

Evolutionary-Love_ErvinLaszlo-MarcGafni_Aug_5_2013.docx

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Speakers

Marc Gafni
Ervin László

Marc So, hello, welcome!

Ervin Yes, hello, is that Marc?

Marc This is. Ervin, it's good to hear your voice, sir.

Ervin Okay. Very good.

Marc We did it.

Ervin Okay. Can you hear me clearly?

Marc I can hear you perfectly.

Ervin Very good.

Marc I can hear you perfectly and you have warm regards from both David Loye and from Ken Wilber.

Ervin Oh, thank you so much to both of them. Please return it in my name.

Marc Absolutely, absolutely. And I'm looking forward to this dialogue. And we actually already have – we're in the recording already, so I'm actually just going to, with your permission, just dive right in.

Ervin Okay, go ahead.

Marc Awesome. So, welcome everyone. We're here in the Center for Integral Wisdom Thought Leader Dialogue Series, and I'm here with Dr. Ervin László who is a name that anyone familiar with integral thought is familiar with. Ervin, you've written, oh my god, such a large number of books and essays that we have to avoid mentioning the number not to scare anyone from trying to write a book, but you've written an enormous amount over a period of many, many years. And this wasn't, as I understand, your original field. Your original field is you actually began as a pianist?

Ervin That's right, that's right. I was a child prodigy on the piano, discovered at an early age and I started playing concerts when I was nine.

Marc Wow, wow, wow! And what was that moment in which you opened up to this particular field of radical integral evolutionary inquiry?

Ervin Well, the experience of music is an experience of harmony and, in the case of great music, of wholeness where everything just follows logically from everything else; and this is the equivalent of what in science and philosophy we call coherence, that everything is tuned to all the other things and altogether create a larger whole that is sort of like a scrabble or a mosaic where all the elements are separate, but once you put them together then you see an image; and then there is something larger which emerges out of the separate pieces, and then they no longer are separable after that. That's the experience of music and that of looking for this experience in reality, in nature, in the human field, and so I started reading and inquiring and that got me into systems theory and then to integral thinking.

Marc Yeah, wow! That's a beautiful way to start this dialogue actually. Just to share with you, my background is Aramaic text, that is to say the world of original text in Aramaic and Hebrew and the world of both Talmud and Kabbalah. And there's a very strong esoteric tradition that the access to prophecy – prophecy not in the kind of mythological sense, you know, using Gebser's structures of consciousness, but prophecy in the sense of being able to sense the evolutionary love that is the initiating Eros and animates the cosmos is through music, which is why actually the primary spiritual enactment in the Jerusalem temples was, of course, the music of the Levites. That was the way in. So, music just so clearly speaks of a larger world of meaning.

So perhaps that's a transition, just as an opening, to really talk about one particular topic and really focus on that. And if I would give it a word I'd borrow Purcell's old phrase that you're of course familiar with and have written about in your own language and added so much to the conversation: evolutionary love. Ken and I wrote a brief version of an essay at the end of my book "Your Unique Self" that we called "Evolutionary Love" and we are working on this topic for a new book that we're working on right now on evolutionary love. And I have in front of me – and this is something that you've thought about so much – there's "The Ervin László All-Embracing Declaration" which is really in some deep and direct sense, I think it would be fair to say it's about evolutionary love.

And so I would just love to invite – and I'll ask some questions and I'll share in a way that seems appropriate as we go – but to really have that conversation. If I could maybe frame it and then turn to you, Ervin. If I had to think of what was the single most damaging societal social construct in the late 19th, 20th century, I would say it was Neo-Darwinism; not Darwinism, not evolution – evolution's a fact, a reality – but the kind of understanding, that kind of scientific worldview really downloaded into the source code of culture, that the world is somehow random, a kind of tooth-eat-claw world, that competitiveness in its most brutal sense; it's just the nature of things; and that you put together random mutation with natural selection in their purely chance form, not as an expression of love intelligence, not as an expression of a larger coherence, and the implications at least for how people think. Maybe I'll close with this: I remember a recent conversation three or four years ago with a lovely person who was a Chief Justice in the United States and at a certain point in the conversation he said, "Marc, you know, this is just an evolutionary world. You know, this is how it works. People are brutal to each other." And this was an intelligent, smart person, but it had just been

downloaded into the source code of culture; and if I would from a distance try and sum up our vision at the Center for Integral Wisdom and your life's work is to really change that in the source code of culture. So I'd love to start there. Is that an entry point where you might step in?

Ervin Okay. Well, what I wrote recently, this "All-Embracing Love Declaration" is the recognition that the idea of love in a deeper sense – and this is not a superficial thing oriented to our immediate satisfaction, but a deep sense of oneness, of connection, of belonging together – that is the driving force, the motor of the cosmos. That is everything that happens from the original Big Bang in this universe or in prior universes, when things fall together and move together and create wholes, larger and larger, more and more complex wholes which more and more interact, more and more communicate with each other, and they are really entangled as a physicist would say.

