

Ten Spiritual Laws to Heal the World



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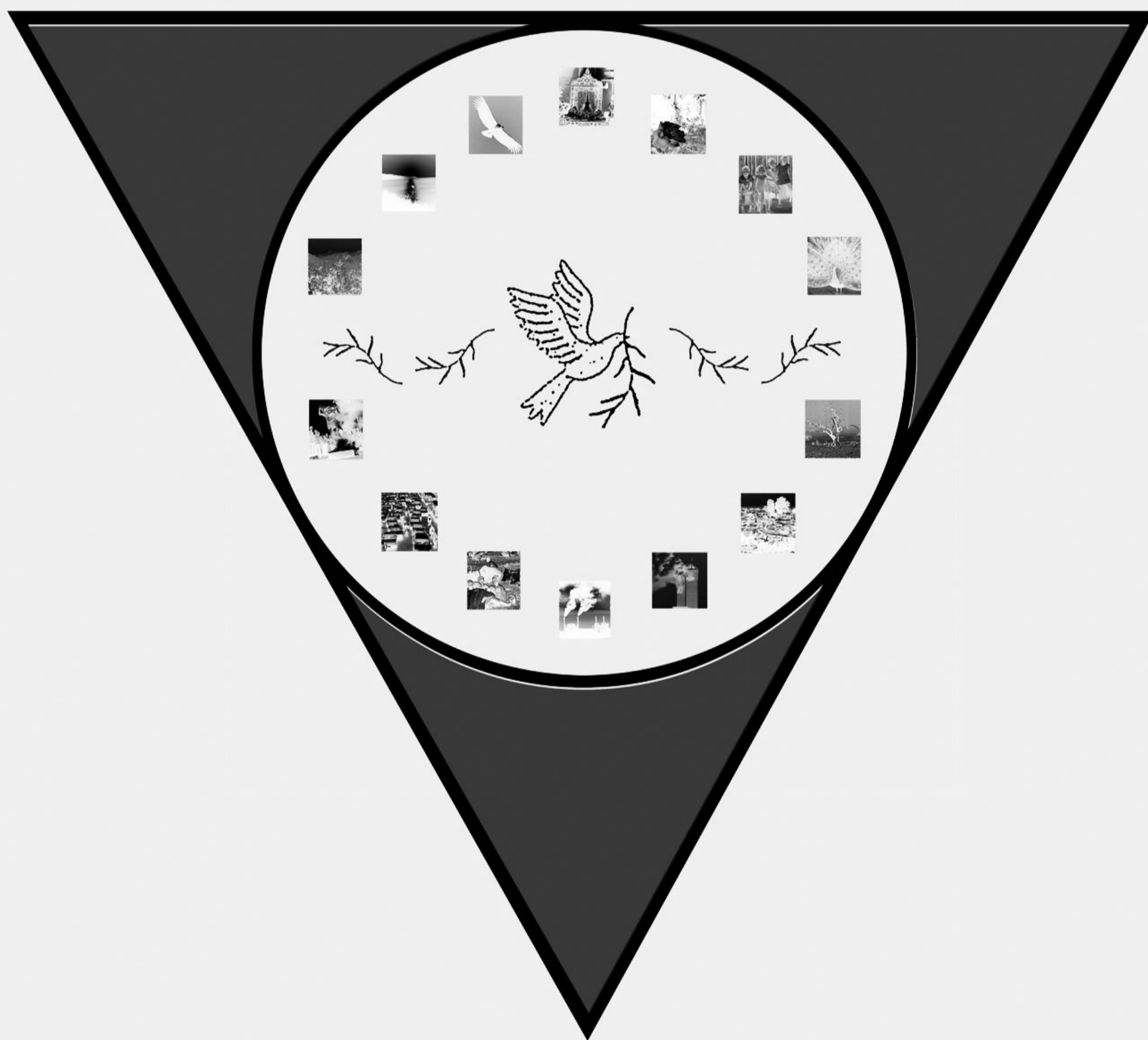
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-----Dr. Alfredo Sfeir-Younis

**Healing The World As a
Condition For Global Peace**

Dzambling Cho Tab Khen-----

-----Introduction

Peace Is You and You Are Peace

There will be no global peace unless we first heal the world.

Our world is shaken by the social, economic, and political violence. Hunger, poverty, repression, and military conflicts are the distinguishing characteristics of our times. Those who wish to end violence engage in heated debates about new technologies, increased production and consumption, better military strategies and more sophisticated lethal weapons to end violence and bring about peace. It is as if by doing more, buying more, and threatening more, we could bring about peace. Peace is seen as a product, a result, a material outcome of those wars on hunger, crime, and violence.

Just as the world shaken, so are we, human beings. We are often sick, angry, and frustrated. We are also at war within our selves. In order to cure such malaise, most of the debate is often focused on just healing the individual. No doubt that many Individuals are sick and in need of healing. The central focus is on how to cure our body and mind of our many illnesses. And, during the past

few years, we have seen on the shelves of bookstores hundreds of videos, books and magazines giving advice on how to lose weight, to become more beautiful, to manage our anger, and to reduce stress and anxiety. Most of the advice can be summarized in the confines of two points: one, the individual can be healed in isolation from the world and, two, whatever makes us ill, it can be cured by purchasing more pills, performing surgeries, and generating more income in order to buy health treatments that promise physical health and peace of mind. Mostly curative medicine.

These policies promising individual and collective health and world peace are not working. We are unhealthy and the world is tired of violence. Moreover, the promises of peace are seen as distant, unattainable, and unrealistic as ever.

These promises of individual and global peace are not working for they are based on false assumptions about reality, both about the individual and the world with which such illness and violence occurs. At the core of our existence, the absence of inner and outer peace results from utter ignorance and the clear disregard for the fundamental spiritual laws concerning the individual, the relationship between individuals, and the relationship between

individuals and their environment. Let us reconsider these premises.

Peace is not an alternative option to war and violence. It is not just some “other” option, or a conditional choice among many possible alternatives. Peace is our destiny. It is our only destiny.

Peace is a state of being. Peace is an inner state, an integral quality of our being. Peace is an expression of our essential human nature. The individual’s true nature is embedded in peace, and peace is embedded in human nature.

No level of material welfare will be able to bring peace. Peace is not a material thing. Nobody will be able to buy peace in the supermarkets. Peace will not result from more war and violence—a contradiction in aims at the most subtle and core levels of our existence. Nor will peace come about from building physical walls, or expanding nations’ armies, or distributing more weapons to gain a balance of power.

It is perhaps important to point out that peace is not just a word. As such, we should not only advocate peace, we must self-realize it. In the end, what really matters is that we are peace and not

just that we advocate its existence. A true advocacy must be embedded in our own experiences of inner and outer peace. Otherwise, advocacy for the sake of advocacy will not yield the right results.

Peace is a complex process that entails personal as well as collective human transformation. Personal transformation and collective transformation are interdependent and both take place within the world, operate within the context of our environment, not separate and outside of it. Individual transformation and global peace cannot occur in isolation from each other and outside the context of our world environment.

Experiencing inner peace necessitates a new relation with others and the world. Our relationship with others occurs within the space of our environment. Our environment not only frames and shapes our relationships to ourselves and others but it also provides the resources, the lessons, the constraints and the rewards to either damage or to enrich our relationships. What people generally call the “world” is what we are calling the environment. That is the ecological, economic, social, political, human, spiritual, and subtle terrain wherein human beings relate to each others in diverse and complex ways.

If our relationship to our environment is ignored, or it is violent, damaging, and disrespectful, we may never be able to bring about individual health, social stability, and world peace. Thus, to bring about global peace we need to heal our relationship to our environment. The environment becomes the world within which individuals, groups, and societies relate and affect each other.

In order to understand this idea we need a new language. Let us call the process of individual and collective interactions and transformations the “content” of the environment within which these relationships take place, the “container.”

In many ways, we could see ourselves as the content of the world and the world as the container. Naturally, there is much more to the content of the world than just ourselves—human beings—although many people often forget this!

What I am suggesting here is that in order to bring about individual and social peace we need to heal the world, that is, end the destruction and violence done to the “container.” There is an urgent need to heal the world—what I would refer as the

container—as a precondition to attaining global peace and to bring about individual and collective peace and transformation. Destroying our environment only limits our infinite possibilities of inner joy, social justice, and global peace.

This book is about healing the container.

In making this distinction between the content and the container, we face an interesting paradox. All my spiritual teachers have taught me that the “inner is like the outer and the outer is like the inner.” In the language of this book, one could then say that the content is like the container and the container is like the content, as if they were totally undistinguishable and inseparable dimensions of life. Thus, in some sense, to radically separate the content from the container may not be correct. In particular, to heal the container we need also to heal the content. Furthermore, and with the same token, to restore the outer environment of the container we must restore our own inner environment (the content). Also, the lack of outer peace in the container reflects the lack of inner peace in the content. And so on.

Here, we will make that distinction so that we can illustrate the nature of the outer and how it interacts with the inner, having

in mind that the outer and the inner are quasi inseparable. It also brings to the fore the unique nature of the container and the types of instruments and interventions one would have to embrace to heal it and attain global peace.

What we see today, however, is that there is much more attention being paid to the content (the people living in the world) than to the container. This is due to many factors, including, for example, the lack of knowledge about the material and spiritual synergies between the two; the influences exercised by the nature of many cultural values that often establish a relationship of superior to inferior with regard to the container (it being the inferior); the imposition of a differentiated intelligence, where nature is less intelligent than humans; and much more.

Ethnocentricity dominates our behavior. As a consequence, we have become the conquistadores or the developers of nature, and the container is being destroyed at a very fast rate. Global warming; ozone layer depletion; destruction of the Amazon; elimination of our biodiversity; pollution of air, water, and space; and the rapid depletion of many renewable and nonrenewable resources are some examples of how we are treating the container. This view, which advocates that the container is

inferior to the content, comes from the idea that the content is only material, that it is only matter and not holistic and true life. Maybe with the exception of animals, the view is that trees, rocks, soil and the like are not alive; they are inanimate things. In my view, this is very far from the truth, and holding that point of view limits us to benefit from their full existence.

Matter cannot exist without spirit.

Another way to establish the grounds for the above-mentioned concerns is that we are in great need of healing our fundamental elements of life: water, air, space, earth, wind, and fire. All of them as matter and as spirit. These elements are as present in the container as they are in the content. And it seems impossible to me to conceive that if the water in the container is polluted, that the water in the content may remain clean. Thus, if there is pollution outside, it means that there is also pollution inside. Human beings are not impermeable!

Furthermore, focusing on the content without focusing on the container leaves half of our stories out.

It leaves out, for example, the impacts of many causes and

conditions that are responsible for the world's human health and betterment.

The destruction of the natural environment is a major cause of diseases of the body, mind, and soul. Think for the moment of the great impact that pollution of the air and water has on our realities.

This environmental destruction also affects the evolution and transformation of our spiritual reality, although fewer people are sensitive to this important process. In part—and owing mainly to our level of physical, mental, and spiritual toxicity—we have become mostly insensitive to the relationship between nature and our spiritual existence. This level of toxicity is also responsible for our numbness regarding the state of the natural environment (part of the container) and the physical and mental welfare of us as a human race (part of the content).

The above has also led me in the past to speak up and write about the critical importance and influences exercised by economics and business in our material and spiritual welfare. In particular, I have stated that economics and business are clearly responsible for the large majority of diseases humanity experiences today.

Economic diseases are essential causes that need to be understood, and these are the result of production, consumption, and trade practices. We see contaminated products of all sorts everywhere.

In addition, it is a fact that economics is the principal destroyer of our environment; all these products are conditions for illnesses. Today's environmental medicine has provided a significant scientific platform, and it has disseminated lots of information about the relationship between the quality of the environment and human wellness (for example, the high level of led pollution and brain cancer in children).

It is in this context that it becomes essential to address some fundamental questions:

- What are the consequences of destroying the container in relation to attaining global peace?
- What would happen to our material and spiritual growth and transformation if we decide not to heal the world?
- What types of patterns and trends are we going to now

experience as a result of the progressive destruction of our container?

I have written many pieces about the relationship between our material growth and transformation and the destruction of the environment. Thus, this book is not about that. Here, attention is paid to issues having to do with our spiritual transformation. More specifically, it will identify the most important spiritual laws that are now being violated. They are ten laws, which are at the roots of world healing for global peace.

The central message of this book is that we have to reestablish these spiritual laws in order to heal the world and to attain global peace.

That is, by understanding and applying these fundamental laws to our life and work, we will be able to not only end the destruction of our environment but also we will bring about inner peace and social transformation. Reestablishing the spiritual laws presented here, through your own efforts, will be the most fundamental way to attain your own inner peace too.

In this lifetime, healing the world is my spiritual mission, and

this book represents an attempt to lay out some of the grounds to healing the world for global peace.

Peace is you and you are peace.

Alfredo Sfeir-Younis

-----Peace Is You
Acknowledgement
and You Are Peace-----

The inspiration of this book is my teacher and spiritual father Lama Gangchen Tulku Rimpoche. He is a Tibetan Healer who comes from a tantric tradition, with a generosity that is unparalleled. All errors and omissions, however, are mine and should not be attributed to him in any way.

My first encounter with Lama Gangchen was at the United Nations in New York City more than a decade ago. Then, he told me that I needed to become a 200 percent environmental economist, and that my ability to become so rested not only on using material and outer instruments to manage the natural environment (the first 100 percent), but also on using the purity of my five elements of life (the second 100 percent). A true environmental economist had to be both—embedded in the outer (material) and inner (spiritual) developments—and, he added that a society also had to be the blend of both. Lama Gangchen told me that the true quality of an environmental economist must be measured by how his or her mere physical and spiritual presence cleans and heals the environment. For me, it was not only a powerful message but

a deeply transformational one. It shifted the course of my inner transformation toward the self-realization of this 200 percent being.

On January 19, 2005, in Premeno, Italy, Lama Gangchen brought me in front of the statue of Garibaldi. There, he blessed and honored me with a major spiritual initiation as The World Healer. My spiritual name became Cho Tab Khen Zambuling. Cho Tab means healing, Khen means the person who embodies healing, and Zambuling means the world as a live entity. What an honor, and what a major responsibility!

Healing people and healing the world have been central to Lama Gangchen Tulku Rimpoche's life and mission within this human lifetime. I have been a witness to so many people being cured and healed through him, where the impossible became possible. He has shared with us so many experiences and instruments to healing both ourselves (the content) and the environment we live in (the container).

I always knew that in this lifetime my mission also included healing. Maybe, a different type of healing. From a very early age I was drawn to healing the world and healing others, with the

sole purpose of serving humanity: to serve the poor, powerless, voiceless and marginalized.

But, I also knew that healing was to be done in a very special way. Healing others and healing the world, has to emerge from the purity of the inner self. This demands the self-realization of some key states of being, such as peace, love, and compassion.

This book is dedicated to him. Thank you, my spiritual father.

Serving humanity with love.

Alfredo Sfeir-Younis

-----Peace Is You
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and You Are Peace-----

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----We Are the World, Only One World, Our World

Why Is the World Hurting?

Chapter 1-----

The world is hurting.

Everywhere one looks there are some forms of conflict, violence, environmental degradation, corruption, misery, diseases, etc. All of them manifest either at the individual or the collective levels.

Many people are now asking, for example: How can they heal the hurting world? Do we know how to do it? Do we have the inner capacity to heal the world?

But more importantly, we must ask why the world is hurting in the first place. Given that the world is you and I (and this is neither just semantics nor a metaphor), why are we hurting each other? Actually, we are the world, there is only one world: our world.

There is no doubt that the world is hurting, and it is hurting because of both material and spiritual reasons.

The world is hurting because nearly half of the world population

is living in poverty with less than two dollars a day and millions are in absolute poverty with less than one dollar a day.

Nearly one billion people go to bed hungry every day, while we witness a world full of wealth and with plenty of food. Thousands of children die everyday of preventable diseases. This is not only a shame, but also the greatest ethical and moral dilemma we will ever face. There are 600,000 women who die every year because they don't have access to health care services during pregnancy and delivery.

The world is hurting today because of the way we are treating the children and the youth.

The youth faces unemployment and sees no real opportunities for betterment of their lives. Many youths are joining gangs in the world. This is not a phenomenon only of developing countries; this is a worldwide phenomenon, because these youngsters have lost hope and they don't believe in the existing political system or in a better future.

Millions of children do not go to school; the majority of those are girls. Millions of children are combatants and at war. In fact, the

weapon industry produces lighter and more effective weapons so that children don't have a physical impairment from carrying these weapons. Through media and toys, we are teaching the children how to kill, and it is devastating to think about how they are going to decide between war and peace when they have to push the button that they are so well trained to push in their war games.

The world is hurting, because we are not respecting the elderly people. They are materially fragile, and they are disempowered. Their wisdom, their spiritual guidance, and their contributions are not allowed to be made, so the transition between our generation and future generations is being ignored. We have disconnected the elderly people from the productive assets of the economy that they helped to create in the first place. This is ethically questionable.

The world is hurting because of social injustices everywhere, and because we are not respecting human rights.

We are still violating the rights of women, as if we needed to discuss again and again whether men and women are equal. This is really a shame and a tragedy of great proportion.

We are destroying indigenous cultures, as if they didn't have anything to contribute to human history. Indigenous peoples have been the custodians of Mother Earth for thousands of years. In fact, we are burning the library of humanity before we have the chance to read the books.

Yes, this is not enough.

What is most tragic today—and that's why the world is hurting—is that we believe that conflict and war are normal states of being. Those not in war do not really care about the destructions of other societies. This is not acceptable. We have created millions of innocent victims and we have destroyed the inner fiber of society and devastated the principal social unit of our lives that is the family.

The world is hurting because we are destroying the environment, which is so fundamental not only for our material existence but for our spiritual existence as well.

The world is being crushed today by a value system that is individualistic and is bounded by economics and finance. These values dominate our lives and the present course of globalization.

But people should know that while some economies are globalizing, their respective societies are not necessarily globalizing.

Spiritually, we are hurting, because we see so much discrimination in the world, because we are taught that there are lives of different values.

Specifically, the lives of the rich persons are worth much more than the lives of the poor persons. Thus, we ignore the death of those in Africa and the most cynical ones say: "this is a necessary evil".

Spiritually, in the end, we are not really respecting the most sacred aspect of our lives and we see how one religion persecutes another religion. We are hurting spiritually because we insist that our way of life today somehow requires that we sacrifice someone for the betterment of someone else, as if we need to leave some people behind to move other people forward. How long we will keep sacrificing others for our benefit?

We are unhappy, and this is not a matter of just being materially developed or underdeveloped.

Material wealth is not a guarantee to healing the world nor to be happy.

There will be no material wealth that will be capable of buying peace, love, compassion, happiness, joy, or security.

In the past, we have tried to cure the world using just material means. For example, we have spent billions and billions of dollars on poverty elimination programs, and we have tried to help in many ways, but actually the success is not that great. And many of us feel that we are losing key ground. In fact, today, many people spend a lot of time saying that the Millennium Development Goals declared by the United Nations at the turn of the century will never be attained.

Human welfare is not just a matter of material means. It is the lack of political will, power, and human commitment.

Are you prepared to heal the world?

----An Appeal for Compassion

Let Us Heal the World

Chapter 2-----

Today, everyone can contribute to the healing of our hurting world, although important conditions must allow it to happen. One of those is to truly understand and practice the golden rule governing this era.

Every era has its challenges. In the past, one of the challenges was to reconcile science with religion. As we know now, many people were killed because those two aspects of our lives were not reconciled. Some died, for example, because they believed the Earth was round. The basic golden rule of that era, which still permeates this era, is very simple and powerful: As I know, so I act.

Knowledge was and still is the central stage of our lives. It is the central stage of public policy-making—as its authorizing rule—as it is a powerful rule in our individual and collective lives. This is why many people are not content with just having a high school diploma. They aspire to a Master's or even a Ph.D. degree, as if a given degree gets them somewhere. However, in practice, we do

see how the marketplace honors this golden rule by allocating more money (salary) to those who have a higher degree than to those who have a lesser degree.

Today, the challenge facing the world is different, and this shift in awareness is to suggest neither that science and religion have been necessarily reconciled nor that knowledge is not important. The greatest challenge we face now is the reconciliation between our material life and our non-material life. In the jargon of my own profession and experience, I have also equated that challenge to the need for reconciliation between economics and spirituality.

This reconciliation is demanding a different golden rule: As I self-realize, or as I experience, so I act. Thus, this rule brings to the fore the centrality of experiencing and self-realizing the states of our human reality, the process of human self-realization, and the process of human transformation.

To walk on the path toward your ultimate state of consciousness and awareness, it is not enough just to have, to do, or to know. Human betterment requires something more: It is important to be and to become.

