

‘When the Veils are Thinnest’
Charney Manor October 31st 2014
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Numbers refer to slides – we shall post these separately very soon

1. Title of Talk: When the Veils are Thinnest

We are gathered here at the time of the year when the days are closing in, and there is more darkness than light; when we may feel the need to spend more time in contemplation, to enter a kind of winter hibernation. Today is Hallowe'en, or Samhain, 'when the Veils between the worlds are at their thinnest'. So this seems a good time to talk about how to move through those Veils.

2. Einstein's quote on the Mysterious

“The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.”

3. Chartres

This is Chartres Cathedral where I had the privilege of teaching for a week in July. Chartres was built on the site of an ancient Druidic cave or grotto that, two thousand years ago was considered to be the most sacred site in Europe. For a thousand years before the time of Christ, the Druids held rites here that connected them to the great rhythms of the earth and the cosmos, the rhythms of light and darkness, of birth, death and regeneration. They had a statue of the Great Mother which every autumn they took down into the underground grotto and every spring brought up into the light. They had a sacred well whose waters had healing properties that were used until the time of the French Revolution, when it was desecrated. Around November 1st, many tribes gathered here to connect with the ancestors and participate in the sacred rituals which ensured the regeneration of the Great Mother during the dark phase of winter so that life would be reborn the following spring. No doubt they also, as at Stonehenge, connected with the souls of their ancestors.

Long ago, the feeling for the sacredness of life and relationship with the Cosmos was a deep instinct, shared by much of humanity. Then, almost imperceptibly, with the coming of the patriarchal religions, something like a hedge of thorns grew up and it was lost. For millennia, a tremendous problem has been troubling the waters of the soul. It is this: in a civilisation which is patriarchal in organization and outlook, which has been structured by a male image of God presiding over religions and institutions created entirely by men, and by a polarising mythology which glorifies power, conquest and the mastery of nature; how can the long-silenced voice of the Feminine, the voice of the

Soul be heard, a voice that once directed the master builders of Chartres, one of the seven great cathedrals in France that are dedicated to the Virgin Mary?

4. The Cosmos as a Living Being

In the Neolithic era in Europe and in the great civilizations of the Bronze Age — particularly those of Egypt, India and China, the whole cosmos was imagined as a living being, an organic, sacred and living whole...

This material world was an epiphany or showing forth of an unseen source or ground which breathed it into being, animating and sustaining it... Everything was infused with divinity because each and all were part of a living, breathing, connecting web of life animated by spirit.

People lived within a Sacred Order, the Order of the Great Mother. In the ancient world the whole of nature was infused with divine presence. Mountains, trees, rivers, springs each had their own particular spirit or guardian. In dreams and waking visions people could walk and talk with gods and goddesses and with angels and daemons who were seen as emissaries and agents of invisible spirit. They were looked upon as being as real as you or I. The Old Testament as well as the Iliad and the Odyssey are full of these encounters. (see the Books of Esdras and Tobit in the Apocrypha and the Book of Revelation). There was a different kind of consciousness to the one we have today, one that might be called 'participatory' rather than 'rational'.

5. Collins – Goddess and Earth

This painting by Cecil Collins gives the feeling of that early experience where everything was connected through the energy that creates and sustains all the myriad forms of life.

The idea that the universe was created out of her Divine Being, that her Divine Energy permeates and sustains all its different elements and forms was later to appear in Indian culture in the image of the goddess Kundalini, and later still in the Shekinah of Kabbalah and Sophia of Alchemy. Whatever we see, whatever we are is created and held within the embrace of that supreme Feminine energy. This concept does not exist in the three patriarchal religions because they defined the image of a male Creator who was separate from creation. They desacralised Nature by repressing all forms of animism. This was the foundation of the split that developed in them between spirit and nature and that has led to the crisis we face today and the horrific slaughter in the Middle East.

6. Two Different Ways of Knowing

We carry within our psyche two very different ways of knowing that I have called Lunar and Solar.

Lunar – The Primordial Soul or matrix of consciousness: a very ancient instinctive, participatory, relational way of knowing, mediated through instinct, sensory observation, intuition, feeling (the heart) and the right hemisphere of the brain — mainly unconscious in us but still found in Shamanic cultures..

Solar – The Rational Mind: developed c. 2,500 BC – 2,000 AD. a goal-focused, objective way of knowing, mediated mainly through linear thinking, the rational mind and the left hemisphere of the brain.

