationship between our soul, our individual soul, and the soul of the world. In fact, our individual soul is a spark in the *anima mundi*, is a spark in the soul of the world. It is not just our own individual soul; it is part of the soul of the world -- it is a spark of light. And one of the great tragedies was when we forgot this, which Jung expressed when he said "man himself has ceased to be the microcosm and his anima is no longer the consubstantial *scintilla* or spark of the *Anima Mundi*, the World Soul."

With rationalism we forgot our place in the world. We forgot that our soul, this spark within us, has a direct relationship to the soul of the world. And I think, out of that, came a lot of the impoverishment -- soul impoverishment -- that we have today. Because once we lose that relationship to the divine within matter, within creation, once we say the divine is only in heaven or can only be found in deep meditation we've lost something fundamental. And we've lost it both for ourselves and also for the *anima mundi*, for the soul of the world. So humanity became more and more separated, or veiled itself more and more, from the soul of creation. Now as many of you know, if you separate yourself from the light of your own soul your life becomes darker and darker. It becomes more and more meaningless. And people would say that is one of the many reasons there is so much addiction in our Western culture, because we have lost anything that nourishes us. We get addicted to drugs, or sex, or consumerism, shopping ... whatever it is because there is nothing that nourishes us. We have lost this relationship to what is present within the soul of creation. We have lost relationship to our own soul and to the soul of creation.

And just to complete this kind of picture, I want to explain something that Jung understood, which has to do with the light of the divine. And this is very important because the light of the divine has two qualities. One is what is traditionally known as the *lumen dei* -- the light of God -- which is really the divine light of one's higher Self. It is a very, very beautiful light. It is very clear, it is very simple; it just

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is. It is the light of God as you can see it as a human being. Of course, the *real* light of God you cannot see. You become blinded by it. It is said He has 70,000 veils of light and 70,000 veils of darkness to separate us from experiencing the true light of the divine. But there is this *lumen dei* that we have within us -- our divine light. And when you pray towards God your light rises up to God. When you really pray, when you really pray to God there is a light, there is a spark. You can see it, in a way, from outer space -- from the human being, from the heart of the human being that goes to God. It is very beautiful. And if you go into deep meditation, you discover that divine light within you. Very, very pure. I think it is called the Diamond Light in Buddhism. It is like a diamond; very clear, very pure, very beautiful.

But that is only half of the way the divine expresses Itself. And the other aspect is what Jung found in alchemy called the *lumen naturae* -- the light within nature, the divine light within nature. One could say that the *lumen dei* -- this clear light -- is the masculine expression of the divine while the *lumen naturae* is the more feminine. It is the light in nature, the light that is present. What is interesting is as a culture we have completely forgotten how to relate to that. I think a lot of traditional cultures in their rituals, whether in dance or song, were a way of being with that light in nature. Through that light, for example, you can speak to the soul of an animal. You can speak to the soul of a mountain. You can speak to the soul of a tree. It is working with the divine within creation. In previous cultures you wouldn't try to live without that light. How would you know what to do? How would you know where to hunt? How would you know about the healing properties of herbs? What is poisonous? What heals what ailments? It was this communication with light with light. It was when the world was *alive*. And we have forgotten the world is alive.

I had a beautiful experience the other day; really moved me somehow. I was trying to understand something and I was taken back, to how things were in the early days before this cloud of forgetfulness came. I was walking along a path and I suddenly realized in those days the path told you where it was going. I hadn't realized that before. I had read about the Aboriginal Time when there were these song lines that guided the Aboriginals across the desert. They followed the song lines. But I never realized that a path could actually speak to you and tell you where it is going. It was interesting because you can see it echoed in Tolkien -- in some of the songs of Tolkien -- because he had access to those ancient memories. He was also a medieval English scholar and he knew those stories that came from the very early times. When the path comes to meet you and it tells you beyond what hills it will take you. And it is this very different relationship of light to light that is very sacred; in a way it is learning how to walk, how to live in a sacred manner. Because it is respecting the divine within creation. In the West this has really been erased from our collective consciousness. And of course, in this country, there was this terrible tragedy because the Europeans just killed off all the people who had this understanding, quite brutally. And they didn't even allow their native language to be spoken. They erased that sacred language -- that understanding of how to talk to the magic that is within creation. This relationship of light to light.