That's because there is built into each element of this universe, each particle, each atom, each cell in a living organism, its belonging to the others, its coherence with this larger whole, which comes through in spirituality. It comes through in a deeper philosophy. It comes through in a deeper, honest theology. And this is basically what the motor is. If this universe was not built in such a way, was not created with its laws of nature and development in such a way that things pull together to create wholes, then we wouldn't be here to ask these questions and the universe would still be a random concourse of perhaps carbon – but carbon is already highly integrated – so photons or initial particles, neutrons and electrons, and that wouldn't be much more than that. Even creating an atom calls for pulling together the elements of the nucleus and the electrons that go around it. So, evolution is what happens, is the essence of things, and evolution is based on the attraction, on the relation of the parts to each other.

Marc Allurement... you're describing a core allurement that exists between all things. You just stated it, of course, so beautifully and so musically and poetically. So let's try and enter into it for our listeners – and there'll be tens of thousands of listeners on this set of calls – so I really want to try and break it down for people. So when we talk about – the phrase you use is, not evolutionary love, the formal phrase you use is an all-embracing love, which is a beautiful phrase, which is the force of – and I'm borrowing Thomas Berry's word – allurement that coheres everything together. Let's try, if we can, if I could invite just to show people three or four just simple examples. Although you mentioned a couple implicitly even in your first opening, but just as we come deeper into the symphony to get a sense of where do we see that? Where can an average, intelligent layperson see that as it's unfolding in the evolutionary ascension?

Ervin Well, when you want to start at the beginning you have to go into cosmology as a start and where we think where this universe has started. Also, I'm convinced on the basis of evidence and rational argument that this is not the only universe. It also has precursor universes. It probably has parallel universes. But when I think of this universe, everything that emerged here emerged in a way as a gigantic – as far as we now can tell – explosion whereby all the things that were concentrated in a single point flew apart and all these elements created particles and antiparticles. Now,

particles and antiparticles cannot coexist in the same space-time, and so they annihilate each other.

So the surviving particles started this process of evolution which was first on the physical plane, a plane of creating, from particles creating nuclei, atomic nuclei, the nuclei attracting the electrons around them, and then these gradually as they get together they heat up and then there are nuclear reactions occurring; and this is going on and on until all the elements that are possible physically in this universe, in this space-time, are built up from hydrogen to uranium and all the scientific elements. So this is a process of construction, of inherent building, of actualizing something that is given in potential in the universe.

And this process continues. When you reach a planetary surface that has sufficient energy flow to constantly move these elements around and enable them to create contact and communication with one another, and then these elements produce higher order systems like macromolecules and then the cells and cellular systems and multi-cellular organisms; and then these in turn create societies and ecologies and civilizations, and this process goes on until there's an entire planetary ecosystem has developed.

And all of this is emerging together because each element searches out – I'm using anthropomorphic terms, but it does seem like that – searches out and seeks its counterpart. What we feel as love between us, I think even sexual love, has a deeper element of searching for a union which is a higher order union of becoming one with something which we are not one alone. And this particular development, I think, is here based on the incredible interconnection that exists at the very basis of this universe. We have known this for several decades, but it is now coming to light more and more that it's not limited to the quantum domain. I'm talking about what is known as entanglement or simply as non-locality.

If things wouldn't be entangled and wouldn't be non-local, they wouldn't have this connection with one another. The connection comes to the fore, but it's not mechanical connection, not one thing pushing and pulling another one, as we thought in the Newtonian classical mechanics. These are instant, inherent connections. These are quantum level connections. Only they operate not only on the quantum level, on the super small scale, they operate on all levels and all scales, and this we feel ourselves, because I think our brains are able to and every cell in our body is able to resonate with this kind of information. And, therefore, at the deepest level we are built to love, we are built to belong, we are built to become coherent, and if we pull out of this – that's another argument, we pull out of this by ignoring it, by artificially making the mistake of neglecting it, thinking it can't exist and doesn't exist, acting as if it didn't exist – and therefore become incoherent and become a kind of a cancer, a disease in this evolving harmony of oneness and coherence. That's part of the problem that is today of forgetting our all-encompassing love, our all-encompassing oneness, our all-encompassing evolutionary love, our evolutionary drive.

Marc Yeah. To download this into the source code of culture would seem to be the most urgent imperative of our time, because this remains... Let's step back a little bit. Now there's the mystics – and when I say the mystics, that's too broad of a phrase.

My original training is in religious scholarship, so I'm careful about words like "the mystics." It really differs in each system, but there is a kind of depth structure shared in mysticism – something like what Dante spoke about when he talked about the love that moves the sun and the stars – certainly in Sufism, in Kashmir Shaivism, in Kabbalah, less apparent in Buddhism although traces of it appear in Vajrayana, in mystical Christianity, in many of the native traditions. There was a deep ability to actually access interiors and feel the creative love impulse in its personal quality that drove the cosmos.