A radical imbalance developed in us as the solar way of knowing was superimposed on the older lunar way, repressing it and denying it a voice. The left hemisphere has gradually become too dominant and we have lost all sense of our relationship with the Earth and the Cosmos. Now we need to bring together these two ways of knowing in a third way that heals the split in our psyche and our unbalanced culture. (see *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* by Iain McGilchrist)

7. Henry Moore figure

In 1945 Henry Moore painted a picture which shows a group of people gazing up at a huge shrouded figure, their smallness dwarfed by its towering height. Beneath the shroud and the ropes which hold it in place is a feminine shape. This painting suggests that a new archetypal image of the numinous was emerging from the collective unconscious, waiting to be unveiled, waiting to be recognised and received by humanity.

The last fifty years of the twentieth century have witnessed the activation of this archetype. A cultural excavation has been undertaken by thousands of individuals, mainly women, seeking to discover what has been lost, neglected or excluded from our religious traditions. Their efforts have recovered for us the mystical and shamanic traditions that had to go underground during the long centuries of persecution as well as the mythology and imagery of the forgotten Great Mother. Like the magma of the earth's molten core, the feminine principle has been pushing up from below the threshold of our conscious lives until it is emerging into our awareness, manifesting as a call for radical change in our values and beliefs by inviting us to reconnect with nature, soul and cosmos. As a result, our understanding of ourselves and our relationship with the planet is changing. We are beginning to recover the lost sense of participation in a sacred universe, the lost sense of belonging to a greater whole.

8. Jung's painting

These decades have also seen the recovery of the gnostic texts buried at Nag Hammadi in Egypt (particularly the gospel of Thomas) and the visionary traditions secretly transmitted from pre-Christian and early Christian cultures,

most importantly the alchemical texts that were largely recovered by Jung. This is one of the paintings from his Red Book showing the realm of spirit above a world of war and technology. What have also been recovered are the spiritual and healing traditions of India, Persia, China and Tibet and the work of the great spiritual teachers of these ancient cultures. These teachings and traditions can be seen as the “complementary” or missing counterpart of the traditions that are more familiar to us. They are an essential yet hitherto unknown aspect of our spiritual inheritance. Included in this precious inheritance are shamanic traditions of healing; travelling to other dimensions of reality; encountering and speaking to the souls of the dead. All these have enriched our culture and have broadened both our understanding and our definition of spirituality. Spirituality is no longer associated with the belief system of a specific religion but rather with the longing, the quest, to become awakened, healed and whole. All this helps to thin the Veils.

9. Hedge of Thorns

However, there is a major problem facing us that could be likened to a hedge of thorns: during the last century in our Western culture, the human spirit has been increasingly compressed between two ideologies - the older patriarchal one which can no longer hold society together in a shared vision and the new one of reductionist science which states that we live in a mechanistic, lifeless universe which has come into being by chance. By a subtle yet powerful censorship this new ideology excludes what it defines as non-rational from our understanding of life. It regards consciousness and visionary experience as the by-product of the physical brain. It does not accept that there is a dimension of reality transcendent to the visible world. There can be no survival of consciousness after death because the death of the brain is the extinction of consciousness. In this belief system God is an unnecessary hypothesis and the concept of the soul an irrelevance. The word mystic or visionary has become a term of contempt - signifying irrationality and instability. This belief system negates the whole past experience of humanity and sets the rational mind against the instinctive need for relationship with the unseen dimension of life.

10. Brian Cox

There is no better example of this mentality than Brian Cox who, brilliant as he is, only recognises the material universe. He does not know that the universe is a living harmonious whole and that our consciousness can connect with the inner dimensions of that greater Whole. He does not know that we live in a universe that is alive, intelligent, conscious, and that it has a soul that is the ground of our own consciousness. In his recent programmes, he offers us knowledge, information, but no sense of relationship with the universe although he wonders whether there could be life on one of the 30 billion planets in our galaxy alone where there is enough water for life to exist. This is an example of

how, because of the pervasive control that scientific materialism has on the media, deep human needs may be denied. The questing human spirit which instinctively seeks *relationship* with the universe is crying out for what is missing, but it cannot get beyond the hedge of thorns that bars its entry into another dimension of reality. So, spiritual needs go unrecognised and the visionary imagination as a vitally important faculty of the soul cannot flourish. People are ill in body as well as spirit. There is no deep and sacred relationship with life, no sense that the life of the individual has meaning and value beyond securing survival needs and achieving a position of power and influence in society. With this limited horizon is it surprising that so many people are depressed and are addicted to food, drink, drugs and sex?

