

RETURN TO EDEN

*Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas
if you stop opening presents and listen.*

—A six-year-old

It is only in samadhi, or in the deepest meditation, that we really fold into the Field. Most of the time we sip at the 'edges.' Of course, I do not literally mean an edge, but a state more like that of a spectator at a game of cricket who sits somewhat back from the action, is able to glimpse something of the game but is unable to note the facial expressions, the weave of the clothing or the smell of grass and sweat. In touching an edge there is a slight rendering of the veil, while most remains unknown. The edge is not a part: the Field is indivisible. The edge is just a beginning, a *soupeçon*, as it were.

As the religions of the East have long upheld, the material world is Maya, an illusion, and although we may think we are physical beings moving through a physical world, this too is an illusion. It is only our desires that support the illusion that this is the only reality. It is a desire not to change our deepest conditioning, of how we interpret what our senses give us, of our conditioned ambitions to be a mother or artist or whatever, and so on forever. These are all 'desires of the mind' that stand in the way of enlightenment.

The authority contained in the energetic level, and the enormous sense of numinous well-being one experiences when 'in touch' is precisely why the great religious teachers keep telling us that the physical world is 'illusory' and that the only reality resides in the energetic realm. One of the oldest statements is contained in the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali that appear under many of the chapter

heads in this book. They are at least 3,000 years old.⁴⁰¹ For so many generations “the greatest number of the subtler speculative minds and the great religious teachers have, in their various fashions, been engaged in”⁴⁰² meditation and prayer to reach this place, and tell us that we are already at one with all there is.

It is particularly poignant that most of our prescientific understanding of the Field comes from enlightened men and women who were able to see through our projections. Buddha defined the process of ongoing creation most clearly as *codependent arising*. That is, that all is emerging out of the Field and falling back in again, arising and unfolding and in the same instant infolding and returning.

What is our goal if not our enlightenment?

Beyond the senses are the objects, beyond the objects is the mind, beyond the mind the intellect, beyond the intellect the Atman, beyond the Atman the nonmanifest, beyond the nonmanifest the Spirit, and beyond the Spirit there is nothing, this is the end, it is Pure Consciousness.

—The Upanishads

Enlightenment is being able to go through what is often called the ‘Veil of Perception’ in order to experience both realities — the ‘real’ world of matter and sensual existence, and the ‘illusory’ world of energy — and to do so simultaneously, to shift back and forth in each world in every second. Enlightenment is not a toggle switch, either you are in or you are not. It is a gradual process of increasingly being able to sense beyond our five senses.

In my earlier book, *Notes to Transformation*, I readily admitted my ignorance, yet attempted to draw a map of the sacred journey.⁴⁰³ It has proved useful, but I had to put it aside once I recognized that the numinous reality of the Field leaves the mind behind. Nevertheless signs and directions can be useful, and libraries are full of attempts to provide them.

The most succinct description of the journey I have ever read is that of the great twelfth-century Arab teacher, Hakim Sanai. In the *Hadiqa* he gives a short roadmap. It is worth intense study. Though I have added my personal invocation to some, these are stages

that must be *experienced* rather than talked about. Here is what he wrote:

“If you ask me, Oh my brother, which are the signs of the path, I would answer you very clearly and without ambiguity. The Path is to look at the Truth and to break with lies, to turn your face to the living universe, to despise worldly rewards, to spring your mind free from any ambition of glory and fame, to stoop to His service, to purify your soul from evil and fortify it with discrimination, to leave the house of those who talk too much and go to the one where people are silent, and to travel from God’s manifestations to God’s attributes and from there to His knowledge. Then, at that moment, you will have crossed the world of mysteries and arrived at the door of poverty. When you are poverty’s friend, your deep soul will have become a penitent heart. Then, God will extract poverty from your heart, and when poverty is gone from there, God will stay in your heart forever.”⁴⁰⁴

I am hugely moved every time I read this. I try to do so aloud, as the sounds deepen the experience. I am in some doubt at even attempting to try a slowing-down sequence in absorbable bits, for I am still on the journey and far from being in Being-ness. Nevertheless, the words are like the Buddha’s noble truths that support us to start learning what one is in truth and living it, in stepping aside from even the subtlest ambitions in worldly matters, to become servant to the soul’s transformation and actively support the soul to be as pure as possible. This, though, is only the start. He goes on to explain that after seeking silence rather than the dramas of life, we:

“Travel from God’s manifestations

from attachments to our egoic beliefs that there is anything permanent in the explicate realm, the realm in which we manifest our daily destiny

to God’s attributes

to our original soul qualities that we were born with, to higher levels of the spirit including archetypes and all collective consciousness, to our original face

and from there to His knowledge.

to receive the intuition and wisdom that descends through the heart from the wholeness of the Field that has nothing to do with information, but carries the wisdom of the whole

Then, at that moment,

these wonderful words: "at that moment." Instantaneously. Now. No waiting.

you will have crossed the world of mysteries and
and!

arrived at the door of poverty.