In a way, what the alchemists were doing in their crucibles, many native cultures did in their daily life -- talking to the light in nature. Whether you call it the Great Spirit, it is the same -- it is this living divine principle within creation. And I am completely convinced that we cannot solve the problems in the world, the ecological problems for example, without invoking this light, this magic, this wisdom, this knowledge; this *presence* within nature. How can you heal yourself if you treat yourself just as a physical body? I mean yes, Western medicine does that, and for some things it's good, like taking out an appendix, but, as most of us here know, that isn't really the answer. We are trying to solve this environmental catastrophe purely on the physical plane, which is missing the whole point. It is trying to solve the problem in the same way the problem has been created, which is cutting everything off from its sacred source, cutting everything off from its root.

What is very beautiful is that, and I have looked at this very carefully, this transition or transformation does not have to be done on a mass collective consciousness level. My feeling is that the collective consciousness in the West, and it is now a *global* West -- the whole world has become McDonaldized -- is caught in this dream, in this nightmare of consumerism. When I looked at it, the energy to take the

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whole collective out of that dream would be phenomenal. There would have to come some mega-disaster, or an enormous influx of grace, or ... I don't know what, but traditionally, in the past, changes that happened always happened just within small groups. They never happened first on the collective level.

Just as, interestingly, when a change happens within you, when you wake up to something, it is usually a little spark within you. A small part of you shifts -- ah! Suddenly there is light. Something changes. Part of our Western spiritual childishness is that we think when that illumination happens our whole life is going to change. And we get really disappointed to wake up and find we still have the same problems with our partner or whatever. We don't realize that you have to work with that light, you have to nurture that light; you have to bring that light into your life. And that initial awakening can take twenty years to change your life, if you're lucky.

If we can just bring back that presence, that divine being that is the Earth, that is the soul of creation; if we can just bring Her back then we create a space where the light can come in, where that presence can come back into Her world. And it is really just accepting this mystery within creation. It's not something very complicated. This is your own soul. And you know that moment when you allow your own soul into your life, that moment when you say yes to this inner part of you. And then to take that to the next step, to acknowledge that the world is a sacred being. I always find it strange that somehow we are very keen on working with *ourselves* as a sacred being but we don't realize that this sacred being that is ourselves is part of a much bigger sacred being that is the world, that is creation.

Human beings have a very pivotal role to play. For example, until human beings welcome them in, certain *devas* and angels are not allowed to participate directly in our life. They are here, sometimes one can see them waiting; very, very beautiful, very powerful nature *devas*, earth *devas*, and angels, and they are waiting on the sidelines. They are waiting while we tear up the world, because they need to be welcomed in. The Earth was given to humanity, so we could evolve together, so we could have this relationship between the light of our soul and the light of creation -- this alchemical interaction of light upon light. And that was what life was always about. For thousands and thousands of years. That's what the mystery of creation was about.

What's interesting is that we look back at civilizations like the Egyptians and we see the pyramids, or we see other sacred buildings, we don't understand the real meaning behind them. They were being used to bring that light, to focus that light, to focus those energies so the priests, the initiates, could work with them. So that the lights from above and the lights that come from creation could work together. In Egypt they did it through building these pyramids. In this country they didn't build any buildings, they had other ways of working, like the Sun Dance, or, for example, for the Hopi with the Serpent Dance, of weaving the energies together, the energies within creation and the energies that are part of a human being. And there are certain words, very powerful words that are only given to initiates that are spoken at certain times that speak to the soul of the world, that speak to the magic in creation. Certain incantations that begin to awaken the energies in the Earth -- because that's what human beings were about.

The purpose of being human is not about going to Wal-Mart and getting more stuff. The whole of life was about making that creative relationship, that spiritual relationship. Yes, there was survival, there was often famine, there was sickness, but underneath there was always a relationship to this divine intelligence within creation. But then Western man was given too much power. And rather than working with nature he decided to control nature. And so he developed technologies to control nature, whether to build a house that was completely insulated or to make chemicals to make the plants grow quicker. We wanted to control nature—which is really the masculine power drive -- to control the feminine. And part of that control, which was done from the very, very beginning, is you deny the sacred within nature. In the same way as the Catholic Church denied the sacred within women -- how many women were burned as witches, women who understood healing, plants, who were midwives. You deny the sacred in the feminine and then you have power over it.

