

Prayer: Source of Time and Space

By Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, DHL
 Founder, Spiritual Eldering Institute

In April, 2004, Rabbi ("Reb") Zalman participated in a roundtable dialogue at the Ideas, Community, Spirituality & Music Conference with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Bishop Desmond Tutu, former Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald and others. He delivered the following address at the Roundtable Dialogue session entitled: "Balancing Educating the Mind with Educating the Heart." Please check the website: www.dalailamavancouver.org for more information

Avinu Malkaynu!
 From infinity draw down to us
 The great renewal
 And attune us to Your intent,
 So that Wisdom, Your daughter
 Flows into our awareness,
 To awaken us to see ahead,
 So we can help instead of harm.
 May all the devices we make and use,
 Be sparing and protecting
 Of Your creation.

Help us to set right
 What we have debased,
 To heal
 What we have made ill,
 To care for and to restore
 What we have injured.

Bless our Earth, our home
 And show us all
 How to care for her,
 So that we might live
 Your promise
 Given to our forebearers,
 "To live heavenly days
 Right here on this Earth."

May all the beings,
 You have fashioned,
 Become aware
 That it is You
 Who has given them being.
 May we realize
 That You shaped our lives
 And may each one who breathes
 Join with others who breathe,
 In the delight of shared knowing
 Of the great breath.

Assist us in learning
 How to partner,
 With family, neighbors
 And friends.
 Aid us
 In dissolving old enmities.

May we come to honor,
 Even in those whom we fear,
 Your image and form,
 Your light
 Dwelling in their hearts.

May we soon see the day when
 Your House will be, indeed,
 The House of prayer
 For all peoples,
 Named and celebrated
 In every tongue and speech.

On that day You will be one
 With all cosmic Life.
 Amen!
 The problems we face at this time
 Don't seem to yield
 To the solutions
 Our traditions and lineages
 Have provided in the past.
 Each one of our traditions
 Had built in a high degree
 Of surface tension
 And saw itself
 As sharply separate
 From others.
 Often universalistic statements
 Were made which
 In subtle and not so subtle ways
 Were what people call inclusivistic;
 That is to say
 "If you come under our umbrella
 As a lesser adjunct,
 As a minor satellite,
 We will legitimate you."
 Still the attitude
 Was basically triumphalistic;
 when the Mashiach—Christ—
 Mahdi—avatar—Maitreia—comes
 We will be proven right
 And you will end up to be
 On a lesser plane than we.
 Then came Auschwitz—
 Hiroshima—Nagasaki—
 The moon walk—the internet—
 And now
 We can no longer afford
 Any reality map
 That does not base itself
 On an organismic view of life
 On this planet.

Our traditional theologians,
 In order to defend themselves
 Against existential terror
 And high anxiety—
 The spiritual vacuum



In which they have to preach—
 Have by and large,
 Been co-opted
 By those haves,
 Who have the deep pockets,
 To hold onto the status quo—

Or by the have-nots
 Who want to return
 To implausible security
 Of the old-time religion.

More and more
 Have deep thinking eco-theologians
 Come to the conclusion
 That each religion
 Is like a vital organ
 Of the planet
 And that we
 For the planets sake
 Need, each one of us,
 To aim to stay alive and devout
 In the most healthy way
 We can manage.

Hence for all my universalism
 I need to be
 The best and healthiest Jew I can be
 And urge my co-religionists
 To become the best and healthiest Jews
 They can be in order to contribute
 To the healing of the planet.

While I have gained much help
 From our tradition which provided me
 With the sacred tools and means
 To higher consciousness
 Many of them seem not to be
 Immediately applicable
 To our current situation.

However,
 There is a revelation
 Coming down to us
 From helpers above our ken
 As well as the result
 Of a chthonic push
 From below
 From our mother the Earth.
 This leads me
 Not so much to offer answers
 As to raise questions.

Prayer, *from page 5*

Therefore my contribution will be
To raise questions
And they are all intertwined.

As each generation comes,
It needs answers for the problems
Which the old answers have created.
Example: nuclear fuel,
Pesticides and herbicides,
Soon we will have to deal with Questions
Which genetic engineering
Is creating in bio-engineered plants
And who knows how soon?
Even with human genetic stock.

The urge we experience
To grow in awareness
Is often blocked and opposed by forces
That want to cut us off from that urge
And addict us
To mind-deadening distractions.

Yet at a meeting like this one
We want to amplify that urge
That has the push
Of our earth's need of healing
As well as the pull
Of the vision of organismic health
That wants to birth itself in us.
Here we want to wake up ourselves
And wake others up
To even more awakenedness.

We have been habituated
To find the easiest
And most immediate answers
So that we not stay in the anxiety
Of holding onto the question.
The answers, easily available,
Don't work to stave off
The impending disaster
Of our accelerating global dying.
So what are some of the questions?

First:
What ideas of cosmology
Do we have to have
In order to approach
The healing of the planet?
Apparently the reality map
We have at this time is not correct.
Our sense of the direction to which
The possible harmonious life matrix points
Demand that we change that map.

Creativity does not reside
In the way we are imprisoned
To repeat precedent.
It is in daring—to be outrageous,
To play with the least probable
Possibilities,
The ones more weird and spiritual
Where we may find answers.
These possibility forms

Dance before the mind's eye
And from that vision
There emerges an unexpected form
With its creative proposal
And therefore new way
To understand and map reality.

