8. The Ultimate Destination

Those who have stepped beyond the threshold into the mystery, outside of time, do not become disembodied spirits. They still have a physical body until that physical body dies. It is simply that their identity has shifted—it is no longer with the ego self or the unconscious urges and desires that drive most of us in our normal lives. Importantly, though, most of those who cross the threshold eventually find themselves back in the world of time—with the ego reasserting itself and again influencing actions and decisions.

Occasionally, though, a person is advanced enough to reenter the world of human interactions while maintaining awakened consciousness. What is more, these fully realized saints and sages can engage with those living in the world of time. When this happens, the awakened ones usually spend their energy sharing their wisdom, serving those in need, and/or promoting the health and well-being of the whole. Some of these wisdom figures have come to be important in their own cultures, and a handful have become iconic symbols the world over.

Beyond time and space

One crucial idea I am trying to convey is that ***time itself*** is a mental construct, a concept the mind creates for us to be able to function in the everyday world. Mystics have known this for thousands of years, philosophers have begun to understand it since Kant, and Einstein's breakthrough insights have helped scientists come to grips with the fact that time does not exist in the way they had assumed. (See Carlo Rovelli's fairly recent book, *The Order of Time*.)[1]

All these insights converge to the conclusion that time is a concept in the mind rather than something that exists separately from the mind that creates it. This is a marvelous thing, crucial for being human. We must create time in order for the world we know and live within to exist. But one implication of this non-basic nature of time is that different cultures might come to understand it in different ways—which is exactly what has happened throughout history. To get a sense of this, read *No Word for Time,* Evan Pritchard's fine book about native American culture.[2] Or, for a mind-bending challenge, try to imagine what the word ***time*** refers to ***before*** the big bang. Of course, "before the big bang" suggests that time existed "before," which it probably did not, so better still, meditate on how to think about the absence of time beyond the threshold of the big bang.

Just trying to formulate sentences about this topic makes clear that, when using our thinking minds, we are trapped in time. As an example, focus on the fact that the

phrase "big bang" is a metaphor with no clear meaning. We do not really understand what it was, or is. We give it a date—almost 14 billion years ago—but since time did not exist before the big bang, and time is not what we have imagined it to be, what does that number really mean? Consider, for instance, that there seem to be billions of massive black holes throughout the universe, some having millions to billions of times the mass of the sun. Inside of each there is nothing that relates to what we think of as time. If a spaceship approached the horizon of a black hole, stayed there for a few of "our" minutes, then moved away, the occupants would discover that a million years had gone by for people on Earth. So, how long ago did the big bang happen for a black hole?

Thinking about time using quantum theory (the most accurate science we have) turns out to be really weird. But back to the big bang. That phrase is only a metaphor suggesting the universe appeared in a nanosecond out of nothing and nowhere. But nanosecond is a reference to time, so we are forced back to the questions: What is time, and how did it get here? When all and everything appeared, seemingly out of nothing, how did time become a part of it all? The answer is: We do not know. But the best scientific guess today is that time is not real in the way we have assumed, but simply a concept we have created in our minds for functioning in the everyday world—which is what mystics have been telling us for centuries. Thus, the big bang is just another name we put on one of the mysteries of existence as we try to make something that escapes our understanding sound scientific and understandable.

Like time, space is also weird, so when I talk about "being in the place across the threshold," it is not actually a place. It is a state of being. But to communicate, we use words even though our words are not "the things themselves." So I use the word "place," but it is not really a place, for both modern physics and many mystics tell us that a place, as well as space, are simply useful concepts we create in our minds for functioning in the everyday world. (See Carlo Rovelli's, *Reality is Not What It Seems*)[3]

"In the world, but not of it."

I know all this is pretty abstract, but it is crucial for conveying something very important. A few saints and sages through the centuries seem to have had an identity centered beyond time, yet to the people around them, these special beings seemed to be functioning in the world of time. One way to try to think of this is the idea that they were, "In the world, but not of it."

The way I have come to understand this phrase is that a person has opened into a state that is completely beyond ego identity. Such persons are no longer pushed and pulled by unconscious drives and needs; they seek no special attention for

themselves; have little desire to look after or take care of their worldly selves. These awakened ones might take care of their bodies to a minimal degree, as a part of the flow of the life force, but their attention is directed toward the All and their actions tend to serve the good of the whole. If they encounter someone who is suffering, they might well look after that person first, at the expense of their own needs. (This is quite different from those who have not yet developed a healthy sense of self, as described in Essays 5 and 6—people who sacrifice their own needs in an attempt to feel better about themselves.)