Therefore, we are not going to have peace, we will have to become peace. We will have to be peace.

On other subjects, one could also say, for example, that the key concern in our lives should not be the progressive advancement of science and technology per se (to know), but the level of consciousness (to be) of those who use that science and technology for unacceptable causes. Specifically, one could do many things with the existence of nuclear energy (power): either fight cancer or create another human holocaust. The choice is ours. And this choice is invariably linked to our level of consciousness.

To heal the hurting world will require that we go beyond matter and beyond the material expression of our human existence. No level of material wealth will resolve the pains of the soul. These pains are deeply rooted in us, both as humans and as beings.

To heal the world, humanity needs to go through a major revolution of values and a major process of human transformation.

More specifically, it is essential to embrace the fact that to heal humanity—materially and spiritually—we must have the experience

of the human self-realization of compassion. Compassion is the most powerful source of healing. However, we should not understand compassion as an act of material generosity or as a compilation of handouts (to have). It is essential that we understand compassion as an absolute state of our existence.

- Compassion is not giving. It is not a handout.
- Compassion is the human and spiritual capacity to become the other without losing our own identity.
- Compassion is born within us for the other.
- Compassion is the true source of healing.

This is why compassion must become a human value in public policy making. Policy makers' legitimacy is on their capacity to become the poor, homeless, disadvantaged. And, public policies must be an outgrowth of this process of being and becoming. Otherwise public policy is just empty promises and shallow decision-making processes.

Despite the delicate situation we live in today, we must remain

optimistic. One major source of optimism is the fact that the ultimate solution to the above-mentioned problems lies within us. We are the architects of our own destiny. The solution does not depend on something else or someone else. The solution depends on each and every one of us, here and now, individually and collectively. The poor and the rich, the blacks, the whites, the yellows, the browns, the people living in the north or in the south, and all living beings on this planet, have all the ability to self-realize compassion.

Compassion needs to be self-realized because the ability to self-realize it is a natural state of our being. It has nothing to do with religion, faith, beliefs, politics, etc. The mother bird feeds her little chicks because of compassion, and she did not go to my school! The mother bird has the ability to be compassionate because her nature is compassion.

You just need one breath of life to do so; to be compassionate. And it will be through this self-realization of compassion that we will heal ourselves, others, and the hurting world.

Now is the time to decide the future of human destiny. This is the time to make major commitments and to bring to the fore

our human will. Without these, we will never be able to heal the world.

We live in a moment of human history when we know that the solution lies within ourselves. That the solution is in the heart and the soul of each of us, whatever may be happening at the level of our material lives.

Compassion must be spread now as a wildfire. Compassion must be spread now like a river of fire. The transformational power of compassion is the only source, and perhaps the ultimate source, of healing the world.

I believe in both: that the world is in need of healing and that it is prepared to be healed.

Let us not spend time pointing fingers, blaming, or having excuses. The time has come to look inward, rather than outward, respecting all aspects of our lives. It is a time to embrace an honest and loving process of inner reflection.

Finally, there is no doubt that to heal the world we must also heal ourselves. And healing others makes our own process of

healing more effective and meaningful. Because we live in an interdependent world, if one person is hurting, we are all being affected.

Let us give peace a chance.

Perhaps this is the last time we have that choice without being exposed to massive conflict and despair. Time is of the essence.

The next few chapters will present several spiritual laws for healing the world. We need to feel them and embrace them with total compassion. The principal premise here is that the world is hurting and being progressively destroyed because these laws are being violated at the personal and collective levels.

Each law will be explained very briefly and some suggestions will be made to reestablish them in our daily lives. As you will see, these laws are totally interdependent and practically inseparable. They have been addressed separately to unbundle some important dimensions of healing the world and attaining global peace.

-----Every State of Being Occupies Space
Law 1 - The Law of Spiritual Space
Chapter 3-----

This law states that every state of being occupies space.

This is to say, positive as well as negative ones. Some examples to illustrate. When there is too much stress, the negative energy within us tends to take all our inner space away. We cannot even think well, and our memory tends to fade off or become erratic.

It is also an experience of usage of precious space when we feel we are to the limits and say: "I cannot take it anymore!" One translation of this situation is that your inner self does not have more space to take another state of reality.

As I became more sensitive to the existence of spaces in my life, I noticed that there are some people who purposely, or otherwise, tend to occupy too much of my inner space. I can feel them as soon as they enter the room I am into. The most powerful ones are the "manipulators"; they know so well how to take space away from people.

With the same vein, positive states of being, like love and compassion, also need space to unfold within us. Nothing is inner space neutral. And our inner life is in great part a constant process geared to create these spaces and manage them as best as we can.

In most cases, the creation of these spaces is a precondition for our human welfare.

The other day, a lady came to my house with a deep depression. This depression goes a long time back, and now it has 'used' all her inner spaces. Thus, her mind is blocked, she cannot think clearly, and everything that is happening around her is a major source of disturbance and conflict. In the language of computer science, her memory is full. Nothing enters and nothing goes out. The system is frozen. Any treatment of this depression necessitates considering the creation of spaces. One way to do so is via lifting away from herself some deep emotions that, most probably, occupy a huge space within. In a treatment I did do so and very soon she could breathe better, and even smile at me.

This means that we need to work at creating the necessary

spaces for each state of being we would like to self-realize. In particular, it is essential that we create the spaces for peace, love and compassion. Otherwise it will be impossible to become peaceful, loving and compassionate.

In a recent seminar I divided the attendees into two groups, women on the left and men on the right. Then I asked the women, what are the traits of the ideal man to marry? I did the same with the men in relation to their ideal woman. The lists were long and with great similarities: intelligent, loving, caring, sensitive, assertive, socially able, hard working, committed to the relationship, compassionate, and so much more. I asked then who in the room has found that special person. The result was astonishing: nobody raised their hands.

After that, we discussed why it is that they do not get the ideal person they want. They themselves recognized the importance of this law of spiritual space, as the large majority had never self-realized the states of being (virtues) they were seeking in someone else.

Why do people not get these partners?

In fact, many of the respondents spoke as if their list was a wish list, or a dream list, rather than something attainable or real. Simply said, they see the ideal partner as a utopia, defined (by them) as something that nobody will ever have, in spite of the aspirations expressed from within.

Sometimes our mind and spirit should have the capacity to receive peace, love, and other states of being (virtues). But this is not always the case. Thus, we do not get who we want.

In my view, we have to prepare ourselves (create the spaces) to receive what we think we deserve.

Reflecting on this law of spiritual space, I have also about the way I used to pray or ask some favour to the Creator. My way was not that different from others around me.

One interesting petition was to ask for the presence of God. This is to say, a situation where one asks for God Energy to come into our inner self. As any state of being, this Energy occupies space, and thus we need to create that space to let that Energy come in. This was an essential teaching during my early childhood, when I was taught how to pray and contemplate in silence.

In most cases we are not prepared for that. One would be in a situation where the self is like a little paper bag, and Divine Energy is a cyclone.

An analogy may help to expand our understanding of some of the above suggestions. Each program in the computer needs some specified space. If the computer memory does not have such a capacity, then it is impossible to receive and use that program. This is also a fundamental principle in computer science. What are the options? Create that space. How do you create that space in your computer? Well, one way is to get rid of stuff you do not need and open spaces in the existing memory. Another way is to buy more memory!

For us human beings, the same thing has to happen.

How much space do we need to create and gain peace in the world?

This is not a rhetorical question even if we do not have a way to measure this space. But if you are not in peace, if the world is not in peace, we could safely assume that there is not enough

space to embrace peace. As I stated before, because your nature is peace, if the space for peace were there, peace will unfold immediately.

There are many ways in which you can empty spaces in your computer memory as well as ways to expand your memory capacities.

This is why, for people in the realm of their true self, it has been so important to pray, contemplate, meditate, practice yoga, and do many other spiritual practices.

This is a well-known law for those who genuinely have a faith and religion. Most of the congregations and groups have their own practices to create spiritual spaces.

When I was a young boy I was a student of the Jesuits (Catholics) and we were taught the practices of Saint Ignacio of Loyola. This was, and still is, an incredible set of instruments and actions to create the spaces not only for love and compassion but also for obedience and discipline.

Having been a student and a very strict practitioner of

instruments from the East, including Hinduism and Buddhism, I know that they indeed have the law of spiritual space at their core. This is less understood in the West, though many of the contemplative practices are based on this notion of space and capacity.

Because time and space are one, it is important to enter into more dimensions of both.

In the West one often hears that “time is money” or that “time is everything.” There is nothing further from the truth. In fact, many people have lots of time on their hands and do not know what to do with it. Now that I have many retired friends I see this phenomenon every day. Others, who use the time they have available, do so very unproductively. It is within this context that we hear “If I had more time, I would do this, that or the other” or, more often than not we hear “I really have no time.”

In the end, the important thing is to understand how the mind and the soul perceive time, and how both behave in accordance with such a given notion of time. For example, our conventions of time may stipulate that a transatlantic flight lasts, let us say, eight hours, but if you are sitting close to someone you like and

can carry on a great conversation, your mind feels that time is actually very short, that time literally flies. Contrary to this situation, if you are in a hurry and want to arrive immediately at your final destination (that is: impatience), the flight feels like an eternity!

The quality of time, as a notion, is an experience and, thus, mostly subjective. And when I say subjective, I am referring here to the subject of the time in question: a person. This idea of subjectivity is the essence of what needs to be understood here. Each person will have his or her own level of subjectivity, which is often defined according to the individual's own capacity to identify, use, and allocate time.

The quality of time is, in many ways, its intrinsic intensity or verticality. The quality of time is related to the impacts we feel as we use one unit of linear time or one unit of horizontal time. Here, horizontal time is equated to our conventional time, the one that dictates, for example, that one day has only 24 hours. Quality of time is vertical, and it shows our level of satisfaction in each unit of horizontal time. Vertical time and horizontal time are not independent of each other, as both are linked to the same mind. Thus, in the example of the transatlantic flight, one sees that

the quality of time was so high that horizontal time diminished significantly.

Peace, happiness, and other important components of quality of life are born, live, and die in each unit of time. As a matter of fact, each state of our being goes through the same process. Thus, if one wants sustained peace, it is important to saturate each unit of time (horizontal time) with peace (the level of saturation being the quality of time, or vertical time). Once saturation of time with peace takes place, the next unit of time will be born peace!

Thus, if the time at our disposal is not coupled with a “capacity”, to enable us to experience positive states of being, it accelerates unhappiness and suffering. In the same vein, it is essential to understand that the same rule applies to every aspect of our lives. Thus, creating capacity could also be understood as affecting one’s own ability to experience different states of being. It is essentially the capacity to “become”; it is the capacity “to be.” It is the experience of subtle and deeply rooted human transformation.

Otherwise, if we lack this capacity to experience the different

states of being, time as an expression of the mind and soul is wasted, or it is felt to be not truly valuable. It is like a huge car with no gasoline in it.

In spirituality, for us to self realize and become one of these states of being, it is essential to know the key to opening ourselves into those states. This is not an obvious proposition and this is why a good spiritual teacher becomes an important assistant in the process. If we do not know the key necessary to enter into that state of being we are aspiring to or working toward, the probability of succeeding in our human transformation will be very small. In this process of becoming, we may also be required to take, and experience, a number of intermediate states so that the progressive embracing of the ultimate goal will be made by careful approximations that ultimately fulfill our most important expectations.

The creation of our inner spiritual space is therefore essential.

In this context, you may also think of yourself as a strong or weak magnet located on one side of a window. Depending on your capacity, you will create a strong or weak vortex. This will have all (and only) the attributes and talents you have been able

to unfold or embrace as of now. If you have become peace, or have the space necessary for peace to enter, then you will attract peaceful people

The same principle applies to nations and to global peace.

EXERCISE

Let me recommend a practice to adopt.

Look into your worst attribute. Let us say it is impatience or conflict. This exercise consists of creating the space for the opposite: inner peace.

To address patience heads on you have to change the frame of reference regarding your notion of linear time or the strong desire to try to predict life's outcomes in that linear time (for example, "I would like this to happen to me now"). Spend one full day without doing anything that has to do with your personal routine. Just be in a contemplative state, be the observer rather than the actor in everything that happens that day.

Try not to modify any outcome that comes to you. Just follow the flow and the rhythm of nature around you. Get completely

embedded in that rhythm; this will create the space for the state of peace to enter. Leave behind all the urges to do something else. Do not try to finish a task you think is unfinished or that will not be finished if you are not “there.” Do not try to get to know something and let that something take its own place as it pleases. Do not try to act on something you remember was to be done or attended to in any form or fashion. Do this for just one day in your life. Let your intuition prevail at all times.

If you do this exercise every day for 30 to 45 minutes a day you will be creating an immense capacity for becoming more patient. Begin to accept destiny (the Great Order, of which you are part) and understand that your personal modification of and intervention in the path you are on today is a very small part in influencing the final outcome in your life.

----All Phenomena Depend on Causes and Conditions

Law 2 - The Law of Karma

Chapter 4-----

This law states that all phenomena depend on causes and conditions; otherwise nothing can actually exist. Thus, attention is paid to the causes and conditions, more than to the actual manifestation of them.

There are many ways in which this law has been defined. One of the most popular ways is to say that this is the law of causes and effects, which states that whatever you do will have some important effects that would, in turn, affect you. Thus, if I do an act of violence it will turn its course and have various violent effects on you. If I do an act of peace, such as caring about your neighbour, it will also result in various effects that are directly related to peace.

In all cases, the relationship that exists between causes and effects is not just one of quantity, or of volume, but also of quality. Small but high-quality actions may result in huge and extremely high-quality reactions.

I often define the law of karma as the law of infinite balance. Thus, whether in past, present, or future lives, our good and bad actions, in whatever form these are defined, must be settled. This is to say, if I do bad, then I need to do the opposite to compensate for the bad I have done.

In many spiritual traditions I have been taught to “offer” when I have some good thing happening to me. Offering means to give something spiritual or material to others, to living beings, to sentient beings, to nature... This offering is an act of recognition for the positive thing I received or had a positive effect from. Many people receive many positive things, including their life, health, talents, etc., and do not offer much to the rest of existing beings.

Actually, to give material goods, services, money, or other things is very ingrained in Eastern cultures, as they see their offerings as accumulation of merits either for this life or future lives. This notion of merit is also linked to the way in which the law of Karma operates.

Is it easy to re-establish the law of karma to attaining world peace?

The above definitions of karma may be easily read, but to put them in practice for world peace is much more difficult.

These definitions have some interesting implications worth noting. The first is that phenomena that do not have causes and conditions do not exist. This is to say, all that we see and experience must have some causes and conditions. Everything is a result of something, whether from this life or from past lives. For you to be happy, sad, peaceful, loving, etc. is all a result of some causes and conditions.

Equally important is to think about why there is so much violence and there is no peace in the world. Violence is the result of certain causes and conditions, and we must focus on them to understand how we can eliminate violence and enter onto the road of world peace. Similarly, if we are to enter the road of peace we must create the necessary causes and conditions for peace to materialize.

As stated in the previous chapter, one of these conditions is space; it is the creation of capacity. Otherwise we will never experience peace.

It may be worthwhile to illustrate this law of karma with one important example involving economics and business as they are practiced today, and their impacts on the environment and human health.

To start, it is important to know that one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century is to be able to cope with economic diseases.

Economic diseases are, for example, those that result from

- The present form of economic growth and development.
- Climate change and ozone layer depletion.
- Pollution of air, water, earth, and space.
- Urban sprawl, excessive poverty, and malnutrition.
- The mismanagement of our health care system.
- The loss of biodiversity and other renewable resources.

The present economic paradigm, inserted in a process of globalization, has become the greatest modifier of our entire lives. It is economics and business that bear a great responsibility for the state of our physical and human environments today and, thus, for the state of our material and spiritual welfare, both individual and collective.

Thus, there is a need to eliminate all forms of economic and business violence both at the gross and subtle levels of our existence—that is, violence in relation to production, consumption, trade, and other forms of exchange.

Many people in the world feel hopeless about modifying the directions of human change and transformation. This desperation people feel today is so great and, at the same time, so perverse, that we often hear sentences like these: “There is nothing we can do about it.” “This is the price we have to pay.” Or “It is a necessary evil.” For example, any negative aspect of globalization, poverty, inequities, corruption, loss of civil rights, insecurity, etc. belongs now to the category of the necessary evil.

It is essential that we break down such a fallacy of the necessary evil. It is up to us to change the course of our personal and

collective human transformation. However, new human transformation will not be the result of the old paradigm that created the problem. In fact, it is always the case that more of the same will yield more of the same.

For example, each of us is responsible for the decisions we make at the level of daily consumption. In particular:

- It is up to us to consume a small or a large quantity of a product that may have been produced in a violent way, with indecent working conditions, destruction of nature, or the elimination of sentient beings.

- It is up to us to invest our capital in companies that are producing in unacceptable ways or to invest in environmentally responsible companies.

- It is up to us to read the labels of the products we consume, and to make the appropriate decisions as regards purchases of such products.

Clearly we are seeing more and more a shift toward conscious consumption, although much more is needed to affect the course

of business and economics. Unfortunately, there is a lack of leadership and tremendous apathy.

Similarly, in relation to public policy positions, it is we, together, who elect public officials. By the same token, it is we who have to take them out of office if they do not perform. It is up to us to exercise our civil and political rights.

We are the core of all causes and conditions as regards what is happening in economics and business. We must see clearly the responsibilities we bear for the many economic diseases we experience today and, thus, it is incumbent upon us to change the present situation.

Also, and in the same vein,

- It is we who are spending nearly 1 trillion dollars on weapons and destroying the lives of people and the environment.

- It is we who spend more than 300 billion dollars on drugs and, thus, annihilate so many young people and children. Those who produce drugs and consume drugs are human beings.

- It is we who spend more money on cat and dog food than on assisting the poor people in developing countries.
- It is we who are stopping processes and possible avenues for generic drugs for those who have contracted HIV/AIDS.

In addition to these material decisions made by people like you and me, it is essential to accept that we are in the cockpit of our spiritual decisions too.

The present situation demands that we create the causes and conditions to heal the world. Let me offer some specific baby steps to healing the world:

1. The Human Collective (Mahayana). To think about economics and business for the benefit of the human collective and not for just a few. This is not just an issue of equity and justice, but also an issue of balancing the already imbalanced process of human transformation. We are failing at the level of the collective. The value system of economics and business is individualistic in nature. It does not open the window for those values that embrace every human being and sentient beings. It is selective and not universal. It is competitive and not cooperative.

2. The Causes (understand the ultimate issue in transformation and evolution). To understand that the ultimate cause of economics and business diseases are human consciousness. Even money is human consciousness expressed in a material way. Money could never provide the functions of exchange and unit of account if there were not an agreement on the embodied trust and awareness to do so. The ultimate cause of matter is non-matter. The ultimate sources are our levels of consciousness. Thus, a new economics and business will only come as a result of a new level of human consciousness.

3. The Conditions (create the proper enabling environment for change). To create an enabling environment for change that includes both our outer and our inner environments. Material development is important; therefore, our material environment outside us is very central to a sustainable society. Equally important is our inner environment, so that spiritual growth can also take place. In the end, and as we reach higher and higher levels of human self-realization, we will see that the “outer environment is like the “inner environment,” both of them forming one holistic reality. Through education, health, nutrition, morals, ethics, culture, institutional arrangements, etc., we would be able to create new enabling environments, so that we come

successfully to environment peace.

4. The Eco-morality (exalt the importance of morals and ethics).

To know whether we are moving in the “right” direction. Whether the process of human transformation has to be changed and in what direction. In this respect, economics and business cannot exist in a moral and ethical vacuum. As a matter of fact, these are immersed in a given ethics and morality, which come as a mirror image of the value system they promote. We must develop a new form of eco-stewardship. It is important to develop a new eco-morality. It is a morality based on love and compassion.

5. The Spirit (bring the non-material and sacred). To realize that human change must not be dominated only by material economics and material business. The time has come to embrace the non-material and the sacred in these two activities. This means that we have to bring a new horizon and a new set of objectives within a vision of humanity where we have a disease-free society, a peaceful society, a drug-free society, and much more. We must bring the spirit into economics by making it the science of abundance rather than the science of scarcity. This implies having as a core goal of business and economics to nurture the values of life. A major investment has to be made to

enhance and expand our spiritual capital.

6. The Self-Realization (embrace the being and becoming in action). To know that life is an experience. Economics and business are also an experience. They happen mostly as a result of the human desire for doing, having, and knowing. But these are not enough. In addition, we must develop the business and the economics of being and becoming. Economics and business must create the space and time for human self-realization in that process—a process that includes work and the working conditions, production, consumption, distribution, trade, and much more. Each and every aspect of economics and business must contribute to the human self-realization of one or more dimensions of our lives.

