

Explorations on a path to a higher state of consciousness

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INTRODUCTION

As the evolution of humankind unfolds, the overall collective consciousness of humankind is gradually being elevated. Every day more and more people are taking steps towards self-improvement. Across all cultures and in all walks of life humans are exploring and employing techniques to better themselves. Studying those who have evolved before them and learning from their past mistakes they are choosing their own path.

Our thirst for knowledge in the area of higher states of consciousness can be reflected in our daily lives and the religions and sciences that shape it. A remodeling of science is currently underway in an attempt to explain and provide models that replicate the discoveries being made as we investigate ways to further elevate our consciousness. Research methods are being employed to further our understanding and make this knowledge accessible to the masses. Collectively, our efforts will be rewarded with an improved society and a higher sense of self. The path to a higher state of consciousness is of utmost priority, unique for each individual, and will change life, as we perceive it.

IMPORTANCE

The search for a path to a higher state of consciousness is important in our life here on earth. It can be observed across all cultures as an important goal in life. Such "efforts" have been highly valued across cultures for centuries; they have been regarded as the "summum bonum", the highest good and highest goal of existence" (Walsh, 1995, p.25). As researchers interact with society to study higher levels of consciousness they begin to realize its importance. Maslow observed that individuals who had experienced transcendent forms of peak experience valued them as the most important part of their lives (Cleary and Shapiro, 1995). The prevalence and importance of altered states of consciousness may be gathered from Bourguignon's (1973, p.11) finding that some 90% of cultures have institutionalized some form of them. She concluded that this is "a striking finding and suggest that we are, indeed, dealing with a matter of major importance, not merely a bit of anthropological esoterica." Therefore, the path to a higher state of consciousness is of utmost priority in our life here on earth.

The search for a higher state of consciousness has puzzled humankind for a long time. As new doctrines of science have come into reality, people have tried to explain and complete the puzzle to grasp an overview of how it all fits together. Several prominent scientists have taken up the task. Maslow, in fact, had modified his need hierarchy theory to provide a place for transcendent states of awareness at the top of the need hierarchy. He did this after his "post mortem" life experience. Abraham H. Maslow had a heart attack about nineteen months before he eventually died of a massive heart attack. He defined that time after his first heart attack as his post mortem life. He said, "I could just as easily have died, so that my living constitutes a kind of an extra. A bonus; I might just as well live as if I had already died; Every moment of every single day is transformed because the pervasive undercurrent - the fear of death - is removed" (Cleary and Shapiro, 1995, p.21). He changed his hierarchy of needs theory to include at its top rank the need for transcendence. Maslow recognized the need for transcendence as an important piece of the puzzle of life and asserted that "the desire to transcend one's nature was as much an aspect of human nature as lower needs" (Cleary and Shapiro, 1995, p.21). Maslow realized the importance of taking steps towards a higher state of consciousness.

Nearly a hundred years ago, William James, one of the fathers of modern psychological research, reflected on how we ourselves created arbitrary boundaries that in effect fence in our psyches. Like Jung and Maslow, he made urgent pleas to open ourselves up to the vast possibilities inherent in an openness to the concept of a higher state of consciousness (Grof, 1990, p.86).

"Most people live; in a very restricted circle of their potential being. They make use of a very small portion of their possible consciousness, and their soul's resources in general, much like a man who, out of his whole

bodily organism, should get into a habit of using and moving only his little finger

James's notion was essentially this: that the core of religious life is found primarily within the inner recesses of the individual; and that in each one of us the essential link between our normal everyday waking awareness and mystical states of religious awakening lay through a direct encounter with our own subliminal unconscious life (Taylor, 1978, p.67).

Most of our higher abilities lie dormant within us. They need to be recognized so that we may learn from them and further develop their possibilities. As individuals undertake the task of elevating their consciousness and accessing these dormant qualities, the effects will be tremendous. In fact, the understanding of evolution itself will be in for a change. In the words of Sri Aurobindo.

"In the previous stages of evolution Nature first came and effort had to be directed toward a change in the physical organization, for only so could there be a change in consciousness; But in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable, for it is through his consciousness, through its transformation and no longer through a new bodily organism; that the evolution can and must be effected." (Metzner, 1980, p. 46)

To a considerable degree, the evolution of society and humanity is anchored in and depends upon the evolution of individuals. Here, modern frontiers of scientific thinking converge with ancient Eastern and esoteric teachings (Ouspensky, 1949; Satpre, 1968). These philosophies view self-transformation as the essential feature of human life on earth, and the key to our participation in the evolutionary design of life and nature as a total system (Metzner, 1980, p.47).

