

THE PEARL WITHIN
DISCOVERING THE RICHES
OF THE UNDERWORLD

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PART ONE

FACING OURSELVES

We might have lost the Light and the Height; but more frightening, we have lost the Mystery and the Deep, the Emptiness and the Abyss, and lost it in a world dedicated to surfaces and shadows, exteriors and shells, whose prophets lovingly exhort us to dive into the shallow end of the pool head first.¹

There's really not much we have to do to begin—only to look at what is happening in our world around us without an ideology or agenda, within the context of our evolutionary history. Then we need to apply an equally objective eye (if there is such a thing) to who we each are and what makes us behave in the ways we do.

Reminding ourselves of the multi-cultural global tradition which has always recognized and respected the Presence of some sort of Higher Power or Mystery in the form of nature spirits, gods and goddesses, planetary Powers and other forms of deity (or formless), we can see that it is only in our most recent times that we have lost such a Center. In **Chapter One** the importance of the Mystery is revitalized and we look for signs of Its Presence in the modern world.

Chapter Two presents a brief sketch of the movement of evolution from the Big Bang to the present, and searches for likely trends based on our momentum today.

In **Chapter Three** we explore the inner side of life, preparing the way for some fairly radical reversals of contemporary assumptions about who we are, what moves us and why. These three chapters lay the foundation for **Part Two** in which we begin our actual journey to the underworld and the mysteries of the unconscious psyche.

¹ Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995) p. xi.

Chapter One

The Mystery and Its Many Faces

AS THE DAY BEGINS, I find myself standing here in the doorway between two worlds. Through my open eyes I see my night table, clock, and lamp. Looking around I find my bureau, a chair, my computer and of course, my bed. But when I close my eyes I see the other world, the one I was just in. Fading quickly away are the charming lady and her plaid dog, as they jump into the ravine. Now what was it she said to me?

Why is it that I believe the world of table and chair is the “real” one? And that the other world of dreams is somehow fake, or fantasy and not real? Could it be because others can also see the furnished world of my bedroom, but that only I can see the inner world? Are the only real facts of my existence the ones I can validate through others? Is anything that arises within my own mind somehow unreal or pretend? Or is it what the Hindus have said: that I have it backwards and the outer world of agreed-upon reality is really the dream, and the true reality can be found within my own soul?

We have lost our way. We are drowning and don’t know it. The tide is rising and we are too busy rushing around, being entertained, looking for love, and trying to get somewhere to notice.

The inner world of the soul, with its dreams and fantasies, is like an orphan inside of us, an abandoned child, needing our protection. She is starving and under attack from our world which mistrusts her, threatened by her innocence. We have abandoned her. Who is she?

“I come here from a place not known to you. I am alone and without my parents. I am your hope, but you do not see me. If you did, you would not want me.”

What is it about this child-like innocence (not harming; lack of worldly experience or sophistication; lack of knowledge) that threatens us? Why do we fear her, attack her, ignore her? Without innocence how will we open our eyes to see what she sees, what she can show us? Mistrusting our world within, believing it is only a chaotic realm of psychic debris, we cling to the “hard” facts of science and the senses.

The time is coming when you will feel real fear. The props that you imagine are holding you up are not real. Some hide behind cynicism, others behind blind hope. It takes great courage to stand at the edge of the abyss and to know that you have nothing to keep you from venturing and falling in. Time is running out and yet you believe either that there is plenty of time or that it is too late. In either case, why bother?

What is this “rising tide?”

It is the violence that once was occasional and now is the rule.

It is the vastly multiplying medication being given to younger and younger children in order to relieve their “problems” or to manage their behavior.

It is the growing number of adults who rely on pills to get through the day and who believe they are incapable of surviving the experience of their own feelings.

It is the increasing loss of any real meaning attached to what people do each day in order to earn their livings, in order to buy all the toys and diversions that we are told we need.

It is the loss of respect for life, for each other, and especially for the Mystery that we embody while It embodies each of us.

It is the increasing destruction of the earth and of the air we breathe and water we drink, all for the sake of money and material desire.

We do not understand that it is an unknown Mystery that holds it all together. We do not honor this Mystery as those before us did.

Because their chosen words and names for this Mystery are old-fashioned and based on a level of education that we consider antique, we have mistakenly and foolishly decided if the name is outdated, so is the Mystery. Whether called “God”, “Allah”, “Krishna”, or “Satan”, the Mystery IS. It does not depend on a name, nor does any one name really capture the Identity which I am calling “Mystery.”