11. 96% of universe is invisible

We see only 4 % of the universe. Dark energy and dark matter make up the other 96 percent. We don't really know what dark energy and matter are, and their existence is only perceived because of the effects they have on observable matter. So what does the 96% we cannot see hold within it? This undiscerned 96% of the universe gives us plenty of room for many invisible dimensions of reality and for consciousness itself to exist there as well as within this reality. The mysterious place called 'Cloud' where we can store information from our computer gives us the idea that Consciousness may be 'stored' in other dimensions and accessed from this one. Reaching another dimension could be a matter of belief. Maybe our bodies could pass through walls if we really believed they could.

12. Einstein quote about changing our mode of thinking

The most powerful call for change in our way of thinking was Einstein's when he said: "With the splitting of the atom we have changed everything save our mode of thinking and thus we drift towards unparalleled catastrophes."

13. Thomas Berry Quote

Another voice calling for a change of consciousness was Thomas Berry's. "To attain peace among the nations in any dynamic or enduring form requires not simply political negotiation but a new mode of consciousness. The magnitude of this change is in the order of religious conversion or of spiritual rebirth... A change is needed in every phase of human life."

14. Man gazing into space

From the first stirrings of conscious awareness, we have sought relationship with the Cosmos. This may be one of our deepest instincts, the root of our desire to explore and discover. Gazing in wonder at the stars, naming the constellations, charting the rising and setting of the moon, connecting through visionary experience with a divine intelligence which has brought the earth and

our own consciousness into being, we have created many rituals, many images to engage with the mystery of our existence.

The visionary or seer who contributes to the regeneration of a culture must always press beyond the boundaries of the known. In this image, a man has gone beyond the known world, and is gazing in wonder at what is being revealed to him. It is a powerful image of breaking through limitations, an image of the thinning of the veil between us and the deepest realities of the Cosmos. It conveys the very essence of the spiritual quest.

15. Diagram of Consciousness – science and religion and third path

We have devised three methods for connecting our consciousness with the greater consciousness of the universe. The first is the method of religion with its emphasis on belief and faith, originally initiated by a great teacher but rapidly institutionalized. At its inception, as revelation, it is more connected with right-hemispheric consciousness. The second method is that of science and its quest to discover the laws of nature. In its methodology, it is more of a left-hemispheric consciousness although it can easily morph into an ideology presenting itself as the only path to the truth. There is tension between science and religion but this need not be if both could move beyond the beliefs which hold them fixated in the past.

The third method is the direct path – indicated by the dotted yellow line – taken by visionaries, mystics and shamans who seek a direct relationship with and revelation of what is beyond the comprehension of the ordinary mind; who are able to pass through the veil that separates us from the great Unknown.

16. Bridge

Visionaries and mystics are bridge builders connecting two levels or dimensions of reality - explorers or astronauts of the soul. The visionary or mystical tradition of different cultures says that like a child separated from its mother, we are separated by an opaque veil from an invisible and transcendent ground of being. This separation is experienced by us as an exile, a fall, a state of disharmony and disunion. But the memory of fusion or union lives on in us as a longing to break through that veil, to reconnect our conscious human self with that unseen ground. I feel that all our different quests spring from that basic longing for reconnection — to discover our place in the universe, to reconnect with our roots and know who we are and why we are here, on this amazing planet. The image of the quest breathes life into the great myths of the ancient world and is a quintessential part of the Christian myth. It lies behind science's exploration of the secrets of matter and the current fascination with the physical brain in neuroscience. It is the instigator of the Apollo Mission to the moon and Hubble's breathtaking exploration of the depths of cosmic space.

17. Blake's ladder

Our culture is impoverished and our souls starved if we fail to take account of visionary experience in the ancient and original interpretation of its meaning: that of receiving revelation, inspiration and guidance from a transcendent dimension of consciousness that used to be called spirit... In this painting by Blake we see an image of Jacob's famous Dream and a spiral path connecting two dimensions of reality with figures moving up and down it.

18. Odilon Redon

At the moment we have a one-eyed consciousness arising from the split between spirit and nature in the patriarchal cultures. We have lost the visionary eye, the eye that was known as the eye of the heart. I am reminded of the words in the Book of Proverbs: "Where there is no vision the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18) Yet revelation may continually be trying to reach us if only we have the ears to hear.

19. The Oracle Cecil Collins

We have lost the visionary imagination of earlier times: we now see stars as objects instead of divine beings; angels, stones and trees no longer speak to us and we do not stand in awe before the great mysteries which surround us. Cut off from its deepest instincts, the human heart is lonely and afraid and the neglected territory of the soul a barren wasteland. Our culture is impoverished because this vital aspect of the total range of our human experience has been ignored and denied validity.