The most powerful command! So hard to really comprehend this level of modesty, of being in total service to the divine and to the soul's transformation, of having nothing, not even the desire for the love for God

When you are poverty's friend,

when you do nothing for your egoic self, but revel in the experiences of knowing there is nothing to do yet watching it all happening as it unfolds

your deep soul will have become a penitent heart.

Then, God will extract poverty from your heart, and when poverty is gone from there,

God will stay in your heart forever."

Forever!

What clarity for a vision! And within the concepts of the Great Field, how true and logical and complete. Hakim Sanai offers a recipe, as so many have before and after, for obtaining access to the other side of the veil. We knew it in the womb, we have glimpsed it again and again as a child and one hopes in our later teens, and then find we have to struggle for the rest of our lives for a permanent intimacy. Yet, as the following quotations show, there is then no struggle:

God's nothingness fills the entire world; his something is nowhere.

—Meister Eckhart

Even though you tie a thousand knots, the string remains one.

—Jalal-ud-Din Rumi

Beingness is in nothingness in the mode of nothingness, and nothingness is in being in the form of being.

– Azreil of Gerona

The Tao flows through all things, inside and outside, and returns to the origin of things.

– Lao Tzu

This is what all the higher religious texts tell us, that there is no distinction between the real world and the unseen. The unseen is the nondual world without time that is the Field. The mystic state and being in the Field are one and the same thing. This is where there are no distinctions, no separations. It goes beyond the duality of our experience, beyond the definition of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and all the desires that come with that.

The richness offered in all the ancient texts is so similar that Aldous Huxley called it the perennial philosophy.⁴⁰⁵ Just as the understanding is everywhere the same, so is the method: all aimed to help us go beyond the dualistic operation of the mind to the coherent singularity of the ground of our being.

It means that all opposites are the same, all contradictions are identical, all definitions are in the moment. It means that everything rests within the universal Ground of Being. It means there is absolutely no separation between observer and observed. It feels like we rest at a midpoint between the contradictions of life.

Ken Wilber, in using the word Spirit where I would use Field, wrote: “The nondual traditions are uncompromising: there is only Spirit, there is only God, there is only Emptiness in all its radiant wonder. All the good and all the evil, the very best and the very worst, the upright and the degenerate — each and all are radically perfect manifestations of Spirit precisely as they are. There is nothing but Spirit in all directions, and not a grain of sand, not a speck of dust, is more or less Spirit than any other.”⁴⁰⁶

This beautiful vision contains the essence of our human potential. It is a statement of ultimate coherence in which no part of us and nothing within the Field is out of tune. We are all in the dance, and its movements are full of the compassionate love of all-pervasive rightness. Under these conditions life becomes extremely simple.

Can therapy help us get there?

Who are you to tell God when to come or when to go? You cannot tell him anything. He will arrive in His own good time. All you have to do is wait and keep the house clean.

—Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

‘Keeping the house clean’ is what most spiritual teachers offer in practices and rituals including meditation and monastic retreats. Most involve long periods of discipline to still the mind and deal with the personal and energetic issues as they arise. These principles work, or we would no longer have teachers or gurus, though it is a fact that the journey is such an individual one that the methods that suited one person may not work with another. This is why few great teachers have pupils of the same quality and depth.

There is also a ‘short route’ offered in our times. It does not bypass other disciplines, but makes it a lot easier to get through the barriers of personal ‘stuff’ that hold most of us back on the journey. Various types of personal therapy are able to clear traumas more effectively than the stilling procedures of the ashram or the meditation hall. They address the problems directly, and so leaves one clear to go deeper with less accompanying baggage.