And now, we're now revealing it, and your work has been one of the central bodies of work in connecting the dots, particularly in what our colleague Ken would call the right-hand quadrants, in seeing this picture of interconnectivity. But in the end this is happening, not only in the right-hand quadrants, this is happening – as you wrote, it's an all-embracing love and it's happening on an interior level, it's happening on an exterior level, and that understanding is the change that really changes everything. And so that's why we're looking for in our think tank now, how do we transmit this, what are the most powerful ways that we can share this in culture?

And there was one particular – I think you've written about this in a number of places, but you actually mentioned it only in passing in your Declaration, which was the latest discoveries that show that organic macromolecules – the basic elements of life – are synthesized already in the physical and chemical evolution of stars – as you wrote, I'm quoting you – even before they emerge and evolve as biological organisms on some planets. That's a really great way in. Might you talk about that for a moment?

Ervin Well, the classical knowledge, the received knowledge as wisdom is that life is only possible under certain circumstances: a definite range of temperature, of chemical conditions, etc, but certainly the evolution of stars is a nuclear process. It's exceedingly hot. It was not believed that it could possibly create anything as enduring as a complex system. Yet it turns out, observations show – even though the scientists themselves say we can't believe it, but the observations show it's there – these new telescopes that are in space, the Planck telescopes, they show that macromolecules are coating the surface of some active stars and coating these clouds that condense around it; these particles condense and those are the future planets and they are there.

So you don't have to wait for planetary surfaces to emerge, because it's there already. Space is full of these macromolecules apparently. It's created in the very process of chemical evolution, much, much before planetary surfaces of a suitable kind could have cooled down and emerged and going to establish trajectories around the stars. So this seems that the universe is constructed in such a way – this is somewhat anthropomorphic language – it is simply, it's such, we could say created if you like, in such a way that it favors the emergence of complex systems that we call life.

And so another example, as I saw accidentally, I had to get up very early to catch a plane and I opened up the television in the hotel room just to see the time and there was a program that reported on life in some toxic lakes in Africa. Toxic start of life

is practically impossible, because the chemical composition of these – there are not many of them, just a couple – were such that no complex system could survive. And then they take a closer look at this – the same thing as when they go deep down into depths they didn't think they could penetrate before, but now they can with the new technology – they find that no matter how unfavorable or inhospitable a surrounding seems, some form of life develops. Something is happening there. Whatever possibility there is to create a living organism and to maintain a living organism is simply exploited. It is as if there was this tremendous drive, this entrepreneurial drive on the part of the living systems just to come together and to make life and to create life, and then to interact and create higher forms of life. Just wherever this is at all possible, it happens, whether it's a planetary surface, whether it's a hot star, whether it's deep down in such depths that I wouldn't think that life or energy could exist there, wherever it is possible.

I am sure that there are other forms of life on other planetary surfaces or perhaps elsewhere in cosmic space. I think that this – what we call space – is far, far more than an empty domain, than a vacuum. This is my other main concern or my thesis that space is really the deepest reality and what we perceive is a manifestation of that reality in a way that we can interact with it, but the deepest reality is there, and the deepest reality is this interconnected whole, practically a holographic whole that co-evolves through coherence of all its parts.

Marc That's beautifully said and thank you. So let me make a side note and then raise a difficult issue. Just the side note is I loved your entrepreneurial description. I actually happen to have just gotten back from Holland and I hope, by the way, next time – we do an annual Mystery School in Holland and I hope that the next Mystery School I'll be able to come to Italy and meet you in person. I'm sorry it didn't work out this time. But we do a Mystery School and I flew from the Mystery School to give a keynote address at a conference of entrepreneurs, and the entire conference was essentially about marketing skills, and my paper was the only one that was an exception to the norm, and I essentially talked about the entrepreneur as a unique expression of the love intelligence and love beauty of the Cosmos, meaning change the self-perception of an entrepreneur to expressions of evolutionary love, because the universe is entrepreneurial.

And I guess one of Jung's synchronicities is that a couple of hours after I finished that keynote, I'm talking to you and you have this beautiful description where you describe the universe as entrepreneurial. So I can't help but remark on that delightful synchronicity, but from that delightful place, let me move into a hard place. And the hard place would be something as follows.

When we talk about love – as you know so well and have written about, and Ken and I wrote about in this essay “Evolutionary Love” – love is generally understood in very, very narrow anthropomorphic terms, expressed beautifully in love songs and it has its great and gorgeous place, and actually spiritual teachers generally make a split between absolute and relative love, which is probably an incorrect split, and in this essay we try and correct that split because actually the same love that moves the sun and the stars, the same love that initiates the cosmos is the love that exists between human beings, but expressed in different form, that there's actually, if we can borrow a phrase from Bob Marley in an inappropriate way, there's one

love, which you talk about eloquently and beautifully in so many of your works. Here's where in trying to download this and share this with culture, which is in itself an expression of love, the desire to share it and to shift the core source code of culture in this regard away from a kind of Neo-Darwinism, the following two questions always emerge.