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And what is interesting is that we are trying to redeem this ecological crisis with the same tools of oppression, rather than going back to what caused it. Which means for each of us to take the spark of our own soul and make this relationship again with the spark of the world soul. It's very simple. Spiritual things are very, very simple. The world soul is still alive. If the world soul had died, or humanity had completely cut itself off from the world soul, humanity would start to regress. You see a few signs of it when you completely cut off your own soul you go back to a previous era of evolution. You go back to more primitive behavior. You are drawn back more into the instinctual world, to the destructive aspect of the instinctual world. So, if we had completely cut off the world soul, if we had killed Her, then a certain life on this planet would be over. It would continue on a purely physical level but a certain magic within creation would be gone, a certain spiritual meaning in life would no longer be accessible to us. And you can actually see that, because for many, many people there is no longer any spiritual meaning in life. And, as I mentioned, we have substituted for that what we can get at the malls, or our for our addictions. Life is no longer seen as an expression of the divine. If that covers everything then the world is over. It cannot regenerate itself. In the same way as a human being cannot regenerate herself without the energy of her soul, without the divine within.

So really, the first step is to acknowledge that the world is a spiritual being. Just as you acknowledge that for yourself, that you are a spiritual being. And then there is this mysterious relationship between the individual and the world, which is what has traditionally been known as microcosm and macrocosm -- that every human being is the microcosm of the whole. There is a whole tradition in Sufism about it, which has to do with the perfect man. There is in creation at any one time, one human being who lives the real potential of what it means to be a human being. The Sufis call him the *qutb* (the pole). There is only one human being alive on the planet at any one time who lives the real potential of what it means to be a human being. And he carries this for the whole world. He carries this truth, this potential for the whole of creation. If he wasn't here creation could not rise up to that. It's a very important principle in Sufism.

But each of us are in our own way the microcosm of the whole. And what that means is that we each have a direct relationship to the powers within creation. And please remember, and I go back to this because we read in history about the burning of the books for example how the library in Alexandria that contained so many of the esoteric traditions for hundreds of years before, was destroyed, burnt. We hear what happened in Tibet with the Chinese, how they systematically burnt the libraries of the Tibetans. And there are enormous amounts of esoteric teachings that have been lost. The Tibetans did an extraordinary work to do with magic, to do with the powers in creation, and most of their teachings have been lost. And in the West the Catholic Church got rid of this tradition, of this power within creation, of how to work with it. The Inquisition did part of it and it was very, very systematic. It has been so systematically erased from our consciousness.

For example, I have a friend who recently went to India and she went near to Dharamsala -- there is a place called Tashi Jong -- because we have a friend there who is a nun, Tenzin Palmo. She was a Western woman from England who went and met her teacher in India who was a Tibetan teacher. She spent 12 years in a cave. She did the proper training in the cave and she is now making a little nunnery there in the hills in Tashi Jong. And also in those hills people have been meditating for hundreds of years. And my friend, when she was there, she was amazed because the hills were alive. She'd never realized what it is to experience it when the land is alive, when the land is singing -- you can feel the magic in the air when you can feel the *devas* present. For us it is like a myth, it is like an *ancient* story, it happened somewhere else. But there, people have been doing practices that welcome the sacred in the land. There is this relationship, so the land is alive. And the soul of the world is full of all of this magic, full of all of this creative potential, and it is waiting for us to relate to it, to welcome it back.

And what is interesting is that in the moment of crisis there is always the moment of potential. The gates of grace are open in a way they were not open before. It is a strange thing: a human being, when we reach a real crisis, we are given a grace we are not otherwise given, and so it is with the world. There is this grace, this energy to awaken the soul of the world before we kill everything. Before everything is forgotten. Before everything is buried so deeply under the Wal-Marts of the world until

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there is nothing left. Then the world will die. It's as simple as that. Because it cannot live without its soul. Or the soul will express its dark side, like the Kali side of the feminine, and become incredibly destructive. And that is a very real possibility. Because just as we have forgotten the world is a living being, part of that is that we have forgotten the powers of creation can get angry. This belongs to this myth of control of the masculine that says we can control nature. And we are also told that nature is not really alive so nothing too bad can happen -- but this is not so. This is why in ancient times the people were very careful in their relationship to nature and the spirits of nature and how to talk to nature and to be present within nature. And they learned how to listen to it; how to make a relationship, a living relationship. Now it's really difficult because you go out on the freeways and the shopping malls and the tv channels and it isn't there; there isn't even a *memory* of it. And how to bring it alive, how to recreate that relationship with the *anima mundi*, with the soul of the world, with this living presence in creation.