We are addicted to certainty because we have no safety net anymore. Without any belief in a Greater Power, what is there to save us, to catch us as we free-fall when our traditional answers serve us no longer? We prefer certainty to the truth.

In a time of increasing danger and confusion, the black-and-white convictions of religious fundamentalism and mandatory jail sentences, of the political “axis of evil” and the implicit assumption of our role as the force of “good” have great appeal. So do the hard “facts” of our technological world. It is often the outward appearance of certainty that is most attractive. Young people in particular yearn to feel as secure and sure as those they see around them who have the “answers” to life’s questions.

Many philosophers have told us it is not only the answers that matter but the ability to live the questions. And living the question means being unsure, living in ignorance or uncertainty, risking making foolish mistakes and appearing hesitant and insecure. Just like the legendary hidden entry hole into the underworld, this is our entry into the world of the orphan and its innocence.

So the questions constantly being posed by life do not open us up to wonder anymore. We avoid the questions with pat answers that have been spoon-fed by the sham of education. It is merely atmospheric conditions that caused the awesome glow in the night sky. It is only your imagination that leads you to envision impending disaster. A recent NASA website displaying the grandeur of a sunset described it: “What’s happening over the horizon? Although the scene may appear somehow supernatural, nothing more unusual is occurring than a setting Sun and some well placed clouds.”

When something suggests any presence of mysterious depth or “higher” powers, it has to be reduced: feelings reduced to chemicals in the brain, unexplainable phenomena to atmospheric, psychic anomalies to mental illness or “imagination.”

But “I wonder...”

Look at ANYTHING... your big toe, a dust ball, a tree, the sky.

Wonder: Why does it exist? Where did it come from? What is my relationship to it? How much do I need it? Depend on it? What would I do if it were suddenly not here? Where does it go when I can no longer see it?

Interestingly, we do not know where the word “wonder” came from, but one must be innocent to wonder.

Why is it childish to spend time wondering *where did I come from?* or *why am I here?* What does it imply to call these core questions that should concern us and once did matter to others “childish?” It implies that with sophistication, education and experience, somehow these questions become irrelevant. But do they? Are they no longer important and worth considering?

We use words here like “God,” “soul,” “spirit,” “fantasy,” and certain Latin terms left to us by the practitioners of the obscure art of alchemy.

If you are called to make this pilgrimage to the underworld, these terms can serve as provisions. But to use them, you will probably have to work to scrape off the accumulated prejudicial definitions of familiarity and history, and learn to see them anew, with fresh eyes as if for the first time.

“Soul” is used here to refer to whatever it is that you experience as your interior, as inside of you, the “place” of your feelings, fantasies and other inner activities, whether intentionally initiated by you or seeming to arise from unseen sources. Soul does not have to mean, but certainly could mean, those things which religion has made of it.

You have an inside, full of moods, symptoms, problems, questions, insights, and complex mysteries. That is all you need to concern yourself with here when you think of “soul.” Leave the rest to theology and philosophy for now, concerning the afterlife, heaven and hell, or reincarnation. It is just inside you, and it’s a Mystery.

“Unconscious” refers to those unseen sources. We don’t know what a soul is, nor have we discovered the real meaning of the unconscious. It is simply for now the realm in which you live, and which lives inside you, which is invisible, hidden from view, undefined, and mysterious.

You have an unconscious, or perhaps we might be better off to say you have a relationship with the unconscious. Since we do not know what it is, it is hard to say whether we possess an unconscious or just swim in it, or both. The unconscious is conspicuous in countless ways every single day in your life. There is no need to concern yourself here with what this or that school of psychology has speculated about the unconscious. It is just in you and around you, and it is a Mystery.

Mystery is really the core of our exploration here. We talk about It, walk around It, seek to penetrate It, but all the time, respect It as beyond our comprehension. The world is a different place when it rests upon Mystery.

Who really is an expert in the Mystery of life? We all start in the same place, and your insights may be the most important ones for you and possibly others. We all are born naked, and we all remain ignorant when it comes to explaining the Mystery. You are a Mystery, life is a Mystery, and the crumbling world with its occasional beautiful flowers and acts of kindness, its agonizing painful deaths and senseless violence, is very much a Mystery.

You are invited to pursue your own investigation of the Mystery.

