

Finding Heaven on Earth

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The Mayan Calendar predicts the end of the world as we know it in 2012, Native Americans such as the Hopi say we are now at the end of the final and most corrupt stage of western civilization, astrologers describe the present era as a transition from dualistic perception to a new unitary consciousness, and a collective hunger for social and political change sweeps across America. What does all this mean? It means that the human species is on the threshold of transcending the old patriarchal world order and waking up to the experience of Heaven on Earth, and this new consciousness will change everything.

What is Heaven on Earth and how might one experience it? The mystics from nearly every tradition tell us that the Divine World is all around us and always has been. We can see it, they say, when we awaken from our habitual absorption in self-centered fantasy and begin to experience the world as it really is. In *Ordinary Enlightenment* (Unity Books, 2000), I proposed four steps for achieving this awakened perception, which I called *Keys to the Garden*. These Keys ask us to:

1. *Stop thinking* – it's not that hard for a few minutes,
2. *Heighten awareness* – as if there were a lion prowling outside your house and all your senses were acutely intensified,
3. *Experience the world exactly as it is* – to see, touch and listen in an intensely sensory way, and then to
4. *Come into the divine Presence* – that is, become consciousness of consciousness itself, for pure consciousness (cleansed of mind, time, and self) is in fact Divine Consciousness.

Achieving these simple shifts in consciousness allows one to move from conceptual to perceptual awareness, that is, from a subjective world created by thought and imagination (variously called maya, delusion, or psychological projection) to a pristine, timeless, infinitely beautiful, precious and joyful, loving and holy Reality *all around us*. When you examine anything with this kind of intense and purified consciousness, you begin to notice exquisite dimensions of light, color, texture and form overlooked in our customary impatient and egocentric awareness. In fact, you are looking directly into Heaven on Earth: the ordinary world transfigured by mystical consciousness into Divinity itself. In this way, even problems and emotional distress become doorways into the Divine World.

All of us have experienced many Heaven-on-Earth moments. Perhaps one occurred when you were extremely happy, or in love, or with the birth of your child or after a close brush with death – times when you felt that everything around you was sacred, extraordinarily beautiful, and perfect. Such moments were neither your imagination nor one-time experiences; rather they are openings to the truest experience of reality we have here: *Heaven on Earth*. Most commonly, these moments happen because the life event itself arrested your normal thought processes, intensified and sharpened perceptual awareness, caused you see and appreciate the world with incredible clarity just as it was, and brought you into the Presence – the imminent and omnipresent Consciousness of the Divine experienced during times of such spontaneous awakening. Sadly we tend to dismiss such moments as “just” a happy or wonderful time rather than the very threshold of Heaven on Earth.

I found a Heaven on Earth moment this morning. I was visiting my 89-year-old mother and helping her with some everyday tasks that her aging brain now finds quite difficult. For a moment I felt impatient and wanted to fix the problem to get onto my own work; instead I stopped all thought, heightened my awareness, looked at her just exactly as she was, and moved into the pure Consciousness that is Divinity, and soon, before me, sat a lovely, sweet, precious, shining and beautiful woman who was doing her best to live a meaningful life, and my heart filled with love and we were together in Heaven on Earth. Time stopped and goals vanished in this moment of perfect Being.

My mother's struggle, of course, brings us to the most common objection to the life-changing idea of finding Heaven here – specifically that a world full of suffering and evil cannot possibly be Heaven on Earth. But suffering and evil arise in a consciousness filled with unhappy, angry, frightened and deranged thoughts that in turn generate painful emotions and destructive behaviors. None of this exists in the consciousness of Heaven on Earth. Indeed, Andrew Harvey, the eminent scholar of mysticism, tells us, "Finding out that this world is Heaven is crucial for human survival. Otherwise in the frenzy of dissociation, our shadow games will annihilate the planet." Author Mathew Fox affirms, "Heaven is earth and earth is heaven in spite of ourselves!" and author/reverend John Mabry proposes, "Finding Heaven Here is a crash-course in spiritual transformation."

My personal life has been a long and transformational journey from the World of Man, with its competitive psychology and damaging beliefs, to Heaven on Earth where existence is already perfect and we are always on sacred ground. As the Mayans, Hopis astrologers, and demographers suggest, we are rapidly approaching this same shift in consciousness on a collective cultural level: *Heaven on Earth is beginning to appear all around us*. Have you noticed such heavenly awareness occurring more often in your life? Two thousand years ago, Jesus told us: "The father's kingdom is spread out upon the earth and people do not see it." But Joseph Campbell, the renowned scholar of religion and mythology, recently proclaimed, "This is it. This is Eden," Thich Nhat Hanh, the contemporary Buddhist teacher, confided, "There is not one day when I do not walk in the kingdom of God," and bestselling author Eckhart Tolle confirmed, "A 'new heaven' is the emergence of a transformed state of human consciousness." *Finding Heaven Here* embodies that new state.

Biography: John Robinson holds doctorates in clinical psychology and ministry and is an ordained interfaith minister, author, and mystic. He has taught extensively at men's gatherings, professional conferences, hospitals, churches and retreat centers and is the author of three previous books on the interface of psychology and spirituality. His new book, *Finding Heaven Here* (O-Books, 1/09) has been endorsed by Andrew Harvey, Mathew Fox, Jeremy Taylor, Malidoma Some, and John Mabry. Dr. Robinson lives on an island in the Puget Sound of Washington State. You can learn more about his work at: www.johnrobinson.org.