Looking at history in this light, many stories emerge in every culture about a few saints and sages who returned to the everyday world of time while their consciousness remained beyond the threshold. What did they do? They spontaneously cared for other people, for animals, for the natural world—for all and everything—because they knew that each and all was an inseparable part of the Whole. They knew that everything is one Being, one Existence, one Consciousness. They did not feel separate from anything, but rather, one with everything. They did not feel separate from the Buddha, Jesus, the Tao, or God. "I and the Father are One,"[4] Jesus said. And, like Jesus, the saints and sages who have entered this state and stayed there have performed incredible acts of service for centuries. In Buddhism, many in this place have made the Bodhisattva vow, a commitment to put others before oneself. Or, more specifically, they have vowed to liberate all sentient beings before they themselves enter nirvana.

Some examples from the previous essay, *Moving Toward the Ultimate*:

1. Being centered in this place beyond the threshold allowed Jesus to say: "Not my will but thine be done."[5] Even if it meant crucifixion.

2. Being in this place allowed the Buddha to be totally untroubled by any criticism or attack, no matter how vehement, and to be unconcerned when sitting on the cold, hard ground in winter.

3. This is Ramana Maharshi, completely oblivious to the afflictions his body was suffering, joking with his doctor who was examining a tumor that was excruciatingly painful. Because his identity was located beyond the threshold, he could ignore the pain.

4. This is Peace Pilgrim telling her body, mind, and emotions to be still, and all would obey, even in extreme circumstances.

5. This is Bawa Muhaiyaddeen offering his life to an enraged man if it would reduce that man's suffering.

6. This is Teresa of Avila, when people were criticizing her and even threatening to send her before the Inquisition, saying she had no desire for things to be any different than they were—and was filled with joy by all that was, including the attacks.

It is from this place that Rumi, flooded with spontaneous inspiration—sometimes in a whirling dance—spoke thousands of pages of poems, giving voice to some of the greatest poetry the world has ever known. Listen to his words for a taste of where his identity was located:

> Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing
> there is a field.
> I'll meet you there

When you are in that place:

> Ideas, language, even the phrase each other
> doesn't make any sense.[6]

In that state:

> I, you, he, she, we
> In the garden of mystic lovers,
> these are not true distinctions.[7]

And:

> You say you see my mouth, ears, eyes, nose
> —they are not mine.[8]
> I am the life of life.
> I am that cat, this stone,
> no one.
> I have thrown duality away like an old dishrag,
> I see and know all times and worlds,
> As one, one, always one.[9]

This is the place from which the Christian mystic Catherine of Siena could say: "My being is God, not by simple participation, but by a true transformation of my Being. God is my Being, my me."[10]

Because she dwelled in this place, when Catherine was very sick and in great physical pain she could still say: "If only you could understand how I feel. My mind is so full of joy and happiness that I am amazed that my soul stays in my body. And so much love for my fellow-men has blazed up in me, that I could face death for them cheerfully and with great joy in my heart."[11]

Dame Julian of Norwich, resting in this place, echoes Catherine's words: "See! I am God; See! I am in all things; See! I do all things."[12]

Another woman who participated in the same experience several centuries earlier, halfway around the globe, was Izumi Shikibu—the 11th century Japanese poet. She wrote:

> Watching the moon at dawn,
> solitary, mid-sky,
> I knew myself completely:
> no part left out.[13]

A disciple of the Indian sage Shankara proclaimed. "I am transcendent, nondual, unrelated, infinite knowledge. Sheer bliss am I, indivisible."[14]

And much earlier, another Hindu master, Ashtavakra, said of the unknowable mystery: "You pervade the universe and the universe exists in you. You are by nature Pure Consciousness."[15]

Wumen Huikai, a Chinese Chan (Zen) master in the 13th century wrote:

> One instant is eternity;
> eternity is the now.
> When you see through this one instant,
> you see through the one who sees.[16]

The result of being in this state? Wumen describes the feeling that arises:

> Ten thousand flowers in spring, the moon in autumn,
> a cool breeze in summer, snow in winter.
> If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things,
> this is the best season of your life.[17]