20. Dante gazing at Beatrice

In this beautiful painting, again by Blake, Dante is gazing across the river that separates him from Beatrice.

21. Gustave Moreau vision

Here Dante and Beatrice are gazing into the Empyrean, dazzled by their vision of the angelic orders. They have broken through the Veil.

22. Collins – Angel of the Flowing Light

The visionary imagination, the shamanic ability to see and travel through the Veil, beyond the known world, is a supremely important faculty of our nature, just as our capacity to feel and our rational intellect are vital faculties of our nature but, like the physical body, it needs exercise.

23. Tobias and the Angel

In pre-Christian cultures (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece), there was a long tradition of visionary healers who were initiated through rites of incubation in temples and caves and who brought back teaching from another world. Far into the Christian era there were contemplatives who sought out the solitude of

forest and desert. People went to them for spiritual counsel. The emphasis of this contemplative tradition was on a *gradual* initiation through meditative practice into the capacity to see, hear and understand things which are not accessible to the normal range of consciousness. The visionary imagination was nourished and cultivated in those cultures where visionaries were regarded with awe and respect as messengers of the invisible as the story of Tobias and the Angel illustrates.

24. Matthaeus Merian

A visionary, seer or shaman - the word means "one who knows" - is traditionally called to this role by a life experience which weakens his or her focus on the usual concerns of society. It could be an illness, a psychotic episode, an experience of catastrophic loss, a powerful visionary or revelatory dream, an out-of-the-body or near-death experience. Whatever it is, it will shatter the pattern of so-called normal life and the structures of defence we have built against the terror and disorientation of such an experience. Our culture may see this experience as a symptom of mental illness. Other cultures may see it as a rite of initiation into a transcendent world - a break-through rather than a breakdown. There are many kinds, levels and degrees of visionary experience. Such an experience is an encounter with the numinous and can be overwhelming and terrifying as well as exalting and inspiring. Jung's Red Book is a perfect example of this encounter. The line separating the visionary, the genius and the psychotic is very fine. All three have a psychic threshold which is permeable to deeper levels of experience, to non-ordinary states of consciousness. A culture may confirm or deny the validity of this kind of experience and it may be the fear and denial of it which may actually drive certain people into psychosis who in other cultures would be confirmed and supported in their calling as a healer and spiritual guide to the community. Stanislaw Grof has written extensively about this.

The definition of a visionary prior to 1650 was one who was able and accustomed to see visions. By 1750 when the belief that the physical universe was the only "real" one was becoming established in philosophical and scientific circles, the definition had changed to someone who sees something which is not real. Today a visionary may be defined as someone who suffers from delusions or hallucinations, who is at worst psychotic, at best emotionally unstable. So why the change in perception? The answer lies in the influence of scientific materialism that has gained an increasingly powerful grip on our culture during the last 300 years.

25. Grail Vision

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Europe there was a flowering of the visionary imagination in the building of the great cathedrals, in the wide

dissemination of the Grail legends and in the songs of the troubadours who introduced into the brutal culture of the time a new image of romantic love between men and women.

26. Black Madonna

All over Europe the Black Madonna drew people in pilgrimage to shrines and holy places that had once been sacred to older goddesses. This was the time when Dante, with Beatrice as his spiritual guide, wrote his *Divine Comedy* after seeing a vision of the Trinity, when Hildegarde of Bingen was experiencing her visions. This is how she says they began: *"In the year 1141 of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, when I was forty-two and seven months old, a burning light coming from heaven poured into my mind. Like a flame which does not burn but rather enkindles. It inflamed my heart and my breast, just as the sun warms something with its rays... The Light said to me: You who receive these things for the manifestation of the things concealed, write what you see and hear.*

Hildegarde said that she was continually ill until she began to write down her visions and to communicate them to close friends and supporters.

27. St. Francis and Red Angel

This was the time when St. Francis received the stigmata from a red angel or seraphim as in this painting and heard the voice of Christ speaking to him from a crucifix in a tiny hermitage in Assisi, telling him to rebuild His church.

28. Hermitage in Assisi

In every culture there have been contemplatives who have experienced a relationship with the transcendent dimension of reality or a sudden revelation or illumination. St. Francis was one of these. In his tiny hermitage in Assisi, he spent many hours in communion with this dimension and also in communion with the birds, whose song is still breathtakingly marvellous in the woods which amplify their song.