There is a profound difference between talking therapy, like counseling or behavioral modification, and transpersonal psychology that aims for the subtler and more hidden issues. When the work is allowed to go deeply into the energy fields and the soul, the coherence that results from therapy produces a quantum leap into our essence. Gallo has popularized the term Energy Psychology to cover all therapy that goes beyond the five senses and that works with fields of energy.⁴⁰⁷ In practice there is no single method used by all practitioners, and an enormous range of modalities.⁴⁰⁸

I will describe the strategic approach we have developed at the Crucible Centre. There are two tributaries to the work. They might be defined in a simplistic way as removing egoic attachments and aligning our life’s purpose with that of soul — of detachment and service. The two streams are examined side by side until they are each so clear they are able to flow together into the sea. There are no rules to this process for, as you would understand, each of us

moves along our streams at our own pace and in our own individual ways.

The work begins by dealing with the hot traumas that worry us most so we can start developing a witnessing consciousness. The witness is our detached inner observer. When we see life from the witness we can separate from the intensity of our daily dramas and our hurts and pains. This is vital as the emotional body too easily interferes with the clarity we should be able to live by. The early stage aims to create such a balance in the psyche that we no longer manifest the traumas and dramas that most of us get caught up in. With the help of the witness we get less 'juice' from them.⁴⁰⁹

This quietyens the mind. Though the physical nature of the brain is the source of our genius, its two hemispheres create its structural incapacity for oneness. The difference in the way each hemisphere operates creates, by its nature, the sense of incompleteness that breeds desire. It is a major task to come to the center between them, that calm space that lies in neither.

While dealing with the parental issues we sensitize ourselves to energy and soul. Gradually the wisdom of the heart finds a balance with the intellect of the brain. We connect with our souls in a deepening intimacy that brings us gradually into our true nature. Working at the energetic the more intractable issues can be cleared up, such as vanishing twins and the karma carried by the soul.

Among the teachings of Buddha there is one injunction that sums up the entire process of inner healing: it is that *all desire brings suffering*. This phrase is simple and true, especially in the more subtle work. Most contemplative religious practices emphasize the importance of letting go the demands of the ego.⁴¹⁰ The Christian mystic Eckhart wrote, "Whatever we find ourselves attached to we must abandon."⁴¹¹ The Patanjali Sutra states: "Nonattachment is freedom from longing for all desires, either earthly or traditional, either here or hereafter." The way the mind holds onto its thoughts and beliefs is the basic resistance in therapy.

As we lose our attachment to parental issues we discover that desires are much more subtle than we may have imagined. The next step is to detach from being identified with any of them. This becomes easier as we become more conscious. Whether in the

ashram or the monastery, the aim has been the same, though not always consciously expressed: to wither the belief that we are defined by our needs and thoughts.

Gradually the endless thinking and planning and mindless commentaries fade away. It is a beautiful moment when we recognize that the old dramas are passing through like a mist without us having any desire to hang on to them. This shows there is less attachment, thoughts are less dominant, and we are becoming more coherent. Jung called this state individuation, and Maharishi called it the first stage in enlightenment.

From then on any actions we undertake for some good cause can provide us with the perfect opportunities to hone our ability to remain detached.⁴¹² When we are asked to save the earth, or to succor the poor and dying, or whatever great task we take up, we need to act with all our heart and all our energy but — the biggest ‘but’ of all — without being attached to the outcome.⁴¹³ The *Bhagavad Gita* states, “Be not attached to the fruits of your actions.”

This does not mean we don’t feel, respond, get excited, and have our hearts pounding. It does not mean we don’t have moral values or ethics. But we remain unattached to the outcome. It does not eliminate fear or passion, but it does mean that fear need not degenerate into guilt or anxiety. We are strong enough in ourselves to stand up for what we are without having to manipulate for survival. If our actions turn out to be against the flow we can adjust, and let go, and create no karma through conflict. Opinions and preferences remain, though without judgment.

Then a deep inner stillness develops — a sure sign of coherence. Gradually there is a fundamental shift in attitude. As we witness our desires in order to lessen attachment to them we begin, through connection with soul, to follow the spiritual path of Hanuman, of being the Good Servant to the soul’s transformation, which is like saying we are serving the truth of who we are.

Work with soul offers the most precious level of healing, for it realigns our life so we are not out for our gain, but for the transformation of our soul, and through that for the greater betterment of mankind. Through this commitment we create subtle alterations in the Field itself. Not only do we see our origin over lifetimes, but

we also see ourselves within the great dance of life, we acknowledge that death has no sting, and begin to understand how we are co-creators of our lives moment to moment. Gradually we acquire the great virtues of humility, compassion, and above all, gratitude. What more can we ask for?