“God” can mean whatever it has meant for you, but here it is another word for the Mystery. God is a very tricky word to work with, because we have been programmed all of our lives to imagine God in some way or other, but rarely purely as Mystery.

“God” is one of our words here for whatever ultimately is the “Higher Power,” the unseen moving Force that stands for that which is beyond our comprehension, yet somehow in charge, whether with intelligence or the blindness of random chaos, or both.

“Fantasy” is a name for the stream of feelings, thoughts, sensations, and imagery that arises spontaneously on the screen of your mind, in your inner world, or soul. It is not a term that separates useless imagining from “reality,” or that means “only” daydreams. It arises without needing to be judged, and is observed because it came from the unconscious and therefore serves as our only clue as to what lives in the unconscious. Fantasy deserves our respect and devoted attention for that reason.

Just as you have a soul, a place of inner and private reflection and activity, and you have a relation to the unconscious, and you are a Mystery, you have constant fantasy. Like dreams, it is not a matter of learning how to have fantasies, only of beginning to pay attention, to observe and record what you experience as the raw material you can then work with.

So this is our simple task: to explore the soul, observe our fantasies and dreams, and remain mindful of the undeniable fact that everything is really a Mystery. It is a challenging Work, asking eventually everything of you. But it has always been said by those who did the Work that it offers the greatest treasure for those who persist. Endurance and patience have no substitutes.

The Greeks—like so many early civilizations—believed in the presence and influence in their daily lives of gods and goddesses. They had names, functions, and places to be worshipped. When the Greeks passed on as a predominating culture, their gods went with them. But did those divine forces which were so real for the Greeks cease to exist? Did they leave the scene, never to be heard from again? What if they are still here, just as they were then, only now lacking identity and our recognition?

The gods—by whatever names and no matter what the culture or historical epoch—kept us humble. We knew we must follow their laws, abide within their limits, and respect their powers. When we stopped believing in the gods and replaced them with scientific formulae and economic obsession, we no longer felt the need to honor and respect these higher powers.

We became the gods. But we are not. Certainly not. All we apparently rule over is the mess we have created for ourselves and which is engulfing us.

What is a god? Some greater force perhaps, outside our control and unavailable to us in our awareness, but which RULES. We do not know how the god thinks, what it wants, unless we are given a sign, unless we watch and listen. But how will we do that if we do not believe the god exists? Who is watching and listening to them now?

What is there now in our world that meets this definition of “god?”

What is outside of our control and unavailable to our awareness?

Symptoms and Catastrophes

When you develop a symptom (“from *syn-* + *piptein* to fall; so to fall on, happen to; something that indicates the presence of bodily disorder; something that indicates the existence of something else”)—whether physical or emotional or mental—you are suddenly faced with something threatening and therefore fearful. You didn’t put it there, would choose to make it gone, but here it is, needing to be faced. It “indicates the existence of something else.” It is as if you had been unexpectedly struck by an arrow. It is a sign (which—like “symptom”—also means “something indicating the presence or existence of something else”).

When a catastrophe (“from *kata-* + *strephein* to turn; a momentous tragic event ranging from extreme misfortune to utter overthrow or ruin; a violent usually destructive natural event; utter failure”) happens, whether on a mass or personal scale, you are again facing an event or situation which you did not choose and would prefer to avoid. It is another sign.

Falling in love may be more welcome (not always!), but it is very much the same as symptom and catastrophe. Romantic love has often been poetically described as a wound or illness. In a sense, these are all signs pointing to a hidden reality which has visited itself upon us and which we cannot fathom. The definition of sign from the dictionary is “something material or external that stands for or signifies something spiritual.” But if you look without prejudice, you will begin to realize that signs are not always material or external. They appear within us as well, as moods and fantasies, some wounding and unwelcome, others blissful and comforting.

So you are faced with symptoms and catastrophes which are experienced as external to your nature, as not-you, but happening to you.

Perhaps these symptoms and catastrophes are just our new names for those same old gods and goddesses. We have taken away their past home in the heavens, in the underworld, in the sanctuary and the place of worship, and—being homeless—they have been forced to assume these seemingly more mundane forms. Perhaps the ancient gods and modern symptoms and catastrophes are both just masks for mysterious “other” forces we do not understand.

Again, if a god is external to our awareness and a power to be reckoned with when it brings us face to face with its demands and limits, how is that different from the symptoms and catastrophes that enter our lives unbidden and unwelcome today?