However, certain events put an end to this flowering: the Black Death in the fourteenth century; the long terror of the Inquisition (13th-19th centuries), which effectively silenced visionaries, particularly women visionaries; the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Protestant Reformation. This last coincided with the beginnings of the scientific revolution in the sixteenth century. People became disenchanted with religion because of the intransigence of the Church towards the new discoveries and the fanaticism of rival religious groups. 400 years ago there was a fundamental shift of focus from religion to science, a shift of focus from faith to knowledge, from confinement within a rigid and persecuting orthodoxy to a passionate exploration of the physical universe and the significance of the individual. The fear of speaking up about

visionary experience goes back to the memory of the time when to speak of such things was to risk being accused of possession by the devil and to invite either incarceration in an asylum or torture and death at the stake.

29. Three Phases of Consciousness

lunar; solar; stellar

with these three Phases of Consciousness there are two ways of knowing that we carry within our psyche and a third that we need to develop now – a way of knowing that the alchemists called stellar consciousness. It is about recovering the visionary way of knowing and marrying it with our conscious rational mind. This would be the change in our mode of thinking that Einstein was calling for.

30. Annunciation

Many myths of the ancient world and our own Christian myth tell us that after a period of disorientation and confusion, there can be renewal and regeneration, the Annunciation of a new birth. But new bottles are needed to contain the new wine. Those who create the new bottles are the visionaries or seers who renew the connection with the transcendent in a form attuned to the needs of their age. Not since the beginning of the Christian era has there been such a powerful impulse for transformation. One could say that what is taking place beneath the surface concerns of our culture is a spiritual awakening on a planetary scale. This awakening is beginning to heal the great split in our psyche between spirit and nature and the dissociation between thinking and feeling that lies at the core of scientific materialism. It is being led by men and women who are bringing into being a new paradigm of reality and a spirituality arising from the need for direct connection with the deeper dimensions of life, a spirituality which recognises and honours the interconnectedness, indivisibility and utter sacredness of life. Their vision is creating a powerful alchemy in the culture, slowly transforming our understanding from lead into gold. It is contributing to the thinning of the Veils between us and the Ground that has brought us into being. In this great endeavour, the ancestors are standing with us, as they stood with the Druids, offering us guidance and counsel if we have the desire to listen.

31. Earthrise from Moon

I think the view of the earth seen from the moon in 1968 began to change our mode of thinking. We suddenly began to see with cosmic eyes, feeling our planet and ourselves to be part of the Cosmos.

32. Chrysalis and Monarch butterfly

To change our consciousness we have to go through a process of transformation similar to how a caterpillar becomes a chrysalis and then a butterfly. When the caterpillar first begins this transformation, an entirely new kind of cell begins to appear inside it. These join together and are called imaginal cells. These cells

contain the template or blueprint of a new kind of being: the butterfly. At first these imaginal cells are attacked by the caterpillar, but as more of these appear, they grow stronger and begin to cluster together to form the first organs of the new creature. Eventually the old form literally dies or falls away as a new being emerges from the chrysalis. This is what is happening to us now. Within every nation groups of imaginal cells have begun to cluster together and through connecting with each other they are creating a new consciousness throughout the planet. There is no point attacking the dying form of the caterpillar or the chrysalis. It is better to help the butterfly to emerge.

33. Crop Circle of Butterfly the Netherlands

this is a crop circle from the Netherlands a few years ago suggesting the manifestation of the new form of a transformed consciousness holding a new vision of reality. So in the next series of pictures I want to suggest how this new vision might manifest.

34. The Waning of the Old Image of God

fundamentalist ideologies filling the vacuum

an aggressive secularism influenced by Scientific Materialism
(attacks by caterpillar)

The Reconciling Third: a spiritual awakening in the Soul of Humanity.
(emergence of butterfly)

At the present time the Christian myth and the Judaeo-Christian image of God which have structured Western civilisation for two thousand years are dying: we are living through an interregnum where the old moral consensus has gone and the old vision no longer guides us.

35. Within Manifest World is a Hidden Reality of the Highest Order

This ancient understanding was transmitted to Alchemy and Kabbalah which kept alive the earlier awareness of the unity of all aspects of life, visible and invisible. Their essential teaching, inherited from Egypt, was: "As Above, so Below."

36. Robin's Cosmos picture

This painting suggests that something is breaking through into our reality, trying to attract our attention.

37. Teilhard quote

Teilhard de Chardin recognised the need for a new image of God. "The human world of today has not grown cold but is ardently searching for a God

proportionate to the new dimensions of a Universe whose appearance has completely revolutionised the scale of our faculty of worship.”

38. Aurobindo and Bohm quote

There is but one force in the world, a single unique current which passes through us and all things... It is this force which links up everything, animates everything; this is the fundamental substance of the Universe.