It is a remarkable moment to realize at this point that life can become very simple. The simpler life may, at least at first, appear rather dull. It certainly has been more interesting to be excited about a drama. This in turn brings us into such an alignment with soul that the song of life is beautifully harmonious. Less struggle and fullness is a fair exchange for less drama and uncertainty.

At this level of simplicity we notice that there is a natural morality. We do not have to compel ourselves to be unselfish or caring: We just are. If the other presents a game that is unpleasant or unjust we no longer have to play the drama game. It is like being the water in a stream that works its way around dams and snags, but is never untrue to its nature. The coherence this brings subtly changes the way we respond so we discriminate rather than react. It is moving from being under the control of the lower brains to knowing ourselves from the higher realm of the forebrain.

Peak experiences: meeting the Field unexpectedly

It was as if I were in ecstasy. I felt as though I were floating in space, as though I were safe in the womb of the universe — in a tremendous void but filled with the highest possible feeling of happiness. ‘This is bliss,’ I thought. ‘This cannot be described: it is too beautiful.’

—Carl Jung⁴¹⁴

From the beginning people with very different beliefs about God have described a reality that is both immanent and transcendent at the same time — transcendent, because it transcends the normally accepted limits of our five senses. They do not describe these states as being utterly strange, but rather they are unexpectedly familiar, like a secret place already known. They write statements like, “I have come home again,” or “this is who I really am.” Beyond the feeling of reconnecting with something lost but remembered, there are frequent references to the experience having included some

supernormal understanding and insight, even into the past and future. There may be clairvoyance, extraordinary insights into all layers of heaven and hell, and even the capacity to speak other languages, yet it feels very commonplace at the same time, “each being fundamentally linked with ordinary human nature.”⁴¹⁵

Toward the end of his life Jung wrote about his experience of “the ecstasy of a nontemporal state in which present, past, and future are one. Everything that happens in time had been brought together into a concrete whole. One is woven into an indescribable whole and yet observes it with complete objectivity.”⁴¹⁶ This was, in Hannah’s words, “his experience of the miracle of grace, decisive for his whole life, and he knew for ever afterward the vital necessity of fulfilling the will of this divine power.”⁴¹⁷ The experience is more intense than any ordinary moment, and is so much more real than everyday events that we know it is true — nothing else competes.

In two surveys conducted in Chicago they found that over fifty percent reported that at some time in their lives they had had intense, overwhelming or indescribable experiences beyond the ordinary. In these ‘altered states of consciousness’ time stood still, and they were left feeling joyful and uplifted. “Visionary experience is an eruption of what the medieval mystics called the unitive vision. An image or event seizes one through the imaginative faculty with such power that one really knows and experiences the unifying truth of the self. One sees, for a brief time, a glimpse of the true unity, beauty, and meaning of life.”⁴¹⁸ It leaves us feeling immense gratitude for every aspect of life, a natural humbleness in the face of the enormity of everything.

It is not surprising that peak experiences lead people to dedicate their lives to reconnecting with the fullness of the Field, and sharing its unsharable wonder in all sorts of enigmatic ways. “Every numinous content possesses a fascination, a richness beyond the power of consciousness to apprehend and organize, a charge of energy surpassing consciousness. Hence an encounter with it always leads to an upheaval of the total personality.”⁴¹⁹

For a few people the experience may arrive with such intensity that the psyche is overpowered. Doctors may treat the sensations as if they were psychotic, and try to still the upheaval with drugs.

This is a huge mistake. Many people work with these Spiritual Emergencies, so-called because spirit is emerging from within the shell of the person.⁴²⁰ The hardest thing about such rare and extreme events is that the person is usually totally unprepared, and may be so shocked by the experience that they make it a life's mission to understand it. Almost inevitably, they will long to experience that sense of grace again.

The Christian idea that grace is dispensed by a deity is as foreign to these peak experiences as it is to Zen and Buddhism. Grace, like compassion, is always and everywhere present, everlastingly available, and endlessly responsive to our aspirations if we only dissolve the veil. "The function of grace is to condition men's home-coming to the center...it is the very attraction of the center itself which provides the incentive to start on the way and the energy to face and overcome its many obstacles. Grace is the welcoming hand when man finds himself standing at long last on the brink of the great divide where all familiar landmarks have disappeared."⁴²¹

It corresponds to a whole dimension of spiritual experience that is acknowledged by all religions. It is a process by which intuitive knowing, self-transcending love, and other extraordinary capacities emerge from within. These seem to be freely given rather than earned, spontaneously revealed rather than attained through any egoic effort.