7. The Content (change the thematic content of the strategy). To acknowledge that too much emphasis has been given to the thematic and content elements of economics and business. This is important, as education cannot exist without a curriculum. What is the curriculum of economics and business today? The large majority of people believe that there is only one course in that curriculum: profit making and material gains. Many expect that this curriculum should also include sustainability, human

development, and more. It is time we debate the content of these two, as they are important aspects of our lives.

8. The Container (expand the capacities of the subject of change).

To focus on the container. In the end, even a perfect curriculum will yield nothing without careful attention to the container: we, the people are the container. We can do only what we can do. To reach new levels of human welfare we must expand the capacity of the container. In many ways, it is all about the container. This is to say, we must expand our capacities. We may have the most effective strategies, but if they are not understood, embraced, and practiced by the key actors in private or public policy, the whole effort will be wasted. This is why it is so important to have a comprehensive and consistent human resources development strategy. Without such strategy, economics and business will benefit a few and create problems for most. For too long we have focused on the content. Now is the moment to change such an approach and focus more on the container.

Let me share a couple of next steps.

The messages. We must understand what economic diseases are and why and how they relate to the destruction of the

environment. We also need to make peace with the environment. It is essential that we carry these messages everywhere. That we reaffirm these messages and that we make these messages ours.

The integration. These messages will have no meaning for others and ourselves if we do not integrate them in all we do. We cannot continue making advocacy statements that compete with other forms of advocacy. The time has come to embody these messages in our professions, in our relationships with others, in all aspects of our lives. Integration needs time, needs space, needs emptiness, and so many things.

The actions. Once we have integrated these messages, go into action, into new ways of doing business and economics and into new ways of consuming or distributing material goods and services. Let us not proclaim without acting. Let us not act without integration. Let us not integrate without the proper message.

EXERCISE

Practice and meditation in relation to karmic cycles. The outcomes you see in your life are the direct result of some causes and conditions. If these did not exist, then you would see that such forms of existence would slowly disappear. All phenomena lack their own inherent existence—at least a great majority of things and situations we are into (maybe not all). It is your mind that gives inherence existence and creates the dependency and attachments. This is simply an error of the intellect.

One example of how the mind creates existence is in the case when we experience fear. In order to get rid of fear we must, for example, go back to the causes and conditions that are responsible for that fear. Often, the same fear repeats itself time after time, in a cyclical way. It becomes like something that is truly real and it is alive within oneself. Thus, there is a need to break down that karmic cycle of fear. This may be done, for example, by meditating on your life within your mother's womb. This meditation is extremely effective in enlivening your inner security and indwelling on many feelings you have as an adult.

----Nobody, and Nothing, Is Independent

Law 3 - The Law of Total Interdependence

Chapter 5-----

This law states that nobody, and nothing, is independent of the rest. Everyone and everything form a holistic whole.

We all make a fundamental contribution to an Order and Evolution, and to a collective Destiny. We do not evolve alone. We live in complete interdependence with other human beings, with all sentient beings and with all living beings.

The feeling of being independent is an error of our intellect. And, it is the result of our incapacity to feel, become, and self-realize this interdependence, as a state of being, at both the material and spiritual levels.

It is important to embrace the fact that our lives are intricately and intimately linked to each other. Nothing can exist without being part of a total whole and holistic reality, which is much larger than oneself. This total and holistic reality—which we may call the reality of our collective—has its own dynamics and its own behaviour, which is different from the sum of each individual's

behaviour.

Thus, whatever one does at any given point in time is affecting everyone else and everything else, and vice-versa. This applies to our existence at the gross level (e.g., daily life) as well as to our existence at the subtle and most subtle/vital levels. Thus, the experience of this interdependence will not only be felt at the material level or as a result of a given material action, but it may also result (remember the law of karma: causes and conditions) from non-material ones, from spiritual actions too. In particular, I may affect the existing interdependence of two people by having bad thoughts about them, or by sending negative vibrations towards them.

At the gross level, today, this law of interdependence is critically manifesting via the process of globalization. The world has become too small, and whatever happens in one part of the planet is felt in the other parts. And this not only applies to economics and business, but it applies to our natural and human environments as well. This is why the destruction of the Amazon is being felt everywhere and in every ecosystem, whether we see it, feel it, or not.

Let me also bring to the fore the interdependence between human beings and other living beings. The point here is that we are totally interdependent on animals and wildlife in general. We may not see this. But, as explained later on in this book, there is no inferior form of intelligence. It is our human ego and cultural values of superiority and ethnocentricity that are affecting our relationships with animals.

In addition, we also need to understand and feel our interdependence with other living beings, such as trees and so many other beings here in this planet. They may be a key to our own process of human transformation.

In addition to the above, I have noticed that people have a stronger tendency to recognize the existing forms of interdependence at the material level than a host of forms of interdependence at the spiritual level. One example is that of understanding the impacts that the destruction of nature has on us human beings.

In particular, we are aware that the destruction of nature is having paramount negative impacts in our material lives, including our human health. But we have less of an understanding and practically no feeling as regards the relationship between environmental

degradation and our personal or collective spiritual evolution.

Thus, it is not really too difficult to have a conversation about how soil degradation diminishes our supplies of food, or on how air and water pollution affect peoples' health and physical welfare. However, very few people see the relationship between a deterioration of the natural environment and the quality and depth of our spiritual evolution and transformation.

One fundamental principle is clear to me: there is a perfect symmetry between the quality of the natural environment and our ability to step into higher levels of spiritual evolution. This is one reason for many Saints and Sages to live in more pristine environments.

The importance of this principle is that destruction of our natural environment limits our spiritual evolution too.

Sometimes, we act as if this interdependence does not exist, or as if this interdependence is not really relevant in our lives and, thus, nature destruction continues.

Why are we numbed in relation to these existing

interdependencies?

I think that there is more to our apathy than just lack of knowledge.

Let us explore some important questions:

- Why is it that most people are numbed and indifferent to the destruction of the environment?

- Why are we insensitive to our material and non-material interdependence?

- Why is it that we are indifferent to the destruction of the natural environment anywhere in the world?

- Why is it that if someone is sick, others do not really care?

- Why is it that, after only a few weeks, most people show no more interest in major catastrophes?

Let me share some thoughts and experiences to address some of these questions.

- **First**, most of the world operates at higher levels of toxicity to

maintain its inner and outer equilibrium. Our human body can maintain its equilibrium at very high levels of toxicity. This is why the drunken person always states that he or she can drive. But only those who are not drunk can hold the keys from the drunk driver. Today, we are not only drunk from alcohol. There are many other forms of toxicity we should be aware of. One of them is ego or material power. How many people make decisions just to gain more external power? The dilemma here is to make sure that those who are making decisions for us are only “drunk” because of love and compassion.

- **Second**, to develop programs of human health and welfare, it has become easier to accept a human adaptability model (rather than a human health model), and be at higher levels of imbalance in relation to our natural state of being. Today, medicine is not addressing the causes and conditions of diseases, particularly of those diseases that result from the deterioration or contamination of our environment. Instead, medicine is only attacking the symptoms, without changing the environment that is the main cause of diseases. This has led to a trillion-dollar pharmaceutical industry, which produces the medicines that will maintain us in such a state of toxic equilibrium. In addition, technological change is being directed toward the development

of external palliatives instead of solving the causes of diseases that plague humanity.

- **Third**, most of the people that make decisions do not understand the negative impacts of this toxic state on our inner (spiritual) development. Most of us have difficulty understanding how the destruction of the natural environment caused by most economic and business activities (cutting trees, destroying the wildlife) affects our spiritual growth. There is no sensitivity to this form of interdependence and, thus, the need to develop human consciousness and awareness. If one accepts the Eastern saying that “the outer is like the inner and the inner is like the outer,” the destruction of our outer environment not only reflects the state of our inner environment, but it also limits our capacity to develop such an inner environment. Our spiritual development is now compromised and can be mutilated by the destruction of our natural external environment.

- **Fourth**, we are in an advanced state of sensorial degeneration and break-down. As we reach equilibrium at higher levels of toxicity, we begin to be numbed and cannot sense the rest of the world, and, for example, seeing more destruction does not disturb us. This process clearly begins by the shutting down of our

sensorial system. Our senses connect to our inner perception or wisdom, and this capacity to sense the world also degenerates. To have a healthy existence in the material world, it is not only important to be able to see and have a healthy eye system, but we also need healthy sight's wisdom. The same applies to other sensorial capacities and organs.

The above issues often raise other fundamental questions for which there are no complete answers. In particular: Are we beyond recovery? Have we passed the point of irreversibility? My answer is "No." There is a clear possibility to reverse the present trends and change the whole process of human transformation.

Thus, we need to shift our minds to ask: What will it take for people to make the turn that is needed? Will the change come because we proactively decide to reach more peaceful states of our human reality? Or, will the change result because it will be driven by more conflicts and violence?

Currently, it seems that most changes taking place are the result of violent events. Today, even those who proclaim peace and freedom are pursuing non-peaceful means to do so. As a result, violence and fear are seriously affecting people's path of

personal growth and inner development.

It is we who have to reverse those trends. If we do not do it, Nature will. This is not a nonsense statement; there is an infinite interdependency between the material and the non-material world and between our outer and inner environments. Thus, it is very possible that we may see the wisdom in Nature taking the lead and bringing about the appropriate forms of change and the new equilibrium that is needed.

So it would be no surprise to see that natural law and natural wisdom will be moving us to reflect and to change toward the desired direction. This is why many of those who have been deeply affected by the great natural catastrophes, such as the recent Asian tsunami, are frequently asking these types of questions and looking for solutions. They also understand the existence of inner tsunamis that result from imbalances and bottling up of negative emotions. These inner tsunamis drive people toward other forms of transformation and change.

EXERCISE

Let me again end with offering a simple practice. One powerful way to understand and enhance the nature of your interdependence would be by allowing you to meditate about the indivisibility of peace. Peace for yourself, peace for other human beings, and peace for all sentient beings.

Peace is universal and inclusive rather than localized and exclusive. This indivisible form of peace and the quality elements it embraces may vary in each individual case, but the meditation will clearly show that to be at peace with someone cannot be at the expense of conflicts with others or simply not being in peace with others. It is important to meditate on this indivisible and all-encompassing state of peace and begin to feel your true universal nature.

This universal nature will be felt when you meditate about your state of peace for all living beings, so important in relation to all aspects of your personal life. Can you imagine peace in a world where you are totally alone, no birds, no trees, and no sentient beings? Can you expand your state of mind if you are required to exclude everyone and everything else? Meditate on how the

sentient beings enrich your self peace, inner peace, and the peace you experience with others.

This is not new as a form of meditation. Many have experienced it even without being aware of the situation at hand. This happens when people who are in a state of peace look for a nice, nature-based spot, silent and full of trees, flowers, water, etc. Our nature is to be interdependent.

----Nobody, and Nothing, Is Independent

Law 4 - The Law of Inclusion and Universality

Chapter 6-----

The law of inclusion and universality states that nobody and nothing can be excluded from any human activity, even if an activity seems to be separate and isolated from the rest of the world.

This law is based on the fact that the nature of the spirit is infinite and unbounded. Thus, everyone and everything is in the nature of the infinite and the unbounded. All forms of existence come and take place at the level of infinity, and manifest in material and non-material forms.

We come from the spirit and we will go back to the spirit.

Thus, exclusion is a way to create boundaries. Boundaries go against the essential nature of the spirit. Exclusion limits the spirit and thus, the spiritual potential of all beings and things. These boundaries do not allow the normal flow of life and they manifest themselves in war and conflicts, in diseases and all forms of illnesses, and in chaos and suffering.

When we create these boundaries with nature in our daily life, when we, for example, destroy the forests—nature reacts because it is in the core of nature to be unbounded in its creation and we are destroying that creation. After we have created bounded conditions, they become the causes of many natural disasters, and we have seen many of them lately.

We also create exclusion at the level of the interdependence between us, human beings, and animals or other living beings. We kill them; we destroy their natural environments, and much more. Humans do this as if animals were not really important in their evolution. Also, many people feel that animals are inferior to humans and, thus, there is some acquired right to kill them. This is very unfortunate, as we are irreversibly depleting many species, while we do not have the capacity to store or manifest the genetic codes of wisdom that we are eliminating from nature. The fact that we do not know what an animal thinks or feels must not be tantamount to our brutal domination.

Thus, what is the consequence of excluding the last Bengal tigers that are left, by progressively depleting them irreversibly?

Every material and spiritual aspect of creation is embodied and embedded in all living beings, including animals. Thus, they do have a spirit, they have a divine dimension, and we must not only recognize them but must respect and foster them.

The killing of animals is one of the major sources of illnesses in the world, and the world needs healing.

Even if someone is to leave animals aside for a moment, this law of inclusion and universality has been violated constantly in the relationships among human beings. Such behaviour implies that we believe that there are human lives of different values and worth. Some are deemed superior and some inferior and, thus, one is allowed to exclude those who are believed inferior.

When there were major wars in Rwanda and millions were killed, I discussed the importance of the events with a journalist friend of mine, as not much was published by the traditional media. He stated that those deaths were not worthy of news. In his mind, it was more important for the ratings to fill the newspapers with football news or some form of yellow press than with reporting on those events. However, if one person considered as superior is killed, even nations go to war to settle the disputes. This is

also a tragic way to violate the laws of karma.

The world also sees indigenous peoples as inferior, and in some countries they marginalize them or annihilate them to the point that many tribes are becoming extinct. Not to add that they are excluded in the economic and business worlds and that the efforts are made to eliminate their languages and cultures. This is a major tragedy in our lifetime. In a figurative sense, we are burning the library before we have the ability to read the books. Tons of knowledge, culture, and more are being eradicated for no reason whatsoever, in the interest of a few powerful groups or nations.

We exclude women, children, the handicapped, and so many other people from key aspects of their lives in the way we violate their human rights, and it is practically impossible to make certain that these groups have equal rights under the law.

Those are major sources of diseases and illnesses in the world.

Furthermore, religions thrive via exclusion.

While the principles of most religions and their original intent

were universal, they have become a major source of exclusion. The messages of Moses, Mohammed, Christ, Buddha, and many others were universal, not only for those who created a religion later on from those teachings and messages. Nowadays, religions make their differences and their boundaries with other religions their main source of action. Each religious group sees their conceptions of God and their road to salvation as superior to that of other religions. This has been a major source of conflict and human suffering. Thus, it is imperative that we move back to the universality of religions if we are to heal the world and attain global peace.

Interesting enough, economics and business also thrive via exclusion. Exclusion has become the way to control markets, exploit labour, and maximize profits. The value system behind these activities is individualistic and exclusionary. For anyone to make profits there must be sharp exclusion. If there is no exclusion from the potential rents out of resources or markets, profits will be zero. Material scarcity and purchasing power are the key instruments of exclusion. Often, business leaders hide under the term “competitiveness” their cunning strategies of exclusion. As a result, we see a world in poverty, hunger, and so many other illnesses.

These activities are far from being universal. For them to be universal, they have to go through a major revolution in values. One must embrace humanistic and spiritual values and move from market economics to spiritual economics, and love economics. Economics must be driven by the values of peace, love, and compassion. We must move from a particularistic, individualistic, economics that materially benefits a few, to a universal, love economics that benefits the spiritual development of all.

Wars are driven by such limited vision of economics. There is plenty of evidence that this is the case. Once war is triggered by these economic disparities and conflicts, then the whole process is fuelled with religion, ethnicity, and other factors. This fact implies that any economic policy must be assessed against its capacity to create peace or generate conflict.

An interesting and practical example of exclusion and inclusion is that of the European Union. A few weeks ago, I entered an antique bookshop. And, in that place, there was a person debating the nature and scope of the European Union. At one point in time I slowly entered into that conversation, and an old history professor stated that this is not the first attempt to unite Europe

to have one European neighbourhood. All through history, there have been several attempts to do so and, he added, none of them succeeded.

Just as an illustration, he mentioned the attempts by the Romans and the Greek empires; Napoleon Bonaparte and his egotistical desire for only one European continent; Stalin and communism; and, most recently, Hitler and his attempt to seek one physical Europe.

The history professor was quick and sharp to remark that each attempt to unite Europe had its own ethos.

For example, some of these attempts have tried politics as the ethos, or religion, ethnicity, or simply muscle power. And he added that today the EU was formed under yet another ethos: the ethos of economics. In fact, it seems that the real EU truly began with the self-imposition of the euro as the monetary currency of the Union. From where I see things, economics is clearly the core ethos of this Union.

Given this situation, it behoves us to ask the question of whether the new European Union would actually work under the ethos of

economics. Time will tell.

It is important to note that underneath each ethos is a value and belief system. An ethos does not represent an esoteric thing, or something in a vacuum. They are very practical and full of strategic priorities and biases that are embodied in each ethos. And if we are to understand what is happening in our global neighbourhood, it is on those values and beliefs that we must focus.

Moving from a local neighbourhood to a global neighbourhood demands a major shift in values and beliefs, notwithstanding the fact that there may be some commonly shared values. These values become common to all when they are universal in nature, such as respect for life in all forms, freedom, inclusion, equality, security, cohesion, etc. In addition, we should add other human values, like the human values of love, compassion, caring, and sharing.

Despite their apparent universal character, I see very few of those values embedded in a neighbourhood whose ethos is economics. It seems that the values of economics are more prevailing and universal. These are individualistic, exclusionary, and competitive values.

It is important to focus on the transition to this new global society. Some have argued that this global society will emerge as a result of a global conflict. Others would say that this global society will emerge in a peaceful, consensual, and coherent manner. At present, there are already factors that may be shaping the transition of our world towards a global world of inclusion and universality. However, just looking at the gross levels of human interaction, one can see that some conditions and variables are already in play and are deeply influencing the nature and scope of our global society. Many of them are seen as negative conditions, which acquire immense value in a world's space that has literally shrunk in relation to what we are demanding from that space. Let me very briefly list some of these variables:

- **First**, population and demographic change. No matter what is being said, we are now 6.5 billion people, and we will continue to grow up to 10 billion or more in a couple of decades. The important thing to remember is that this population explosion is a phenomenon of the last 100 years only—a very short time span; also, that the nearly 100 million people who are born every year are being born in the cities of developing countries where the services are most precarious and social instability the highest.

- **Second**, poverty as a global issue. Nearly half of the people in the world are poor, and at least one-quarter are in absolute poverty. Of them, almost 900 million go hungry every day in a world that is rich in foods and in many other basic material things. As I hear the debates on the Millennium Development Goals, many say that even if absolute poverty is cut in half by 2015, there will be another billion people below the poverty line. Poverty is not just a localized issue. There are millions of poor people in developed countries too. I see them with my own eyes in Europe, and I saw them in shelters and other places in the United States. Poverty is not just an issue of numbers. It is about people like you and me who happen to be born in disadvantaged areas of the world, and who form an integral part of the global neighbourhood! They are our neighbours. Poverty has become a moral and an ethical issue of great proportions.

- **Third**, the spread of major and very resistant diseases. Health and health care are also a very global issue. Many of our neighbours around the world are very ill, and they need assistance. There are millions dying of HIV/AIDS every year, and in some societies the active population has shrunk significantly, with major consequences, not only in human terms, but also in economic and social terms. The tragedy that many families

live today because of these diseases it is very difficult to even imagine.

- **Finally**, the real absence of peace and serenity. There have been more than 100 conflicts in the last 50 years. These are more cruel and more savage than in the past. The weapons used are so effective that millions of innocent people die everyday. But they die as if they did not really matter for the rest of the world. When watching television, it is difficult to keep the count of the death in Iraq, Palestine, Israel, Angola, Nepal, Liberia, Chad, Guatemala, and so on. We are living in the absence of peace and serenity and, thus, our senses are damaged and have lost a lot of their inner wisdom. This wisdom is so much depleted that many people love to watch violent movies. We all have some Terminator in our souls. Needless to say that many people ignore the millions of children dying of hunger and of preventable diseases.

If inclusion will be made a human reality, there are more elements shaping up this global civilization, some positive and some negative; all intermingled. And, consequently, we see that we are accompanied by human insecurity and strongly supported by individualistic values, hand in hand with the expansion of communications, the Internet, and transport, and so many other

dimensions of human progress. In this context, many people, including many of us here in this room, feel that we are not the architects of the existing global society. People feel that they are more the residual than the truly centre stage of globalization.

A world with total inclusion—*our global neighbourhood*—is facing at least three global dilemmas. We will call it “The Three ‘G’ Symptoms,” and these are global governance, global welfare, and global redistribution of wealth and assets.

