

# The Tipping Point Alliance

A Vision and Strategy for a Meaningful Life in a fracturing World

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## **1) World 1: The Source of life**

**Invisible – Our Essence.  
Emptiness which is Fullness.  
No way to represent it.**

*In this world there are two orders of being,  
the perishable and the imperishable.  
The perishable is all that is visible.  
The imperishable is the invisible substance  
of all that is visible.*

(The Bhagavad Gita)

## **2) W2: Visible + impermanent**

**Nature - the world we see.  
Makes the Source visible.  
Signs that help us to grow.  
Incarnation: see and do / be.**

## **3) W3: Our own construct**

**Our projections – fiction.  
The meaning we impose.  
The world of our making.  
The world we change.**

# **An Annex to the Manifesto**

## **A METAPHOR AND HYPOTHESIS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPIRIT AND MATTER**

### **The great contradiction about the relation between spirit and matter**

#### **The three worlds**

As a metaphor we could say that we live at the same time in three worlds:

- 1) World 1 = the Source: this is the world of our own Source and origin (the Ground of Being) that is not visible but nevertheless never stops from keeping us alive and from inspiring us; this is the immanent and spiritual source of our deeper being.
- 2) World 2 = the Expression: this is the physical world in which we live and which reveals to us (the book that makes it visible) the true essence of World 1 (the Source) when we dare to look for meaning beyond mere appearances; this is an expression of World 1 in physical and material form as the sign of impact of the Source on our surroundings.
- 3) World 3 = the Interpretation / the Construct: it is the world we construct ourselves (in our heart-mind) as a representation of the world (W1 and W2) in which we live: this is a man-made construct that fits more or less Reality (W1 and W2) when our representations and interpretations are adequate; but most of the time this World 3 consists in an illusion we have built to protect ourselves from the fear we have of the Mystery (W1) and from the harshness of an environment (W2) that we wish to be more gentle and comfortable. But more important, this is then also the world we build artificially and physically (no more in our heart-mind but in our physical or social environment) through our action when we relate more to our preconceived representations than to reality. We then transform physically and mentally and socially our environment (W2) to make it “more compatible” with our artificial representations (W3), rather than with the Source (W1); this forced adaptation of World 2 into World 3 makes World 2 less perceivable as the Expression; it means that our action will participate in hiding more and more the Reality (W1) through the screen we interpose between us and World 1 in transforming World 2 into World 3.

#### **The great contradiction of materialism**

If this metaphor (this is only a metaphor!) describes a true relationship between spirit and matter, it means that World 1 (the Source) is the origin of everything; yet we do not start our own evolution from this source but we start indeed from the experience we have of World 2 (the Expression), which is not revealing all of its true source (W1) but is only in the image or incarnation of it (W2). The great contradiction is therefore that we observe only an image instead of seeing the source. The expression, beyond which is the Reality that the expression reveals, may well also hide the source in many ways (because it is not the complete revelation) as much as it reveals it (it reveals only glimpses of it). This unclear perception that leads to a form of confusion about what the world truly is impacts strongly on the way we try to explain (W3) the nature of our world. This distortion is pretty evident in what concerns science, religion, art and culture (or humanism), when each of them pretends to deliver complete and exclusive explanations of our world at the exclusion of the others<sup>1</sup>.

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1 Science, culture, art and religion have tried to propose descriptions and interpretations of what they see. As such they belong to World 3 as interpretations (the Construct), but each one is concerned with only one of these three worlds at the exclusion of the others: religion focuses on World 1 as a description of the Source, science on World 2 as a description of what we see (the Expression), and culture (humanism or liberalism) on World 3 as a description of what we made of the world (the Interpretation). Art is similar to science but relies on a fundamentally different approach as it is not rational but intuitive; in this way it is apart and bridges the gaps between the three worlds