Abraham Maslow coined the phrase 'peak experience.' He showed that transcendent experiences occur universally, and yet cannot be shared, as the experience is unique to each person.⁴²² Maslow preferred this phrase because he wished to secularize the encounter as a natural event that was available without organized ritual, though a religious context could help one to understand it. From it arises a natural sacredness that comes of its own volition. It remains with us forever, "becoming a state of mind achievable in almost any activity of life, if raised to a suitable level of perfection."⁴²³ It is something we should be encouraging (if that were possible) so that those who "have never had them or who repress or suppress them" might have a route for their spiritual longings.⁴²⁴ This is the ultimate purpose of Energy Psychology.

If it's a mission, it's impossible

Nonexistence is eagerly bubbling up in the expectation of being given existence.

—Jalal-ud-Din Rumi

Peak experiences usually push us into the desire to know this realm more deeply. The desire to want to work hard for a more permanent enlightenment and inner peace is natural. Ken Wilber has discussed this most clearly, and called it the Great Search.⁴²⁵ I am very grateful for his clarity, and will use some of his phrases in this part.

But there is a trap here: working at getting enlightened actually gets in the way of getting it. This presumes that something in us needs to be changed, and is just one more desire. Most self-development movements are caught in this delicious trap. It is the trap of wanting the unwanted, grasping at the ungraspable. Just as the mind cleverly transforms the energetic vibrations in the cones of the eye into a world of objects, so the mind transforms our natural coherence with the Field into a belief that we have to do something in order to connect with it.

The concept of the Great Search, in fact, prevents us from crossing the veil, because it presumes that we have lost something. In truth, losing any part of the Field is impossible. Attachment to the aim initiates the very mechanism that pushes the aim away. Attachment promises to find tomorrow that which exists only in the timeless now. Attachment clutches at the future so fervently that the present always passes us by — very quickly — and god's smiling face with it.

We have created the idea that we are empty, which means that we need to be filled. One illusion, called loss, has spawned a host of others, called desires. These drive everything in our lives. They are attachments. Whereas if they were replaced by a simple Being-ness we would already be at our right level of coherence in the Field. This means we are much closer to 'being there' than we were when we were striving our best to get there through hard work, dedicated meditation, or long-suffering therapy.

Wanting it, by its nature, undoes the purpose! The concept of having to be dedicated simply reinforces the mistaken assumption that we are not already in the Field, and that we need to overcome that which is lacking in order to partake of that which is full. But there is no thing lacking, and there is no thing more full. There is only the ever-present flow of the Great Field. Therefore, seeking of any sort, determination of any sort, even attainment of any sort, has to be called profoundly useless.

However, should we then simply cease looking? Definitely, if we could. But the effort to stop looking for something that is such an essential human desire is itself more of the same effort. That would be pointless as the belief that we have to try and the act of trying are two consequences of the same thing — the attachment to the idea that we are not already full. This means we should relax, keep it simple, and stay awake. As the saying goes, “Merely chop wood and carry water.”

So, why do any spiritual practices? Is this not just another example of the trying, and as such destined to fail? This is the most exquisite paradox of all, the most exquisite double bind that engages us in the sneakiest fashion that Zen calls “selling water by the river.” We know that effort is needed, and equally we know that such effort is futile. So what do we do?

Paradox again, we just keep on doing what we are doing, while keeping the bow of the canoe facing downstream, without adding energies like ambition that just induct their opposites and hold us in place, and without any attachment to the outcome. I write this book because there are demands in me that, without thought, get me up at five every morning and impel me to turn on my laptop. I write with care and to the best of my ability, but I step back from having any attachment to the outcome — or, at least I try to. I have looked for a publisher without needing to have it published, and found Elite Books through a chance meeting with a great Swiss sandplay therapist, Ruth Ammann. It is not the same as being laid back. It is subtly different. It is doing without being forced to, with the passion of a child who lives his life in only the moment that that life is being lived.

This does not mean we should not clear up any mess we are still carrying. The canoe gets stuck in the riverbanks if we don't do this. Steering in fast-moving waters requires us to be very attentive to how we are in each moment, and free to make inner adjustments as necessary. We still need to get rid of the old entanglements and parental hangups. The more we are in tune with the flow of the water the less 'steering' we have to do.