My own personal interest in higher states of consciousness came about after realizing that there must be more to our life here on earth than the limitations of materialistic joys. I had gone to university like most of my contemporaries to further what seemed to be the logical progression towards a fulfilling lifestyle. This decision had affected one of my burning passions -a love of sport. I was on the Canadian team and training towards the Olympics while trying as the same time to balance school. Two years before the 1996 Summer Olympics I left school to focus full time on my training. Training and competing with the Canadian team became my vehicle to travel the world, explore remote places and meet the most beautiful people. No monetary sum can represent these experiences. I realized that all material things are transient. Happiness must come from within. And basically, the purpose of life is to serve other people. The path towards this goal is to be enjoyed, and the experience is more important than attaining the specific goal. With respect to myself, I realized the importance of physical and mental health. With these come mental clarity, optimum performance and well being. The concept of perfection has always been foremost in my mind. Interacting with other Olympic athletes and meeting people who worked at transcending their own consciousness convinced me of the importance of achieving a higher state of consciousness. As the 2000 Olympics are happening right now in Sydney, Australia it is an important time for the world to watch how far it is possible to take human potential. Competition aside, it is a great opportunity for the world to unite on friendly ground.

DEFINING A HIGHER STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Attempting to define higher states of consciousness is very difficult. There are many limitations that have been encountered. Language and semantics limit our conceptualizing and expression. How can we describe these experiences when they are said to be "ineffable, indescribable, and inconceivable because they are transempirical, transverbal, and transrational" (Walsh, 1995, p. 48)? Some have described a higher state of consciousness as a state of enlightenment referring to the qualities present and realized once one has accessed this potential. Others have described it as "the Zone", a place outside of time where everything makes sense. The idea of transcending consciousness is another way to describe the process. Transcendence, as defined by Baruss (1996, p.16) is "the surpassing of limitations, such as those of human experience." Transpersonal, the notion of transcending the personal self is another term that has also been used.

Charles Tart (1969; 1971) has given us a reasonable, overall description of higher states. Higher states are defined as those in which lower states are all subsumed, so that any higher state is an expanded state. And it is not something instead of a lower state; it includes everything in the lower state so that the higher state means more presence. It doesn't mean moving from here to there; it just means being here, with expanded awareness (Vaughan, 1982, p. 110).

Attaining higher states enlightens the individual to the secrets of the universe. Self-actualization, "the process of becoming all that one can become" (Baruss, 1996, p.160) moves oneself toward a higher state of consciousness. The knowledge and understanding can be useful for humanity. Like prophets and sages, those who have achieved these higher states of insightful knowledge can pass it on to others to improve society and help individuals on their own paths to perfection. The concept of helping people is important, -upon attaining a higher state of consciousness, it is important to educate other people and help them, if they so desire, to attain a higher level of functioning. Research methods need to be employed, and a remodeling of scientific theory to help explain these states.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research into higher states of consciousness is very challenging. In the words of Metzner, "Here is the Problem: how can we know or describe anything about the changes we have not yet experienced, changes that by universal consensus take us beyond the realm of everyday reality, for which no words and concepts were fashioned? It may be that all we can really go by are the reports of those who have gone ahead, who have explored further, who have seen and understood more, and who come back and say, 'it's like this' and 'it's as if' (Metzner, 1980, p. 48).

Experiences are subjective. Like Metzner suggests, our most successful methods of research have been case studies. Based on the knowledge of how others have elevated their own consciousness and by reviewing their reports of what they have experienced we can find a path that is the one for us.

One problem related to exploring the path through someone else's experiences is that these experiences are beyond this reality. This raised the question of how is it possible to relate these experiences to our material universe? As Baruss mentioned (1996, p. 81) "Transcendent consciousness is necessarily ineffable." How do we go about researching these states? Some people believe we can't. Metzner has claimed "that since transpersonal states are private and interior they cannot be publicly validated and therefore can not be researched" (1980, p.48). Along with Metzner, Goleman (1972, p. 59) said, "research regarding higher states of consciousness is quite difficult if not impossible from an Empirical standpoint." Thus, we must change our material universe and our objective research methods to accommodate a way to study these states. This screams out for a remodeling of science.