The Universe is an undivided wholeness in flowing movement. (Bohm)

39. An emerging concept of Spirit

We participate in a Cosmic Consciousness or Intelligence which is co-inherent with every atom of our being and every particle of matter. God or Spirit or Divine Mind is not something transcendent to ourselves. We are co-inherent with it, at the very heart of It.

Spirit, so long projected onto a transcendent Creator, remote from our world, is the quintessential consciousness which is awaiting discovery both in nature and ourselves. This is one of the great revelations of our time.

We have the extraordinary responsibility of helping Spirit to become conscious in ourselves.

40. Divine Light hidden within man

“Hidden within man there exists a heavenly and divine light which cannot be placed in man from without but must emerge from within.” It could be said that we are spiritual beings having a human experience rather than human beings seeking a spiritual experience. Reflecting on this would help to thin the veil hiding our true cosmic nature and reveal that Light and Love that are the pulse and the ground of the Cosmos.

41. The Voice

The artist Cecil Collins, who painted this picture trusted his visionary imagination in the face of contempt of the art establishment and wrote these words: *"My works are a visual music of the kingdoms of the imagination. There is in all human beings a secret, personal life, untouched, protected - won from communal life; and of which all public life is the enemy. It is this sensitive life which my art is created to feed and sustain, this real life deep in each person."* The visionary has to adapt the direct experience of a transcendent reality to the level of understanding of his time and also struggle to integrate it with his own understanding. He or she is really a kind of translator. Cecil Collins was a visionary whose paintings were understood and welcomed by only a handful of people. The culture dismissed him as a mystic.

42. Imagination is the Star in Man

the celestial and super-celestial body. We know that if we are deprived of sleep for too long we become disoriented. Perhaps it is the same if we are deprived of the visionary imagination. What is there in our culture that could nourish and sustain this secret life, particularly the imaginative life of a sensitive child? If we insist that there is nothing beyond this visible world, if we ridicule mystics as deluded or unbalanced people, and fail to tell our children about the great visionary artists, poets and seers, what can give them the awareness that there is something beyond the concerns of this material world that is calling to them?

What is missing and has been repressed for a long time in Western culture is the connective principle of soul. It is this neglected feminine principle that carries our deepest longings, our deepest instincts. The soul is the source of the visionary imagination. It is this special faculty of the imagination that seeks relationship with the invisible; that can connect us with the unseen face of spirit. Like the thread of Ariadne, it can guide us through the bewildering labyrinth of life.

43. Definition of the Soul

The Soul is the Cosmic Sea of Being or Web of Life underlying physical reality through which all things are connected to each other. The Soul is the Source or Matrix of Consciousness, the invisible Great Mother, called Anima-Mundi, Sophia, Divine Wisdom, Shekinah, Holy Spirit.

The soul is not only in us, we are in the Soul.

Our physical body and brain are the vehicle of the Soul in this dimension of reality

You could not discover the limits of the soul, even if you travelled by every path in order to do so; so profound is its meaning. Heraclitus

44. Robin's drawing of figure behind hill

45. Door into other dimensions

A door is opening into other dimensions. Many individuals have helped to open it so we can pass through the Veil that has so long obscured our vision. The Near-Death experience is one of the factors that is opening that door, thinning the veil.

I thought I would read you these words from woman who had a near-death experience.

“It was then that I looked down at my body and with amazement wondered, “Where did this gown come from?” I was no longer bound in heavy, restricting layers of winter wool, but was wearing an exquisite white gown that appeared to be fashioned of a fabric some master designer had created by splashing star dust

on filigree spider webs. I watched as it seemed to float above my skin. It was as if a million tiny wings kept it from putting even the weight of a feather on my body. A sense of lightness permeated my being to what I thought must be a cellular – indeed a ‘soulular’ – level.

“And then I heard the MUSIC. It was a tone so sublimely perfect that remembering it still brings me to tears. I knew then, and know now, that I was hearing the symphony of angels, the song of the universe, what some have called ‘the Music of the Spheres’. All thoughts melted in its melody and everything else ceased to be of any importance. I closed my eyes and began to dance, moving to the resonant vibration that coursed through my essence. The melody seemed to issue from a single point and was composed of one verse, a song whose mystical tone my entire being knew and sang. I bathed in its melody as utter joy filled my being, and as the sound washed over my spirit, I felt all confusion purged from my consciousness. “Standing beneath this euphonious canopy of grace, I knew love was being awakened at the depths of my soul. And I began my return to the dawn of totality as a growing sense of Oneness swelled within my heart, mind, and soul.”