The first question is, when we think of love, we think of love as being creative, constructive, and cosmological evolution, as we both know, involves enormous creation and destruction. Just even the images of cosmological evolution, supernovas exploding... Reality begins, as you pointed out, with only a small dimension surviving. It's only the surviving particles that then begin to constitute life on earth. The biological world is clearly not a world that builds hospitals for the sick. In other words, hospitals for the sick is an evolution of love, it's an evolution of consciousness that is very, very late and new on the planet.

And so on the one hand we can speak of the evolution of consciousness as the evolution of love, in a deep and a profound way, in the way that the Hindus already understood when they talked about Chit Ananda, Chit being consciousness and Ananda being pure form love. And on the other hand, it's also subject to a kind of cynical attack which says which lens are you looking through? A kind of New Atheist lens which says, well, 100 million people killed in the 20th century; the biosphere filled with essentially a kind of carnivorous survival brutality by any kind of humanist standard. And so how do we talk about that?

I'll end the question and I know this is a larger embracing question. I took off a year, Ervin, when I was 32 to write a several-hundred page work on theodicy. Essentially what we're saying is not just why do bad things happen to good people, why is there suffering in the human world, but actually a much bigger evolutionary question. There's this great mystery that this entire structure is built on, not just creation and construction, but constant deconstruction, constant destruction, again, talking in anthropomorphic terms, constant tearing apart. You begin to understand why Freud, for all of his greatness, he also had real limitations and Eros and Thanatos is a complex theory, but you understand why I spoke of it, because Eros and Thanatos really do exist. So how do you think about that? How do you work with that from a poetic, musical, and from a more rigorous, constructivist perspective? Is that a fair question?

Ervin Yes, it is, absolutely. It depends on how you look at it. I think, destruction – I don't think there is random destruction. I think destruction is always reorganization. The existing things and existing structures have to be liberated, have to be made more flexible, more fluid before they can be reorganized. But in nature I am not aware if there would be meaningless, random destruction, something just comes apart. It's always part of a process. What level are you looking at? Which part will you take as your central point? If you take, for example, an entire ecosystem, then you see relationships that you don't see if you look at a single species. If you look at a whole species you see relationships that you don't see when you look at the individual. If you look at the individual as a whole you don't see those things that hold the individual together when you look at an organ or a cell.

So, depending on the level that you look at, the entire system which is a coherent system is a co-evolving system, which internally structures and constantly restructures itself. So it can also establish – it sounds anthropomorphic, but at the same time as it, I would say, creates higher level connections with its environment, with other systems around it. So you could talk about a galaxy as a whole, as being in an evolutionary phase.

The great mystery, I think the great puzzle is you have to look at, but I think we can look at it positively, is that it appears that this phase of evolution in the cosmos is a finite phase, because as the universe expands – and it now seems that it expands because the distant galaxies seem to be expanding much faster than the close ones – if it continues to expand, eventually it will be inhospitable to us. If it doesn't expand, but contracts – and this is also another possibility – and then eventually reach a point of contraction where, again, life is not possible. So the higher level systems, what we would consider higher structures, are not possible.

But then, if it's possible, and I think we are going now much, much deeper into these arguments – I'm trying to opine this in my newest book – is that this Universe itself is a phase in a cycle of universes in which one universe cycle builds on other cycles. So the information that is produced in a single cycle remains in space, which I call the Akashic Dimension or Akashic Field. It remains there and it's the basis on which the next cycle can be built.

So looking at the overall picture, the largest possible picture, which is the multiverse or megaverse or metaverse – there are different names being given to it – which is beyond a single universe, beyond our universe, if you look at that and its likely plausible processes, you don't see things coming apart just meaninglessly, just coming apart. It's only an organization for reaching a higher level and if there are multiple cycles and the information is conserved between the cycles, then each cycle builds on the previous cycle, just the same way as the information from the parents' organism is reproduced in the zygote and the zygote then becomes the embryo and the fetus, and then becomes a new individual which uses that information that has been created in previous generations.

So I think there is a buildup process, on the highest level the buildup process. On the lower level there is all kinds of changes occurring which involve destruction, but the only random or vandalizing destruction is by individuals who do not recognize this process and willfully or artificially and with great mistake they pull themselves out of it and they just act as negative agents, which unfortunately we can do because we have the power with our consciousness to disregard things and to misbelieve things and to create wrong ideas about who we are and what this world is. That's our curse in a way; at the same time it's a blessing; both sides. We can recognize this for what it is – the blessing. If we make mistakes and destroy things then it's a curse.