Jumping across the ocean, and across centuries, Ralph Waldo Emerson planted the same seeds of knowing in the soil of early America, saying, "We lie in the lap of immense intelligence."[18] Emerson saw that, when we move beyond the threshold, we ourselves will know "the laws which traverse the universe.[19]" Standing in this place, we understand that "to the good, to the perfect"[20] we are born, no matter how far away we might feel from those things right now. If we will but wake to the possibility, "worlds, time, space, eternity, do seem to break out into joy."[21]

Emerson clearly experienced this highest possibility himself. He tells us about one such moment:

> Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years.
>
> In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, no disgrace, no calamity … which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God.[22]

Make no mistake: People are still crossing the threshold in modern times, often in the most difficult of circumstances. Robert Assagioli, a Jewish psychiatrist in Italy before World War II, was arrested and placed in solitary confinement by Mussolini's fascist organization. He used his time in prison in an unusual way: meditating, attempting to penetrate to the very essence of who he really was. His meditations led to profound experiences, recorded in an article entitled "Freedom in Prison," in which he described what he saw and experienced:

> A sense of boundlessness, of no separation from all that is, a merging with the self of the whole … Essential Reality is so far above all mental conceptions. It is inexpressible. It has to be lived … Joy inherent in Life Itself, in the Substance of Reality … The realization of the Self, resting and standing in Itself … The selfless Self … The three attitudes of the supreme paradox: No Self (Buddhist), Merged Into God (Mystic), Realization of the True Self (Vedanta).[23]

In my life

I have known these moments, but I have not stayed in that place beyond the threshold continuously. I don't know whether all the saints and sages mentioned above stayed there permanently, but each was intimately familiar with it, and I believe some lived continuously there, in the consciousness beyond the threshold.

As for myself, after the timeless moments have passed, I have always found myself back in my ego life, with desires for comfort, pleasure, and power once again knocking at the door of my consciousness. Once again I feel concern about the praise and blame of others. Now, with my thinking mind, I am trying to write words about my visits beyond time, all the while knowing that what i am trying to describe is ineffable and indescribable. Yet it still seems worthwhile to try to say what I know and have seen.

In my personal life now, I remember my time out of time and have more clarity about the choices available to me. I see more clearly that I can choose to believe, or not to believe, many of the things my enculturation taught. I see that I have significant choice about the values and meanings I will organize my life around, and I am clearer about the actions that might lead to the highest possibilities life has to offer.

I am more free now, but I am also aware that I still have unconscious drives that are trying to shape and control my life. Gradually, though, I am learning ways to make them more conscious, and the more I do so, the more my conscious self is able to participate in life's unfolding.

I dramatically remember that in my moments beyond the threshold there was only Being, there was only moving in the flow of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Now, back in the world of time, my ego tempts me to believe that I am in that place still, so I can do whatever my ego wants—and those actions will be aligned with the will of God. My ego often insinuates that its views come from the Higher Self, and so everything it is suggesting is fine. It tells me I am now selfless—as it advocates selfish desires.

If, however, I am fiercely honest with myself, I know when I have fallen back into ego mind. I know that true freedom doesn’t mean doing whatever the ego suggests. Rather, I must make choices: I can work to be more conscious of the forces inside me that are pushing and pulling my behavior, instead of giving in to them. I can choose to live by higher values and meanings, the ones I glimpsed when beyond time. Or I can drift back into unawareness and let egoic desires and unconscious whims again motivate my life.

So here I am, back in my ego life, trying to write about what I have seen and experienced. I feel a longing to be in that place across the threshold again, but I know I am not centered there now. I know in my thinking mind that, ultimately, there is no separation, but knowing this does not result in being able to live beyond the threshold. My identity, for now, has fallen back into my ego self. And even if I try, I cannot force myself back into that place beyond the threshold. Even if I say to myself: “Non-duality is the only reality,” “There is no self,” “All is One,” “I am completely surrendered to God,” “The world is an illusion,” “Everything is Emptiness,” “Love is my only motive,” saying or thinking these words does not shift my identity to that place.

When I am honest with myself, I know that thinking these thoughts will not take me back beyond the threshold. Even though I believe they are true, I also know that, right now, my ego and unconscious are present, even if I try to tell myself they are

not real. I know I am not living from pure awareness right now, or in complete harmony with the Divine.