And my sense is it has to be done through simple things. Because this is, in a way you always go back to what is simple. It is like when Mother Theresa said small things with great love. It's not what you do but the love you put in the doing. And there *is* a way to do the simple acts of life, making a meal, even just having a bath, with a certain awareness, with a certain relationship with what you are actually doing. Remember, it used to be prescribed, although we have forgotten it -- bathing used to be a ritual, cooking *used* to be a ritual, the women did it together. They used to sing when they pounded the grain together -- they sang the songs of creation when they pounded the grain. It was all part of this very elaborate relationship between the energies in creation. But we can't go back, we can't pound the grain anymore. And we've forgotten the chants and the prayers that went with the ritual bath. Nobody is here to teach us to do it anymore. They have been lost. And so we have to discover it each for ourselves, in our own way. In those simple acts we do we have to welcome the *anima mundi*, welcome Her soul, welcome Her presence back to us. And then, slowly, we will have a relationship with Her.

First of all, you have to welcome Her in those simple acts because we still have to eat, we still have to wash, we still have to breath. We don't have to go into the fields anymore. We don't have to do the songs of planting, the songs of harvesting, and the songs of grinding corn. We don't do them anymore. We tried in the Sixties to go back to doing that but it didn't work very well. But there are the *basic* things of life; we can always return to what is basic in life, what is simple in life. And it is not to do with time; everybody is always very busy these days I know, but you still brush your teeth. But are you really present in that experience?

So the first step: to give a space. And I think it is easiest to give Her a space, as I say, in those simple very necessary things to do with just being a human being. As Sufis, as in many spiritual paths, we also do it in awareness of breath. If you are really aware of the breath, the breath is extraordinary because every breath you take the energy comes down from the soul into creation and back to the soul. If you were really aware of what happens in every cycle of your breath you would be a liberated human being. Every breath you would come from the plane of the soul, from the clear light beyond this world down, and you would bring that energy down into the physical world, into the magic of creation where that light nourished and communicated to, and was communicated to, your own body, by the cells in your body, by the way the light flows in your body, and then went back with that information, back to the plane of the soul. It's extraordinary. That's why we do the *dhikr* with the breath, or you do a *mantra* with the breath, to bring that consciousness. It is amazing, every breath you take, the soul, the light of the soul, comes down into this plane. And it speaks to this plane and it gathers information from this plane; it has experiences in this plane and it relates to the light in your body. And there is this extraordinary meeting of the light of your own soul and the light within your body. And then, it goes back. And that's why if you are really aware at the end of every in-breath, which is when the in-breath, the soul, goes back to its own plane and there is this moment of bliss. The soul goes back to its own plane -- back to the plane of the soul. Just for a moment there is this moment of bliss at the end of every breath...moment of bliss; it is beautiful. And then it comes back again into creation.

So you can do a spiritual practice, which is the light of your nature coming into creation, coming into this world where *it* interacts with this world. To make a relationship with God you return to simple

things, to what you cannot live without. It's always interesting as a spiritual practice to see what you can live without. In the West we tend to accumulate, accumulate, and accumulate. Not just things, we also accumulate ideas. We accumulate things we think are important and then you go back to what is basic. And it is there in what is basic that life is. And life is this incredible, sacred light, sacred energy, sacred substance. And it is waiting to be infused with the light of human consciousness -- this is alchemy. This is the catalytic relationship in alchemy. This is part of the secret that the alchemists understood, the secret of creation, the way that the light of human consciousness is the catalyst for creation. Now, nobody knows what effect a catalyst can have because we have forgotten about it. We see it in chemistry, yes, but we do not realize the secret of the alchemists; that this secret belongs to the whole of creation, that creation is also waiting to be catalyzed. It is waiting for this spark to go into it so it can wake up. It's as simple as that. So then creation can wake up. This is the secret of alchemy: releasing the light hidden in nature. Not just the divine light of God in heaven but the *lumen naturae* -- the light in nature. This is the presence of God in this world. There's a lovely line by the English mystical poet Gerald Manly Hopkins when he says, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out like shining from shook foil." If you get a piece of foil and you shake it in the sun or in the light, the light comes out. This is the light of the divine in this world, waiting to come out, waiting to be...because the worst thing to happen is if it happened and nobody noticed it.

We are here to experience the divine in creation. You cannot know God in His pure essence, it would destroy you. No one knows God but God. But you can know Him in His creation, not in some abstract sense, but in a very lived relationship to this spark in the world. And although we have forgotten it, this spark *is* the divine intelligence within creation. It is the divine intelligence within creation and it creates creation. That's why in the medieval time, in the Gothic time, they tried to understand what are the divine ordering principles within creation? That's the magic of sacred geometry -- of divine proportion. They tried to look, what are the divine principles within creation? And behind those principles there is this spark, the divine spark, the spark within matter. This is the divine energy of creation itself. So, it's very potent, very, very powerful. It can change the world. *We* cannot; we don't know how to do it, we don't know *what* to do.