## The great dance

It is very important to understand that our description of the 3 worlds is only a metaphor and that these three worlds of our metaphor are not separated one from another but on the contrary inter-meshed. They are indeed like the three dimensions in space: length, width and height cannot exist one without the two others. Each one of these three worlds hence penetrates the other two ones and is ever present in everything. Each one also impacts therefore on the two others<sup>2</sup>. In a similar way we have these three worlds in us: body (W2), mind (W3) and spirit (W1). We need indeed urgently to develop a broader approach that has to integrate the three approaches (W1-3) as a synthesis: an integral understanding which is able to situate itself on three different levels or from three different points of view at the same time; it means that we have to elevate our understanding to a higher level that is ready to integrate the three different approaches without opposition from one to another. It is

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depending on the sensitivity of the artist to the presence of these three worlds. Science has adopted a very rigorous path that only accepts what it can observe and measure and prove as consistent through experience. It means it has decided that it would only accept what belongs to World 2. This is not a problem as long as it is able to see in World 2 an image of World 1. But it becomes a serious limitation when science refuses to accept that there is anything else than World 2: what you see is what you get; i.e. when it excludes World 1 and World 3; and therefore it decides that World 2 is all that there is and refuses also to see that what it generates as knowledge is not an all-encompassing description of World 2 as such, but only an interpretation of what we can grasp and that it belongs therefore to World 3 which is different from World 2 which it is meant to focus on. Religion (rather in its institutional and sclerotic forms) adopts also a pretty similar path, but inverted, when it declares that World 2 is despicable because there is indeed only World 1. In other words it means that matter is bad (or inferior) and spirit only is good. It denies in this way the reality and wonder of World 2 and the whole mystery of incarnation (which is yet a fundamental dimension of Christianity or Hinduism); this denial is in fact in contradiction with the core of the message that a deeper expression of religion is meant to deliver. This is a mere regression into pre-rational behaviour, especially when narrow formalised religion prescribes beliefs and rites and proposes complete and accomplished forms of so-called complete revelation and denies that all of World 1 is indeed pure Mystery. Culture or humanism (called also often liberalism) does the same when it rejects both science as too narrow and religion as regressive and proposes humanism as the base for a new ethics and social reference - in which mankind becomes the central and main actor. The three of these approaches are in general very rich and creative in what they describe as their own specialised field but they are mistaken in the exclusive character of their own process when they exclude the other approaches. They all tend to deny what is not their own focus of specialisation, i.e. the two other worlds.

More about the expressions *liberalism* and *humanism*: The English word *liberalism* is a pretty ambiguous expression when, at the same time, on one hand, it describes a radical freedom of speech or ability to criticise the existing social settings in order to re-establish more justice in place of inequity and, on the other hand, it is also the proper term to define the neo-liberal free market tendency that precisely creates this inequity. This ambivalent meaning is of course linked with previous historical developments that make it understandable (at the time when in the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. liberalism was the challenging critic of our society). It seems also that the Anglo-Saxon culture has always had difficulties to distance itself critically from capitalism and liberal economics, probably for the reason that this is precisely this type of economics that has generated its fantastic wealth and allowed its domination and spread over the world. Consequently it would be more appropriate to use here the term *humanism* (it is the word that is in use in French culture) which refers to the deeper nature of our common humanity (in ethic terms), mainly as distinct persons and yet also in our belonging to an extended community (mankind); like the word *liberalism* the expression *humanism* does not include any reference to science or religion which humanism as well as liberalism tend to deny. Techno-liberalism seems to become the dominating force today of an alliance of market and technology with human domination of the creation. Man makes himself God (Homo Deus) by his own power. Dreadful!

- 2 The Ground of Being is by essence in everything we see, it is in us, because it is the energy that sustains everything. Without it, there would be no life, no energy, no atoms, no matter, no nature. World 1 is the Source but World 2 expresses what it is (makes it visible) and is therefore present also in everything we see or experience. World 3 (interpretation) tries to describe and to explain what one understands about Worlds 1 and 2. World 3 changes in turn what World 2 is and it probably impacts as well by ripple effects back onto World 1. The fact is that the three of these worlds exist as complementary reflections (mirrors) of what is (at least this is the intuition and the meaning of the metaphor) and are narrowly interrelated. They all need each other: World 1 needs World 2 to be perceived, and World 2 needs World 1 to get any content. World 3 needs to become explicit to show how far we have understood or twisted the perception of Worlds 1 and 2. Without World 3, Worlds 1 and 2 would be pure abstractions.

a great dance. The image we will get can then be in three dimensions: more complete and trustworthy<sup>3</sup>.