- **First, global governance.** It is evident that a global neighbourhood must have well-defined rights and responsibilities, collective rules of the game, and organizational structures that will serve those collective agreements. Otherwise, it is simply chaos. In today’s world, we see that the organizations that claim to be global in nature do not have the trust of the collective—in part, because they are dominated by governments and, among those governments, there is a handful who impose their rules within those institutions. What is most interesting is that churches are also believe to be global, but they are nowhere to be seen in the world of those mentioned global governance institutions. And it is the major decay of governments that is poisoning the structure of global governance for our global neighbourhood. It is essential

that we ask ourselves what is the most acceptable and most effective form of governance for our global neighbourhood? Is just an aggregation of what exists today sufficient, or is it something much more than that?

- **Second, global welfare.** In a global neighborhood we must create new indicators of global welfare and not just an addition of individual welfare. New forms of collective wealth creation, to benefit the great majority of people, are needed. These must become part of the public domain. The welfare of my neighbour must be at the center stage of the debate. We should all be instruments of welfare creation at the collective level and for the benefit of the collective. It is similar to the protection of the environment; we must be concerned about the collective environment as a unit of account and not to the state of the environment in my own little world. To arrive at a notion of collective welfare will demand a dramatic change in our value system, in favour of more humanistic and spiritual values. Thus, to love thy neighbour as I love my self must become the ethos of material welfare creation in the global neighbourhood. Is this possible? Will our minds and souls become an instrument of the collective? Are we willing to behave like the Good Samaritan? Can we be at peace with ourselves when there are significant

numbers of people going hungry every night?

- **Finally, global redistribution of wealth and assets.** There is no doubt that unless we begin a process of redistribution of wealth and redistribution of productive assets, all the wealth of our neighbourhood will be in the hands of a few. Today, the initial conditions in terms of material possessions determine the outcomes of trade and material exchanges, no matter what. Those who possess the land, monetary capital, physical assets, etc., are those who can call the shots. Material wealth is tantamount to all forms of material power. But this redistribution of wealth per se will not guarantee long-term equity and social justice within the collective. A very powerful change in attitudes and intents must permeate the behaviour within the global neighbourhood.

It is clear that we are still facing very old collective problems of exclusion. These problems seem to stay there forever, and remedies are all short lived, in spite of technology, globalization, and development. In addition, there are many organizations that are supposed to make decisions for the human collective, in the local, national, or global neighbourhoods.

Why is it that so many problems remain unresolved? One reason, perhaps, is the fact that we are creating more problems than we are able to resolve. Another reason is related to those who are making decisions for the collective. Perhaps, those who are making decisions for the collective are part of the problem.

Today, there is a big outcry about the democratic deficit in those organizations dealing with the human collective. It is often said that those who will be affected by the decisions in question are not truly represented in those organizations.

This democratic deficit is not just a political issue. This democratic deficit is a mirror image of our spiritual deficit. In a democracy, coequality and people's empowerment are essential. But both are states of being that we have not fully self-realized, and this is the reason why these organizations are inadequate to address the above-mentioned issues.

Organizations are no more and no less than the people who are part of them. Thus, the ability of any organization to perform a certain function depends on the abilities of its members. When the members have a very low level of consciousness and awareness, the organization will reflect that immediately.

This is why leadership is important. This is why commitment is important.

EXERCISE

Think about all the enemies you have or the persons you dislike most. Reflect on how you exclude them and what does it does to your feelings and your soul as you think about them. Try to sense the current of negative energy that such exclusion creates and see where it goes in your body.

Search deeply within your spirit and try to locate where the conflicts are with one or two of these people. Rescue them out of that state and meditate on love and compassion and bring peace into their souls and your soul. Seat them in front of you and talk to them. Tell them that despite the differences, you love them deeply and that you would like to embrace peace together.

Think that both of you live in this unbounded world that belongs to all of you as a collective. You must acknowledge your joint collective existence and that excluding one from the other creates boundaries and diseases of all sorts. Your own suffering is a result of these boundaries.

----Feminine Energy: Core of All Forms of Life

Law 5 - The Law of the Feminine

Chapter 7-----

This law states that we cannot diminish nor eliminate the feminine dimensions of each and every form of life. In human form, either as a man or as a woman.

It is the nature and capacities of the feminine energy that forms the foundation of life and human transformation in this millennium. It is the feminine side of life, everywhere, that will enable humanity to find a new identity, a new road map toward a better future, a new way to nurture the fundamental values of life, and a new set of practices to accelerate our self-realization processes.

The equilibrium among world energies has been lost, and the great imbalances we experience today have to be corrected, be it within the existence of men and women, holy beings, sentient beings, and nature at large. These imbalances are the main source of diseases and violence in the world.

In fact, peace is the mirror image of the state of our feminine

energy.

Unfortunately, the theme of feminine energy has reached the public domain as a form of advocacy. Clearly, advocacy has its merits, but its focus must go beyond the traditional debates on human rights alone.

One example of this relates to the whole debate on gender equality and its spiritual dimensions.

First, nobody who claims to be in the spiritual path will be able to attain higher levels of consciousness without the self realization of his or her own feminine dimensions. The same applies to the masculine dimensions of life. Masculine and feminine energies live in union to each other, like day and night. This requires to go beyond simplistic debates on gender equality, and must be brought into the spiritual realm, so that it touches the bottom line of our existence and, in the end, shapes the fate of humanity here on Earth.

Second, the imbalances that we experience between our feminine and masculine energies –key dimensions of our spirituality-- must be reconciled before we expect to become peaceful,

compassionate, loving, happy, holy, and healthy.

For example, the source of peace and happiness is ultimately a state of the mind, a state of the soul, and a state of the spirit. These states cannot be clouded by a life existence that stops the needed balance that must be attained among all forms of energies defining our ultimate existence. The ability to be peaceful requires each of us to live in our full expression, in our full totality, and this certainly includes the feminine dimensions of our lives.

But to be holistic in addressing our energies, including our feminine energy, we must embrace an all encompassing principle that would organize all our dimensions. This is where spirituality plays a fundamental role as it gives the ultimate sense to the vast comprehensiveness in our lives.

This balance should not be discounted in importance. We know that the ability to be healthy these days must start by recognizing that diseases, illnesses, and the like, are simply the outcomes of energy imbalances in our lives. And, thus, embracing fully our feminine and masculine energies has to be an integral part of a healthy life.

We need to create a manifesto, and seek the support of every one so that the conditions to reawakening our feminine energies are materialized. This manifesto must become the depository of the real foundations for the reawakening of, and the reconnection with, our feminine energy and all forms of life in the planet.

A society without a human foundation for peace is not a society at all. And we cannot conceive a holistic human foundation of peace without a systematic integration of feminine energy in all aspects of our lives. This process of reconnection will become the renaissance of a new paradigm of inclusion, and not of exclusion, and of coalitions for peace and happiness and not just coalitions of self-interest.

Sustainable peace in the world will not be attained unless the feminine is fully developed in our personal lives, in our professions, and in our interactions—business, political, institutional, economic, physical, and cultural— within the container.

Many people are attributing the existence of conflict to the boundaries we are putting on the feminine in our lives. This situation leads me to address the importance of women in all forms of life.

Today, there is really major discrimination against women. This is simply neither acceptable nor morally right.

It is not acceptable because it is the women who embody one of the most fundamental energies of life. And a world without the full expression of this feminine energy implies that our existence will always be truncated. In short, discriminating against women is de facto to arbitrarily limit human evolution in all its dimensions (e.g., both the human and natural dimensions). And this constraint translates in practice into social instability, incoherence, debilitation of our social fiber, conflict, and war. Discrimination against women often involves the rejection and denial of all that represents the feminine, whether it is people of color, other non-human living beings, and the natural environment.

Denying and limiting the expression of the feminine not only hurts women but also men. Rejection of the feminine energy in men makes for a grotesque characterization of masculinity, masculinity and thus manhood that is violent, individualistic, and incapable of empathy and compassion. Masculinity defined as against the feminine limits the potential spiritual and human development of all men. It sets men against other men, against women and against nature. It makes impossible for men to

care, to recognize interdependence, to develop the compassion necessary to put into practice the spiritual laws that would heal the world and bring inner and outer peace.

The debate on gender must be embedded in the realm of our personal and collective spiritual evolution.

Focusing on gender and spirituality is to focus on our own total and holistic existence. Is to recognize what actually determines the real fate of life on this planet. It is to reconnect with the most profound cosmic and divine aspects of our lives, no matter if you are physically (materially) a man or a woman.

Focusing on gender and spirituality, and on the essential role of unfolding the feminine energy embedded in our existence, makes us all transcend to higher and higher levels of consciousness. The enfoldment of the spiritual dimension begins to discard a large number of outdated and superfluous norms and standards that have dominated this world for too long.

However, any understanding of the synergies between gender and spirituality has to go far beyond the numbers we are used to calling upon regarding jobs, salaries, and positions, notwithstanding the

practical importance of them all.

A debate on gender and spirituality has to be sought as a way to recover and rediscover our holistic self, united with the magic of life on Mother Earth.

A new debate on gender and spirituality has to become the most effective means to go far beyond a number of problems that look to us so intractable, including, for example, those debates around poverty, discrimination, human rights, transparency, governance, and sustainable peace. Such a debate must become a reawakening and a redirecting of the huge potential of feminine energy to find unique solutions to today's problems.

A debate on gender and spirituality has to become the gate to the humanization of economics, business, and all professions, and the humanization of decision making everywhere in the world. It is here where, for example, the reconciliation between economics and spirituality must pass through the humanization of economists, and the humanization of economists will only happen if their feminine energy is honored to its fullest extent.

Turning to Mother Nature, I would like to point out that in nature

this balance is in its full expression. Nature and Natural Law bring to perfection the unfolding of life in each and every aspect of evolution. All of this manifest through beautiful and deeply meaningful colors, shapes, forms, and sounds. It does not take much for mother bird to nurture her chicks and father bird to protect the nest. The magic of the pollination process between bees and flowers shows us how genetic planes of different origin help each other in a chain of beneficial interactions. It also shows that there is no differentiated intelligence; that is, nobody considers the bees more intelligent than the flowers, or vice versa.

Feminine energy not only is the nurturing force of life but also is the foundation of coherence in a totally diverse natural and human world.

In our spiritual evolution we must master the intricate dimensions of feminine energy so that we can advance to higher planes of spiritual existence. Feminine energy is a current that transports us to the most subtle aspects of transformation. It brings softness, lightness, and receptiveness to all we do.

Being void of feminine energy is to be condemned to war, conflict,

violence, and diseases.

Peace and feminine energy are written on the skies of humanity with the same ink!

EXERCISE

Let us learn a useful contemplation on feminine energy and life. Think that you are in perfect balance. Think that all your energies are of high quality and in total harmony with each other. Rejoice in this harmony and shower yourself with all these energies. Feel how they heal you deeply and how peaceful you become.

Move into the opposite spectrum and eliminate your feminine energy. Block it and leave it out of that world. See whether you can still maintain that balance and coherence. Most probably it will not be possible to be in peace and harmony.

Meditate about life, honor life in all its dimensions. See life everywhere and in everyone.

-----Spirituality Is Extremely Simple
Law 6 - The Law of Simplicity
Chapter 8-----

This law states that spirituality is simple.

Equally so, to attain peace, love, compassion, justice, equality, etc., is also simple. It is us, our level of collective consciousness that makes things complex and, most often, complicated.

Similarly, the different forms of spiritual education tend to be too complex for their understanding and integration. The key characteristic of the Great masters is that their teachings were extremely simple. In my own experience, all my teachers have or have had a very simple language that penetrates to the most subtle levels of my existence. I often went to them and shared with them what my mind saw as very complex and difficult realities, while their responses were a few words so easy to embrace and these were words that dissolved every edge in a few seconds.

I never forget when I loaded onto Rising Sun a huge amount of frustrations and problems I was being affected by in the early 1990s. He listened for about 45 minutes while driving from

Iowa to Kansas. Then, he suddenly pulled off the highway and looked at my eyes very seriously and said “Alfredo, you are being drowned by your own values and belief system”. It was like a cold shower, so clear, so evident, and so impacting, because, it was certainly the case. After that simple statement, my heart healed, expanded, and calmed deeply into its emotional existence.

I have the same experience when doing spiritual therapy with someone. For example, a person that comes with huge problems and with a very complex and bitter view of life. I feel I was effective when in only one or two words the person understands (makes a ‘click’) and goes to the real centre of her existence.

As an example, and a personal experience, it is not less important the ways many religious leaders interpret the sacred books, like the Bible, Koran, Vedas, Torah, etc. Some, gives messages that are extremely convoluted and do not add any more understanding than those who are simple, to the point and give messages that are really transformational.

In some ways, the simplicity is correlated with the level of self realization of what is being taught. Those who are realized beings tend to really go deep into the ocean of our lives and

souls throwing just a little pebble that leaves no ripples to worry about. While the less self-realized throw huge stones that splash our hearts and feelings for many days.

Some teachers like to make out of spirituality something complex so that the students or disciples have to climb high to get where they are supposed to be. Or, they are strict disciplinarians, and teaching is full of steps to follow, rules to obey, etc.

That is not spirituality.

The great dimension we are to understand and to understand as soon as possible, is that we come from simplicity and will have to go to simplicity.

I would adventure to say that we do not attain many of the values we preach, like world peace, because we have completely lost our inner simplicity. We see so many negative things on others, we are so suspicious of others, that one never is able to attain peace.

Complexity in our mind means the loss of “innocence” in our soul. This loss of innocence limits our spiritual understanding

of most teaching, like meditation and yoga. Some people express this dilemma as one where we enter spirituality with the brain and not with our heart. Why? The idea is that our brain is complex or creates complexity and our heart is simple and creates innocence.

I remember sharing some thoughts with my parents in relation to The Sermon of The Mountain. The first major statement that is attributed to Christ in this Sermon is holy are those who are poor of the spirit because they belong to the Kingdom of God. This is not an exact quote. I always asked myself, How come is it possible that someone who is poor at the level of the spirit could become part of the enlightened and holy beings? Well, this is not to mean poverty as we define material poverty in most cases. It means, holy are those who are innocent because they are most able to 'become' holy.

This is something to reflect upon.

Let me now turn to our professions as an example.

Perhaps, the above, has been the most difficult challenge in my own spiritual experience. I have practiced a profession where the

whole idea is to make things complex. And, the more complex you make them, the better you get paid, the fastest you get promoted, and the closest you are of a Nobel Prize.

In my own professional experience as an economist, I noticed that most people search for very complex solutions to the challenges we face today. These complex solutions often involve a disproportionate amount of material resources and, thus, they have proposed excessively expensive projects, coupled with large loans and significant debts. All of those grandiose things have led to promotions, salary raises, and fame. Thus, as an incentive to do so, strong efforts are made to maintain the complexity of the proposed economic and development framework and, then, accompany that framework with instruments that are difficult to use and with prescriptions that are complicated to sustain. Moreover, those who were supposed to be the beneficiary of those projects have not benefited much, and these complex solutions have little relation to the real problems faced.

Solutions are made complex because the people involved in decision making either do not see the simple solutions or they reject them for it may be contrary to their personal interests.

Often we construct complex solutions because we do not have a correct understanding of the problem at hand. The problem is generally defined based on faulty assumptions, premises, and an inappropriate use of values. That is to say, we create “frameworks” of beliefs, values, and data about the problem that reflect more the mental states of ourselves, or our particularistic interests, rather than the problem itself (reality). In other words, complex solutions are usually the result of a specific way of understanding of the problem and not necessarily related to what corresponds to a given reality.

To make matter worse, those who are able to see very simple and straightforward solutions are often ridiculed as simplistic or naïve. Sometimes the solution is simple and around the corner, but we either do not have the space, the capacity to see it or we reject it because it does not fit into our own understanding of reality. .

In our personal and spiritual lives we do the same.

My spiritual experience from counselling shows that there are very simple solutions to complex problems, even problems such as depression, drug abuse, and raping. Simple solutions

in the sense that it is much better to dismantle the conceptual framework, the causes and conditions of a given situation than entering into an analysis or to offering solutions that are not only ineffective but that create complex and difficult situations.

Furthermore, and knowing that innocence is at the core of simplicity, teaching contemplative techniques spiritual development, these yield much more effective and rapid results, when our rational being opens the way to our innocent child. For example, the use of mantras is extremely effective when the person associates that sound with simplicity and innocence.

In practice, however, it is very common to observe how we embrace mental constructs that do not correspond to reality and that often make it impossible for the person who believes in them to handle the problem it faces. Those mental constructs or frameworks that only see “complex” solutions are the ones that need modification and change. However we often are unwilling to change them, and then, maintaining them as fixed and non-changeable, we look for ways to address problems in still more intricate and complex ways. Let me share with you some examples.

The other day a young friend of mine came to my house for advice as he had serious problems with his father. In the middle of the session he stated that he was willing to do a lot of work to repair and improve this relationship. In fact, he stated his intent as his most important resolution that year. In that context, he made a serious request from me. He asked me for all forms of meditation, he requested mantras from me, and sought specific yoga and spiritual practices that could help him solve his relationship problem. In his own words, he was willing to climb that huge mountain in front of him. Given his own understanding of the problem, he wished a complex solution that involved a variety of spiritual devices that put together, he thought, would solve his problem. I decided not to go on with his request but decided to have a conversation with him about the validity of his mental framework, that is, the premises, values, and beliefs that constituted his understanding of the problem.

The first step was to change the complexity of his conceptual framework as it related to that relationship. It was too complex and full of nooks and crannies. Thus, we spent lots of time together unpacking and discussing the validity of his premises that ultimately led him to come to the conclusion that his framework was actually out of sync with the true reality he was

facing. Central to the complexity of his mental framework was the notion of “indispensability.” That is, the notion that his father was indispensable. The other notion was that of “omnipotent”; whatever his father said or did was right and unquestionable. From the examples he shared with me about his relationship to his father, I realized that many of the things his father did to him—that made him suffer a great deal—were questionable, at least in my book. We talked about these actions at length and he, himself, began to realize that his father was really trespassing on his privacy and his rights to self-determination.

Then, we dared to chat about the “need” or the “indispensability” of the relationship. I put him in many different situations and asked him whether the relationship is needed or whether it is indispensable. He began to shift from indispensability to need and realized that the concept of indispensability had left him in the open and at the mercy of whatever his father did, without limits. Of course, he created the space and the environment for his private life to be violated.

In the end he was convinced that he had to change the analytic framework of that relationship that he carried for years on his shoulders, with a great deal of suffering. That mountain on his

shoulders was heavy and difficult to climb. To climb it required lots of spiritual and mental 4-wheel drives! After this important “aha” happened in his mind and soul, I coached him on the ways and means to confront his father when he began to make him uncomfortable and suffer. It is my understanding that now the relationship is excellent. He now has a great renewed relationship and does not need any techniques or complex instruments. In the end, the situation was not a mountain, it was just a flat surface that was easy to walk onto and enjoy life.

Another example is from my own experience. A few years ago I went to see one of my spiritual teachers, Rising Sun. I arrived in Des Moines, Iowa, and he was there waiting for me at the airport with his old pickup truck, a Dodge Ram. He saluted me as he always did and told me that we were going to Kansas to do some important spiritual initiations. The trip was long and I used part of the initial time to complain about many things that were happening in my life: what was happening to me at work and all that stuff we often complain about and ask someone to listen. He indeed listened for like 40 minutes while driving, when all of the sudden he abruptly stopped the pickup truck in the middle of nowhere and said to me in no uncertain terms: “You are being drowned by your own value system. Your rigidity in holding on to

the values of what should be in your life is the main reason for the absence of inner peace.” He added, “All in life is subject to change or elimination.”

That was like a cold shower to me and a transcendental revelation that changed me for life. Of course, I have never forgotten this teaching. And, today, I see so many people holding on to their framework (being religion, politics, ethics, or morals) and, thus, having created problems for themselves rather than facing real ones. Most of the complex frameworks I have seen end up in very difficult-to-digest statements of what is happening to them in life, and often impossible solutions.

Another illustration of the importance of simplifying your view of life comes from a lifetime experience of a great friend of mine. One night, after dining out in a very good Mexican restaurant, she began to cry as I have never seen anyone before. And, naturally, I asked her why she was crying. She said that was the anniversary of the death of her father, a person who had died more than 20 years ago. Then I asked, why are you crying so much? She said that it was because she had killed her father. That took me by surprise, as I would have never thought she would have done such a thing. She was an incredible soul, pure

and really extraordinary.

I dared to ask her how the whole situation actually happened so that I would have some idea about her framework, the main cause of her suffering. She told me that at that time she took drugs and alcohol and that she used to arrive home at very late hours of the night. After one night she repeated this pattern, her father came to her bedroom, opened the curtains, took away the blankets and sheets, and began to scream at her and abuse her verbally and physically. She screamed and defended herself without major violence. But the whole debate was hot and intense. That afternoon, her father went fishing with a friend and had a heart attack while fishing and died then. Her conclusion was that she killed her father. That the reason her father died was due to the exchange they had that morning. In sum, that was her conceptual framework for more than two decades.

