

Spirituality & Community

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www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

Jarvis the Duck
Kurt Venables



Ralph Waldo Emerson
Nature

**The Role of Pain in
Driving Behaviour**
Hrvoje Butkovic

Finding Heaven on Earth
John Robinson

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Who We Are

www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

Welcome! Seeking spiritual fulfillment? True happiness and mental wellness? Well, that's what we're all about. Spirituality & Community is a magazine, web site, and online community for those seeking answers to life's deepest questions. ***We are dedicated to promoting spirituality, true happiness, mental wellness, and appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.***

A New Age of Light

Our focus is spirituality, which we view as an inner search for happiness and fulfillment. We are concerned with what lies within the heart. ***We believe that within everyone lies a pure love that we call the Light or the Lord within. We believe that one must open one's heart to the Light to attain spiritual fulfillment and that only this brings true happiness and mental wellness.*** The Light is the essence of humanity. ***Ultimately, we find our way by casting our gaze inward.*** We will search this inner world over until we find our home:

***We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding***

We believe that mankind is entering a new age, an Age of Light. We see a growing spiritual crisis in the world today. Our culture has brought us unprecedented material well being, but we seem further away than ever from true spiritual wholeness. We also perceive an increase in mental health issues in our society and believe this to be linked to spiritual detachment. Many wander endlessly in search of the material gratification that will bring them happiness. Many have lost faith in religions and traditions. Others sincerely believe in traditional religions but remain unfulfilled spiritually and unhappy. Unfortunately, too many are so close-minded they refuse to ask what is missing from their lives. Yet, many hunger for spiritual wholeness and are searching for answers. ***We believe that we are entering a new age of enlightenment in which genuine spiritual progress will be made and that spiritual development depends upon a genuine appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.*** An appreciation for diversity of belief provides us with a fresh view of the beliefs of others, allows us to take from each set of beliefs that which rings true, and enables us to synthesize a personal spirituality that makes sense for each of us. When we view the beliefs of others with our hearts, we see truth shine through. We look with the highest regard to traditional beliefs and religions for guidance, and we also look forward. ***We believe that the past is not the end but the beginning.***



What We Do

Spirituality & Community produces a magazine and encompasses an online community. Both aspects serve as the basis for bringing together those who share our aspirations and beliefs, to meet each other and exchange ideas. We provide many opportunities for exploring spirituality and communicating with others:

- *Spirituality & Community magazine*
- *Features on the site*
- *Online chats* (as interest arises)

The magazine is based on a Reader's Digest® type model. It is comprised primarily of reader submitted material. It is the primary mechanism for a member to both explore spirituality and communicate his or her ideas to others. Features are also posted on the site. When interest is sufficiently high, we will hold chats online. *We sincerely hope that you will find truth within, and we wish you only the best on your own personal journey!*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Nature

(excerpts)

Published in 1836, *Nature* outlines the basic tenets of Transcendentalism. It beautifully describes mankind's spiritual connection to nature. For more, see: <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/emerson/nature-contents.html>



A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;

And, striving to be man, the worm Mounts through all the spires of form.

Introduction

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far, as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehends it as truth. In like manner, nature is already, in its forms and tendencies, describing its own design. Let us interrogate the great apparition, that shines so peacefully around us. Let us inquire, to what end is nature?

All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and of functions, but scarcely yet a remote approach to an idea of creation. We are now so far from the road to truth, that religious teachers dispute and hate each other, and speculative men are esteemed unsound and frivolous. But to a sound judgment, the most abstract truth is the most practical. Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena. Now many are thought not only unexplained but inexplicable; as language, sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, sex.

Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE. In enumerating the values of nature and casting up their sum, I shall use the word in both senses; -- in its common and in its philosophical import. In inquiries so general as our present one, the inaccuracy is not material; no confusion of thought will occur. Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf. Art is applied to the mixture of his will with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture. But his operations taken together are so insignificant, a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing, that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result.

Chapter I: NATURE

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, -- he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone,

but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. 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. In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth. 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, (leaving me my eyes,) 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 eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, -- master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

Chapter VII: SPIRIT

It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored, and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope. Through all its kingdoms, to the suburbs and outskirts of things, it is faithful to the cause whence it had its origin. It always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.

The aspect of nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

Of that ineffable essence which we call Spirit, he that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshipped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it.

When we consider Spirit, we see that the views already presented do not include the whole circumference of man. We must add some related thoughts.

Three problems are put by nature to the mind; What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto? The first of these questions only, the ideal theory answers. Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. Idealism acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being, and the evidence of the world's being. The one is perfect; the other, incapable of any assurance; the mind is a part of the nature of things; the world is a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day. Idealism is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life, that there is something of humanity in all, and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.

Let it stand, then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprise us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world.

But when, following the invisible steps of thought, we come to inquire, Whence is matter? and Whereto? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man, that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound, it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws, at his need, inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which admonishes me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to

The golden key,

Which opes the palace of eternity,

Carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature, as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine. Is not the landscape, every glimpse of which hath a grandeur, a face of him? Yet this may show us what discord is between man and nature, for you cannot freely admire a noble landscape, if laborers are digging in the field hard by. The poet finds something ridiculous in his delight, until he is out of the sight of men.

Jarvis the Duck

The Comic Strip

Kurt Venables

The soul is like a flower.



If it basks in The Light, it thrives.
If it turns away, it withers.



If I was a flower, I'd be a
rose covered in thorns,
flowerboy



The Role of Pain in Driving Behaviour

Hrvoje Butkovic

Just the other day I lived through what, on the surface of it, would appear to be a traumatic event. Someone whom I care about deeply and whose friendship is dearly important to me announced that he was so unhappy with me that he was no longer willing to consider himself my friend. Worse, he also made it clear that he expected his other friends to do the same. Yet as much as I cared about this person and wanted to continue associating with him, I wasn't at all distressed by this turn of events.