### **Everything is natural / nothing is supernatural**

To make more explicit what we mean by a spiritual reference to the Source (W1) we need to say that there is indeed no supernatural process that would make the action of this Source to be of different nature from the laws that govern our physical world; each phenomenon is indeed natural, i.e. naturally the expression of what it is according to the law of causes (W1) and consequences (W2). Most people in everyday life and even on a spiritual path do not experiment any special so-called supernatural event (vision, lights, apparitions, etc.). The Ground of Being is, as it has been said, not apart from us and from the surrounding world. It is everywhere present (although a discrete presence) precisely because it is the natural force that leads everything, like the force of attraction in the atom, like gravitation, like the force of life and of love; the action of the Source is not distinct from these forces we experience daily in our physical interaction with the world. It means that there is nothing supernatural that is apart. Everything (all three worlds) is involved in everyday life. Life is therefore the natural thing and the unique and true miracle that happens again and again at each instant for each of us. There is only one Reality. When one grasps this truth, one opens to the true wonder of life: a life beat in each instant. The bird is a good metaphor for this magic instant that is full of liveliness, of beauty, of immateriality too, yet incarnated, despite or thanks to the few grams of such a light body. Life is magic. This is the wonder: simply breathing in and out, here and now. There is nothing else that matters more!

### **A radical change of perspective leading to transformation**

#### **The great transformation**

The recognition that life is much more than a material process invites us to search for, and go back to, the original cause. This is indeed the sense of the path of spiritual growth and liberation which has to lead us to personal transformation<sup>4</sup>. This transformation consists indeed in the fundamental change of mind or of world vision when the core of meaning shifts from World 3 (interpretation) to World 2 (expression) back to World 1 (source). This constitutes a deep mutation in our understanding of life and consequently in our behaviour as well. World 2 and World 3, although

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3 Metaphors should not be taken literally but only received as an emphasis on one of many aspects. The meaning of our metaphor is to tell us that the leading energy is the Source although it is not a constraining power that pre-defines everything. Truly the influence of the Spirit upon us is indeed restrained by the measure of our acceptance of its influence. It is then “only” a source that contributes in the measure of the space we give him or her. It means first that it is only the source of energy and life and inspiration from which we can freely draw (or not) our respective originality at will. It means as well that we are meant to go back every time to the source if we want to understand what happens in our world. This leads us to adopt a spiritual reading of the Universe: everything that happens has at the same time, on one hand, a visual form that makes it perceivable (or also hides partially its true content) and also, on the other hand, a deeper spiritual meaning that is to be related with its source. In other words any event has both a formal appearance and a spiritual content, it means two different modes of reading. To well understand what is at hand we need therefore to go back to this spiritual meaning that is not always apparent but may be deciphered when we bother to search further for the true original cause.

4 Most scientific, philosophical or religious systems may have two contrasting roles to play:

- 1) Firstly as an explanation of what we see and what we experience directly, by reference to a paradigm that makes our surroundings more understandable and bearable and compatible with our present way of life.
- 2) Secondly as a shift of paradigm that reveals that the existing paradigm according to which we live is only an illusion, based on real premises but false interpretations, and it requires a fundamental personal transformation in the way we perceive the world and interpret what we see of it: our own inner transformation that will enable us to see deeper.