By the way, she also shared with me the tribulations she had gone through during this period, including not being able to sleep a straight night since then and the continuous failures of her relationships with men.

I had a very serious and explicit discussion on the possible errors

of that analytic framework that has been the major source of her suffering. I got to know that her father never took care of his health, that he was overweight, that many things for years could have well been the source of his death and not her exchange that morning. He was also Type A, intense and irritable, and thus he had accumulated so many things inside him that, in my very limited view, she should not feel responsible for his death. Who knows what actually contributed to that heart attack. It was not the first time they had had those exchanges, and probably he had the same exchanges with others.

I requested her to change this complex and inadequate framework. I also challenged her by saying to her, "For how long are you willing to continue suffering?" To which she answered, "Not anymore." I did some important healing and I brought her to her home. The next day she called me to tell me that it was the first night that she slept straight through. She is much more at ease. I worked with her to reconcile many aspects of her relationship with her father, and things are better now.

In the world of economics and business, the issue of faulty "frameworks" and "complex solutions" also apply. Think for a moment of one of the most urgent challenges humanity is facing

today: poverty. This problem could be solved in 24 hours if we honoured the above-mentioned spiritual laws. All of this without money and at very little cost to the collective. But we simply do not want to do it. There is poverty because we want it that way.

The other day I asked an entrepreneur from a country with significant wealth inequalities: How many families possess the key productive assets of that society? The answer was: “There are 12 families who possess almost everything, for practical purposes.” I am not contesting whether the number is 12, less or more or whether they possess 90 percent or more. If this were the case, then all the ailments of that society are their responsibility and they should provide the means to resolve them. Truly, that country should have no poverty. Certainly, it should not have absolute poverty. This nation could be a world heaven. But in the absence of a willingness on the part of the few to share wealth, and to provide all equal opportunities, then, these very same people in their efforts to seek solutions to poverty, construct very complex solutions which involve the impossible task of keeping making the majority of poor share wealth but without letting the poor sharing it. Complex solutions are impossible solutions. In fact, these complex solutions only worsen the problem.

By the way, the situation described above is not just in that country; it happens in many countries, and in the world at large.

The whole discussion up to here also applies to human health and the curing and healing of so many diseases. The simple solutions are out there, but we refuse to accept them; thus, medicine is a profession for the powerful and rich elite and does little to create a healthy society. One illustration of this issue related to the use of generic drugs and HIV/AIDS. In sum, I have the impression that this disease can be rapidly cured, but the human will of those who possess the knowledge and the power to do so is simply not there. Another example is related to the tremendous effort that modern medicine makes to block and discredit traditional medicine.

The same applies to peace. If you ask any negotiator of peace about the number and nature of the conditions to attain peace, you will find that the list is very long and complex. Thus, this becomes an arduous and an almost impossible process. Often, “peace” negotiators from one country ask such impossible conditions for cease fires and the end of violence from the other country that the picture one gets is that in reality not only the country they represent does not wish peace but seeks a greater

justification for more war.

In order to solve a problem, it would be easier, simpler, to change the faulty framework, the current definition of the problem, than accepting the present framework as given and seek a solution within that framework. It is really not the real problem that calls for complex solutions; it is the frameworks that we construct out of our own value systems and interests that complicates the solution and calls for complex solutions. The problem is often not the reality faced but the framework that defines it.

The same applies to the solution of many problems, including war and conflict and the attainment of peace. We only see the complexity of the problem and the rather super-complex solutions. Thus, we solve nothing and we never attain peace.

Thus, this is the great importance of the spiritual law of simplicity. The spiritual law of simplicity helps us deconstruct such frameworks, it frees us from premises, values, and beliefs that prevent simple solutions and limit our capacity to see reality as it is. By liberating ourselves from the prisons of faulty mental frameworks, we will not only open the road to solutions but clear our own path of human transformation and spiritual

development. By letting go of such frameworks we ceased to be an obstacle to the solution of problems that alleviate the suffering of others. In this way one could become not part of the problem and an obstacle to its solution, but one could participate in the solution. By helping making solutions simple, we actually solve human problems. By letting go of complex frameworks one is in closer contact with reality and the reality of others. We became enlightened in compassion, caring, and enlightened interdependence.

Simplify, simplify, simplify. This is the real way to healing the world and attaining global peace.

You are adding to peace things that do not belong there.

To attain peace is really simple.

Simple and little things may be central to healing the world and attaining world peace. These little things travel the infinite spiritual space with the speed of light and arrive at the places where these solutions are needed.

Using Lama Gangchen's teachings, to attain inner and outer

peace, just have a peaceful look, a peaceful touch, a peaceful thought, and a peaceful intent, and peace will be fertilized and enlivened everywhere.

Let us not engage in finding complex and impossible solutions.

Can you imagine the impact that one minute of silence all over the world, embracing peaceful thoughts, would have in healing the world and in attaining global peace? I am asking for just one minute among the trillions of minutes in our lifetime.

Can you imagine what would be the impact of an orchestrated peaceful contemplation of existing nature and the nature of us all over the world?

Those actions require no money; demand no material resources, nothing.

Only human will coupled with the right intent is needed to do so.

In attaining peace we have to go for the simplest actions we could perform, and perform them right now. If one is walking the complicated path, then, for sure, it is not a true spiritual path.

This law is needed because simplicity is tantamount to innocence, which, in turn, is essential to realizing the various states of being. This innocence opens the door to purity and to the realization of the fullness of emptiness. It becomes also the foundation of ethics and morals.

Finally, let me say that spirituality will become simple depending on the layer of action you are into. At the very gross level, to visit a library may become a nightmare. There are too many shelves and books to choose from. There are so many books that a person may decide to leave the library, either with many books or no books at all. To visit a supermarket may be a terrible experience as there is too much to choose from. When I went to the USA after suffering a great deal of goods' shortages in my own country, I was dizzy every time I enter a department store. There were too many things, too many smells, too many colours, etc. Too much!

If you entered at a more subtle level, where an intent, a desire, a special mission is to be accomplished, you may start feeling a different set of emotions and the relationship with that environment may be more effective. You go to a level where the diversity is less, the choices are less, and so on. You bring more

simplicity into that experience.

As you go to more subtle levels of existence, then simplicity tends to unfold and with very few elements at hand you may make very powerful and comprehensive decisions.

Thus, a move towards simplicity, and really enjoy true spirituality, one goes back recommending the experience at more refined and subtle levels of our existence.

In the end, this chapter is an appeal for simplicity in healing the world and in attaining global peace.

EXERCISE

Find a very empty place, a room or any similar environment, a place where there is only your little mat to meditate in silence, a simple place in total absence of any material reality. Meditate the way you know how. Be aware of the so many thoughts and ideas that come to your mind in that place of simplicity. The great sages go to caves and isolated places to be surrounded by “nothing.” And by being surrounded by nothing, they attain everything.

Then go to a far away place in nature, where you will see millions of things, colours, shapes, live entities, etc. Sit down again and meditate, and you will experience in that infinitely full and diverse place the nature of total simplicity. In this simplicity meditate about world peace. See peace in everyone, in every action, and in every aspect of our human existence. Become one with your inner peace.

-----The Road to Peace and Enlightenment Is Exact

Law 7 - The Law of Exactitude

Chapter 9-----

This law states that healing the world and, thus, attaining peace through spirituality is a clear, precise and, exact, process. It is not a just wishful thinking. While any spiritual experience is rooted in one's own mind, body, and soul, spirituality is not something that is infinitely malleable at will, elastic, and subject to ever-changing personal opinions.

If we accept the definition of spirituality as the knowledge, instruments, and practices that lead us to find our mission here on Earth, in many respects spirituality must be exact. This is to say, the Great Beings who allowed us to come back into human existence will not send us with no road map, to get lost and to go around in circles. On the contrary, our mission has very specific elements and concrete ways to get where we are supposed to go.

We already have clear evidence of the exactitude I am trying to convey in this chapter. One is the fact that you came as a man or a woman. This is exact and it is supposed to be the

most effective and infinitely intelligent way to self realize your mission. Make no mistakes. The same applies to the fact that you chose to become part of a black or white family; rich or poor, etc. These are not random choices. And, in this sense, there is a precise way to get “there”, to “be”, and to “become”.

The same applies to all our spiritual and human values, or states of being.

The way to peace, love, and compassion is precise. Once you center on your mission and establish the nature and extent of your transformational process, the self-realization of peace is exact and not something that is simply at the mercy of one’s changing states of mind.

Many people think that the subjective nature (depends on the “subject”, us) of spirituality is synonymous with being imprecise or subject to all sorts of opinions. This opinion is based on the assumption that the material world and the sciences that observe and measure that world are considered more exact than those of the spiritual realm. The material world, the world we can touch, see, and measure is considered better as our point of reference, and as a model of exactitude.

But in many ways, this apparent objective measurement is also extremely subjective. In some of my seminars I ask participants, which is the most objective science of all. The majority of people say it is either mathematics or physics. Then I ask them, why this is so. On mathematics, they often respond: because one plus one is two and there is no other possibility. On physics, they make reference to matter and that one can see and touch it and there is no confusion.

Well, is it so?

On mathematics, we know that the only reason why one plus one is two is because we have an agreement on the meaning of 'zero' and 'infinity'. If there were no conventions on those two elements, one plus one can be anything you may think about. On physics, it is important to acknowledge the findings of quantum physics, one of which states that the ultimate source of matter is non matter.

Isn't this interesting?

Another aspect of these initial reflections about this law is the fact that exactitude is often equated with someone being

inflexible, unchangeable, and rigid. But, we know that nothing is farther from the truth. Thus, in the realm of spirituality it is better to talk about discipline than inflexibility. We know, for example, that many of the religious and spiritual congregations around the world have their spiritual disciplines and, in the practice of these disciplines, there is a lot of exactitude.

Yet another phenomenon in this area of inquiry is what I call spiritual shopping. This is a situation where one practices a little bit of this spiritual principle, then one chooses another, and so on. Never deepening to find the peace and love within one's self. The person takes one weekend of tarot, the next for meditation, and tomorrow Reiki or tai chi. And so on and so forth. This is not always a good strategy, unless one sees the universal and complement from among all of them.

Let me use an analogy here. Assume that we are trying to find water from the ground aquifer. If you drill one centimetre here and another centimetre there, you will never find water. In order to find water, one needs to drill deep and be faced with hard rocks, with tough dirt, and much more. It is hard work, and this requires knowing well the ultimate horizon and the process through which you will get there.

Lately, and maybe it is the signs of the time, I have experienced many people who love to redefine spirituality to fit their own convenient life and state of mind. I have seen endless discussions where one or more of the discussants would state, for example, "this is my spirituality; you have your own spirituality." These statements are often made to shield and justify one's ignorance (I do not mean it in a pejorative sense, because most of the time it is a reflection of inner insecurity), to push a personal point across, or to resist inner transformation. Such practice has nothing to do with real spirituality.

The most assertive ones would suggest today that even the term spirituality is out of fashion and, thus, it would be better not use it, as if the spirit were subject to the ratings of the market. This happened to me at a meeting in the United Nations a couple of years ago, where some in the audience criticized the theme of my presentation – Spirituality and the UN. Often spirituality is identified with morality, ethic or religion and, therefore, some people are seeking a new term to define this process.

In the late 1990s I had the most powerful experience of the law of exactitude. At that time I began to have a series of spiritual and daily life encounters that were not of my making. Many of them

were very difficult and they became a great source of suffering for me. As I decided to interpret the situation, my suffering was mainly caused by the loss of spiritual ground. Everywhere I went I saw conflict, or conflict was created around me. Even on very little things like taking a taxi. Without saying much, except where I wanted to go, the driver will insult me because of something that had nothing to do with me (may be another driver was not doing the job right close to his car). Or big things, like experiencing very deeply the suffering of humanity.

This experience, which lasted nearly three years, was what a great spiritual older brother of mine would call the dark night of the soul.

As I begun to understand better my spiritual experiences, I realized then that it was like peeling an onion until the last possible skin had to come out. And then it left me there to experience emptiness in its entirety. In many ways this was my experience of the state of faith. Not faith in something or someone. But, it was the result of total 'detachment'. This experience of faith unfolded when the last peel of the onion was taken away from me.

In relation to this law of exactitude and of the above experience, a couple of things are worth noting. First, until I became fully aware of my path to the self-realization of faith, it was impossible to advance steadily in my spiritual transformation. It was not a path subject to too many options, notwithstanding the fact that my free will and ego could and did make decisions, some of them, I must say, the wrong ones. Second, the exact path and instrument for the self-realization of faith was for me total detachment. Again, it was not just any other instrument.

I am sure there are many ways to attain the state of faith. But it is essential to know the right way for you, as it is completely related to the nature and scope of your mission, and to the need to stay on course until the end of the life process. Dig deep and you will find your eternal well of peace, joy, and happiness.

For us to heal the world, we have to generate a global consensus on some instruments and processes that are to be followed. To think that any path will do and that we are to wait for each of us to do whatever we want are all tantamount to doing nothing. Too many options are tantamount to no options at all.

Healing the world is in your hands and it is something you have

to do in systematic and relentless ways. If you are Catholic, you do it the Catholic way. If you are Jewish do it the Jewish way. If you are Muslim, do it the Muslim way. If you are Hindu, do it the Hindu way. If you are Buddhist, do it the Buddhist way. And so on.

You are a doctor, do it the doctor way. You are an economist, do it the economist way. You are an entrepreneur, do it the entrepreneur way.

In the end, however, it will all hang from your ability to know your spiritual path and mission. If you are on your path, it will never collide with any other path because your path is part of the Great Plan and, thus, it is perfect, unique, and the right one at the personal and collective levels (see the last two chapters of this book).

The way to peace is there and it is not fluffy. There are many ways to peace, but there is one for you, as a unique musician of the orchestra of life. That path is exact, it is well defined, and it must be self-realized.

EXERCISE

Practice the following meditation: think about being in a situation where you are at a crossroads. In front of you there are millions of roads you may decide to take. Contemplate on each of them. Think about moving ahead. As you get closer to the great fork in front of you, you will begin to see the names of those roads. One will say "Peace, 3500 km." Another will say, "Peace, 1 km." Choose the latter one and drive toward peace. Observe everything you find in that kilometre. Touch, feel, see, smell, and hear everything. Feel how peace welcomes you using an exact road toward it.

-The Most Effective Way to Enlightenment Is by Servicing Others

Law 8 - The Law of Service (Seva)

Chapter 10-----

One of the fastest and most effective ways to spiritual self-realization (enlightenment) is through service to others. In India, this is called “Seva”. Seva calls for a genuine (intention) dedication of one’s life to the service of others.

One reason for the power of Seva is its own meaning as well as the relationship it has with the other laws we have identified here. Most particularly with the Law of Interdependence. It is the self realization of interdependence that makes Seva essential to our collective future and to the expansion of our collective consciousness. Otherwise service to others has no real meaning.

It is not just another form of service. This is why it must be done without any form of attachment, not even the attachment to acquire a higher level of spiritual growth!! It must be totally selfless, something not easy to do. This is particularly important also in the relationship between teacher, Guru, Master and Disciple.

Seva is not a physical or emotional thing. It is a core spiritual practice, and the one who does not perform Seva in his life time will have a major problem to advancing in the realm of spiritual transformation. Seva is a spiritual instrument and practice. Serving the other, or others, is in itself acknowledging the importance of others in our own spiritual transformation.

Seva can be done not only in relationship to other human beings, but also in relation to other living beings and holy beings. Thus, our service to animals and nature is of great importance. This is not only my conviction but my concrete experience in this life, as I devoted a lot of time to that form of Seva and know how much it helped the animals and myself spiritually and otherwise.

There is also Seva for the world as a well defined material and spiritual entity. Our container also comes and is spirit. Nothing is void of spirit, whether we realize it or not. In some ways, this book represents an attempt to do so.

In my own experience, because of Seva I have been benefited by more knowledge, more understanding of the Self, and of the different ways we may have to nurture the different values of life, in all forms. One of my teachers revealed to me that the

essence of my navel Chakra, and my capacity to develop that Chakra depended on my relationship and service to others. It is as if the foundation of my knowledge and capacity to learn is embedded in others.

We acknowledge our different forms of connectedness with all forms of life in this planet as well as in every galaxy. This means that we are able to create important positive external effects in peoples' lives as well as in all forms of life. This is essential now when so many aspects of our lives are being harmed left and center.

In everyone's mission there is an intrinsic and unique form of Seva. This is simply from the fact that our mission has a collective dimension, and the fact that it fits within a collective existence. Proper seva develops our abilities associated to inner non-attachment. In some ways it has to do with the notion of "samayama", which I learned in my studies and practices of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. It is a form of observation, witnessing, being part and non-part at the same time, being non-judgmental... when we relate to everybody and everything.

Seva is not an add-on. It is a dimension, a part of, a characteristic of all we do in life. We cannot do seva on Sundays and destroy its

essence the rest of the week. This is a self destructive duality and a major error of our intellect. We detach in servicing someone, while we attach dearly to money and business. This is a total contradiction in life terms.

The other day I met a young fellow who seems to be a very tough cookie, as Americans would say. He told me “I do not do any work that is not for money.” I did not ask him why. I did not want to listen to the same arguments I have heard in my career for so many years in a world where money is everything.

I did feel like asking him this question: “How much is nature charging you for sunlight? How much money are we being charged for the mountains, the waters, the winds, and the air you benefit so much from?”

It seems that there is an asymmetry between what we do for money and what others do for us totally free.

Let us not go too far from our present reality as human beings, so that you do not feel this chapter started in too esoteric a manner.

How much did you pay your mother for carrying you during nine months of pregnancy? How much did you pay for your mother's milk? How much money did you pay your mother and father for the eternal nights they had to be with you while you were crying or ill?

If money is the sole source of motivation to take actions in life, we are in trouble. Money and material compensations must not be our only motivating factor in life. No doubt that everyone needs money, given the economics we practice today. In fact, we could do very few material things without money, and I, as an economist, know this very well.

But, shall we put the destiny of peace and prosperity at the mercy of money and material wealth and instruments? Shall we wait until we have enough money to work and contribute to the healing of the world and to global peace? How much money is enough?

I am not sure how to address the latter question here, except to repeat what I have said here more than once, from the very beginning, that you will not be able to buy peace in the supermarkets, and that there will be no level of material wealth

that will bring you peace or security. Peace is not a thing. It cannot be purchased for a price. The more we think that the road to peace is to be measured in money, the farther away we will be from attaining and realizing peace.

Why then is service (Seva) so important? And why is service different from money or any other form of capital to attain our goals and aims?

To do service unpaid and with the sole purpose to help humanity and our cause of peace is the most important determinant of our inner and outer human transformation. Our peace efforts, manifests itself from our inner human will. It unfolds from a different intent and forms of other material transactions. If profits, income, and rents emerge from material capital, peace emerges from an inner human capital, a peace capital. This kind of capital is different from all other forms of capital.

A few years ago, in the world conference on volunteers, I advanced this concept of “volunteer capital”. I suggested this concept as a way to define and recognize that most of what actually is happening in our lives and in the world is knitted by the human will of millions of people.

At the core of development, cooperation is the need to address the issue of peace and incorporate into the peace processes those strategic actions that tackle its root causes as well as those that deal with its manifestations. In almost all societies the most basic of all human dimensions is to help your neighbors. To attain peace, we must help each other in many and useful ways. Let us not be victims of individualism and materialism.

Research on the so-called social capital (human interaction in development) has shown that the increase in human voluntary interactions has great impacts in alleviating the poverty of the poorest. It also points to impacts on social stability and cohesion during moments of conflict and despair. This social capital is made of institutional arrangements—formal or informal—networks, traditions, and cultural values and beliefs. Social capital centers our human existence in the process of being, of becoming, and not in having.

Volunteer capital encompasses will and mutual trust and has a pronounced public good character, and it accumulates benefits to all. It is also a form of inner and outer empowerment: those who lack power and tangible economic assets are given a more level playing field. It is amply recognized that volunteering

promotes the concept of collaborative action, a foundation for the strengthening and development of civil society, which is essential to pave the road for global peace.

On the field of development, we are now moving to the concept of “empowered development.” This is a new form of development whereby we should be able to form an effective and fraternal web of human interdependence, and also a form of self-engaged, totally owned process at all levels of decision making.

Service helps us become aware of the contributions of others and nature, it humbles us, it motivates us to share, to reciprocate, and to be at par with the flow of love and caring for all. Service allows the expansion of our loving capacity, it opens up our insight, and it is a direct path towards enlightenment. In service, we became at one with others and with God. Service to others is the best way to be an agent of change and to service our process of spiritual transformation.