We need to learn this process
Of questing
In order to discover
—and this is urgent—
To co-create
With the integral—
Planetary mind—
The cosmology
We have to have in order
To approach
The healing of the planet.

Secondly:
What is the basic health ethos
Arising
From that new cosmology?
The cosmology
Of the industrial revolution
Gave us an ethos to productivity
At any cost.
The cosmology
Of corporate capitalism
Pushes an ethos
To consumption at any cost.

The cosmology we seek to find
Should produce first and foremost
An ethos that honors
Harmonious biological health
In the individual
And in the matrix
Of the most harmonious
Biological health
Of the environment.
In order to co-create this cosmology
We can no longer rely
On a single mind.

The complexity,
And with it the responsibility,
Of what we have to mind
In the world and life
Is too great to bear for only one person.
The only way
To get it together
Is together.

I plead for research
That would discover
What it takes
To enable us
To operate in webs of consciousness
In mind networks.
At least for a small group
Of prepared minds
To seek to merge dreams
And behold visions.

These people would serve
As our psychonauts
And contact minds
In other regions.

We are quite underdeveloped
In this area.
We have very low ideas
Of how groups really work.
While there is
Immense sophistication
In the technological area
Of military systems
And lethal Weapons
Of Mass Destruction
We are very low
In our understanding
Of how we need to handle
Conflict resolution.

Much research
Needs to be done to help us
To optimal
Social and political harmony
And this cannot wait.

What do we need to do
In order that there be
That cultural revolution
That is now urgently needed?

I have often challenged educators
To plan the curricula
For handling information
With ecological wisdom,
For the formation of character,
For education of the heart,
For raising the emotional IQ
For teaching skills of cooperation.
That would produce the
Adepts, saints,
Zaddikim, rishis,
Bodhisattvas and shamans
Which we will need
At this time.

Thirdly:
What are the upaya,
The skillful means,
Needed to lift cultural trance
And launch the awareness
Of the emerging cosmology?

Current consensus mind
Leads us to ever greater crises.
We must do the miraculous work
Of altering
Millions of people's awareness.

-continued on page 7

Prayer, from page 6

We must go
Deeper and deeper
Into regions
Where we cannot use muscle effort,
Where only awareness
Can shift awareness
Which is,
As one of my friends remarked,
Changing the tires
While the car is moving—
Moving fast.
We need to update
The inner resources
Of our spiritual traditions
That once worked well
But which were associated
With flesh-rejecting
Monastic asceticism.

If your suggestions
For my spiritual practice
Exceed 20 minutes in the morning
And 20 minutes in the evening
I will not do them
And the old traditions
Demand more time
Than I can afford.

So we need to look
At what works
Of the old techniques
And enhance their yield
By learning
To attune our consciousness
To optimal transformational power.
These actions take place
In other regions
Than the mind of the shopping mall.

When I think
Of the turbulent mind space
We inhabit at this time
I get close to schizophrenia.
I can't hear
The choral symphonic music
Of a sacred common dream.
Just as some people once lamented
The twilight of the gods
So it seems
That we now experience
The twilight
Of the life-affirming archetypes!

How can we access them?
How can we empower them?
How can they empower us?
We have come to realize
That we are not
On the top of the chain of being.
What do we,
As spiritual people,
Have as means
To access the waiting helpers
From higher planes?

What do we need to do
To address the matrix
Of the life process
On the subtle plane to gain
Understanding
Of the deep life process?

Only then
Can we embark on
Designing the needed education
Of heart and spirit.

Lastly:
What adjustments
In psychology, anthropology,
Biology, physics, medicine
Philosophy, political science,
Theology, spiritual technologies,
Economics, the arts,
Communications,
And most of all, the ethics
We need
In order to heal the planet?
So the big questions remain.

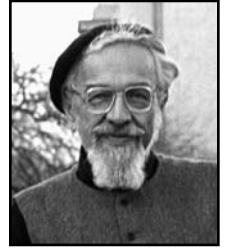
The current state
Of the disciplines
Of Transpersonal Psychology
And Transpersonal Sociology
Is too primitive
To handle our crisis.
You who are here,
My colleagues on the dais,
as well as you in the audience,
I invite you to help find
The answers
To the questions we raised.

We need to relearn
The technology of blessings.

May the people
Who organized this event,
The people who contributed
With effort and finances
May we who spoke
And you who listened
Be blessed
With energy, vigor, resourcefulness,
Joy, health and well-being,
Harmony in your family and work life
To actualize our renewed hope.

May the words of my mouth
And the concerns in our hearts
Be received and responded to
By the One in whom
We find refuge and redemption.
AMEN.

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi is co-author of *From Age-ing to Sage-ing* (©1995, Warner Books) and founder of the *Spiritual Eldering Institute*. He teaches at Naropa University and lives in Boulder, CO. If you'd like to learn more about "Reb" Zalman's life and visionary work, contact us at: info@spiritualeldering.org.



Perennial Spiritual Practices

- Transform your motivation; reduce craving and find your soul's desire.
- Cultivate emotional wisdom; heal your heart and learn to love.
- Live ethically; feel good by doing good.
- Concentrate and calm your mind.
- Awaken your spiritual vision; see clearly and recognize the sacred in all things.
- Cultivate spiritual intelligence; develop wisdom and understand life.
- Express spirit in action; embrace generosity and the joy of service.

-From *Essential Spirituality, Exercises from the World's Religions to Cultivate Kindness, Love, Joy, Peace, Vision, Wisdom and Generosity*

By Roger Walsh, MD, PhD