I was brought up as a child in the Christian faith and we used to read the Lord's Prayer everyday. And there is this line in the Lord's Prayer that stays with me now, more and more and more, "May Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is to give the divine permission to live in creation again. Once again, it was got rid of because the Church chose political and worldly power rather than spiritual power. That's why a couple of years ago, I wrote this book, *Spiritual Power*, because I realized we have forgotten the real meaning of spiritual power. We have even forgotten that spiritual power exists. The Cathars had it and they were killed -- quite ruthlessly. And in the Reformation they didn't want to acknowledge that at all either. You can work with the individual soul but you can't work with the soul of creation. You can't work with the primal powers of creation. That is where the magic is, that is where the power is; that is where the potency is. I always say, you know if you have a problem you go to the boss. You know on those help-lines when you've got a computer problem or something, the first thing you do is say can I please talk to a supervisor. Then you have a chance of getting a result. Because the guy who you first talk to usually doesn't know very much and doesn't have the authority to do anything either.

So, we have a problem. The world is dying. It is not supposed to be like this. I am convinced that human beings are not meant to sit looking at a flickering screen 10 hours a day pressing buttons. Human beings are so extraordinary! They are full of light; they have this divine intelligence. They are meant to live in a sacred way, not spend their life looking at a flickering television screen, or computer screen. It is not what we were created for. And there are these powers within creation waiting to be woken up. Just as on a spiritual path, you cannot take a step really unless certain powers in *you* are woken up. You can't do it. In the Orthodox church some of this remained -- they kept some of the esoteric practices that wake up some of those energies, and of course they are in the *chakra* system in India. And they're also in Sufism; in the Naqshbandi tradition we have all these *latâif* -- the chambers of the heart -- that you work with to awaken certain energies. It's also one of the esoteric reasons why at some point you need a teacher who can wake up those energies within you. You can't change yourself

without them. You can't change yourself on the level of the mind. You can't even change yourself with good intentions. I always felt that it was really, really tough that the Catholic Church decided to become celibate and everybody had to go off to a monastery -- but they never gave them the practices to transmute their sexuality! It was a real shame. Because I have been a monk in a past life in Tibet and, you know, when you're a young guy you get given the practices. In fact, my sheikh, Bhai Sahib, pointed to a Brahmacharin -- someone who practices celibacy and is given the practices at the right time -- and he said they have a little bump on the top of their head where the energy has gone to. There are basic practices on how to transmute your sexuality. And if you've decided to follow that path you practice them! They belong to humanity; they belong to the magical side of being a human being -- how to work with these energies. You can't do anything without them. You cannot progress. You know, that's why you do a *dhikr*, a mantra; you do breathing exercises. They are designed to awaken certain energies within you.

On our particular path we do a heart meditation that spins the heart *chakra*. That takes you somewhere else, to a different level of reality. It's a science -- it *works*. It's how a human being is actually meant to work. And the same for this body called the earth, this being called the earth, this divine presence that we live in. It is meant to transform. At this moment in time it is meant to transform. I'm not the only person who says that. There's even this Mayan prophecy that says if we hang around until the year 2012 we're going to wake up in a different world. It's the end of time; it's the beginning of time. Maybe something is going to happen. There are these signs that the world is waiting to transform. Just as for an individual -- there are signs in an individual when they are waiting to transform. They begin to get certain dreams. Certain shifts begin to take place, just like there are signs in a caterpillar when it is waiting to become a cocoon, when it is waiting to become a butterfly. And those signs are visible in the world now. And they're not just in the crisis. I personally think that global communication and the Internet is one of the signs of the world waiting to transform, waiting to shift into a different level of consciousness. I'm completely convinced. It's a very tricky business when this shift happens, when transformation happens. An individual, if you are not careful, can go crazy. When I was 23 and my sheikh woke me up on the plane of the soul it took me 9 months to come back again. It's a very delicate time. That's why when you are really going to transform inside yourself often the energies get drawn inward. Jung used this alchemical term called brooding, the energies go within. You don't have the same energy you had to go out and do things, which is difficult in this very extrovert culture called America. The energy takes you in. You have to be much more attentive to signs, to how things are. And exactly the same as now in the world. There are signs. And many of us have seen those signs.