Marc Yeah, thank you for engaging that. And it really is the most difficult issue, because – and let's just think about this together for a moment – when we think about the qualities of the personal and the impersonal, let me try and frame it that way. People talk about, for example, evolutionary spirituality. So evolutionary spirituality per se is not a loving process or it's not a loving philosophy. The same way we call

religions to task for the destruction that they've wrought, despite the great gifts that they've given, we would call evolutionary spirituality to task for its destruction, because it's actually given birth to what contributed directly and indirectly to some of the greatest horrors of humanity, including, of course, communism and all of its expressions, and had some real influence on Nazism.

And the weakness of evolutionary spirituality, the way it's taught, is that it emphasizes the impersonal nature of the process. Then when you combine an Advaita Vedanta impersonality and you merge that with a Neo-Hegelian impersonality, then you have these two streams of impersonality coming together and you get a vision in which the personal is effaced and limited to – the personal is almost a pejorative word in quite a bit of writing. The personal is associated with the separate self or the ego self or the contraction, when, in fact, the deeper view – and coming from the place of a child prodigy in music – music is intensely personal. That's why it moves us so personally. Actually beyond the impersonal there's the infinite...

I sometimes like to think of the universe as the infinity of intimacy, the personal quality of the cosmos, and that this great grand process rooted in all-embracing love and the necessity for what you call the re-cognition of an all-embracing love, needs to be not just an impersonal love or a cosmic love, but a love that's deeply personal, not in the narrow sense of being anthropomorphic, but in the sense of being more personal than the merely human personal, not less, more intensely intimate, not less. And because of that, when we then encounter just the infinity of pain – when the original Aramaic texts talk about the infinity of divine power, they also talk with an incredible sense of elegance that just actually blew my heart open when I was 15 and 16 about the infinity of divine pain; that the universe is both infinitely powerful, infinitely elegant, infinitely beautiful, and yet there's also an infinity of pain, an infinity of tears, if you will. And somehow, to hold that remains the realm of mystery. It's almost as if we have to delight and laugh out of one side of our mouths and cry out of the other side.

And so holding that is an intense and challenging art and I would love your thoughts or your rejoinder or did I miss something or a completion of the thought or adding something new. We have to be careful not to fall back into a sense of the larger interconnectivity of the metaverses emerging one from the other, because the individual gets lost there and it took us, as you know, all of evolutionary history to get to a place where we actually understand the infinite dignity and the irreducible value of the individual. So holding that in balance seems to be an invitation. Does that resonate with you in any way? Any thoughts on that?

Ervin I'm thinking that the individual is a mirror of the whole. The part is a mirror of the whole. And if you look inside, you see yourself and you see it's mirroring the whole. You are gods. You are the infinity. You are the cosmos. If you look at it from the outside, you see the part, you see an element, and it takes a longer, rational exercise to see the connections of that one part to the others. Because we have consciousness, we not only feel the world, but we can to some extent recognize that we feel the world and we can have thoughts about it, and as we relate to the world, the world is constantly changing and we need to be constantly adapting to it.

I wonder to what extent a living being, a species that does not have this level of consciousness actually is happy or unhappy, whether it has that kind of differentiation or the realization of what that is. One takes it naturally. Of course if one is deprived, one is beaten or starving or thirsting or exceedingly cold or exceedingly hot, all kinds of circumstances, or doesn't have one's partner in life – I'm talking about less evolved levels or organisms or species – then of course there would be something equivalent to pain, but it's still part of experience, it's not a cause for unhappiness. It's a cause for seeking – seeking completion, seeking fulfillment in one's natural desires, natural instincts, natural needs in the world.

We can verbalize these things. We can abstract things from our experience and we can reify certain elements of our experience, and therefore we end up with concepts such as pain, our pain, recognizing our pain, recognizing our happiness, recognizing our consciousness and we can make it abstract and we can make it total in a sense and then we can talk about the cosmic love, the cosmic pain or infinite pain and the infinite happiness in the same sense. We can talk about cosmic consciousness.

We are an experienced element of the world. We connect with the whole rest of the world, and the whole rest of the world is in us, just as we are in the rest of the world. The way we put this together, the way we recognize this is then the way we perceive it finally select from this enormous collection, enormous stream of information that reaches us. We pick up some and deconstruct it and we make it into our world, that our world can have all these elements in it. There are now mind boggling elements. The more we think, the more detailed we think, the more we come up with these enormously different, enormously deep, perhaps, elements that are a consequence of our relating to the rest of the world, because we are constantly – that I'm convinced of – we are constantly interrelated or co-evolving with all the rest of the world. And when we don't recognize, we can't recognize all that at the same time, we select only a very small portion of that, and then we relate to that aspect of the world that we can consciously select.

But instinctively and intuitively and essentially, I would say, we are constantly built into the rest of the world, just as the rest of the world is built into us, and that is, to me, one side of the element of the personal side. When you say the world is in me, then I feel the world as being me, then it's the personal side. When I consider myself being in the world then it's going to be more of the external side. Look at the world and I see myself as an element of this world. Both sides could complement each other and as long as both sides show the interconnection, the oneness, then it's just a different description, different aspect of the truth. The big danger is the big fallacy of thinking that we are disjointed, disjointed, that we are separate, we are two instead of one. And that is, I think, the mistake that one can make as a conscious being, and that's a mistake that is not made by other species and is not made in the deeper level of spirituality where we recover this oneness which is there in the universe.