I also know that the more I become conscious of my ego's desires—and my unconscious urges, fears, and anxieties—the less they control my life. I know that the more I make conscious choices in harmony with the meanings I have glimpsed in moments beyond the threshold, the closer I come to crossing the threshold again. And I know that the more I choose to be guided by the values taught by the wisdom figures I admire and trust, the nearer I come to resting in Pure Awareness, able to just "Be" and to move in harmony with All and Everything. As I do the work necessary to become more conscious, I feel the hold of my ego and unconscious loosen, even though I am not totally free from their influence right now.

Why do bad things happen?

In the picture of life I am suggesting, why do "bad" things happen, not only to ordinary people, but to the great saints and sages as well? There is no question that, from one point of view, bad things happen to "good" people. To understand why this is so, it is crucial to recognize that all judgments of good and bad are from the ego's point of view. All arise from a thinking mind that labels some things good and others bad—from a particular person's ego perspective. As a simple example, consider that the team that wins a ball game is good from one person's perspective and bad from another's. It is not just ball games; the same is true for elections, romance, even wars. In most wars, one side eventually celebrates victory, feeling they have been successful. But that "success" has often resulted in the devastation of another country and many deaths among the "enemies." So, while the winners are celebrating, the losers are mourning their defeat.

In our lives in the world, there have always been and always will be competition, conflict, loss, disappointment, sickness, and death. Rumi says, "good and bad are mixed."[24] The Biblical book of Ecclesiastes says the same. Good and bad are present in every individual life, as well as every family, community, and country. It is the price of having a human life. Good and bad are present in every spiritual community as well, for any time people congregate there will be those who are living, at least partly, from ego, and every one of those egos will at times be demanding, selfish, and suffering. To each and every ego, the flow of the Unseen Order will seem "good" when that flow accords with what the ego wants, and "bad" when it does not.

The crucial point is that God, the Tao, the Divine, the Mystery, the Unseen Order do not create or allow bad things to happen. It is always ego preferences and

unconscious desires that lead to judgments about what is good and what is bad. That is why the Third Zen Patriarch said:

> If you wish to see the truth
> then hold no opinions for or against anything.
> To set up what you like against what you dislike
> is the disease of the mind.[25]

In the flow of *All That Is*, there is no good and bad as egos think of it. To enter an individual ego existence means entering the world of good and bad. The flow of life, of existence, is not organized to give each individual ego what it wants, so egos will always judge some things as good and some as bad. The only escape from "bad" things is to bring your life into harmony with the Unseen Order. Perhaps, as philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead suggested, the mystery, the sacred dimension is "an all-embracing chaotic Attractor, acting throughout the world by gentle persuasion toward love."[26] Perhaps that love is what we are to come into harmony with. But this is not what the ego seeks. The ego is seeking a different kind of love; the ego wants to be loved, wants to bring the Unseen Order into harmony with what it wants, rather than bringing itself into harmony with *All That Is*.

This is the heart of the Buddha's message—that to be free of suffering means giving up all clinging and all aversion. To escape "bad" things means giving up all ego wishes and wants, even those that seem to the ego to be idealistic. This is what Jesus was conveying when he said that, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."[27] It is the heart of the vision so many mystics and near-death experiencers have had, such as this powerful mystical vision reported by Canadian psychiatrist R. M. Bucke (which is in complete accord with that of Alfred North Whitehead):

> The cosmic order is such that without any per-adventure all things work together for the good of each and all … the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call love, and the happiness of each and all is in the long run absolutely certain.[28]

But this happiness of each and all is not that of egos, but of the ultimate identity we all possess, or rather, the Ultimate that is the true identity of each and all.

Serving the Good

When I am in harmony with the whole, simply doing my part to serve the health of the whole, I am serving the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. But when my ego is in charge, I sometimes interfere with the flow of the Tao. I make mistakes that bring

pain and suffering, mistakes due to misunderstandings, and mistakes motivated by anger and greed. I even make mistakes, through confusion and errors of judgment, that cause my ego self pain and suffering. I suspect you do this as well.

What should we do? First, accept that mistakes are a natural part of human life. As the Third Zen Patriarch said about accepting our imperfections: "To live in this realization is to be without anxiety about non-perfection."[29] Secondly, we must recognize that our mistakes are "grist for the mill."[30] Another Zen master was asked how he had been able to progress so far, and he said: "One mistake at a time."