REMODELING OF SCIENCE

Aldous Huxley had in mind a remodeling of science when he developed his "perennial philosophy". Viewing Western science as incomplete and limited he introduced the notion that humans are essentially commensurate with the entire universe and ultimately divine, thus, mirroring the spiritual philosophies of the great ancient and Eastern cultures. Perennial philosophy offers a rich spectrum of spiritual techniques through which it is possible to recognize and experience one's own divinity and achieve liberation from suffering (Grof, 1983, p. 14).

As Grof mentioned (1983, p. 15) "there needs to be a theory that would be broad enough to incorporate some important aspects of perennial philosophy and yet preserve the pragmatic power of mechanistic science". Science has provided us with sound models upon which to explain many of the functions of our world. However, both mechanistic

and perennial theories have their problems. "Materialistic science has developed effective means of alleviating the most obvious forms of suffering - disease, poverty and starvation - but has done very little for inner freedom and genuine emotional satisfaction. As a matter of fact, against all expectations, increase of material affluence has been characteristically associated with dramatic increases of mental disorders, alcoholism, suicide rate, crime, violence and social disintegration" (Grof, 1983, p.14). On the other hand, perennial philosophy has offered inner liberation to a select few, but has failed in offering solutions for the urgent practical problems of everyday existence and improving the external conditions of human life. It seems a new science would have to include the best of both, build upon the clear-cut rigidity of science yet at the same time be flexible enough to include facts which can not be objectified. Grof essentially had this in mind when he suggested (1983, p. 14) that "a new science would have to include new ways of observing and measuring these higher states of consciousness, since western science in the past has only recognized as real those phenomena that can be objectively observed and measured".

Developing a new science would be a step in the right direction to accommodate higher levels of consciousness. Other scientists have realized the need for a remodeling of science. Charles Tart has observed this in his studies. He mentioned particularly that "the primary implication (from studies such as the Ganzfeld Study) is that, using the best kind of scientific methodology, the human mind has occasional abilities to transcend space and time that are totally inexplicable in terms of the material world". He also agrees that "Materialism, while it may be a useful working hypothesis in many areas, especially the physical sciences, is totally unable to explain important aspects of human nature" (Tart, 1995, p.8). For example, how can materialistic science attempt to explain "a shift in the base of consciousness... transformation in the meaning of the "Self"... depth penetration... sense of complete freedom... beyond space, time and causality... freedom from guilt... a sense of all knowing... and all of the other characteristics associated with the adjustment to a higher energy level, or higher state of consciousness and described by Merrell-Wolff, (1973, pp. 38-51). These qualities are associated with a higher state of consciousness, yet there are many more phenomena in our world that become dismissed as "anthropological esoterica", simply because we have not yet developed a science to understand them.

"According to Materialistic Science, any memory requires a material substrate, such as the neuronal network in the brain or the DNA molecules of the genes. However, it is impossible to imagine any other material medium for the information conveyed by various forms of transpersonal experiences described above. This information clearly has not been acquired during the perception. It seems to exist independently of matter and to be contained in the field of consciousness itself, or in some other types of field that cannot be detected by our scientific instruments. The observations from the study of transpersonal experiences are supported by evidence that comes from other avenues of research. Challenging the basic metaphysical assumptions of Cartesian-Newtonian thinking, scientists like Rupert Sheldrake seriously explore such possibilities as "Memory without a material substrate" and "morphogenetic fields". (Grof, 1994, p. 25-26)

It is reassuring to know that science is headed in the right direction towards explaining some of these phenomena. It has still taken a long time, for "only in the late twentieth century did science finally offer a firm basis for reunification when it was discovered that matter has a potential for producing greater order and complexity. For example, as the Nobel laureate chemist Ilya Prigogine discovered, certain biochemical systems called "dissipative structures" can grow in chemical complexity, in apparent defiance of entropy and the second law of thermodynamics. This defiance is thought to provide a possible basis for the origin of life" (Walsh, 1995, p. 18). Discoveries like these should encourage the most skeptical scientists to reconsider their working models to accommodate higher levels of consciousness studies and research.