Service towards peace is the greatest expression of service.

Be fully aware that if you serve peace, peace will serve you.

With the same token, heal the world by servicing that cause, and the world will heal you.

These are difficult statements to make, particularly for many who are embedded in what they call “reality.” In this context, I have been told several times, “be real,” as if peace will demand huge amounts of material resources to be attained.

In a world of individualistic, competitive, and materialistic values, to see peace at the end of service may be seen as an impossible path. But in my view this is the only path. Money will many times contaminate peace and the processes toward peace.

EXERCISE

Let us meditate on servicing peace. Sit quietly somewhere in your house or in any place you may find calm and silence. Look around you and see what is the most important thing or element in your life. Identify and select the essential ones, those with whom you will never be able to live without. Think, for example, of air, water, and space. You simply cannot live without them, and yet they come to you via the tremendous work of the Creator and Nature at every step of your transformation.

Then, go and meditate on service in the middle of a natural park. See the beauty around you of nature, animals, and scenic views for which you pay nothing, do nothing, and benefit immensely. Think about how important your servicing of peace will be for those who suffer from conflict and everyday instability. Find practical ways for you to give, give, and give again and again. Embed your self with the happiness and joy you will bring when the world attains global peace. When you will visit every corner of the world, and find that you are standing on peaceful grounds.

---In the Realm of the Spirit, Nothing Is Wasted

Law 9 - The Law of Diversity

Chapter 11-----

This law states that in the realm of the spirit, nothing is wasted and that all, in its infinite variety and diversity, forms a holistic and very strong union.

It is essential to understand that uniformity is not part of the spiritual paradigm. Therefore, in its infinite manifestations—material and non-material—everyone and everything has its place and contributions to make. At the material level, the spirit, our consciousness, manifests at the gross level of our existence. As it manifests, it unfolds many shapes, colours, textures, and sounds.

You are a melody and I am another melody. Nobody and nothing is equal to anyone else or anything else.

Thus, every aspect of life manifests in accordance with a Grand Plan. Nothing is random. Everything that manifests happens in relation to our personal and collective missions (see the content of the next two chapters where these issues are expanded).

All manifestations are perfect and are necessary. Thus, diversity is essential to healing the world. Healing the world requires an immense variety of beings, things, and situations. And peace will manifest also as a result of this diversity.

This is why it is so perverse to see that some people in the world would like to see one colour, one shape, one texture, or one of every possible situation. And they fight against diversity in the most sophisticated ways. This is a recipe for human disaster, because diversity is a source of strength. In particular, if one observes the laws of nature, we will see that a forest is an infinite collection of tree varieties, bushes, shrubs, grasses, etc. In forestry management, this is often referred to as the socialization of different varieties. In the seventies, foresters discovered that the strength in hardwood types of trees (e.g., Oak, Alamo) was mainly the result of bushes, shrubs, and grasses around the trees. This discovery was apparent when the results of the first single-tree-type plantations came to fruition, after 30 to 40 years of investments. The harvested trees failed the chemical as well as the mechanical tests of strength. In addition, this diversity is a form of protection and, thus, when one variety of tree gets infected, the surrounding shrubs help protect the other trees so that all the other trees may survive in the forests. Contrary to this,

in single-tree-type plantations, the infection of one tree means the destruction of the whole forest.

The above-mentioned natural phenomenon is also present in the process of raising animals. We are witnessing this with the bird flu and mad cow disease.

To return to peace, it is important to restore this infinite diversity in all aspects of life on this planet. Peace will not result by the elimination of one race, colour, and shape or form. On the contrary, this desire for uniformity is the principal reason for conflict and for the rapid spread of such conflict.

To heal human beings with traditional forms of medicine demands a great variety of plants and animals. Each of these varieties embodies some dimension of curing and healing. If we reduce the plant and animal kingdom to zero diversity, curing humanity of the many diseases will be impossible. Similarly, if one contaminates the air, water, and soils, these medicinal plants lose their capacity to heal and cure people.

Rising Sun, one of my Lakota spiritual teachers, would say that the solution to all my ailments was inside the radius within my

extended arms. And I often use that technique when I am in a difficult situation. I stop, open my arms and draw that circle, and then wait and observe. In almost all situations I find the solution inside it!

The same applies to healing the world.

The main source of conflict in the world is not diversity but the boundaries that some people create around diversity, or the interpretation given to each one's nature here on Earth. Thus, these boundaries are the problem. The causes of these boundaries are related to culture, politics, economics, religious beliefs, and more. The need to create boundaries is so pronounced that humans built the Great Wall in China, the Berlin Wall in Germany, and now several other walls are being created to protect uniformity.

In the world of shapes, colours, forms, or sounds there are no boundaries. There are infinite numbers (shades) of blue or red as they move into the existence of other colours. The same applies to the other dimensions of life. Can you imagine our human body going for uniformity and deciding not to have cells of only one type? Can you imagine if the body decided that all organs, cells, and any other particle had to be round in shape? Can you

imagine if in your garden you had only one variety of plant with one type of flower and a single colour all around you?

Peace is a harmonious process, not a uniform process. Peace results from becoming part and parcel of this harmony. Not your harmony or my harmony, everyone's and everything's harmony. Places that are not in peace are that way because they have lost this harmony.

It is difficult to have inner peace without the experience of this infinitely beautiful harmony of ourselves with our selves, and between ourselves and all beings in existence, both in the material realm and in the realm of the spirit.

This is an important point, as the harmony is to be attained with all beings in the material world and in the spiritual world as well.

The lack of harmony is the source of many illnesses and conflict.

Each part of your body is the expression of a given melody that melts with the melody of each and every organ of that body. There are thousand of organs and cells that are to live in harmony within diversity and without exclusion. All this diversity is expressed at

the gross, subtle, and very subtle levels of our existence. Diseases occur when each instrument of our orchestra is not in tune with the script of our individual life.

A great spiritual teacher of mine taught me about the language of nature, its sounds and its full configuration through sounds. It all makes sense as I experience those sounds and those states of evolution in my meditations and other spiritual practices. Some have stated that everything, every state, produces a sound, whether we hear that sound or not. This is one of the reasons that I have been told that the mantra OM was the sound Earth made when it was born. This mantra centers you with the sound and harmony of nature. I have also been told that the first sound of nature was AK, where the sound A represents infinity and K represents zero, all in a figurative sense. The sound A also represents infinite movement, and K represents infinite stillness. And between A and K everything exists and other melodies surface as the sound world.

In a recent dialogue with the Dalai Lama in the Vatican, an incredible young sound engineer explained to us that the culture and routine of the life we have adopted has mutated our capacities to listen to real interesting melodies and sounds of the subtle

and more subtle states of our reality. We tend to dislike and reject those melodies that are not part of our daily routine and culture. Thus, this young man put into play one of the greatest symphonies ever written, but put it backward, using electronic means. At the beginning the experience was odd, my ears were totally shocked, as I have never heard those sounds before. Then I realized that such an exercise was rapidly expanding the wisdom of my audition. It enriched me, and it created faculties that I did not have before.

The same happens with diversity and our capacity to be in harmony and peace with all the melodies that exist. The more you are willing and open to someone else's melody, the larger your capacity to enter into inner and outer peace. This is an essential message, as peace and diversity are part of a holistic and indivisible totality.

Recognizing the diversity of all life, allows us to value and learn from others who are different from us. It also makes us aware of others' contributions to my own life and our close interdependence. To be aware of the value and contributions of others motivates me to nourish to service that other and the diversity it represents. To value diversity makes us more diverse.

To recognize the diversity in the world encourages me to develop a space for inner diversity, the diversity of my own spirit. To value the diversity of others and of Life also makes me value my own. If violence results from the destruction of diversity, applying in my life the law of diversity makes me an empowered agent of peace.

EXERCISE

Bring to your life the notion that you are music and that you are a unique melody. This melody is to be played and, thus, maybe you should identify what melody is you, in relation to the ones you have heard in your lifetime. That melody that says to you, "This is me." Play that music and feel how harmonious you become and how centred you feel as the music is being played.

Then play the music backward. It is the same music but the other way. How do you feel then? Why is it that you sense a discomfort? Expand yourself and embrace it because it is you, it is your melody. Yes, feeling discomfort at the beginning is normal, as it is a little bit different to walk backward, though it is the same human body. Then put two different melodies at the same time and sit in between the two sets of speakers. This

exercise will greatly enlarge the wisdom of your audition in the long term. You will be subject to sounds your ears have never heard in the past. Then, and last, identify that melody that for you means peace. Play it every day if you can.

---Every Being Has a Unique Identity
Law 10 - The Law of Self-Identity
Chapter 12-----

This law states that every human being, sentient being, and holy being play a very well orchestrated role, and therefore all of us have a unique identity and mission in life. As our consciousness takes material form (more than once), this identity may also be found in each and every living being on Earth and, thus, form part of this organized order.

This identity is essential in defining the purpose of life and giving flesh to a major road map of each individual's life. It is impossible to be without being. Thus, being means identity.

War and conflict are the result of a major loss in self-identity or a deep fear of losing it.

- But what identity am I talking about?
- Is this identity a source of peace or conflict?
- Is my identity part of the solution or a major condition of the

problem?

-Why is having a unique identity a source of conflict?

As a spiritual adviser I very often hear the statement: I cannot just be myself.

As a citizen of the world, I also hear some nations saying we cannot be ourselves because this becomes a major source of conflict. What is happening in the Middle East is a prime example. Other examples of nations that have expressed such a concern are Cuba and China. There are others. As this is not a book about partisan or religious politics, it suffices to say that this inner anxiety of not having the spiritual and material space to be or become you is a huge source of suffering and conflict. Many people are willing to die for their self-identity and to protect their mission.

Thus, the road to peace is directly linked to healing yourself from the weakening or the loss of identity and to creating the conditions for this identity to be expressed among all other identities (the law of diversity, once again).

There cannot be peace without one's self-identity or the respect for the self-identity of others. Self-identity is an integral component of peace.

This above assertion has major implications for designing and identifying the necessary human processes and instruments leading to peace. Negotiations of peace must start with a serious meditation on, and a collective recognition of, the self-identities that are in conflict.

But self-identity, or the mission, may be misunderstood. Clearly it does not necessarily equate to the protection or defense of a physical territory, though in a few cases it may. Also, it is not necessarily the possession of a material thing. And it is not desirable to artificially create a self-identity just for political or religious purposes.

A true road map to peace demands that those involved self-realize the identity of others, without losing the identity of their own. Such a process necessitates that identity does not come at the expense of spiritual or material boundaries. Many people use their identities to exclude and differentiate themselves from others.

Thus, the self-realization of someone else's identity is not a trivial proposition, particularly when the said identity surrounds itself with millions of boundaries and forms of differentiation. In that case it is quasi impossible to become the other without losing your own identity. As a result of these boundaries, many of the peace negotiations fail all over the world, or are short-lived. The maximum they are accomplishing these days is to temporarily stop conflicts. But such a result is not necessarily peace.

This law of self-identity is violated almost everywhere. Think for the moment how difficult it is for indigenous peoples to maintain their own identity.

To restore this law of self-identity one needs to understand the frame of reference against which one is to embody or embrace self-identity. Thus, it may become important to talk some more about the frame of reference of our personal and collective missions here on this planet. Otherwise, there is no real (or acceptable) reference point against which one may judge the goodness of proclaimed identities.

The point of departure is an understanding of our mission on Earth, but within the context of our spiritual evolution

and transformation, both individually and collectively. The commanding element here is our spiritual evolution and transformation (the next chapter expands on some of the points made here).

Many people who are seekers of their own identity neither remember their mission nor their “terms of reference” (using a managerial jargon). They do not know why they are here, or what they are supposed to do here in order to continue their spiritual evolution. Thus, they are frustrated, they suffer a great deal, and they live in ways they know are not right.

Remembering your real mission has nothing to do with whether you are materially rich or poor!

If you know with certainty what you came here to do in this lifetime, then you will be very happy doing what is needed, even if it is to be poor, to suffer, or to give your life for the collective. You would be on the real highway of human transformation.

Why did you forget your mission?

There are many different reasons. Here are some examples.

One reason you forgot is related to the spiritual and material processes linked to incarnation in the fertilized egg, created by your parents. The adoption by your spirit of this material body is a very elaborate and intricate process, with imperfections and, at times, a lot of pain. To be in union of mind, body, and spirit is neither easy nor trivial. And it is in this process that a lot of the memory gets lost from the realm of the spirit.

All that happens in your mother's womb is also of essential importance to know, as it conditions your memory or lack thereof. What you hear from the outside, what your mother does or does not do, the language, volume, behavior, feelings, food and nutrition, etc., all affect your memory. The more demanding your material existence at those moments, the faster you forget in lieu of survival. If you have to fight against drug abuse, alcohol, cigarettes, and other stuff, the higher the probability of losing your memory of the mission.

Another reason for your memory loss is the act of birth (delivery). It is at that moment that you will become physically detached from any other being. This is a huge step in the process of material evolution. Your lungs will have to play a function, and so many other organs will too. You will have to understand your

surroundings and interact with them at all times. This might be another distraction away from your mission.

Yet another reason why we have forgotten the mission is because, over the years, we have reached a state of equilibrium at ever higher levels of toxicity (an issue this book raised earlier in another context). Medicines, drugs, cigarettes, eating habits, and inner thinking, and many other daily practices, are all a major source of toxicity. Because we are in some form of equilibrium, we believe we are “right” and within the “right path.” Unfortunately, this is not necessarily true.

But what happens when most people are indeed intoxicated in relation to many aspects of their lives?

This toxicity is a major factor in our loss of memory about the ultimate mission on Earth. With higher levels of toxicity we lose the power of our senses, the windows to the outside, and the quality of our wiring system to the inside. What we see is distorted, what we want is exaggerated; the roles that others play are seen as inferior or irrelevant to our mission, and the collective challenges and collective responsibilities are forgotten.

Another reason has to do with the fact that we live in societies that

are intoxicated as a result of the form of medicine practiced today. It is also because of the economics and business principles that are embedded in our daily practice. Because of the agronomy we use in the production of foods and the management of our natural resources. And because of the engineering and architecture that we believe are best to address humanity's management of space and time.

Finally, we have lost our understanding of the mission because of the education system and our experiences in life, all of which are major distractions away from the mission. This is not difficult to understand.

A great teacher of mine, Yogi Bhanjan, used to tell me that if I wanted to feel the presence of God (as a source of our mission) I should go to the area of the hospitals where they put the newborn babies. He stated that such a state is the nearest to the experience of God energy one could ever experience. Within this context, it means that this is the moment when most of them remember all, or a great deal of, their mission. Many of them are in pure spirit and possess a perfect road map to continue their evolution.

Yes, you forgot why you came here.

If you are genuinely aware of this memory loss, then you are very close to being able to reactivate and invigorate it. The fact that such desire is there within you, it means that you are very close to taking away the veil.

Many people spend all of their lives searching for their mission and never find it. In part, this is the case because their intent behind finding it is not the correct one. Let me illustrate. Let say that you are supposed to be the ruler of the Earth, but your ego is big and nasty. In this case, little will be revealed to you! The same applies to many other situations.

The maxima rule here is that you must prepare yourself to remember. Remembering is as much a process as it is an outcome. The process is, in many ways, an energy field you have to open up to, so that it enters you and you are capable of managing it. To illustrate this trivially, if God energy is like a huge hot fire and your soul is like a paper bag, to bring God into your soul will burn you out.

This maxima rule creates another important dimension of

human transformation:

“One needs to become the right container for the content one desires.”

To remember is an act or a state of reality that occupies space. Thus, the importance of the law of spiritual space! The size of the space is related to the nature and scope of the mission. Thus, these conditions must be created for the memory to be enlivened. Therefore, to remember means a very special process of human transformation of the container. It is not automatic.

One mantra that may help to expand capacity is “Muni Muni Maha Muni Shakhya Muni Soha.” This is a mantra Lama Gangchen taught me, and it is extremely effective. Muni is related to the several dimensions of capacity and the transformation of the container. I also teach another one, which is “Remember to Remember.” These are just illustrations, because there are infinite ways to stimulate that spiritual memory into your brain memory, so that it is translated in thoughts and words you can identify with. Borrowing from another paradigm, all the spiritual disciplines and contemplative practices of many saints (Santa Theresa of Avila, Saint John of the Cross, Saint Ignatius of

Loyola) will also assist you in remembering and in recuperating that memory loss.

Hopefully, while reading this chapter you may remember why you came here.

Life in a material human form is central to all processes of human transformation, in both the material and spiritual realms. It is also important to recognize the importance of life of all the sentient beings and nature. Life in a material human form is a key vehicle to our spiritual transformation, to our superior state of existence.

This is why we have to take care of our human bodies and to work diligently within our minds and souls. Sometimes, to find out our mission here, there is a need to transform the container in its entirety. The change in the container will have major implications as regards the way we see some of the most salient issues in our lives. For example, such issues as life and death, male and female, black and white, developed and underdeveloped, and many other social, economic, and human issues are part and parcel of this material transformation in a human form. Nothing much is left unattended.

It is also important to say something specific about all the other living beings and nature, understood as part of our holistic totality. All are part of the plan. All are part of the Great Plan of transformation. All living beings have their process of transformation too (their mission), and their transformation is essential to our own transformation as human beings. We are all interdependent.

This is something we must pause and reflect on. For example, for many people, it is not self-evident that animals have rights. But what are these rights in the end? They are a way to protect them so that they and all of us human beings are able to transform and evolve in the direction of our individual plan and the collective plan, all inclusive.

In the evolution of the spirit, all is coequal. There are no identities that are better or worse than others, if they are true identities in the way it has been defined here. This coequality is essential for the process of melting into the union of the personal and the collective. In the Master Plan there are no hierarchies that become destructive of one for the benefit of another form of evolution. This coequality is an essential principle of material and spiritual evolution. Borrowing from another paradigm, one

may be able to say that everyone and everything created by God is of equal value and equal intelligence. God would not create useless things that are here to be destroyed in some sort of game for life.

Everyone and everything is the best to occupy that space of life. Nobody and no one are to be wasted or restricted in their evolution. No personal identity or mission is to be crushed for the benefit of another. Thus, if you are here, you are perfect and you are the right person, the right animal, the right tree at this space and at this time.

Borrowing from another paradigm, every one and everything were made in God's image. Creation is perfect by definition. If creation were to enable irrational chaos to take place, we would have disappeared a long time ago. Why would Jesus Christ, Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, and many other enlightened beings come to this Earth to fulfill their missions? Why didn't they go somewhere else?

One reason, in my view, is the quality of this Earth to get the missions done, even the ones that are very superior and complex ones. The Earth also can house the evolution of high-level forms

of transformation. The Earth is a place of healing. It is a place of special forms of transformation. It is a place of sublime transformations.

Behind those realities is an important fact and an important rule of engagement in our evolutionary process. Specifically, there must be a total symmetry and coherence between the quality of material life (be aware I did not say the “quantity”) and the aims of the mission.

This is why environmental destruction is a major problem at this juncture in history. Not even technological change will be able to address this issue. The more we destroy nature, the more we handicap ourselves in our human evolution, in unfolding our identity, and in carrying out our mission. A low-quality environment means a vicious circle of self-destruction and incomplete missions that will have to be completed somehow. It will be either the Spirit or Nature who will respond to this situation. And we are witnessing lately all sort of natural calamities, wars, and conflicts. There is something more superior at stake when we pollute, destroy existing biodiversity, and so on.

Today’s human beings are not able to reproduce nature’s and

living beings' genetic codes of wisdom. I do not have the capacity to create an elephant or a Bengal tiger. Thus, their depletion is irreversible, and the elimination of these species means limited means to our and their evolutions. We have destroyed pieces of the road map as their identities and missions are eliminated. Needless to say, there are incredibly negative impacts of war and the killing of other beings in relation to our own evolution.

Therefore, our own identity and mission should only be defined in relation to our spiritual evolution.

However, because we have forgotten our real mission on Earth, we adopt other missions and reshape away our identity. Culture, values, and beliefs create for us a different identity than the one that is truly at the foundation of our spiritual evolution. We develop it, we defend it, we create conflict and wars to proclaim it, and we do much more to make sure every person is aware of our identity.

Most of the wars in the world are the result of missing identities!

Healing the world represents a process of recovering our true identity and mission, and since we are all in the perfect time and

space, we will see that our individual identity will never conflict with anyone else's identity. These harmonious reawakenings of our true identity will create the strongest foundation for world peace.

False identity leads to fundamentalism of all sorts. It leads to arrogance and hate. And they are a major source of world illnesses.