I have made, and likely will continue to make, many mistakes. I used to beat myself up for each one, adding to the pain and suffering each mistake was already causing. Gradually I am coming to see that the best response to a mistake is to acknowledge it and immediately ask: What can I learn from this? If I do this long enough, perhaps, like the Zen master, I will make enough mistakes and, learning from each, finally arrive at the Ultimate destination. Until this happens, mistakes are great teachers, if I use them wisely.

I am also coming to see that, even when my ego is alive and active, I can still serve the Good. I will not be able to do so perfectly. I will make mistakes. But I can make an effort to see the larger Good and serve it as best I can, while accepting that I do not see the whole picture. I can reach toward being guided by the Unseen Order as much as possible—but with humility—for I am sure that my ego's perceptions are limited. That is the best I can do.

And it is enough. Making a commitment to serve the Good as best I can and doing the things I sense that might increase the moments I spend beyond the threshold are sufficient principles around which to organize my life.

The Ultimate

I know I will return to the Ultimate, the place across the threshold. I will "Be" there once again, beyond time. Perhaps it will happen again in this lifetime. I might even dwell there permanently before this body dies. If not, then I will return there when death frees me from the hold of my ego and unconscious drives. Death is not to be sought, but neither is it to be feared. Death is not the goal of life—yet it is the natural fulfilment of existence in a mortal body. What lies beyond death is Mystery. As Shakespeare so eloquently said in Hamlet's voice (who was at the time fed up with life and its troubles and considering whether he should end it):

> To die: to sleep;
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end

> The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
> To sleep: perchance to dream: aye, there's the rub;
> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause:[31]

As Shakespeare clearly saw (there's the rub), we do not know what happens after death; we know almost nothing about the "undiscover'd country," that "puzzles the will."[32] Thus we must pause any time we think that death is an escape from the difficulties of life.

Those who are centered in the consciousness that lies beyond the threshold, though, can tell us more than Shakespeare was able to tell. And what they tell us is that the inner work we do here in this life matters, that everything we do to increase our connection and live in harmony with the Good affects the energy in which we spent the moments of our days. And they tell us that how we choose to live now affects whether we will cross the threshold during this life.

An example comes from the ancient Upanishads of India, which tell us that a mind "in deep absorption," "grown pure and silent," can "merge with the formless truth." If you can do this in your present life, you have "solved the great riddle," you have "found yourself," and are now "free." Your "heart forever is at peace."[33] The result of a life lived this way is that, before the body's death, you enter this state:

> Whole, he enters the Whole.
> His personal self returns to its radiant, intimate, deathless source.
> As rivers lose name and form when they disappear into the sea,
> the sage leaves behind all traces when she disappears into the light.
> Perceiving the truth, he becomes the truth;
> he passes beyond all suffering, beyond death;
> all the knots of his heart are loosed.[34]

The Buddha summarized what he taught this way: "There is, oh monks, an Unborn; neither become nor created nor formed. Were there not, there would be no deliverance from the formed, the made, the compounded."[35]

How does one get there? The Buddha instructed, "Vigilance is the path to the Deathless, Negligence the path to death. The vigilant do not die."[36] He goes on:

> One who does evil grieves in this life
> Grieves in the next, Grieves in both worlds

> One who makes merit now rejoices in this life
> Rejoices in the next, Rejoices in both worlds.[37]

The Buddha's message is that our task in this life is to let go of grasping and clinging, then to "make merit," and we will cross the threshold, discover the deathless, find nirvana for ourselves before the body dies. What will that be like? The Buddhist scholar Bhikkhu Bodhi says that the Buddhist path "aims to lead the practitioner to the state of liberation that lies beyond all realms of conditioned existence, to the same sorrowless and stainless bliss of Nibbāna that the Buddha himself attained on the night of his enlightenment."[38]

Crucially, this bliss is not something only those in the distant past could find. It does not require a particular set of practices or beliefs. In the mystical experience of R. M. Bucke, continuing the quote above:

> I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, a living Presence; I became conscious in myself of eternal life. It was not a conviction that I would have eternal life, but a consciousness that I possessed eternal life now.[39]

Turning to the Christian mystics, their message is that you will discover, as medieval theologian Meister Eckhart put it, "The ground of God and the ground of the soul are one and the same."[40] In the same vein, modern mystic Thomas Merton said, "If I penetrate to the depths of my own existence and my own present reality … then through this deep center I pass into the infinite 'I Am' which is the very Name of the Almighty."[41] When you do this, you enter Teresa of Avila's Seventh Mansion, and can dwell there while living in your current body—until that body dies. You have moved into and dwell in the "ultimate union" that she vividly describes.[42]