"The key point is that there is now significant scientific evidence for a self-organizing, self-transcending process in matter, life and mind" (Walsh, 1995, p. 18). Now hopefully, since we have the evidence science will come to recognize these areas and make them more accessible to investigation.

How do we achieve a higher state of consciousness? This is one of the mysterious and most sought questions in our life here on earth. I do not claim to have the answer. I believe it is different for every individual. I do however, propose to investigate and shed some light on some possible ways to achieve a higher state of consciousness.

The path to a higher state of consciousness is not clearly outlined. It has been called the "razors edge" in India because it can be treacherous encountering your inner self. Many people are not ready or afraid to travel to the root of their souls suffering and torment. For these reasons few people take up the task to try to transcend their consciousness.

The path is unique for each individual, since our own beliefs and experiences are truly personal. Tart (1990 p. 155) stated very simply that "your belief system is related to the experiences that you have". Before we attempt to outline a path concerning individual beliefs one cautionary word of advice comes from the Buddha.

Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it.

Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations.

Do not believe in anything because it is spoken and rumored by many.

Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books.

Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders.

But after observation and analysis, when you find anything agrees with reason, and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it. (Tart, 1990, p. 157)

A PATH THAT IS PERSONAL

Every religion and every culture the world over has input into finding the right path. Some say you must not eat meat, others advocate the surrender of all material and sensual pleasures. How are we supposed to decipher all of this to find one path that is consistent? There is an old story of a king who is interested in achieving enlightenment. I believe this story sums up many of the inconsistencies happening today.

The King was very interested in Buddhism and wanting to get enlightened, so the Buddha started to tell him about the rules of the monastic life. But the king said, "No, wait a minute. I like being a king, and I do the job well, and people need my services. I don't want to give up being a king." The Buddha supposedly worked out a different set of practices for someone who wants to continue being a king. (Tart, 1990, p. 154)

OUTLINE A PATH

When we take up the task to change ourselves we can then begin to truly know ourselves. The path begins with an understanding, or complete knowing of the "self". This is extremely broad in scope, perhaps taking a lifetime or several. According to Baruss (1996, p. 133) "we need to undergo a process of self-transformation in order to activate this dormant quality; thus the effort to develop discernment amounts to authenticity". Authenticity is the "effort to act on the basis of one's own understanding" (Baruss, 1996, p. 152). This provides credence to the fact that we must trust our own instincts and live up to our own chosen guidelines. The development of authenticity can be chronicled through various religions. I believe many religions offer paths to the truth,

but no one in particular has the absolute or pursues it that far. Therefore, we must find the way for ourselves.

There are several possibilities. For example, Buddhism might be practical for some. "Buddhism may; not be a religion in the usual sense of the word. Buddhism is more like a medicine, I would say, than a religion or philosophy. It is something with a practical goal, the permanent eradication of all suffering. Put alternatively, Buddhism is a technology for attaining happiness independent of conditions and circumstances" (Tart, 1990, p. 157). McDonald-Smith is also inclined to use a Buddhist model: "I'm drawn in my teachings to use the Buddhist model of the paramis. It's actually a model of multiple developmental lines. There's the development of generosity, ethics (sila), renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, resolution or determination, loving-kindness (metta), and equanimity" (McDonald-Smith, 1996, p. 43). Therefore, Buddhism might be the way for some people.

Tart (1990, p. 156) suggests that we can describe "the entire path in terms of four practices. We might call them (1) basic morality, (2) concentration power, (3) insight through observation, and (4) habitual loving kindness. The original terms in Pali, the classical language of early Buddhism, are sila, samadhi, panna, and metta."

BASIC MORALITY (SILA)

Shinzen Young talking with Tart gives a definition of basic morality as five-fold: "not to take life, not to take what is not given, not to lie, not to do sexual practices that are harmful to people, and not to indulge in intoxicants" (Tart, 1990, p. 156). Thus mirroring the basic teachings of most of our religions.

Basic morality can also include the lower states of consciousness, which must be acknowledged before progressing to a higher state. It is important not to neglect any of these aspects. "What I see as really important is to help people apply wise attention to every aspect of their lives, so that each of the paramis get developed" (McDonald-Smith, 1996, p. 43).

Surrendering our ego is an important obstacle to overcome. It can come about through following the values of basic morality. As Welwood suggests "a spiritual path demands an enormous surrender of our normal egocentric way of going about our lives" (Welwood, 1978, p. 109). By surrendering our ego, it is possible to uncover the layers of our personality and to discover our true self.