EXERCISE

Maybe an exercise to restore self-identity. Can you meditate on the identity and mission of the trees outside your house? Can you list the dimensions of that identity? Is it possible to see the synergies that such an identity has in fulfilling your own mission?

The people you see everyday, including the poor, homeless, and marginalized, represent mirrors of us. As mirrors, they appear in front of us to stimulate the inner wisdom of our memory, so that we finally remember our identity and mission during this lifetime. Our rejection or indifference toward them eliminates one important avenue to remember. Contemplate your attitudes when it comes to people you dislike or want out of your life,

and become more aware of their positive contributions to the realization of your mission. See how they could strengthen your identity as a process of sharpening the true values of your inner self.

---Spirituality Is the Reencountering with Your True Mission Meaning of Enlightenment and Spirituality

Chapter 13-----

Enlightenment is a totally natural state (a pathway) of our material human existence.

Enlightenment is not a complex dimension of our lives and, thus, it is important to create a transformational space so that one is able to embody within the soul the key messages.

Enlightenment is not a state or a path that only very few people can experience or attain. Nor is it the outcome of some form of retreating away from everyday life and obligations, as we see in the movies about gurus, monks, and others.

It is possible that the road map, and its instruments and components, toward enlightenment are in front of your eyes and yet you do not see or feel them. Maybe your enlightenment is manifesting in very simple yet meaningful ways, and you are not able to sense it because you are used to, or are in search of, something more complex or cherish an unduly complicated form of life.

Thus, it is important to create a transformational space within oneself so that one is able to perceive and incorporate within the soul the key messages of life. To open such transformational spaces (like a special energy vortex) may require that you read this chapter with your heart and not with your brain. Feel the messages within your soul and then open up to a simple way of getting enlightened.

If you ask around, you will find that most people would like to be enlightened beings within this lifetime, if possible. However, very few people know what this state (or experience) is all about, or how to express it. Thus, as a result, there is suffering, frustration, and anxiety.

Many say that enlightenment is some sort of a utopia, using this term in a pejorative sense: something that will never be attainable and, thus, why bother about it in the first place.

Others feel that it may be too hard to become enlightened and, consequently, it is better to live or do something simple and to “be happy,” and not to worry too much about praying, reciting mantras, being in silence, practicing meditations, going to

retreats, being in contemplation, etc. These are the practices frequently identified with the path toward enlightenment, and they are sought as a form of detachment from, or too much in parallel with, the everyday “realities of life.” Maybe yes, maybe not!

Some people are tremendously afraid of embracing the path toward enlightenment and to embody this state of human existence in its entirety, even though they may be at the doorstep of enlightenment. They do as many strange things as possible so that enlightenment does not even come closer.

A most common idea is that enlightenment is the luxury of the rich, concluding that the poor have to first satisfy their basic material needs and only then address issues of spirituality, enlightenment, and the rest.

This approach is based on a few incorrect assumptions. One is the assumption of a hierarchy of needs that assumes that human consciousness is an irrelevant intervening dimension in making decisions at the material level and, particularly, at levels of lowest material wealth. A second assumption assumes that our material and spiritual existence are two different, independent,

and, perhaps, non-complementary aspects in our lives. The third assumption is that individual enlightenment and collective enlightenment are two separate and unrelated dimensions. Finally, the assumption that one's enlightenment in this life has no relationship to my experiences in prior lives is also incorrect. Let us share some insights about each one of them.

In my view, the idea that one's level of wealth determines one's capacity to bring spirituality into one's life is a total misunderstanding of human life, whether one is materially rich or poor. Material wealth and spiritual wealth are part of the same spectrum of human life, and both are subjected to a superior objective to be attained; for example, happiness, satisfaction, and contentment. All of these superior objectives are states of being, and not states of having, doing, or knowing. And as such, these states condition the level of attainment and the outcomes of material needs and wealth accumulation. However, this is a subject that needs a more comprehensive treatment, and it is important not to deviate from the theme of today.

The misconception that material and spiritual life are two different and often antagonistic dimensions of one's life often result from stories of individuals who may have actually experienced

some or all the dimensions of enlightenment and, as soon as this transformation happens, they withdraw into quietness and silence, pristine forests, far-away mountains, and so on. Thus, the immediate tendency is to disconnect from society (e.g., noise, interference, pollution) rather than to integrate within it, the idea being that enlightenment requires separateness, protection from noise and other interferences, and a marked departure from everyday life. When stories of enlightened people are told or shown, they appear in isolated places, mountains, caves, and the like. Needless to say, this very unique state of our existence is often identified with living a monastic life, being celibate, and being a strict vegetarian.

But, you must know that enlightenment is an experience that occurs not in separation, in antagonism, or in isolation from daily life. Quite the contrary, enlightenment is an integral part of human experience. Enlightenment is part of life, in direct relation to daily experience. And as such, everyone may be enlightened in this lifetime. You can continue cooking, driving, working, mothering, teaching, farming, and doing a number of things that look like being away from enlightenment.

The false assumption that sees an apparent separation between

the paths toward individual enlightenment and the one leading to collective enlightenment needs further elaboration. Based on my own inner experience, I have come to realize that in today's world it is practically impossible to attain individual enlightenment without collective enlightenment or, at least, to be part of the process of collective enlightenment. They are totally interdependent and interconnected.

Moreover, my conception of individual enlightenment is that by definition, anyone's enlightenment must be for the sake of others and not for the sake of oneself. In fact, individual salvation is totally embedded in collective salvation. Individual salvation has no meaning without establishing the conditions for collective salvation.

If you were to ask the great enlightened beings why did they do what they did, and what were they willing to embody (such as death) in their path of enlightenment, they would have said: they were doing it for the other. Think about the lives of Christ and Buddha, and the lives of many others (for example, prophets, saints, and bodhisattvas) who understood that there is no duality between individual and collective salvation.

Spirituality is always about the other, it is about our collective self.

The last assumption which sees no connection between one's present life and our prior experiences requires further elaboration. As you may perceive by now, the core of this presentation has a subtle holistic conception of human life, which has to be made explicit now: the idea of reincarnation.

Simply explained, this is Life in its many forms, which expresses itself many times and within an infinite space of life manifestations and realities. For our purpose, reincarnation is not a concept or something that anyone should dogmatically reject or accept as true or false. You should just be open to the possibilities embedded in the infinite expressions of Life.

Evolution is not only present in our material existence as living beings. We also evolve at the level of the spirit, and our spiritual evolution is something real. In the ultimate, the only thing that matters is our spiritual evolution and transformation, both as individual beings and as collective beings.

These are two essential aspects of life that are to be fully

understood.

To start, the spirit (and our spiritual being) is a superior form of existence. This is the reason why it was your spirit who came into your body and not your body into your spirit. It was your spirit that came into the fertilized egg (or even before its material expression) and not the other way around.

Try to feel this for a silent moment.

There are several implications that come out of the above major statement.

- **First**, our life in the spirit or, to say, our spiritual existence, is constantly evolving. It is constantly transforming for the sake of itself and for the sake of others. Evolution and transformation at the spiritual level is there, it is tangible, even when we are in the confines of a material life. This transformation was there and will be there forever, ad infinitum. It is the nature of the spirit to evolve ad infinitum. It is a constant and an ever-changing dimension of our existence.

- **Second**, as in any form of evolution, be it material or spiritual, the

nature of our spiritual life is subject to all laws of evolution: unity, bliss, suffering, ups and downs, polarity, duality, and moments or stages, characterized by having to get unstuck from a given state of spiritual existence. It is like the need to get a rock out of your way.

- **Third**, it is also true that, to get unstuck and continue the process of spiritual transformation, something is to be done. This involves choices. In many ways, and for many souls, to get unstuck—that is, as the only way to the next stage of spiritual evolution—it means the realization of a particular state within its own spiritual reality (experience). Thus, this transformation will require remaining at the level of the spirit and being subject to a given experience that will bring the spirit to the next stage of its evolution. This is like getting rid of a spiritual rock from the highway of spiritual evolution.

- **Fourth**, in many other cases, however, the spirit needs to go beyond a given spiritual experience, within the realm of the spirit. In particular, to attain that next stage of spiritual evolution, one would require a specific experience in a material realm, either in a human or nonhuman form. Both of these forms are also subject to the laws of evolution. Thus, for the spirit to continue

within the path of evolution into higher stages, it will have to (do) carry out “something” in the material realm and, only then, go back to the spiritual realm and move to a higher stage of evolution. It is a process of transformation in the material realm for an evolution in the spiritual realm. Thus, for some spiritual beings, the only way to the next stage of spiritual evolution is to come to this precious Planet Earth.

- **Fifth**, in spirit, and before coming to the Earth, one knows what is to be done to get unstuck. For example, for some, this transformation on the Earth may demand the experience of compassion. For others it may demand attaining a totally coherent state of vibration with some part of nature.

- **Sixth**, whether a spirit has the opportunity to come to the Earth or not, this is an important dimension in itself. There are many souls in the realm of the spirit who know what they are to do but who are not yet given the opportunity to reincarnate. Within this context, and as expressed by many religions and faiths, there is the Supreme Council that ultimately decides about your next reincarnation into the material realm, as a human or otherwise. As it has been said elsewhere, “Many are called but few are chosen.” The Supreme Council is an important instance where

many issues are addressed regarding what one's mission is and when the mission is to be implemented, in addition to exchanges on agreeing to the fact that you are to do it.

- **Seventh**, once you realize that your spiritual evolution needs that “something,” within that realm your pure consciousness begins to vibrate, signaling the need or the desire to have the experience of that something. However, as your spirit wants the next stage, it is also true that there may be millions of other spirits who are doing the same for completely different reasons—different missions, i.e., the self-realization of that something.

- **Eighth**, it is only out of a decision by the Supreme Council that such a desire would be granted. It is like any contract, which focuses on when you are able to do the mission and under what conditions. Borrowing language from another paradigm, it is the nature of this contract that becomes central to what happens in the Final Judgment. Often, it is a very elaborate process of full awareness and a situation of significant dialogue with the Supreme Council that will end up yielding a clear road map. Then, this map is drawn and that mission or something is clearly defined and understood by you and the members of the Council. I was not afraid to call it a contract between you and the Supreme

Council. The exchange may end up with a decision that demands you take a human material form. Or that you have to stay stuck for a while, or that you take other forms in other “places” or in various states of reality. Borrowing from another paradigm, you may continue being either in Limbo or in Purgatory.

- **Ninth**, assuming that an agreement has been reached for you to go to this material realm, and in a human form, the next stage is one of full awareness in the choosing of your parents and siblings. Whether you are male or female, the eldest or the youngest, and many other possible dimensions are decided at the level of the Supreme Council. These dimensions are supposed to be the “optimal” ones for a rapid embodiment of your experience on the Earth.

It is possible that these dimensions and their critical elements may have been decided many thousands of years before the move to Earth takes place, as time in the spiritual realm is very different from the time within the material realm.

The most important thing here is that it was you who decided to come to Earth—in time and space. It is fundamental that you make an effort to remember the intent, the reason why you made

such a decision whether via praying, meditation, or any other instrument of integration you feel gets you the right outcome.

Furthermore, many people complain about: Why are they part of a given family? Why is it that they are born poor? Why are they in this or another country? Why are they men and not women? Why are they born white and not black?

This notion that it was we who decided to come here also has implications as regards our attitudes as human beings in relation to the nature of another human being or a sentient being. Because I am a man in this lifetime, for example, many people see this in me as the only label of who I am. Yes, I am a man in this lifetime, in order to be able to accomplish my mission and continue in my spiritual evolution. The same applies to every aspect of our lives (e.g., color, race, gender). But I could have been a woman in a previous lifetime, or will be one in a future one. Thus, we must be aware that the vehicle of transformation is not a matter to be judged by others, good or bad, right or wrong.

The above illustrations of the nature and scope of our spiritual evolution apply to all forms of spirits; it happens at any level of consciousness, even at the highest levels of consciousness.

This is to say, the spiritual evolution often needs a material experience, and the Earth is providing that experience for many of us. Borrowing language from another paradigm, this is one of the reasons why God created the Earth, and this is why Christ became man.

Many people who are seekers do not know why they are here, or what are they supposed to do here in order to get unstuck in the realm of the spirit. Thus, they are frustrated, they suffer a great deal, and they live in ways they know are not right. And remembering your real mission has nothing to do with whether you are materially rich or poor!

If you knew with certainty what you came here to do in this lifetime, then you would be very happy doing what is needed, even if it is to be poor, to suffer, or to give your life for the collective. You would be on the real highway of human transformation.

Also, I am particularly concerned about the arrogance of power structures, and decision makers within those structures, who disregard indigenous people and their knowledge, a knowledge that is central to remembering our missions. This is a knowledge that comes from Nature and the Divine, and it has been available

for millennia.

Enlightenment is to remember your mission, strategy and instruments.

An enlightened person is one who knows what is to be done here at the personal and collective levels. Enlightenment is not meditation, prayer, celibate living, being in silence, or following a certain religious path. This concept of enlightenment is a distorted and alienating one.

A carpenter (the reader may remember St. Joseph) may be an enlightened person if he or she knows that through that activity, or a pertinent one, is an instrument of the mission. A housewife (the reader may remember Virgin Mary), by taking care of her children, she may remember her ultimate aim of being on Earth at this point in time. A medical doctor may remember the mission by being in constant contact with life and death. An economist may be an enlightened being by embracing the values of love and compassion in the allocation of scarce material resources. An architect may encounter the mission and remember the path as she or he modifies our space and time.

It is essential that we become enlightened beings. We should know why we are here. We must become self-realized beings. To be a self-realized being means to do what you are here to do, to embody your mission, to be always within the boundaries of your mission.

What, then, is the meaning of spirituality? This is a term that has been widely used and misused. To avoid confusion, in my view, spirituality is not religion, although religion has a spiritual foundation. Unfortunately, it is not always the case that religions emphasize the spiritual dimensions and practices. Dogma seems to replace spirituality.

Spirituality is the path that a person or a group of people chose to remember their mission in this planet.

Spirituality belongs to the universal realm where everyone is included and nobody and nothing is excluded. Spirituality embodies a series of practices to go within and encounter the relationship between you and the divine within you. This is to say, to be in total union with your higher self and that of everyone else. Be completely aware—in bone and flesh—of your spiritual evolution. Spirituality is not some strange stuff that is

occult somewhere, or witchcraft as defined by the layperson. Spirituality is universal, exact, and simple. There is nothing fluffy about your destiny and mission. There is nothing arbitrary about all dimensions of your spirituality.

If we accept this way of seeing spirituality, we will realize that we make ourselves fully responsible for our actions. It makes one the active being and not the passive receiver of some state of evolution. In the language of another paradigm, I am responsible for my salvation. Salvation will not come randomly. But, as said before, I am also responsible for everyone's salvation.

As you integrate the above-mentioned ideas, you will find out that it is rather difficult to make generalizations, or for me to suggest to you ready-made recipes. While human transformation is a complex phenomenon, I cannot leave you here with no recommendations or, let us call them, hints. These hints are totally complementary in nature:

- **First**, increasing personal and collective awareness. We must form groups all around the world, to reflect and share ideas and possible activities regarding the safe passage of our individual and the collective destiny. These groups may be formed

tomorrow. There is no need for money, conditions, or any other excuse. The groups must be highly participatory, and coequality must be central to everything the group does. Form a group now, and remember to remember.

- **Second**, observing what seems NOT to be the mission. This is often easier to do or feel, as the path outside your real path creates illnesses of the body and the mind, depression, suffering, etc. Reflect on the negative impacts of war, conflict, poverty, devastation, trafficking of young women, depletion of the environment. None of these represent the path.

- **Third**, practicing instruments that have been proven to enliven your memory. This you know as when you need to remember you go into silence, for example. Others use music of a special type to remember. And there are many more instruments. The rule is to practice, practice, and practice.

- **Fourth**, observing full respect for nature and all living beings. This means treating them as coequal. Do not kill animals for the sake of it, or the pleasure of it. This runs counter to creating a space for the transformation of the container (ourselves). By destroying nature, we are destroying the content of life, and we

are obscuring the many manifestations of enlightenment that will enliven our lost memories.

- **Fifth**, having new eating habits so that you do not get intoxicated with diets that are very strong filters to remembering your mission. This is not to advocate becoming vegetarians or something else. This is not the point. The point here is that your vehicle—your human body—is to be taken care of. Also, I would like to state that if you need to eat animals, you must ask their blessings, if not permission, to eat them. This is very important, and there are many examples of the divine nature of such acts in religious sacred books, including the Bible, the Vedas, etc. Some people have to eat animals, but we must acknowledge their role and suffering as we kill them.

- **Sixth**, choosing to be with who you think is an enlightened being(s). If you do not have that possibility, reading their books, assimilating their thinking, embodying some of their experiences toward enlightenment, etc., are all excellent ways to remember. It is also proven effective to imitate enlightened people. In my experience, this is one of the fastest ways to your own enlightenment, because this imitation will enliven your memory!

- **Seventh**, understanding that economics and finance, and any other profession for that matter, are instruments of our enlightenment and, therefore, these activities should not keep us away from the true path. There are many ways in which they keep us away from the path: destruction of the family, massive consumption of nature, creating poverty, destroying our natural environment, leading media and communications away from our mission, creating violence of all sorts, etc. This demands the reconciliation of economics with spirituality, where spirituality must be understood in the above-mentioned context and not a thing full of dogmatism and arbitrariness.

- **Eighth**, enlivening your feminine energy, the energy of love, compassion, caring, sharing, bliss, and emptiness. The energy of motherhood and the caring for the collective. This is not the monopoly of those who have women's bodies. Having a woman's body in this lifetime is not tantamount to being a carrier of a lot of feminine energy. In the realm of the spirit, and in the world of energies, everyone holds feminine energies within themselves. Enlivening those feminine energies is essential to change human destiny and to enliven our memories linked to our mission.

- **Ninth**, learning about the meaning of shapes, colors, texture, and forms and seeing the differences at the most subtle level you possibly can. Remember that all that exist manifests through them, and thus, enlightenment does too! What is the geometry of your enlightenment? We all know that there are geometric figures we like more than others. Maybe surfing some sites that hold many symbols may help you to identify elements of your geometry. Look at those symbols you like most, or those you feel interpret what you are doing in life.

- **Tenth**, moving toward the self-realization of human values, like love, compassion, sharing, caring. You must become those states of human existence. Be closer to the poor, the needy, those who are disadvantaged. Be involved in group activities and observe the enlightened ones. Ask yourself which value do they truly embody?

As one gains real understanding of the mission on Earth, the realization comes that the distinction or duality between spiritual and material evolution, between our material life and spiritual life, is in many ways a false one. It is an error of the intellect.

From the origin and the destination, spiritual evolution and

material evolution are one and the same, manifesting in an infinite space of transformation. This chapter has separated them only to illustrate some of the dualities we live in, but also as a didactic way of presenting some important issues we face today.

As one is in union of the mind, body, and spirit, and as one becomes enlightened—that is, to know with certainty one's mission on Earth—then, all is one and one is all, and the outer is like the inner and the inner is like the outer.

I have always seen nature as an enlightened form of life. Unfortunately, nature has been greatly modified and depleted by human beings, with the consequences we witness today in both the human and animal kingdoms.

When I see that love and compassion of mother bird is a natural dimension of her mission—as she takes careful care of her chicks—I see a divine form of enlightenment. When I see a condor flying so high, covering the skies and watching over the highest peaks, I see enlightenment. There is little doubt in my mind that nature and the laws governing nature are the most powerful proof of manifested enlightenment in a material form.

All is as if everyone and everything in the animal kingdom and nature remember their mission. This is a reality that reminds me of the incredible paradox that those who believe that humans are superior to animals, trees, and grasses live in, who for most part do not know what are they here for.

---Let Us Give Peace a Chance
Healing the World: Walk Together in Peace
Chapter 14-----

Why doesn't everyone strive for peace?

We know that there are many people who talk about peace, or who read textbooks in which peace is one aspect. But this is not enough. I strongly believe the main reason why people do not really strive for peace, as a central part of their life, is because they have never experienced the state of peace.

Once you experience peace, you will never want to leave that state. Once you experience peace, everything around you will be organized according to that state of peace. The state of peace is an "all or nothing state," and there are too few points or stages in between. Either you are in a state of peace or you are not.

Thus, we must commit to having as many people as possible experience the real state of peace and to awaken the feminine energy of life. Just to talk about peace is not enough. Just to read about peace is not enough. Peace is something that one experiences, and this must be our focus of attention. How can

a person attain the state of peace if the value system promoted by education is that of nurturing conflict and war?

Now is the time to act.

Now is the time to honor our peaceful nature. Now is the time to go back to our true identity and mission.

Now is the time to re-establish all the above mentioned spiritual laws.

Let us give peace a chance. Let us create the spiritual space for the self-realization of inner and outer peace.