If this happens to you, how will you spend your time? Many of the great saints and sages tell us that helping those in need is one primary way that those who have crossed the threshold spend their life energy. With the Bodhisattva vow, many Buddhists commit to a beautiful example of this. In a dramatic Christian parallel, Teresa of Avila says that, if you come to permanently dwell in the Seventh Mansion before the body's death, "The soul must let ego bring it back to the ordinary world, to the seeming separateness of individual life."[43] Why? To finish the work that having this marvelous thing called existence is about. Taking Teresa's life as an example, that work involves tireless service to others.

What is it like for consciousness to permanently dwell in the Seventh Mansion, while the physical body is still in the world of time? If it happens in you, the transformation of your identity will be complete and you will be filled with a new energy. "The soul

who has dissolved into God reemerges with a vibrant wakefulness." You are in "a permanent place of peace"—no matter the difficulties encountered in the world of time.[44]

My here and now

Only a fully awakened heart/mind permanently experiences, during life in the everyday world, the state the saints and sages describe. But the more I am able to shift my identity to the highest stages they suggest while living in this particular body/mind, the closer I come to complete fulfillment of this life. And the more I intentionally choose to live from love and compassion, the more my identity shifts from my small, ego self to the "radiant, intimate, deathless source."

To emphasize once again, I am not living my daily life now in the place across the threshold that a few saints and sages seem to have been able to permanently occupy. I am not writing this essay from that state of consciousness. Rather, I am trying to capture fragments of what I have seen, offering a few hints and guesses that might help you on your journey. In my here and now life I am simply living from the highest level I can, practicing acceptance, gratitude, and humility, and sharing what I have learned as best I can with those who are making the journey themselves. This is where I will be until the natural death of this body comes, or until my consciousness is able to permanently rest beyond the threshold.

In moments of illumination, when stepping beyond the threshold of time into the timeless dimension, the seer is absorbed in the beauty and wonder of what is seen, becoming the shimmering glory of Being itself. Ego identity disappears. All that remains is the mystery of Being, of Existence, of Consciousness.

How did Existence come to exist? How is it there is Consciousness of Existence? How did Being come to be? When beyond the ego, these questions disappear. There is only the miracle of Being. The feelings that arise when I touch this place are wonder, love, compassion, and gratitude. Sometimes even joy. Love and gratitude for the mystery of Being, for Consciousness, for the Tao, for God. And for the guides who have helped me reach as far as I have been able to travel. I feel compassion for all other beings and for the beauty and wonder of the world. In this place, I see that everything is connected, all and everything is a part of the Whole which I am. Which you are.

Is what I say true? Listen to Rumi's answer:

> Is what I say true? Say yes quickly,
> if you know, if you've known it
> from before the beginning of the universe.[45]

[1] Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time*, trans. Simon Carnell and Erica Segre (New York, New York: Riverhead Books/Penguin Random House, 2018).

[2] Evan Pritchard, *No Word for Time: The Way of the Algonquin People* (Graham, North Carolina; Millichap Books, 2012).

[3] Carlo Rovelli, *Reality is Not What It Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity*, trans. Simon Carnell and Erica Segre ((New York, New York: Riverhead Books/Penguin Random House, 2017).

[4] John 10:30 (New International version of the *Bible*).

[5] Luke 22:42 (King James version of the *Bible*).

[6] Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks (New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 36.

[7] James Redfield, Michael Murphy and Sylvia Timbers, *God and the Evolving Universe: The Next Step in Personal Evolution* (New York, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin Putnam Books, 2002), 230.

[8] Andrew Harvey, *The Way of Passion: A Celebration of Rumi* (New York, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Penguin Putnam, 1994), 154.

[9] Andrew Harvey, *Light Upon Light: Inspirations from Rumi*, "This is Your Own Voice" (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 1996), 211.

[10] Baron Friedrich von Hugel, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends* (New York, New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1909), 265.

[11] Blessed Raymond of Capua, *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena*, trans. George Lamb (Charlotte, North Carolina, TAN Books, 2003), 146.

[12] Stephen Mitchell, ed., *The Enlightened Mind: An Anthology of Sacred Prose* (New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 127.