The path to a higher state of consciousness includes a change in self through following the basic moral guidelines. Once we have made a decision to pursue, we will begin to notice corresponding changes.

As Aldous Huxley summarized the problem in perennial philosophy, knowledge is a function of being. When we change our core self, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing. Talmudic wisdom put it succinctly: "We do not see things as they are but as we are" (Walsh, 1996, p. 13). Thus we begin to see things with a different view, and progress towards a higher state of consciousness.

DEVELOP CONCENTRATION (SAMADHI)

Learning to listen requires extreme concentration. Before we begin to gather insight through observation we must develop concentration power. This concentration can be acquired through such practices as meditation, yoga or any other practice that can develop similar skills. The essential goal is to quiet the mind.

Meditation can offer a way to develop concentration powers and know the self. Through the process of transcending the functioning of the active mind it is possible to know the self. Baruss informed us to the three broad categories of

meditation: witnessing, concentration, and reflexive meditation. "In witnessing meditation, one observes the ongoing activity of the mind; in concentrative meditation, one restricts attention to specific mental contents; and in reflexive meditation, one seeks the source of consciousness" (Baruss, 1996, p. 65). All forms can lead to knowledge of self in a broad sense.

OBSERVATION

Not enough can be said about knowing your inner self. This is a process that can be followed by learning to listen to your inner self. Abraham Maslow demonstrated throughout his work with people who were highly "self-actualized" that one's full potential could be realized not by suppressing signals from the inner core but, on the contrary, by learning to listen to them. His research indicated that while the "voices and impulses" from this inner core (like Jung's Philemon) might be weak, subtle and delicate, very easily drowned out by learning, by cultural expectations, by fear of disapproval, it was nevertheless true that: "authentic selfhood can be defined in part as being able to hear these impulse-voices within oneself" He said: "No psychological health is possible unless this essential core of the person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected". (Grof, 1990, p.85)

Thus, through the idea of surrendering our ego, abiding by the rules of basic morality, developing concentration power and directing our thoughts inwardly it is possible to listen and begin to understand our true self.

The idea of training our selves to listen is important. As Tart says "we miss many important but delicate insights and intuitions because we haven't trained ourselves to listen to the quiet, rapid, more subtle level of our mind, emotions and body" (1990, p. 150).

LOVE (METTA)

The ultimate attainment is Love. It is the complete union with God, realizing that the self is connected, and we are one with God at the same time. It is the merging of spirit with spirit. The ultimate Truth at the heart of creation. Realizing and applying this, we develop habitual loving-kindness.

Union with God in absorbing Love marks the height of attainment, but Sufis, according to Robert Graves (in Shah, 1971), "admits its value only if the devotee can afterward return to the world and live in a manner consistent with his experience" (Goleman, 1972, p.162). Establishing a connection with God, and acting as a conductor for his light can be accomplished. Essentially you become a channel, allowing Love to pour forth from every cell in your body.

BEYOND A PATH

I believe it is important to live among the people and to stay in tune with the world. Many people think they must go to India, live in a log cabin, change religions, become a monk, etc. to achieve a higher state of consciousness. From someone who has tried all of these paths Richard Alpert a.k.a. Baba Ram Dass has said "I'm beginning to see that I am only going to be free when I'm fully involved in the world. A strange insight for me" (1982, p.182). Thus these changes are fully capable of happening right where we are.

It is still important to rise above the material world and to be in tune with the universe. "I tell those who come to me to lead a life unattached like the maid-servant. I tell them to live unattached to this world - to be in the world, but not of the world" (Frager and Fadiman, 1975, p.70).

Anyone can decide to elevate his or her own consciousness. Once this decision has been consciously made half of the

work is already done. It is important that a person stick with their decision, for it has been said that obstacles are those things we see when we take our eyes off the goal. For most people "The underlying premise is constant with my basic belief system, and it is something that they would like to do... [BUT] of those people, only a tiny fraction actually persevere with the practice." "I think that the problem is that they do not get the constant reinforcement that they need in order to keep the practice up" (Tart, 1990, p. 162).