Marc Thank you, thank you. What you're describing so beautifully is the infinity of subjectivity – and I think it's a really important correction – because, of course, in the deeper levels genuine enlightenment thought doesn't only say that I'm an indivisible and inextricable part of the whole, part of the seamless code of the universe, but as you point out so clearly, that actually it all resides in me in some

essential way, which of course ascribes infinite dignity to the individual subjectivity, paradoxically, and that there's this paradoxical tension between autonomy and communion and that communion is an essential feature of reality, but so is autonomy because the genuine awakening is that it all resides in me and that creates this balance between everything being in me as you put it, as an infinite subjectivity, and yet at the same time I'm fully connected to everything, and those two things live in balance.

So, from there, let me go to one major last question. So, if we go into the great traditions and you pointed out, and I was really very delighted by it – at the very beginning, at the preamble I believe, if I remember correctly, to your declaration. Let me get it out in front of me here, yeah, it's in the preamble. Yeah, you point out that these great truths were not only uncovering, were not even discovering, but we're rediscovering. Although that doesn't mean that all these great truths were fully articulated in the ancient world, because clearly there's an evolution of consciousness, and we know things today obviously in so many different realms, particularly in the right-hand quadrants, particularly in the physical correlates that we had no idea of 1,000, 2,000 and 3,000 years ago.

Nonetheless, the great traditions, as you point out, really understood deeply the interior connections, the interconnectivity of the all with the all. They understood something of the infinity of intimacy. They understood something of the central human role and the infinite significance of every human action. They did unbelievably well. When you listen even to a Lakshmi chant and the way that it actually intuits something of the interior workings of the cosmos and how a chant interacts with the cosmos, and you look at the literature that Larry Dossey has gathered the data on in a really quite competent way on prayer and its efficacy, one of the things that emerges is, how do we begin to talk about the personal face of essence in the sense of a personal god, not in the old sense, not in the kind of Gebserian mythological sense, but also not in the merely third person sense.

In other words, as you know so well, so much of evolutionary thinking is third person. It's a third person system of what our colleague Ken likes to call interconnected "Its" with the "I" in the upper left-handed quadrant dangling in the air. When, in fact, what happened, what's lost there again is this quality of the personal. And, of course, one of the expressions of the quality of the personal is this notion of a personal god who is on the one hand, as Stuart Kauffman would say, ceaselessly creative, imminent, in that great book he wrote, "Reinventing the Sacred" and, at the same time, how do we hold the notion of this imminent love intelligence, this kind of morphogenesis, this self-organizing intelligence, self-organization through self-transcendence, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to be able to access the actual realization of a kind of Rumi or a Hafiz or a Kabbalist that I'm actually held, that divinity or love intelligence both inheres and self-organizes. And, at the same time, in a kind of paradox that's not easily reducible, I'm at the same time held and every place I fall, I fall into God's hands and there's actually a realization of that kind of personal all-embracing holding. So I would just turn to you and anything that might come to you, I'm sure you've thought about this deeply, how we hold that paradox.

Ervin Well, it is a paradox. I think one way of approaching this is to recognize that what we perceive of the world is a tiny selection of the information that we get from the world, and the information that we get from the world goes way beyond what is perceivable through our senses. And that doesn't mean that we need to go to any esoteric notions of extrasensory perception. It means that we recognize that there are more ways that information is propagating in the world than through the electromagnetic spectrum or through the air or through a gravitational field. There is information on the quantum entanglement level, which is quantum resonance basically which is holographic information which means that practically everything in the world is present as information, is present in every part of this holographic field because it's a distributed information.

So, now, but this is to put it in a scientific sense. To put it in a more philosophical or more personal meaningful sense, it means that our mind, our consciousness is a decoder, is a receiver that is capable of interacting and receiving tremendous depths of information, tremendous bandwidths of information, let's say, and of which we filter out the 99.9999% of that. And the more we can get of this, the more we find ourselves linked in the spontaneous entanglement with the rest of the world, so the more we find ourselves at one with the world. And that is a question of becoming aware of allowing our consciousness to reach into or to access the information that is reaching us. By information I mean this quantum resonance basically.

We know that when waves interact, let's say on the surface of the sea or any kind of wave anywhere, when they interact the interaction produces a complex pattern and this complex pattern carries the information on what produced the waves and all the physical properties of those waves. We can even deduce what produced it, how far away, etc. So the information is always there in the nodes of interaction of this complex interference pattern, as it's called. So our brain is an instrument for decoding that. Our consciousness is associated with the brain.