[13] Jane Hirschfield, ed., *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women,* poem trans. Jane Hirschfield and Mariko Aratani (New York, New York: HarperCollins Books, 1994), 59.

[14] Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion* (Toronto, Canada: St. James Press, Limited, 1986), 109-110.

[15] Campbell, *The Inner Reaches*, 110.

[16]Koun Yamada, trans., *The Gateless Gate: The Classic Book of Zen Koans* (Somerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 224. I use a shortened poetic version. A more scholarly one can be found in this referenced book: "In one consciousness, we see the whole of eternity: Eternity is nothing other than right now. If you see through this one consciousness at this moment, You see through the one who is seeing right now."

[17] Stephen Mitchell, ed., *The Enlightened Heart: An Anthology of Sacred Poetry* (New York, New York: HarperPerennial/HarperCollins Publishers, 1989), 47.

[18] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance, The Over-Soul and other Essays* (Claremont, California: Coyote Canyon Press, 2010), 28.

[19] January Searle/George Searle Phillips, *Emerson: His Life and Writings* (London, United Kingdom: Holyoake & Company, 1855), 18.

[20] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: Comprising his Essays, Lectures, Poems and Orations*, "An Address delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, July 15, 1838," (London, United Kingdom: Bell & Daldy Publishers, 1866), 190.

[21] Emerson, *The Complete Works*, 192.

[22] Emerson, *The Complete Works*, 142-143.

[23] Robert Assagioli, "Freedom in Jail: Assagioli's Notes," *The Quest*, 56-57. Reprinted in the *Psychosynthesis Quarterly*, Vol 4:1, March 2015, 30-31.

[24] Kabir Helminski, ed., *The Rumi Collection: An Anthology of Translations of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi* (Boulder, Colorada: Shambhala Publications, 1998), 6.

[25] Dennis Genpo Merzel, *The Eye Never Sleeps: Striking to the Heart of Zen*, ed. Stephen Muho Proskauer (Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, 1991), 3.

[26] Ken Wilbur, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* (Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, 2001), 85.

[27] Luke 17:33 (King James Bible).

[28] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature: Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (New York, New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1920), 399. James says that his quotation follows the privately printed pamphlet which preceded Dr. Bucke's larger work and differs verbally a little from the text of the latter. Richard Maurice Bucke, ed., *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Innes & Sons, 1901).

[29] Sengtsan, The Third Zen Patriarch, *hsin hsin ming: verses on the faith mind*, trans. Richard B. Clarke (Buffalo, New York, White Pine Press, in cooperation with The Living Dharma Center, 1973), Last Page.

[30] Ram Dass and Stephen Levine, *Grist for the Mill: Awakening to Oneness* (New York, New York: HarperOne/Harper Collins Publishers, 2013).

[31] William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, "Hamlet" (San Diego, California: Canterbury Clasics/Baker & Taylor Publishing Company, 2014), 755.

[32] Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, 755.

[33] Mitchell, ed., *The Enlightened Heart*, xv.

[34] Ibid., 4.

[35] Bhikkhu Nyanatiloka, *The Work of the Buddha: An Outline of the Ethico-philosophical System of the Buddha, in the words of the Pali Canon, together with explanatory notes*, trans. Sasanavamsa (Rangoon, Myanmar: International Buddhist Society, 1907), 16. The quote is a shorter version of: "Brothers, there is an unborn, an unoriginated, that has not become, that has not been formed, therefore is escape possible from the world of the born, the originated, the become, the formed."

[36] Gill Fronsdal, *The Dhammapada: A Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations* (Boulder, Colorado, Shambhala Publications, 2005), 7.

[37] Fronsdal, *The Dhammapada*, 4.

[38] Bhikkhu Bodhi, In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon (The Teachings of the Buddha) Somerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, Inc. 2005). 223.

[39] James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 399.

[40] James Ogilvy, ed., *Revisioning Philosophy* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 84.

[41] Peter Russell, *From Science to God; A Physicist's Journey into the Mystery of Consciousness* (Novato, California: New World Library, 2002), 88.

[42] Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, trans. Mirabai Starr (New York, New York: Riverhead Books, 2003), 27.

[43] Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, 26.

[44] Ibid., 26.

[45] Kabir Helminski, ed., *The Rumi Collection: An Anthology of Translations of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 1998), 145.