It is important to understand that both functions are essential and combine one with another. The first one leads slowly to the second one, rather for few people who feel they need it. But the second path remains yet accessible for all. It depends only on the personal choice to follow it or not (question of life and death). Despite the fact the path is accessible to all, it is statistically evident that people who follow the second path constitute only a small minority.

they are real, are no more the fundamental and unique references. World 1 becomes the focus of our attention and therefore our behaviour changes fundamentally because what seemed earlier so important (the practicalities of daily life) falls back into relative insignificance. This is the great inner and personal transformation<sup>5</sup> that may lead to further external transformations when it participates to transform our ways of living; and it may well also impact on a wider social level when it happens that many people undergo together the same shift of mentality.

### **A new interpretation of evolution**

This shift of understanding focusing on the impact of the Spirit can also change the way we perceive evolution. Our own personal evolution or the long process of evolution of different species may then be interpreted rather as an increasing expression of the Ground of Being in his or her intention to be revealed to us and through us; evolution as an expression of the Ground of Being is very different, maybe not in facts but yet in terms of interpretation, from evolution being perceived only (according to scientific observation) as the generation of ever more complex composite bodies, i.e. an evolution which tends progressively towards more complex physical forms (the Without) which subsequently allow a form of spiritualisation of matter (the Within): from matter to body to mind to soul to spirit<sup>6</sup>.

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5 We may propose here a second metaphor: in our everyday life we experience the Sun as rising at the East and setting at the West after travelling through the whole sky. Until the Renaissance mankind has thought that the Sun was circulating around the Earth; this was indeed the logic deduction from direct human daily experience. But then Copernicus discovered that the Earth was only one of many satellites of the Sun which was indeed the real centre of our small solar system. This was a big shift of paradigm. It meant a tremendous transformation of the understanding we had of the Universe and of our place in it. For the better and the worse, it changed fundamentally our attitude. This was the great transformation. The strange thing is that, instead of becoming more modest because of the newly gained awareness of our relative non-importance in the whole system, we became on the contrary much bolder because our new understanding seemed to reveal to us our true power of understanding and being rational; we decided in our way that we could in the future handle the world and even master and transform our environment through science and technology. This metaphor shows that our experience (the daily course of the Sun) needs sometimes an external influence (teaching - Copernicus) to become relevant and to get all its depth of revelation and to consecutively trigger the transformation. And the funny thing is that, even after transformation, we still experience the Sun as running through the sky (our sky) from East to West. But we learned nevertheless that our own experience is illusion and that the process is indeed very different from what it seems to be.

6 Usually evolution is understood as a slow metamorphosis of physical elementary forms into ever more complex composite bodies. From the particle to the atom to the molecule to the cell to the organism to the body to the person to the community. This is the holon theory (Ken Wilber explains this very clearly) that says that elements combine in ever more complex compounds with a hierarchy from the simplest to the most complex compound; at each new level there is integration of all the qualities which are present at the precedent lower level but the new combination that characterises the new compound adds a special new quality as a sort of synthesis to the total quality of the assembled lower parts by adding new ways of combination. The whole is always more than the sum of the parts. This is the experience we have practically of evolution and we can in fact concretely observe how living cells are truly more complex than particles of rocks or how birds are more complex and evolved than protozoa. In a similar way our consciousness evolves from matter to body to mind to soul and to spirit, as we experience it on the path of liberation when our awareness grows into a deeper and less egocentric perception of what is. Yet this image of evolution seems incomplete, as it has just been described, when we look at it in the light of the previous explanation which says that the Spirit is the first cause of everything. If the metaphor of the three worlds is right, evolution is more than what we perceive when we observe World 2; it is not only the creation of new forms that spiritualise matter (matter – body – mind – soul – spirit) but it is essentially the Ground of Being that makes herself or himself more understandable through more subtle and nuanced physical expression. Practically it looks the same (i.e. evolution) but the intention behind it (or rather its interpretation) appears very different: it means in reality that the spiritualisation of matter we can observe reveals in fact also a loving intention that wants to make itself known and shared; this is the other Reality itself (the Ground of Being) which tries to reveal itself to us by a material expression that takes the shape of evolution to make itself visible and understandable and expresses in this way his/her power of love. Evolution in this way is no more understood as the main transformation that leads to the spiritual realm; it becomes rather essentially an image of the true nature of the Spirit revealing itself to us. This shows still more clearly, in harmony with the theory of Teilhard de Chardin, how not only the complexity of the Without (i.e. the complexity of the external physical form) is accompanied by a deeper level of consciousness of the Within (i.e. the