It requires patience, in the words of Ram Dass. "Ten years ago I used to be counting, How soon 'til I get enlightened? Now I've developed patience. It's not despair. It's patience. It's rooted in hopelessness. My attachment to where I was going was getting in the way of being. The third Chinese patriarch says, "Even to be attached to enlightenment is to go astray" (Alpert/Ram Dass, 1982, p. 182).

McDonald-Smith agrees. From her twenty years of practice she reports that there is a lot for us to develop. She believes that the map of what needs to be done keeps enlarging. "There's such a vastness to spiritual practice; there's so much for all of us to develop" (McDonald-Smith, 1996, p.43).

Wren-Lewis offered his input on a path to a higher state of consciousness. Here is a man who had a near death experience (NDE). While traveling in Thailand he was poisoned by a stranger. Upon returning back to life he had a different outlook on life. Wren-Lewis suggested that there are not any mystical traditions that can offer the kind of immediate liberation that NDE's can bring. He believes too often people get bogged down with the preoccupation with one's personal future, this perhaps is the cause of all the trouble in the world.

"What I suspect we need is not any kind of path or discipline, but a collection of tricks or devices for catching the Dark at the corner of the eye, as it were, and learning how to spot its just-waiting-to-be-seen presence, combined with strategies for stopping the hyperactive survival-programs from immediately explaining the perception away." (Wren-Lewis, 1994, p.114)

Achieving this realization one will often find oneself no longer bothered to pursue worldly, materialistic goals, since in this new consciousness, satisfaction is the basic essence itself, not the result of desire gratification. Giving up this competitive stance one may rely instead on one's intuition and synchronistic occurrences. Thus a path to a higher state of consciousness can be expanded upon to overlook the preoccupation with a path, and lead to a trust in self.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

As we learn more about ourselves and take steps towards improvement, we discover that there is more to the puzzle than first anticipated. Our sense of self can encompass a larger aspect of life and universe. As Grof noted (1990, p. 91), "it completely overrides the everyday illusion of Newtonian reality, where we seem to be "skin-encapsulated egos" existing in a world of separate beings and objects." Our actions can have multiple effects beyond our-self. Individuals who take up the path to a higher state of consciousness can thus help the overall evolution of humankind. By elevating ourselves we cannot but help increase the awareness of those around us. I see collective consciousness as a merging into what can be called a critical mass when everyone will have achieved a higher state of consciousness. This will in turn help our understanding of the nature of consciousness.

Still in this time there are many impediments. When we learn to overcome the problems of ineffability, our science only recognizing as real those objective experiences and our old research methods, we will begin to understand more about consciousness.

As we start with ourselves, improving and observing our own consciousness we will begin to know ourselves on a truly personal level. As research methods and science improves we will be able to chart our experiences with those of others. Explaining and sharing these experiences will help others to achieve the same. Therefore leading to a more complete understanding of the nature of consciousness. An overall improved society will reveal itself through the process of trying to achieve a higher state of consciousness.

Grof shared this view (1990, p. 18) when he said "I see consciousness and the human psyche as experiences and reflections of a cosmic intelligence that permeates the entire universe and all of existence".

Research into these areas has already begun. "Pauli and Jung sought the mechanisms of the collective consciousness that connected a number of human brains across space and time" (Jibu, Mari, Yasue and Kunio, 1995, p.142). One day we will all be connected in a state of higher consciousness.

CONCLUSION

There is a path to a higher state of consciousness. It cannot be written in stone or summed up in 10 steps, it involves a combination of different techniques and changes that must occur within each individual.

Realizing that each one of us is connected with a higher order we can choose to become one with it, and use the knowledge gained to help foster an improved society. Each evolutionary and historical epoch has been associated with a specific stage of individual cognitive development together with correlative socially shared worldviews and moralities. It has been observed that cultural evolution and individual development go hand in hand. Humans can increase their own consciousness, in turn affecting those around them. The effect will be huge leading to a better understanding of consciousness. It has been observed that new organisms come into being as a result of necessity. Therefore, increase your necessity so that you may increase your perception.

Concluding, I agree with Tart when he said:

In Buddhism, the word for heaven is "Pure Land." Each day through what you put out, you are making your world into a Pure Land. And this just happens, without effort. Life takes on a magical quality. (Tart, 1990, p.165)

Therefore, I am not advocating a set path to a higher state of consciousness. I believe it is truly unique to each of us. It is important for each individual to choose his or her own way and develop as much as possible to take oneself to the seldom-achieved ultimate.

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