The reason? The person subjecting me to this treatment was my three-year-old son. He was determined to get his way, and he resorted to every weapon in his limited arsenal in an attempt to do so. There were no long-term intentions behind his actions. Seeing his efforts in this light, it was easy to face them without feeling personally attacked.

This stands in stark contrast to numerous cases of violent crime that take place around the world on daily basis. The frequency and viciousness of such crimes have increased in South Africa in recent years. Reporting on them has completely saturated the media.

The most poignant of these events that I can recall was an armed robbery that had gone horribly wrong. A group of criminals ended up killing a middle-aged woman, her mother and her daughter. When her husband learned of what had happened, he expressed his desire to have the people who committed the murders die painfully.

One needn't examine the incident too deeply to appreciate the reasons for the man's reaction. Losing a loved one is a painful experience. Simultaneously losing three generations of close family members is a devastating blow. Such is the intensity of the experience that one loses all sense of perspective and simply wants to strike back. It is not a reasoned response, but one driven by blind emotion.

An interesting thing happens if we visualise a scale of abuse in order of increasing severity. Severing of ties by a three-year-old resides at one end of the scale, and murder of close loved ones at the other. If we accept the above responses as appropriate, then we are left with the conclusion that, in the least abusive cases, we should respond in constructive ways, whereas in the most abusive ones, we should seek retribution.

This presents us with a dilemma. As we traverse the scale from less to more abusive actions, at some point the purpose of our response will switch from understanding, healing and support to retribution. What is the nature of the dividing line between the two kinds of responses? I believe that it can be accurately characterised as *experiencing pain*.

If we perceive ourselves to be injured, we will be motivated to protect ourselves from the injury. This will cause us to react defensively, perhaps even retaliate. Such a reaction is likely to be unconscious, especially if the hurt is severe. As in the case of the man who suddenly lost his wife, mother and daughter, it will not be a carefully crafted response aimed at a particular desirable outcome, but thoughtless lashing out brought on by pain. It is about inflicting pain for the pain that has been caused, regardless of other consequences.

This is quite unlike a situation in which no injury is perceived. There, we feel free to consciously choose the most beneficial course of action. Having no need to protect ourselves from the intended abuse, we can examine the situation deeply to empathise with the other person, uncover her motivation for engaging in such destructive behaviour, and help her heal.

Another way to look at the boundary between constructive and retributive responses is in terms of availability or freedom of choice. When no injury is sustained, we find ourselves at liberty to pursue any course of action we wish. Experiencing pain restricts our choices. The hurt compels us to react in certain ways, taking the matter beyond our control.

What happens if we are able to conquer pain? Not eliminate it – I doubt that such a thing is possible – but prevent it from limiting our choices, and thereby driving our actions? How do we act when we are able to retain control over our choices in the midst of calamity?

While he was dying on the cross, Jesus didn't call for retribution against those who crucified him; he prayed for them instead. Such was the power of his example that some of his followers were able to emulate it at their own martyrdom.

As much as he criticised their actions, Gandhi didn't cry out for revenge against the British soldiers who physically assaulted Indian demonstrators on a peaceful march. He understood that, like his own followers, they were only doing what they believed to be right.

Even though his country remains under military occupation by the Chinese, Dalai Lama has shown no inclination to resort to military tactics in an effort to drive them out. Furthermore, he has pledged that, as long as he is the leader of the Tibetan people, the efforts at freeing his country will remain peaceful.

And lest we think that such behaviour is the exclusive province of renowned spiritual masters, in 2007, a New York woman expressed her sorrow for the behaviour of two young men who sodomised her son with a plumbing tool. Addressing them in the criminal court, she said that "The only thing I can think of that is worse than what you

did to my son is how your parents must have felt when they found out the truth, that their child had done something so horrible to another human being. Our hearts go out to them as they deal with the aftermath of your actions."

These examples present us with a tough act to follow. If we are to succeed at following it, we need to find an answer to the question that naturally arises from these considerations, namely how to conquer pain. How do we ensure that we are not overwhelmed by hurt in what are normally painful circumstances without shutting emotions out altogether?

Various answers can be given. The one that I would like to focus on here was hinted at in the words of the New York mother whose son was sodomised. Empathising with the parents of her son's attackers has enabled her to look beyond her own pain.

Another example was given by Bud Welch, whose daughter Julie-Marie died in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. When reflecting on his sentiments towards the perpetrators – McVeigh and Nichols – in the weeks immediately following the incident, he says: "I would have killed them with my bare hands if I could have reached them."

As time went on, however, he realised that their death wouldn't have taken away his pain. His perspective gradually expanded beyond the initial demand for retribution. It helped to meet Timothy McVeigh's father Bill, and his sister Jennifer. Talking to them gave him better understanding of the background to the crime and greater appreciation of the feelings of other people whom he may otherwise have perceived as belonging to 'the other side'. They did not lose anyone in the bombing, but were adversely impacted by it just as much as he was, if not more.

The Bud Welch example is instructive in another important way – it shows that healing can be a lengthy process. If we react immediately, we may do something destructive that we will regret later. We would be better off focusing on the grieving process and allowing it to run its course. Then, when the choice of response is ours again and not dictated to us by the pain, we will be in a far better position to make use of it for everyone's greatest good, including our own.

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For more, see: <http://fluffygroovy.com>

Finding Heaven on Earth

John C. Robinson, Ph.D, D.Min.

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.