If in fact these are our old gods in new guise, then how do we presently respond and how might we better relate to them?

Symptoms

The symptom appears—let’s say anxiety, a chronic pain or a disease—and our first typical response is denial: “It’s nothing; it will go away.” Some people respond by making a very big deal out of

any symptom. We may call them hypochondriacs, but in fact they are according greater respect to the symptom than we do in our denial.

When the symptom does not follow our wishes and disappear, then we feel compelled to name it, to find out what it is, to get a diagnosis either from the doctor or the internet. By naming it we hope to gain the power over it to eliminate it. Treatment and cure. We want to rid ourselves of the symptom because it makes us uncomfortable, disturbing our security.

Why are we uncomfortable? Certainly there may be physical dis-ease, but we are also disturbed because of the unsettling way this unwelcome visitor has entered our “house” and made itself at home in our domain.

So having named our anxiety, our pain or disease, we seek the proper treatment—warmth, rest, medication, acupuncture, counseling. If we are lucky, the treatment eliminates the symptom and we move on safely in the illusion of our protection. If we are not, then the symptom resists our attempts and we must enter into a new phase of relationship with it, seeking a way to live with it.

But if in fact the symptom is now the only way for the gods to manifest in our lives, then eliminating it puts us at risk. The god manifests for a purpose, and by escaping its presence we have lost the opportunity to receive what it offers—the chance to gain insight into ourselves, to become aware of the need for change, or to correct our errors which if allowed to accumulate can lead to disaster.



This might be a good moment for you to pause and consider this very unorthodox thought again. Slow down, be aware of habitual thinking and feelings that may arise in considering this radical idea. Observe.

What if we treated our symptoms as if they were manifestations of the gods?

We would listen. With awe we would know that our survival and well-being were at stake and that history is filled with tragic examples of those who ignored the signs and warnings of the gods. We would ask: “What are you saying and what do you want from me?”

We would listen to hear through the symbolism of the symptom. Why anxiety? What kind exactly? Anxious about heights? Crowds? Death? Intimacy? Poverty? When did it start?

Is it arthritis? What is arthritis? A hardening, a kind of petrification. Is that somehow reflective of an attitude we have? Where are you hurting? The throat? Why the throat? Is there some issue not being faced about swallowing or communicating? What is the symptom saying in its specifics? Can we look at the symptom as a symbol conveying a message, even while at the same time seeking medical assistance?

We would ask “What do you want from me? Why are you speaking to me in this way at this time?”

We would wonder how to respond, to signify our submission and compliance with the wish of the god. We would find ways to alter our lifestyle, to change our attitude, and to perform rituals that would allow us to digest this new information. But compliance is not on our minds anymore.

None of this will happen when the symptom is viewed only as an annoying intrusion needing to be quickly removed. Yet we live in a world where symptoms are multiplying as rapidly as cancer cells. Diagnoses beget more diagnoses and new medications appear each day. But somehow the overall picture becomes more and more bleak. We do not get better; we collectively get worse. Our approach is not working because we are not listening.

We seek to rule our own domain rather than to know we are granted what we have—the time we have and the comfort we have. We want to believe that we are the authority and arrogantly turn away from the humility necessary to submit. We go further and further away from our roots and our Source.

And it is here that we find ourselves today—lost and abandoned like an orphan without a home or parents, seeking protection from a guardian which we believe is science, medicine and technology.

Everything has its limit and its breaking point. We are near ours, and getting closer every day. Time moves on, each moment passes, each breath leaves us with one less, and our death approaches with no pause.

Isn't it time to listen rather than to fight?

Catastrophes

While our personal lives may be visited unexpectedly by symptoms major or minor—a hangnail or terminal cancer—we also face the always present possibility of a catastrophe. Storms, transportation accidents, fires, and other disasters erupt suddenly and wreak havoc on small and large groups anywhere on our planet at any time.

On a smaller scale, a car accident or a slip on the ice can produce results that at the time may seem relatively minor, and yet the repercussions may last a lifetime, changing goals and possibilities for better or worse. Can we not imagine this too as an intervention by the gods?

Again, the gods were once considered as the cause of these “accidents” or turning points. Why? Because they were out of our control, originating from beyond our intent, and because they were considered to have a purpose, as if there were intention behind the specific circumstances of the event.