This way, there is nothing 'we' can do to stop ourselves, because the 'we' and the play of life are just two names for the same state. Therefore remain with an effortless gentleness with yourself. Give yourself space to simply be. *If there is any sense of effort it is a distraction.* We may attain, or we may not, either is equal. Don't obstruct any natural evolution, just surrender to the Field and we will find the grace that comes through being servant to soul.

We are the consciousness of the Earth

The state of unity becomes possible when the qualities of matter no longer exercise any hold over the Self, and the pure spiritual consciousness withdraws into the One.

—Patanjali Sutra

The mystic is one of those people, existing in all religions, who understands themselves in the light of the direct experience of God.

—Robert Johnson

The ideas and evidence presented here lead to two inescapable conclusions: that everything in the universe is simultaneously physical and energetic, including the human psyche, and that every movement in one realm affects every part of every other realm. Matter and energy form a seamless and indivisible whole woven within the interactive flow of the Field. The energy in everything is affected by the entire range of energetic forms that exist.

Spiritual suffering today is deep-seated. The remoteness and immorality of Western culture is projected onto the world so that as we disparage the energetic presences of nature — be they fairies or angels or devas or pixies — we lose respect for their living presence in the environment. By polluting the earth we are changing the relationship between the Field and humanity. The connections are

becoming less. Those powers in the Field that in the past resonated with every form on this planet are gradually withdrawing from the Earth. The mutual projections are diminishing.

This only increases our suffering as we humans are finding ourselves more and more on our own. We have to live in our own steel and concrete environment without support or integration. A deep and painful separation is occurring, as painful as birth or death. All our lives would be transformed were we to really take this in at the very depth of ourselves, for we could no longer feel we were alone, but inevitably part of the whole. Indeed, it is our belief in our separateness that is the greatest barrier to the survival of our species on this planet.

The natural state of life is to be so coherent that we are in tune with all the fields around us. We are born into this state, and as we lose it the psyche is disturbed, and with it our energy field. This disturbance is experienced as suffering that then impels us to disturb further all that we come in contact with.

The paradigm that most people in the world have accepted is that this is a material universe of separate objects that affect one another through direct contact. It underlies every assumption in education and scientific discussion, and when questioned will often raise eyebrows, if not temper. The 'separate-matter' paradigm, after the experimental work of the past twenty-five years, can no longer pose the only 'correct' view of the world. Neither the universe nor we humans are merely an assembly of mechanical bits, nor are our organs, including the brain, operated and maintained only by chemicals and genes.

What modern research is showing, and many of us have believed unconsciously, is that these views are too limited to explain the complexity and wonder of our world. They have formed the bedrock of physics and biology, and all our wondrous technology and our unprecedented standard of living. We have much to thank science for. However, the other side to this coin is illustrated by the unbelievably crass way in which we treat the planet and pollute the environment on which we depend — a daily stream of self-destruction not found in any other society nor any other species in history.

Globalization has produced a new social order without a holistic myth to explain, support, and direct it. Efficiency has become more important than morality. A new global myth is required, a new view of the planet and the purpose of life that has the authority to inspire and is so true it cannot be ignored. Joseph Campbell has argued, "We have to get back into accord with the wisdom of nature and realize again our brotherhood with the water and the sea. If you will think of ourselves as coming out of the earth, rather than having been thrown in here from somewhere else, you will see that we are the Earth, we are the consciousness of the Earth. You will see we are the eyes of the Earth, we are the voice of the Earth."⁴²⁶

This is what the ancients knew. All Eastern religions and sacred philosophies teach us that this is exactly the nature of reality, and they are correct in referring to our 'normal' and civilized vision as an illusion. Once we accept the possibility that all our perceptions are illusory virtual projections, we can lift the filtering and distortions of our images from the sordid desecration around us.

The simplicity this vision offers for our comprehension of existence is quite astounding. All distinctions drop away and we are left with the most satisfying concept: that we are all one in the Field, and that whatever we are and wherever our souls, life and the environment grow or fade together.

The universe exists in a vast present that includes all points of space and all moments of time in a single instant. In the Great Field, life and energy, our personal aims and the galaxies beyond exist as equally present and now. Sentient beings proceeding through countless lifetimes in different forms in infinitely many universes of infinitely many worlds — the vast unfolding of consciousness on an unimaginably large canvas. It is no paradox that soul, in being the juice by which we are nourished, is our guarantee of ordinariness.