## **Matter and spirit: two sides of the same coin**

This latter form of understanding concerns in fact the way matter and spirit relate one with another<sup>7</sup>. To avoid any misunderstanding it is important to notice that this other interpretation which emphasises the role of the Spirit does not create any hierarchy between spirit and matter like for instance in saying that only the spirit is principal and matter is despicable. This is not about a hierarchy but about a relationship between these two different dimensions of our Universe. We are used to understand the relation as an opposition or even more often as an absence of relation. Our interpretation brings back here an intense relation between the two dimensions. Matter is the formal expression of the spirit which constitutes its original paradigm. It is interesting that our other understanding creates indeed a fascinating tension between spirit and matter because they are each in their own way the respective complementary aspect of the other, in the same reality, like the two sides of the same coin. This tension is indeed the fascinating challenge of fields of activity such as medicine or architecture which combine spirit and matter as the two basic components, always antithetic but yet allied, of what they attempt to express or to understand.

## **Emptiness and relationships**

Consequently to what has just been explained we can then formulate a new hypothesis about the nature of life (nothing more!!). Another metaphor will help us which is relative to the structure of the solar system or the atom. We can observe how there is very little matter involved in the solar system<sup>8</sup>; the dimension of the Earth is almost negligible and the distance to the Sun reveals a gigantic proportion of void between our planet and the star. Paradoxically, although it is of material nature, our physical world (W2) is made principally of emptiness and of only a very little quantity of matter, inasmuch as the atom is also built on the same pattern as the solar system (hardly a few grains of matter lost in a huge empty space). The forces which hold the whole together are forces of attraction that inhabit the emptiness between the grains of matter. This means that matter is in very negligible quantities and that energy is the predominant agent. In other words our world is made rather of energy, of relationships, than of solid stuff. What matters is not matter (the wordplay is significant of our resistance to see the essence!) but the relationships between the elements. In more powerful words we could say that everything is relationship or energy that binds or relates, and

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complexity and depth of an ever deeper consciousness); but, more radically, it shows that the complexity of the Without becomes in fact the consequence (the expression or the visible sign) of the deeper consciousness in the Within. The latter is the cause of the former. This is more than concomitance; it is cause and consequence, source and expression. It means that there is a hierarchy between both Without and Within as the former is "only" the expression of the latter. The complex form is then not only the product of spiritualisation but it is also the expression of this fundamental intention of the Spirit. This is of course one more interpretation (W3) that does not seem to be able to be proved scientifically but yet resonates deeply with what the metaphor of the 3 worlds tries to express. Would Teilhard de Chardin agree with this?

- 7 One could say that there are three ways of considering the relation between spirit and matter:
  - 1) Either matter is the only true reality and there is no spirit (what we see is what we get);
  - 2) Or matter evolves into more complexity and generates in this way more subtle levels of materiality that acquire by extension a spiritual content: this is the chain of evolution from matter into body into mind into soul into spirit;
  - 3) Or the true essence of everything is spirit and this essence expresses itself through matter; Spirit is the energy that gives shape; it is the origin and leading force that expresses itself in ever complex forms in order to be better known (revealed) as an energy of Love.
- 8 Take a grain of sand of 1mm diam. (the Earth) and a grapefruit of some 10cm diam. (the Sun); place the grapefruit at a distance of some 10m from the grain of sand. You get roughly the proportion of matter and void we have in the solar system. Of course between the Earth and the Sun, there is also Venus (a tiny bit smaller than the Earth) or rather it is somewhere on its orbital which runs at a small third of the distance to the Sun. And also Mercury (less than half the size) somewhere on its orbital that runs at two thirds of the distance to the Sun. The same proportion of almost total emptiness can be described also for the atom: the electron is rather a probability of matter than a real mass, and the nucleus is made of a few protons in the middle of a proportionally very large empty space (similar to the void of the solar system) between nucleus and electrons. It means that matter is almost empty of consistent material. It is essentially principally made of energy, attraction or relationship.

matter does not play any important role, except the role of making the relationships visible. It only allows relationships to happen and develop<sup>9</sup>.