46. Bernard Haisch and Laszlo

All visionaries and people who have a near-Death experience say that Light is what they see as they approach the deeper dimensions of reality. “The electromagnetic quantum vacuum is a form of light. It is an underlying sea of energy, that permeates every tiny volume of space, from the emptiest intergalactic void to the depths of the Earth, the Sun and our own bodies. Our world of matter is like the visible foam atop a very deep ocean of light.” Haisch

“Scientists now know... that particles are nonlocally connected with each other throughout space: Living things of all kinds are nonlocally connected throughout a subtle field that scientists know exists although they don’t yet understand what it is or how it works. Non-locality refers to the ability of two objects to instantaneously know about each other’s states, even if they’re separated by vast distances.” Particle A and particle B interact, and thereafter remain mysteriously bonded. When particle A undergoes a change, particle B undergoes the same change; A and B have, in many ways, lost their individuality and behave as a single entity. Laszlo

47. Kubler Ross and Bosch

Elisabeth Kubler Ross accumulated an extensive amount of evidence about the survival of consciousness beyond the death of the body which she described in her books, published between 1975 and 1991.

“Nothing is more important for our well being than to know that when we die

we move into another reality that is as real and vitally alive as this one. Consciousness does not die with the death of the body: consciousness is eternal.”

48. soul arising from the body

An article in the Daily Telegraph on October 7th reported the findings of a survey done about the experiences of people during a state of cardiac arrest. Dr. Pym van Lommel, a cardiologist in the Netherlands, has written a most interesting book called “*Consciousness beyond Life; the Science of the Near-Death Experience*” about the experiences of some of his patients and his conclusions.

49. quote about communication between worlds

“Those that have gone since the earth was first peopled, live on, and we who tread the earth today will live on. They now hold speech with those who still inhabit the earth plane, as we may do when we join them, if conditions are right. As communication is improved, there will be a better understanding, and finer development, as we come to know this law.”

50. Three Dimensions of reality

I think it helps to have a diagram of the three main dimensions of levels of reality: this material level; the soul level and the spirit level.

51. Three Bodies for these three dimensions

Each of us has three different bodies for these three different dimension of reality.

1. a physical body for this world.
2. a soul-body, called by some the subtle or etheric body, but also called the radiant, luminous or starry body, composed of much finer particles than our physical body and attached to it by a silver cord. This body is weightless and can move freely; it can create through the heart and the imagination and communicates telepathically.
3. A spirit body or bodies — called radiant or shining — composed of ever finer light particles that we enter as we move closer to the light of the divine ground, ultimately merging with it. The Egyptians called this body the *Akh*.

52. Bodies on Tree of Life

here is an image of our 7 different bodies placed on the sefiroth of the Tree of Life in Kabbalah: physical body, vital body, astral body, mental body, causal body, buddhic body and atmic body.

53. The Immortality of the Soul

We are immortal and we retain our individuality after we die.

There are literally millions of unseen worlds, planes or dimensions beyond the visible universe that are inhabited by countless billions of souls.

There is no *place* called heaven or hell but there are states of being which may be compared with these. It is not what we believe but how we live our lives here that draws us to the plane we will inhabit there.

No saviour accomplishes our redemption for us. We save, redeem and heal ourselves because we have the innate evolutionary capacity to do so.

54. Jung picture

In 1949, a man called Max Zeller, who had spent time in a concentration camp and later became a Jungian analyst, told Jung this dream:

A temple of vast dimensions was in the process of being built. As far as I could see – ahead, behind, right and left – there were incredible numbers of people building on gigantic pillars. I, too, was building on a pillar. The whole building process was in its very first beginnings, but the foundation was already there, the rest of the building was starting to go up, and I and many others were working on it.

Jung said, “You know, that is the temple we all build on. We don’t know the people because, believe me, they build in India and China and in Russia and all over the world. That is the new religion. You know how long it will take until it is built?” I said, “How should I know? Do you know?” He said, “I know.”

I asked how long it will take. He said, “About six hundred years.”

“Where do you know this from?” I asked. He said, “From dreams; from other people’s dreams and from my own. This new religion will come together as far as we can see.” From *The Dream: The Vision of the Night*. edited by Janet Dallett. (1975)

55. Einstein’s Definition of new Religion

The best definition of this new religion is, I think, this one, from Einstein: The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God and avoid dogma and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual, as a meaningful unity.