That's another argument that I don't believe. Let me just mention that. I don't believe that our consciousness is produced by our brain. Our consciousness is something that is accessed by our brain as we perceive it, we receive it. The consciousness is there in this infinite deep dimension, this deep field, what I call the Akashic Dimension. And this is the cosmic intelligence, the cosmic consciousness which is there, and we can dip into it by allowing some of that information that reaches us actually to be recognized and to be brought to the level of awareness. And that gives you a very different world. That gives you an intuitive world. That gives you a meaningful world, but intuitively meaningful. It gives you a whole kind of a world, but it doesn't have that kind of specificity, it doesn't have that kind of surfaces, that cold, regular, geographic structures and mechanical structures that you have if you just try to put together the elements, or what you get when you perceive the sensory as conceived, as perceived, as conveyed information.

We have this enormous facility, enormous faculty of becoming conscious of what everything is, how everything is related to everything else, and that gives us this range of world views, this range of different ways of being in the world, of thinking ourselves of who we are in the world, from the level of being just a set of atoms interacting in a mechanical way to the way of being a deeply transcendental spiritual being who is just experiencing the material world as a temporary phase, and

everything else in between. So this fact of being immersed in a sea of interconnected information in a cosmic hologram gives you boundless possibilities of interpretation and of finding ourselves, and gives rise also to paradoxes and anomalies, because sometimes one kind of interpretation doesn't mesh with another one.

I try to look at the largest picture and from the largest picture then try to deduce or infer what is logical if one is participating in that picture. What seems to be then is more likely to be plausible, given that the whole is one, that the whole is a single system which is interconnected, which co-evolves, which has this evolutionary love, if you like, or this evolutionary spirituality as a basic element of pulling it forward from the Big Bang to the big crunch and possibly toward the next phase of the universe.

Marc I think, Ervin, what is obvious to anyone who listens to or reads you, is that you're still an active musician, and it's really just poetically and beautifully expressed and formulated with such a resonant coherence. So emerging out of that, so now this dimension of the personal, I want to stay with it for a moment. So we have this kind of co-evolving, interconnected system which produces not only at the level of the gross, but at the level of the subtle, the causal, at the level of what you call a transcendental spirit. How do we access or how do you experience personally in the universe this particular quality of cosmos which is the quality of being held?

I was talking recently to a Buddhist teacher, a wonderful teacher, who has written some really important books, well-known, and has heard of both of us. And he said, Gafni, I heard you're a pretty intelligent teacher, but that you believe in prayer. How could you believe in something so primitive? So I asked him, well, what do you believe in? So he said, well, I believe in awareness. So I asked him, well, why do you believe in awareness? He said, well, I don't really believe in it – it's a realization. So I said to him, well, prayer is a realization as well, meaning prayer is a realization, it's Rumi's realization of falling into the arms of the beloved. When a person's in love or a person is in a loving relationship, they feel held. So that quality of feeling held is in some sense no different than the creative advance of novelty and prehension in which one moment holds the moment before it.

And there's a quality in cosmos of being held and of being heard. In the same way I'm able to hear you – how do I hear you? I hear you through my ears. I hear you, but not really through my ears – those are just a physical expression of a kind of intelligence that lives in me. I'm not so smart. I participate in this larger intelligence. So if Marc can hear Ervin, then clearly the cosmos can hear Ervin. That is to say the cosmos can in some sense hear prayer.

And the reason this is of concern to me and why am I raising this or staying with this, is because it feels like we lose a huge part of potential constituency necessary for this emergent new world view to actually take hold when we actually dismiss what the Kashmir Shaivites and Kabbalists call the second face of God or God in the second person, a core construct of the Kabbalah, and that maybe in evolutionary spirituality we need to reclaim that ability to hold that paradox and think in second person terms as much as we think in third person terms, and allow them to live in paradoxical tension. Does that resonate or make any sense to you at all?

Ervin It means I think prayer and meditation and all this, all for aesthetic enjoyment, music or whatever other means, are all vehicles, are keys toward a level of experience which is deeper than the ordinary sterilized experience that we believe gives us the truth in the western world at least. It means opening, yes, becoming aware, but I think prayer, if prayer is not supplication – in my mind I'd never practice that – but to me prayer or meditation would be ways of entering into communion I'd say. It's holding. It holds you. You're holding the world. You're beginning to feel yourself embraced in the world. And this comes from a rational insight on my side which has been the result of an irrational feeling which would be the experience of music or experience of art or experience of beauty in any form, which suggests this higher coherence, this higher harmony. And that higher harmony in turn makes me think that the whole universe seeks harmony, is moving toward harmony, is moving toward coherence.

And all the evidence that we see, if we piece it together, shows interconnection, shows not evolution but co-evolution, and even if there are temporary fallbacks, if there are temporary local destructions, the whole is still an interconnected whole. The whole is still non-local. Even though the local level is chaotic, the non-local level is not. The non-local level is one. It has this oneness. To enter into that level, to find that level, there are various ways of approaching it – to me, allowing myself to think about these issues, to consider issues. Right now I'm coping or trying to cope with this issue of whether there is such a thing as personal immortality, at least whether it's permanent or temporary, but of course you can't have temporary immortality, but in the sense of the personality surviving for a time before it gets reabsorbed or restructured. In that sense there is immortality even though the personal element changes over time possibly.