I wrote about it years ago when I said the magical unicorns that used to be deep in the forest can now be seen on street corners. I had it for myself on a very banal level when a year ago I was driving on the freeway through Berkeley, in the Bay Area, and suddenly I saw this billboard on which was written my favorite Zen koan of all time: "The wild geese do not intend to cast their reflection, the water has no mind to receive their image." And it was there on a billboard by the freeway. I mean, what could be more of a sign than that! Something wanted to wake up. And what is interesting is that, most people are far too busy -- this is just the accepted thing today, everybody is far too busy. I don't know what they are busy doing but they are busy. It is an American addiction -- you've got to be busy. It is as if Americans are persecuted by time. They are a bit like the people at the mad-hatter's tea party. You know in *Alice in Wonderland* at the mad-hatter's tea party it's always four o'clock and they are sitting round the tea-table and they don't have time to wash the dishes, they just move the places around the table. It's what we do now. We just move the places around the tea table. And Alice said to the mad-hatter, "What's *happened*?" And he said, "Well I said one day I was going to kill time. So time died." We have this bizarre relationship to time; it's kind of an infantile relationship to time, it's very strange.

But what I am trying to say is that there is real opportunity for those who are actually awake. Most of the time being awake is really, really dismal because all you get to do is see other people snore. I generally don't advise being awake. There was actually somebody, years ago, in our group had a dream, which clearly said that. In the dream she was asleep in bed and she woke up before dawn so she could pull the curtains, so that when the sun came up it wouldn't wake her up so she could go back to bed. But at this moment in time it's actually really amazing to be awake because there are certain

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things that are going to happen; and if you are here when they are happening you can take part in them. If you are attentive to the World Soul, She is going to let you work with Her like you've never been able to work with Her. She is going to tell you how to help Her to wake up. It's like being invited to a friend's birth. It's really, really amazing.

A while ago, a few years ago, I thought, wouldn't it be great if everyone woke up, but I realized that was impossible. But I want to be here. I actually want to be here *now* -- when the world is wanting to wake up, when the soul of the world is wanting us to work with it. And She is going to tell us what to do because She's been around a lot longer than us. And all of the books have been burnt. Yes, there were some books in Tibet -- I remember reading them a long time ago. There were very ancient books in other libraries but they have gone. And the oral traditions of the Native Americans, who understood it--they've gone. You can't go to the elders because they don't know anymore. And you can't find it in books because it isn't written; it's been got rid of. But you *can* be there when it happens. I don't know exactly when it's going to happen -- there are signs but we don't know how to read the signs. That's part of the catch-22. Because nobody's told us how to read the signs anymore. It is such an adventure; to be present with this energy within creation, with the power in creation, with the soul of the world. Which is *our* soul, we are part of it. It's not our mother because if it's our mother we remain as children and we play the part of children and become delinquent adolescents. And to me, when people talk about co-creation -- which is a popular word now -- this is what I call co-creation: working directly with the energy of creation, being present. The first thing you have to do is be present. And it's amazing how few people show up even to their own lives. They live other people's lives or they forget they have a life of their own.

So you have to show up in your life and you have to show up in the life of the world. And the life of the world is not a shopping mall and the life of the world is not a problem to be solved by economists or scientists because it's not *made* like that. It is not a computer-generated model. Just as *you're* not a computer-generated model. You're not a statistic. It is always this relationship of microcosm to macrocosm. That spark that goes from your consciousness -- your heart to the heart of the world. It is so simple, it is so primary, just as everything in spiritual life is primary. Just as what happens with a human being, it is called awakening, *tauba*, the turning of the heart -- that moment in the human incarnation when you are given this spark. It's an act of grace. And suddenly your whole life changes. A spark is put into you. It is very beautiful how it is done. It comes from the Higher Self. At a particular moment in your incarnation, the Higher Self is allowed to give you a certain energy. And after that spark -- that *scintilla* -- that spark, that infusion of divine energy -- you can call it grace, you are no longer the same person. Something in you is woken up. There is this light, there is this hope, there is this sunshine in the eyes -- it is incredibly beautiful -- most precious moment. I know when it happened to me when I was 16, and suddenly the whole world was there. Like it had always been and I had never seen it. Full of light, full of beauty. And all you have to do is to be present and to say yes. To be present in your life and in the life of the world. The life of the world as it belongs to the soul of the world. And She is alive. She is here now. Because we have forgotten about Her for so long. And She is waiting to wake up.

(Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee is a Sufi teacher and author of a number of books, including *Working with Oneness*)

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