56. Man and woman with Grail Cup

This is a modern painting of the alchemical wedding, with a woman and a man who represent the lunar and solar energies of the Cosmos holding the chalice of the Grail. Alchemy is the western tradition of inner psychic transformation. It is a Feminine mystery, a mystery of the soul. The symbols yield their secret to those who contemplate them. The process of transformation is unique for each one of us yet intrinsically the same for all. This is the slow creation of the

wondrous stone, the vision of the Holy Grail, the healing with the alchemical gold. As the veil thins, we begin to realise that this invisible yet immanent Holy Spirit is the flow of life in our veins, the flux and flow of our thoughts, the power of our instincts, the miracle of our bodily processes, the creative genius of our imagination. It is the blazing revelation of the divinity of life in the reunion of body, soul and spirit and the service of that life with whatever creative gifts it has bestowed on us. The gradual revelation of the treasure of the Grail is an experience of great suffering and sacrifice on the one hand and illumination, wonder and inexpressible joy on the other as the light of the unified consciousness dawns.

57. Sol and Luna and Circle of Stars

Here we see Sol and Luna as glorified bodies surrounded by a circle of stars. The small circle symbolises the completed stone; the square the completion of the four stages and the ability of the healing power of the stone to manifest in the world. The large triangle signifies the union of the trinity of body, soul and spirit. The circle of stars signifies the connection to the cosmic ground. As a triune whole, Sol and Luna are united in the sacred marriage with the divine ground of being.

58. The Sacred Marriage

The final stage of alchemy and the completion of the Great Work give rise to a state of consciousness that unites the solar and lunar ways of knowing in a third state that the alchemists called Stellar Consciousness. Stellar consciousness is about conscious participation in an ensouled Cosmos. The Egyptian alchemists called this final state “Living in Truth”. In the view of the alchemists, we are all treading the path of return to the stars.

This image suggests that we can learn how to live in a state of expanded consciousness, holding awareness of this dimension of reality but also awareness of the invisible dimensions that interpenetrate this one. We have to get rid of the idea that there are two different worlds or an inside and an outside of our bodies. To return to the ground from which we have come, so completing our evolutionary journey on this planet and bringing the consciousness of the planet with us, is one of the most exciting quests that I can imagine. To discover that spirit, so long projected on a God remote from ourselves and creation, is the quintessential consciousness which is awaiting discovery both in nature and ourselves is one of the greatest revelations that it is possible to experience. The other revelation, no less overwhelming, is that we have the extraordinary privilege of helping this divine consciousness to achieve its evolutionary goal. No-one, the alchemists said, may accomplish this work except through humility and love. In awakening to our soul, in discovering how to relate to it, heal its wounds and listen to its guidance, receive its dreams and reflect on its visions,

we help to bring about that conscious marriage with the ground of life which I believe is the tremendous destiny of the human race.

Because at the quantum level, we are all connected, when thousands of us begin to change our consciousness, millions are affected. I believe that we can change our mode of thinking as Einstein exhorted us to do and heal the terrible errors our beliefs have created. We can choose whether to continue in these beliefs or to live and act from a different relationship with life. As we do so, we would begin to align ourselves with the luminous ground of reality. Our minds would serve the deepest longing of our hearts, the deepest wisdom of our soul. We would transmit the light and love flowing from this ground. We would define a new image of what it means to be human: no longer as a fallen species in need of redemption by a Saviour but an awakened species, aware of a new and responsible role as the servant of this planet. We would know who we are and why we are here and the veil which has hidden the mysteries of our divine origin would no longer cloud our vision.

The dangers of the visionary experience:

(I was unable, for want of time, to include this section in the talk)

- ▶ The danger of too fragile a container. The conscious personality cannot assimilate the numinous impact of the transpersonal experience and takes the visions or messages literally instead of allowing time to assimilate and reflect on them - a process which may take many years.
- ▶ The danger of grandiosity and inflation - the cult leader - the recent catastrophes of mass suicides (Order of the Solar Temple). Seeing oneself as the messenger of God in pathological acts of vengeance, terrorism and human sacrifice.
- ▶ The danger of paranoid projections onto others and acting upon them. The need to question the "voices" which urge one to acts of destruction or self-destruction rather than obeying them implicitly as the voice of God. It is important to know that these voices may come from a dissociated unconscious complex which can, with help, be integrated with the conscious personality to the great benefit of a person's life.
- ▶ The danger of nervous exhaustion, depression and suicide. Depression is often the dark companion of the visionary experience, particularly if the latter is not validated and supported by the culture or by friends, relatives and therapists and there is no access to guidance from others who are familiar with this kind of experience.
- ▶ The danger of neglecting or persecuting the body in the belief that self-mortification is a requirement of the spiritual life. Withdrawing from commitment to life in this world and from relationships with other people.