So I'm trying to think of these things and my best way of approaching it is allowing myself to have ideas float into my head, and if they seem to make sense subsequently then I try to look after it and try to see the evidence and try to connect it with what is known, but it's my way of praying, it's my way of meditating, it's my way of entering into the Kabbalah. It's allowing it to come and it flows. When you allow it, it does flow.

Marc That's beautiful. That's a beautiful expression of prayer and perhaps as we near the close of our hour, a reflection on the last question. Just a reflection would just be that, strangely enough, personal immortality, not in the gross sense that we're recreated precisely as we are in this world in whatever the next unfolding is, but in the preservation of some configuration of personal essence, is so powerful in every great tradition. And even an impersonal tradition like Buddhism somehow had to deal with a very strong doctrine of reincarnation, and although reincarnation rarely means – for example Walter Benjamin and Scholem's correspondence, and Scholem wrote a great essay on the doctrine of reincarnation in the Kabbalah – it rarely means I'm recreated as I am in a similar body in the next world. That's a gross anthropomorphism. But the notion that there's a – if I can say it – reality having an Ervin László experience, that in some sense goes on and reemerges in the cosmos with some sense of continuity and coherence is, of course, core to the doctrines of Karma, core to the Kabbalistic doctrine of reincarnation, core of course to mystical Christianity, and paradoxically even core to Buddhism.

So there's a very strong sense and I think that's actually an intuition. Before the full notion of irreducible personal human dignity had emerged in the Renaissance and the word "self" begins appearing in the dictionary, actually the great traditions, again, were paradoxical. They had this deep understanding of not merely as a kind of egoic anthropomorphism, but of a deeply felt sense that the personal is not an accident. That seems powerfully important.

Ervin The core of it is exactly as you say. I don't think anything that occurs, anything that comes about, anything that emerges or evolves in space and time is evanescent, that it disappears. It doesn't vanish. The past is always there in the present and this was also invited, which you have quoted with various terminologies, ideas, but I think it's there in all the great traditions. The past is not past. The past is part of the present, and nothing is completely lost. All the elements that ever happened are still there. Therefore, that's our personal immortality. If we are such a highly integrated bunch of ideas and experiences and information in this world, as our brain enables us to perceive, to extract from the sea of interconnected information, then this bunch itself is bound to continue to persist in that sea. And that sea is different by us having ever lived. We've changed the world. I don't agree with the idea that platonic objects are eternal objects or platonic ideas are eternally unchanging. We interact constantly with this deeper dimension. We change the world by being and the world changes us constantly, and out of this interaction is a continuous process of which we are a part. In that sense, I think, we are personally immortal.

Marc That's a beautiful place to come towards a close. I've got to finish with the impossible question, Ervin, which is for our listeners, if they had to pick one book by Ervin László to read and they were going to pick one, which one would it be?

Ervin Well, I'm afraid I'll give you a very different choice, because it's always, at least in my case and not I think in some other cases, always the latest one. Only the latest one is not published yet. It's written already, but it's not published yet. It will be published in a couple of months.

Marc Oi vey!

Ervin It's called "The Self-Actualizing Cosmos."

Marc Wow!

Ervin It's an evolutionary Akashic Field book and all my latest thinking is there. I would like to think of that as my legacy and, of course, if people want to read what I've written before, they're welcome to read. There is "Science and the Akashic Field." There is "The Akashic Experience." There's "The Reenchantment of the Cosmos." But this in a way puts together my latest thinking, this new book.

Marc That's wonderful. So "The Self-Actualizing Cosmos" which will be out in a couple of months.

Ervin First on the internet and then in print – on the internet already this fall.

Marc Wow, that's wonderful! That's wonderful. So what we'll do actually is we will publish this dialogue when the book comes out as a way of supporting the emergence of the book in the world. And I just want to thank you for a completely gracious hour and if the invitation still remains open, when I'm in Italy, God willing, in several months from now, I'll come and we'll do a second dialogue, hopefully also with visual images just so people can actually experience you directly. And just on behalf of everyone listening, just to thank you for decades of thinking, playing the music of the cosmos, and being such a gorgeous and inspiring catalyst and incarnation of the evolution of love. So deep gratitude and deep bow and deep thank you.

Ervin Well, I am grateful to you for picking up precisely this little thought that I have. Yes, it's a deeper thought, but it's just a few pages of this "All-Embracing Love" which came to me one day or one morning, just more or less in an intuitive way. Thank you for picking that up and we can hook our conversation around that, because the evolution is an evolution of love and the universe does evolve through love.

Marc No words after that. Thank you very, very, very much and I look forward to the next contact. Thank you, thank you.

Ervin Thank you, thank you very much.