### **The new hypothesis: love in the in-between**

The metaphor of the solar system tells us that relationships happen in the in-between. We have then to focus our attention on this space in-between, the space of emptiness which is not void because it is inhabited by attraction (love), the energy that holds the Universe together. This other way of describing the Universe is evidently only an hypothesis (which is fully compatible with science) and nothing more than an attempt to see more clearly: the true essence of life remains nevertheless mysterious and non-graspable; this interpretation says that the essence of everything is love which develops in relationships, in the in-between. This seems a very strong reason not to focus anymore on matter but rather on what happens in-between. Relationships constitute a flow that never stops changing or being transformed, in permanent fluctuations, never at a halt. We then cannot grasp them because they always escape our control. We can only experience them in the instant as a lively movement of never ending creativity and transformation.

### **The corollary of this hypothesis: growth as discovery of love**

And there can be formulated a corollary to this hypothesis: as creatures we have been created incomplete because we have still to discover the essential fundamental essence of love as the main force that leads the Universe<sup>10</sup>. Out of our choices (our clear-sightedness) ensues the way we live and experience life. The spirit, once again, is only a discrete, mostly invisible presence that works as an inspiration, never as a totalitarian power. Our creativity is left untouched. True freedom (the ability to choose where we go) gives a sense to love, when it is our own free response to the Source. Maybe it is the purpose of life to discover how to respond positively to this discrete offer of love by the Ground of Being. And yet love remains a mystery. We do not know indeed what it is and we have to discover what its true essence is, by practising it and deepening our knowledge of it<sup>11</sup>.

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9 Grains of matter are like hooks on which relationships are anchored. The forces of attraction that hold the Universe are “hooked” on planets and stars but they are indeed the main constituents of what is: everything is relationship; and attraction that holds the Universe together is nothing else than the physical expression of what love is in an invisible way. This idea is inspired by the book by Brian Swimme: *the Universe is a Green Dragon*.

10 If we were given spiritual perfection we would be “forced” by our perfect level of maturity to recognise the essence of love. It would not be a free acceptance but a form of constraint that would be imposed upon us by our own perfect nature. It means it would not be love because love is free acceptance and free movement of the heart. It is why we had to be made imperfect, at the start of the path of liberation because our personal and spiritual growth consists precisely in our search for deeper meaning and for the true essence of love. When we evolve and discover what has been exposed above (if it is correct!), we come in touch with a deeper Reality that reveals to us the depth of love. We experience it then as our “own” choice, outside of any constraint. This radical difference makes the whole difference. Of course the risk is that we go astray. Evil and suffering in the world are probably just that: our awkwardness, our incapacity to detect the authentic source. Evil is indeed never, I believe, the work of the Ground of Being. It is never created for us in the attempt of harming us. It is always, it seems, a consequence of our inability to love truly and to be compassionate with our fellow sentient beings. Or it is the consequence of physical spasms in the natural world which is also in mutation, in transformation on the path to perfection. If love is truly our choice, evil can be defined as the lack of our capacity to love. I believe that the former or the latter are never imposed onto us by the Ground of Being; we encounter both on our path and we have to deal with both in an inspired way (i.e. with love).

11 In Greek there are three different words for love:

1) *Eros* is the energy of desire that moves us toward the other. It is very much self-centred as it is more concerned by one's own satisfaction of one's own needs. It is the root of sexual attraction but it is much more than that; it is the force that drives us forward to discover the world and be in true connection with it or with all other sentient beings.