Each of these laws can be practiced at your personal level or at the collective level in your community or nation. You do not need to address all of them at once. Just choose the one you know you violate the most and work on it. You will soon realize that by ascertaining in your life that particular spiritual law, you will be progressively re-establishing all of them. This is a special bonus that unfolds when one practices and lives the spiritual paradigm in its entirety.

The same happens with the different states of being, like peace, love, and compassion, to name just a few. If you decide to self-realize peace, you will experience that as you reach higher and higher levels of self-realization you will be self-realizing also love and compassion. The reason is simple; there cannot be peace without the self-realization of love and compassion.

Our intellect separates these states of being but, in essence, they are all from the same source; they are all one and the same.

Peace is not just another choice to make or one more option among many other options. Peace is our destiny. It is our destiny because it is our very nature, and destiny is no more and no less than returning to our nature. There is no destiny separated from our core nature.

Let us walk together, because your peace depends on whether I am at peace and my peace depends on yours as well.

Let us walk together because world peace is the result of our collective inner peace.

I want to join you in your inner peace.

I want to visit your soul and learn from your state of peace.

I want to share my peace with you, and with our peace we could shift the course of humanity.

Peace I am and peace I want to become within the infinite space of the Collective Spirit.

Let us not deny each other that opportunity.

---The Last Appeal
Real Foundations of Peace: A World
Appeal to Policy Makers and Economists
for a Culture Of Prevention
An Epilogue-----

In today's public policy, be it at the national, regional or global levels, decision-makers have not found the real foundation(s) of peace yet.

And, many people have legitimately suggested that a world living in peace is a utopia, with most of the attention now given to second or third best solutions, e.g., either "managing conflicts" or "conflict prevention". This conceptual tension, in the abstract and in practice, is quite pervasive and has been responsible for many conflicts at all levels; otherwise, this event would not be taking place today. This note contends that thus, to focus only on the so-called "undercurrents", or on the "culture of prevention", while important, is not enough. Rather, the world situation demands a clear and an unequivocal understanding of what peace is all about, and actions. towards sustainable peace. This includes, among other dimensions, a major identity of the key elements

that constitute the foundations of such a culture of peace.

For now, the above remains obscure and confused and, consequently, the selected instruments and action plans have proven partially or totally ineffective. Fundamental changes in approach must be adopted now, not tomorrow; otherwise well-intended efforts will not avoid experiencing more wars and conflicts, and where the last ones are more violent than the previous ones!

For the sake of transparency, the following premises are at the core of the thinking expressed here.

- **First**, the large majority of wars in the last four decades have responded mainly to economic considerations. The manifestation of these considerations finds refuge later on in the politics of race, ethnicity, and religion. Thus, economic policies are not neutral with regard to war and peace.

Peace Economics Is Needed

- **Second**, the real foundation of sustainable peace is only “inner peace”. This, in turn, influences and translates into peace at the

social level. Inner peace has been very much disregarded at the policy level, or it is seen not to be like “hard knocks” and material-economics and policy making. And, thus, the lack of inner peace seems to be the main reason explaining why we have not really attained peace yet.

Inner Economics Is Needed

- **Third**, the “culture of peace” must embrace a new concept of peace that goes far beyond “conflict prevention”, notwithstanding the importance of an eventual absence of conflict. Absence of conflict is not really a state of peace—thus, a world without conflict is not a world living in a state of peace. Peace must be understood as a supreme state of non-violence in all dimensions.

Non-Violence Economics Is Needed

- **Finally**, the material dimensions of conflict avoidance (armies, tanks, weapons) or the material solutions to prevention are just one minimal part of a complex equation. Non-material elements—most difficult to address (e.g., the ethic and rights to life)—play a considerably larger role in addressing both the material and non-material dimensions of conflicts. Non-material instruments

will be the foundation of everlasting peace.

Non-material, Spiritual Economics Is Needed

The thinking behind every aspect of this paper is not neutral. There are plenty of values-laden statements in it, some explicit and some provided through a special angle that will not always be evident to the reader. Some of the most radical statements come from the need to project a major sense of urgency so we all stop more conflicts from happening, and so we together can direct public debates and actions into the “right direction” once and for all. Values and beliefs are central to a debate of this nature, because addressing issues linked to war and peace demands, as a point of reference, a normative view of what you, we, me feel that life and human welfare must be all about on this Planet. It must be normative because it is this vision which will set the reference point and the ultimate aim against which all our actions, policies, and programs must be assessed. It is this normative vision—i.e., a world in total peace—that permeates all the propositions suggested here. Maybe, for some, this is simply utopia, particularly when so many people are affirming that wars and conflicts are a necessary evil and that history has always experienced them anyway. Thus, the real proposal must

be one where the most we can do as a civilization is to “manage conflict”.

In fact, the concept of managing conflicts runs deeply counter to action plans and decisions made today. In addition, using “management of conflict” as the point of reference, or as the sole measure of our success, will take us nowhere. It is just a short-term palliative. And as we experience today, it would become another major source of a profitable industry. It would avoid going deep into the source of peace and the root causes of conflict.

State of the World

Despite billions of dollars spent in the name of economic development, the results are mixed at best. The material balance sheet shows great progress, but only very few have benefited from it. We still have 1.3 billion people earning less than one dollar a day, and almost half of the world population earning less than two dollars a day, in addition to not having access to drinking water and sanitation. Thirty-five thousand children die each day of diseases whose cures are well known, and six hundred thousand women die every year because they do

not have access to primary health care during pregnancy. Two hundred and fifty million children, who do not go to school, are becoming the slaves of the so-called human progress. Most styles of development function under the principle “grow now and clean later” and, thus, we are destroying all our natural forests, depleting existing biodiversity, contaminating surface and ground waters and the air we breath, in addition to the negative effects on the ozone layer and global warming. Finally, income distribution is unacceptable, with the number of poor people being the largest of any period in history. Exclusion of the poor, powerless, and voiceless is the main characteristic of economic progress today. Income disparities, within countries and among countries, have become so acute that no wonder we have so many conflicts today.

In addition, we have made the weapon industry one of the most profitable economic activities and exports, in both developed and developing countries. Thus, we face a tremendous ethical paradox. In some cases the same countries that claim the need for peace have the largest weapon industries. They and their opponents are fighting the same weapons they sold a few months earlier or they end up killing the same soldiers they trained into combat. This is both unacceptable and morally questionable.

How can we tell the poor in Africa that just one weapon, one airplane, or one submarine costs the equivalent of 70,000 schools for their children? How will some countries be able to explain that expenditures on weapons are two to five times their expenditures in education, health, and nutrition combined?

Let us not create new theories about the very unequal and negative outcomes of modern progress. The explanation is simple: the outcomes we see in front of our eyes are simply the results of decisions we make every day, either individually or collectively.

It is we who produce the weapons. It is we who buy the weapons. It is we who sell the weapons. And, it is we who use the weapons to kill or injure someone else.

Thus, if you do not like the results, just focus on the decisions you make everyday. Are these peace-enhancing decisions? Are they moving us towards peace? Am I financing violent, or non-violent, investments? Denial is so pervasive in the world today that we do not act; for example, "this paper must be talking about someone else, who could do this!" "This situation must be happening in Africa and not at the doorsteps of America, Sweden,

or Switzerland”. The tragedy of denial is a severe disease in our professions, including us economists.

But, let us go one step further. The decisions we make are the result of the values and belief system we have and hold dearly in our hearts. They influence everything we do, from what we consume to where we invest our money. In a world mainly thriving out of economic and financial profits, it is evident that we are disregarding the rest that is so dear to us: our inner peace. And, when we speak of values, these must include those linked to human life. The results of development show that we live a crisis of values. For example, we now teach our children that there are lives of different values. Thus, if someone from a rich country gets killed we see a major display of hundreds of marines, tanks, airplanes and the dropping of a thousand bombs! But if it is a little child who dies in Ethiopia, we may even change the TV channel to not feel affected and absolve ourselves of responsibility. Or, if millions die in Africa...“well, sorry for them”, “there must be something wrong there”. Also, the many forms of racism, discrimination, and xenophobia are just more examples of the same crisis of values.

Thus, let us learn a simple line of argument: outcomes, decisions,

and values. Hence, if you do not like the results you see, you must deeply reconsider individually and collectively held values and beliefs today. It is as simple as that. And this correlates perfectly well with decisions related to war and peace.

All Begins with Political Commitment by World Leaders.

If we are to attain peace, we must look into our value and belief systems! And this starts with a close look at our world leaders. In my view, they must take the responsibility for the millions of lives of innocent people being taken because of war, and of those children who are dying of hunger and pain. Peace begins with a collective political commitment. Without commitment to change, peace will never take place. But are our leaders willing to make that commitment? Or even a more basic question, are these leaders at peace with themselves; to embrace peace and guide us towards a peaceful Planet? How responsible are we for electing leaders who are not the shining light of peace, the champions of peace?

We are the fundamental framework for leadership. Leaders mirror our level of commitment, our level of awareness, our level of consciousness. Unless they have a unique communication and

a channel to a superior form of development and consciousness, institutions, governments, companies, and all organizations in society, INCLUDING THE ARMY are the mirror image of who we are. Thus, we must know that the leaders are not committed to peace, because neither you nor I are in peace with ourselves or committed to everlasting peace. We still see the advantages of conflicts, the advantages of dominating someone else, of keeping them at their weakest state.

And, again, the key reason we do so is because we are not at peace within ourselves; we are simply not invincible yet. If we were, there would not be a problem that everyone else also becomes invincible.

Thus we must call all world leaders to commit not just to preventing conflict but to everlasting peace, to a commitment to the values of peace, the language of peace, to peace economics, to peace technology, to peace policies, to peace decisions, to peaceful investment and against violent investments, policies, technologies, and actions. Let us not elect leaders by what they say, have, or know, but by whom they really are.

Why Do We not Strive for Peace?

Why don't people strive for peace? Why is it that despite many meetings, world conferences, proclamations, and conventions we do not get there? The answer is also simple:

People do not strive for peace because they have never experienced the state of peace.

Facts show that few people have experienced the full state of peace. An absolute state that, once experienced, one will never come out of, or want to come out of. Peace is a state of consciousness, and it is far beyond the absence of conflicts. Again, as stated earlier, the state described as the absence of conflict is not equivalent to the state of peace. And it is here where we must change our views! Even if we choose the perfect instruments and policies to avoid and manage conflict, we will not summarily reach peace.

For one, the state of "conflict avoidance" is external. The state of peace is internal. Thus, a strategy to manage conflict will simply mean continuing the material race we are into right now, and make out of this race a very profitable enterprise. This seems to be the preferred strategy for many people to avoid addressing fundamental questions about our existence as a generation on

this planet.

We can certainly buy a state of conflict avoidance even if the global community ends up paying huge costs. And, in the ultimate, the total avoidance of conflict is tantamount to diverting billions of dollars that could have been invested in the culture of peace, rather than buying weapons of mass destruction and making out of each of us a police of the world. A real shift in the paradigm is needed. We cannot buy the state of sustainable peace. We simply cannot buy peace in the supermarkets.

We need peace economics, which must start with its humanization in thinking and in actions. We must only allow economists who are in peace to practice or to make decisions regarding war and peace. This can only happen if we dematerialize economics.

The Role of Our Education Systems

In most cases whenever we have a problem of this magnitude, we blame it on our education systems. But it seems we are not able to change them so we would have a peaceful world. Understanding, for example, arithmetic, physics, or biology in

the way it is taught today, does not amount to everlasting peace. One reason is its definitional value system, ingrained mostly into the “to have”, “to know”, and “to fit”, rather than into “to be”. Materialism is at the core of education systems, as we all want to equate education with jobs, and with economic and financial gains.

In the meantime we proclaim we live in a global village (population, our interconnectedness, information, and communication revolution), a global village that is experiencing economic, financial, environmental, and cultural globalization, giving us no doubt that we indeed live in a village!

But, who is creating the global being?

It is possible that conflicts may result from the asymmetry between actually living in the global village without yet having formed the global being. A global being that is at ease with ethnic and religious diversity, committed to a clean environment, that strives for equality and equity in all aspects of life, and where gender equality and human rights are embodied in all that a global being does.

Education of the global being must start now, and we have to be bold to force this change. We have been trained in the old school and, thus, it may be difficult to accept these radical transformations.

A Deep Change in Value System: A New Paradigm

The only solution to conflict is to deeply change our value system. We are blinded by our beliefs, we are in a state of denial when it comes to accepting total interconnectedness, and we are supporting more conflict through excessive consumption, major income and race discrimination and disparities, promoting gender biases, and violating human rights.

A new paradigm is needed. But we have heard this a million times. Some say “yes” as a way to justify inaction. However, a new paradigm means a deep change in value system, a change that is so transformational that our behavior and decisions will change too. We must not adopt value systems that do not transform us!

Clearly, traditional economic and financial values must not be the only guide to the fate of humanity. It will be suicidal to do

so, because these values favor more exclusion than universality (through purchasing power) and more the laws of the marketplace than the laws of nature (with the corresponding destruction of our natural environment and sources for unmet needs) than these values favor breaking human boundaries. It is mandatory that we embrace a non-material spiritual value system that, by definition, is universal (everyone included), evolutionary (respects the organized natural order that already exists here), and transcendental (breaks boundaries).

Then, no one will think about poverty and population growth as a numbers game. Poverty will have the face of a child, who is crying of hunger, or frustrated youth that see no future but conflict and war, or a desolate woman who cannot nourish the child who is dying in front of her eyes, or an old man who is sitting on a bench waiting to die some day soon. This new paradigm will see people as consciousness, or increased awareness, and not just as one more number added to the existing load! This paradigm shift must not be conceived as a marginal move, but as a radical one, requiring major courage and guts.

Final Thoughts

Where do we go from here? As in previous occasions, we can simply disregard what is said, disqualify the proposals, and leave with a sense that “only what I said counts”, the rest will be immaterial, irrelevant, utopian, simplistic, too far-fetched; all just the terminology of the old paradigm! Yet another conference...

Reality shows that humanity needs a lot of healing today. Many groups are deeply wounded in the spirit as they suffer from hunger, diseases, desperation, conflicts, poverty, and the violation of rights. While we, the privileged ones, continue within the same comfortable mode. Thus, economists continue to tell us they have the solutions, and say that it is the politicians who do not want to honor their advice. In the meantime, politicians see clearly the great dilemmas confronting us, as the economic system creates additional incentives to superfluous consumption, a spiral of interminable proportions. The media, as referees, still do not play the fundamental role of becoming the most powerful agents of change in relation to everlasting peace. It seems that the media respond more to economic or financial interests, and impose limits for us to act upon.

Identity and legitimacy are at the center stage of crises, and they are the main cause of pain for many people. As experience shows, it is not only material welfare that really motivates people. Also, the strategy of “growing now, cleaning later” has been dominating the debate on environment and sustainability, and, as a result, many still feel that a clean environment is the luxury of the rich. And many argue that only once a society attains that ideal level of material welfare, only then will it focus on cleaning the environment. And we know this is a deadly fallacy! But, here we are.

By the same token, we embrace the view that material growth is a precondition to spiritual growth, with spirituality also being the “luxury of the rich”. Yet another fallacy that makes out of poverty another huge business: drugs, weapons, crime, and physical devastation. And this business can only occur when consumers are spiritually weak; for example, they have no identity, no notion of quality of progress, and no feeling for their role on this planet. Equally, a claim that the best we can do is to manage conflict is essentially directing all our attention to another material way of creating wealth for a few at the expense of the rest of us. A major responsibility!

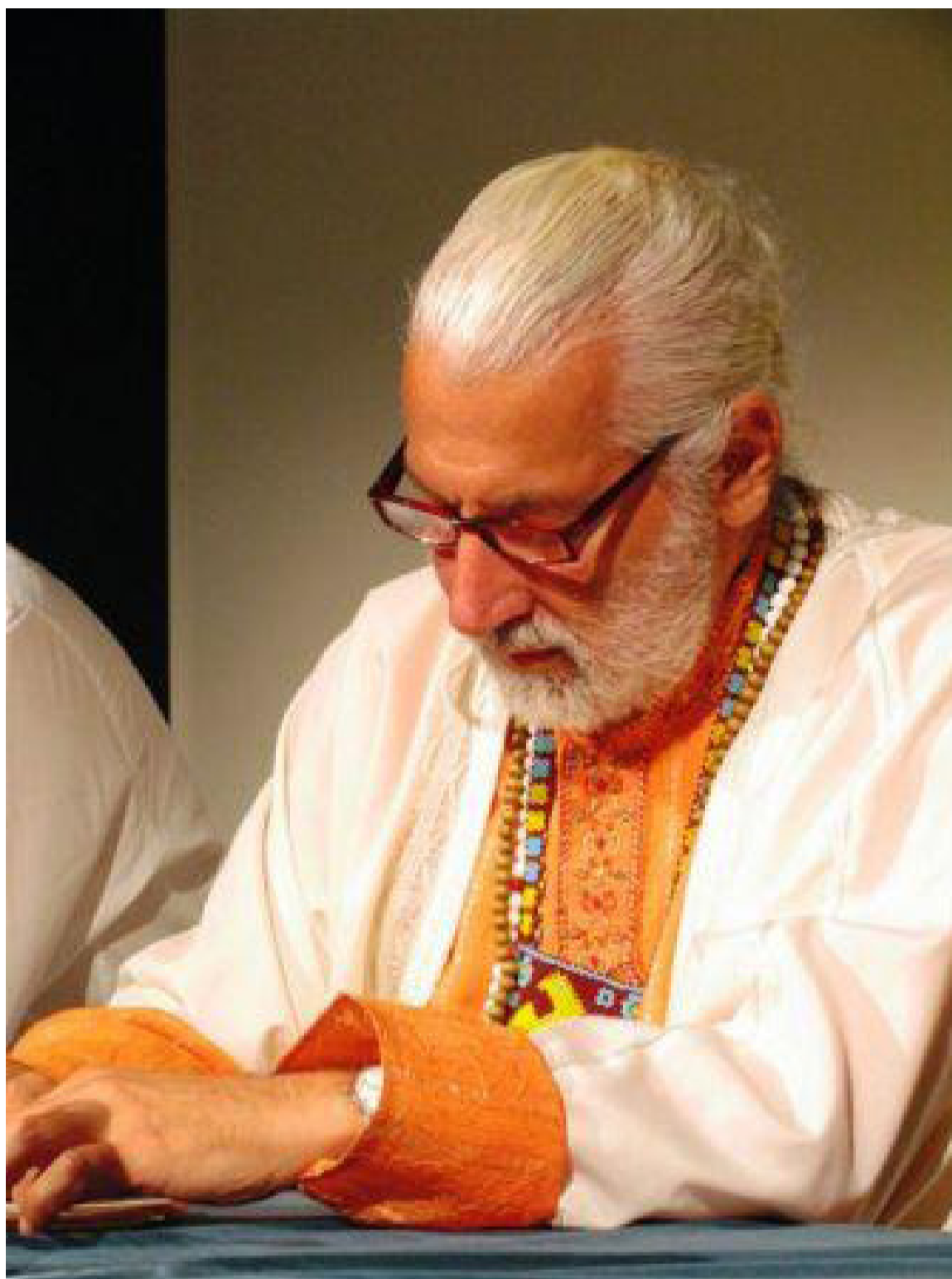
I came to this meeting because I felt I could speak up. That I could speak from the heart and for those who are in need of a lot of healing today.

It is not my intention to hurt anybody or to criticize anyone. But I have no time for practicing “cynical diplomacy” or waiting any longer. There is too much at stake, as conflicts are spreading, brutality is increasing, and we are left with societies that are so deeply wounded that there will not be any level of material welfare that could bring them to the state of inner peace. As the discussion on the new World Conference of Racism demonstrates, despite many decades, or centuries, gone by, there are many in the world who still seek compensation of war crimes committed so long ago. Certainly, they are not wrong! But, to me, this is another strong demonstration of how much healing is still needed to attain inner peace.

All efforts must be oriented to attain inner peace through all possible means: education, material welfare, inner growth, etc. I remain convinced that the same material race we support to avoid conflicts will be in turn the main source of future conflicts. And we are already seeing this all around the world. If we are serious about peace, we must now proclaim, for example, a total

moratorium on the production, distribution, sale, and use of any weapon, no matter what. And we should sign a Global Peace Manifesto for every leader to commit to, if she or he wants to become a leader.

I insist that the point of departure is inner peace, and we have to commit to individual and collective decisions that will not create more incentives for violent investments, violent decisions, violent language, violent attitudes, violent actions, and violent concepts of life on this planet.



-----**Dr. Alfredo Sfeir-Younis**

Dzambing Cho Tab Khen

2007-----

"An Appeal For Peace"



The Zambuling Institute for Human Transformation