The point here is not a revival of Greek or other traditional religions. We have moved on. But if we imagine that these earlier effective formulations of the hidden and unknown forces in our lives might have been justified in their recognition of and respect for those forces, then we can at least realize that our current position of denying the existence of any such powers calls for reassessment. And our interface with these powers lies in the realms where they visit us with frequency—our symptoms and catastrophes.

As I sit writing the first pages of this book, the U.S. Space Shuttle has just at the same moment been sent crashing down to its death from 20 miles in space across eastern Texas, wiping out its crew of 7 astronauts. How would the ancients have viewed such an event?

Would it be seen totally as a random accident, without meaning other than to point out flaws in the space flight process which could eventually be specified and then eliminated? Just as we do with the symptom, this is how our civilization responds to the fearful prospect that highlights our vulnerability and mortality when someone is suddenly wiped away in an unpredictable catastrophe. There is no consideration of the event as a sign, and if one were to speculate on that possibility, they would have forfeited any credibility in the eyes of our official institutions.

The ancients would have immediately sought for guidance and interpretation from their wisest elders, their seers. The event would be “read” as a sign, much like the symptom would be read as

a sign. They would seek to divine (“the art or practice that seeks to foresee or foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge usually by the interpretation of omens or by the aid of supernatural powers”) the intention, the hidden purpose, as a message from the gods intended for humanity, in order to adjust to this new directive.

The lines of communication between each of us and our mysterious roots have been lost. We are the orphan with nothing to protect us and no one to guide us. Whatever “Mother” gave birth to us all, whatever “Father” rules this Universe, we are on our own, like the hero of the “Hymn of the Pearl,” unless and until we are shocked into awakening and remembering who we really are.

Maybe that letter that was sent by his royal parents has been sent to you. Maybe it is contained in a symptom or catastrophe that has intruded unexpectedly into your life. Have you considered that possibility?



Consider it now.

Signs

It might be extreme to suggest that every symptom or catastrophe contains a hidden meaning. But is it reasonable to assume that any such event is NEVER a sign? The thought that something is hidden or concealed naturally makes the mind uneasy. The rational mind lives for clarity and certainty. It often sees the world through a two-color spectrum—black and white. If it’s not one, it must be the other—no gray in the middle where it might fall into confusion. It won’t be your mind that will lead you into the realm of the Mystery, though it may carry you to its edge. It will have to follow your curiosity into the mists and there try to do what it does best—clarify and sort things out.

If you were to be married and the place where the wedding was to be held burned down the night before, would you consider that a possible sign? Even if you never thought like that before, don’t you think something inside you would wonder, a slight doubt might be raised? What could that be, if it’s not your rational mind? Is it only alarm and fear, or some deeper instinct dormant from years of neglect? Like your appendix, you still carry a vestigial irrational antenna which once was adept at seeing through the obvious for the concealed.

But now such musings are considered “spooky” or “weird.” The intuitively felt oddity must be dismissed before your inner censor or others suspect your sanity. How did we learn to think this way? What is it meant to avoid? What does it protect? What does this dismissive reasoning think of the orphan soul inside you? Does it stand at the gate, guarding your reason against the corrupting influence of fantasy, innocence, and ambiguity?

Are the fluctuations in the stock market based solely on rational decisions being made by statistics and logical analysis, or are many motivated by hunches and feelings in their decisions? Like astrology, the belief in signs and omens has persisted through the ages, no matter what our official “experts” tell us to try to dissuade our “superstitious” leanings. The irrational mind cannot be eliminated, though we certainly have tried.

But if you want to go about talking about how this or that event was a sign that such-and-such was going to happen, who would you expect to listen? In our desire for a universe that can be

controlled by technology and logical thought, we have swept intuitions and gut reactions under the rug. These still function as they always have, but now they are beneath the radar, not acknowledged. People are compelled to back up their hunches with rationalization so as to make them seem reasonable. But ask any wildly successful person how they got where they are, and almost always they talk about hunches, chance, or intuition, if not fate. When you are successful, you can often afford to openly acknowledge the irrational, though not always. Look at the reaction when news leaked out that President Ronald Reagan and his Chief of Staff were using information from an astrologer.

So who is there to tell us about the signs now? What if it is up to you to read the hidden meaning of events in your life? Could you? Would you even dare to try? What if in fact there IS a deeper meaning, and the only thing keeping you from seeing it is your belief that no such meaning could exist? And where would you say such a belief comes from? Is it the result of rigorous experimentation? Is it a collectively held taboo?

Think about it: for thousands of years people assumed there were hidden powers (gods) at work in their lives. They made crucial personal and group decisions based upon the interpretations of a few “seers” who claimed that they could read divine intention in the stars, animal entrails, tea leaves, or the day’s hunt. Now that is all gone and we are operating as if we are handicapped by this lack of vision. We don’t know where we’re going, have no plan as to where it should be, and seem largely at a loss, and lost.

Is it that radical an idea to wonder if perhaps those people before us actually had something going for them? That maybe our current attitudes about hidden signs are wrong? Can you pause long enough to really examine why you believe that the events in your life could not possibly be signs waiting to be read, indicating a direction or a suggestion that you change your stance, correct your course?



If this is how you think, then do you really know why? So many of our fundamental assumptions, upon which we base our lives and decide which things are important and which are meaningless, come from questionable sources. Perhaps one of the main reasons more people are unable to consider an actual living Higher Power of some sort (not just a kindly old man who favors only “our” religion) or the presence of invisible intentional powers and the signs they leave us, is that to really consider these things would undermine the unexamined assumptions that we rely on to give us our false sense of security.

To realize the Mystery as present in every moment of uncertainty, and to understand that no one REALLY KNOWS the ultimate Truth about anything, leaves us very vulnerable, teetering on the edge of the abyss of the unknown. It’s much easier of course to take the words of the experts and authorities as dependable—until you reach a situation like we have now, where their words have led us to, as is said, “going to hell in a hand basket.”

So what choice do you have? Blindly follow those who assume the air of superior knowledge, those who have led us to our predicament, or let go of the illusion that they offer protection from the scary realization that NO ONE KNOWS? If you let go, then you have no other choice than either to go looking for different experts, say an astrologer to replace your broker, or to take the risky plunge into trying to find your own inner source of guidance.

Some would argue there are no signs to be read, only vivid imaginations. Perhaps they are closer to the truth than they realize. Maybe there are really signs, and the way to read them is with the

imagination. How will we begin to salvage the imagination and its fantasies from the trash heap where modern civilization has put it?

You have a dream. You remember only a scrap of it, but it grabs your attention. You feel like there's something there, but you can't quite get it. So you give it up. But if you only wondered if perhaps there might really be hidden messages contained in dreams and events, you might not let it go quite so quickly. All that's required with a dream is to keep it around for a while. Just to wonder about it. Not even to wonder what it means, just what is this? If you hold a dream or fragment in your mind for a while, as a curiosity or puzzle, you will often find a moment of realization, an "aha!". And once that happens, dreaming will never be the same. It's like your first kiss—a channel of communication has been opened.

So the first important key for determining if there are signs hidden in everyday life and its happenings is your willingness to give something your attention for a while, rather than dismissing it as foolish or meaningless. You don't have to obsess for the whole day and neglect your work, just keep it in your mind. Think about it during the morning commute, maybe while you're eating. Maybe your curiosity leads you to do a little research on the internet. You dream about a three-legged chair, and you look it up. And in reading, something strikes you as odd, or maybe reminds you of a situation in your life. Something suddenly makes sense. You have uncovered meaning in your dream. That's how it works.

This is very different from the way we've been trained to use our minds. This buried and little-used ability is in most of us, but it is not valued and there are few opportunities to develop it. It is another facet of the orphan soul. The fact that it's been cast off and now seems to have no value does not make it so. There are many real treasures to be found in the refuse that was so quickly tossed aside in our enthusiasm for technology and reason.

Having reached a critical time in our world, it would seem likely if there were a God or divine powers, they would be working hard right now to get through to us. It is time to pay attention. It is time to wake up and look. It is time to stop following the fad of the day, each new trend in thought and philosophy which comes and goes like last year's Paris fashions, and to think for ourselves. No one is going to miraculously come from the skies to save us. If a Messiah is to come, it may well be in your mind and mine, in the awakening of our ability to find out for ourselves, to pay attention to the soul, and to try to fathom the deeper meaning of our lives.

There is nothing wrong with feeding our bodies. We must. But we now live in a time when the soul hungers and our response is still to feed the body. The soul hungers for wonder, contemplation, and fantasy, but we are deaf to the soul's voice, and so when it needs filling, we respond in the only way we know, by shopping for things for the body and eating food. The soul withers while the body bloats.