2) *Philia* is rather a selective love, the love of friendship that chooses whom we want to love, the elected friend, usually the one who is very compatible with us and does not disturb us in our way of being; but it can also, at a further stage, choose to extend its feelings to people who are a challenging presence that will call us for change of our ways of being.

## **The loss of attachment**

### **The further step**

To be able to live fully and to discover the true nature of love, we need first to make a decisive step which consists in learning how to practise detachment. This is absolutely necessary in our growth, and it is even the unavoidable condition that has to be fulfilled if we want to be free to evolve further into deeper stages of being, because attachment is the great obstacle that in fact prevents us from living fully. It is not an ethical reason that impels us to cross this line; it is the fact that attachment is the wall we have to break through in order to access life.

### **Immanence and personal relationship**

Before we investigate what attachment is, it is necessary to notice that our relationship with the Ground of Being tends very much to be perceived from a self-centred point of view that hides the most important part of the picture. We believe in the love and the gracefulness of this caring presence who is the tender root of our life and energy. We know by experience that this presence is, on one hand, transcendent, i.e. distant and impersonal in its non-graspable power and mystery, but that it is also by contrast, on the other hand, immanent too, i.e. near and personal in a loving proximity in our deepest inner being; this proximity of a loving presence is in fact the most intimate part of ourselves where we do not know whether it is us (me) or Him/Her. And even this so-called *me* does not seem to exist as a properly distinct entity because it becomes only truly alive through our True Self which has its essence rather in the Ground of Being than it is anything we could create and manage by ourselves.

### **A relationship with the Ground of Being oriented towards “profit”**

This most private part of ourselves is in deep relationship with the Ground of Being, without us knowing too well how it happens. There is often a joy or trust or love that arises and expresses this connection without yet any clear visible agent seeming to take part in it. This is how we experience this presence in a personal and intimate way. In traditional ways we have learned to meditate or to pray as these are the traditional ritualised and practical forms how to communicate with the Ground. Silence and meditation and prayer offer ways of relationship and expression we can truly experience. This ability to be in a personal relationship with this presence corresponds very much to an experience in our deepest inner world. We need very much to interact with this presence and receive from it inasmuch as the Ground is by nature radical generosity. We developed therefore a way to interact that is principally egocentric, it means centred on our own needs and expectations and projections. Prayer and meditation became in this way some various paths how to receive (or grab?) what we desire, whether it is the answer to a request or simply peace of mind. The Ground of Being, because it is so generous and abundant in grace, became the one to whom we address our requests. This is rich but we can nevertheless notice how there is in this egocentric process a great lack of perception that meditation or prayer should principally be a form of surrender; prayers of request may well be answered but they are not meant to be focused principally on our own will and our “profit”. Rather than being a request, a truly contemplative attitude has in fact essentially to help us to find our authentic root and ground in being, when we are able to forget about our own worries. We can then tune in with our own root in the Ground.

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3) *Agape* is the fatherly or motherly love that extends to all children, or all people without distinction of who they are and how they behave; this is the unconditional love; the rain which falls onto the good and the wicked.

These three forms of love are all components of the way we love and they are all necessary. *Eros* leads us to *philia* which develops into *agape*, and there is some *eros* and *philia* in *agape*. They are all intertwined. It is why the discovery of the true nature of love is something very deep and complex; we will never exhaust our ability to discover new aspects of it. And love is the core energy of life.

## **His/Her will as our nature and vocation**

It is in fact more appropriate for us rather to adapt to the Ground of Being, instead of S/He adapting to us, because our own human will is not so fundamental and it is rather our root and origin in this presence that constitute indeed the essential parameters that define our nature (True Self) and destiny (our vocation for freedom). If we want to be enriched by the authentic source of life, our need for rootedness means that we have to find the source rather than give priority to our will to be answered. In forgetting about our own desires and in opening to the true nature of this presence, we may better discover what our own nature is; and we may also then better conform with our true vocation. In using prayer as the egocentric way to have our desires and wishes fulfilled we miss in fact completely what matters most on our path. The Ground of Being is not at our disposition as a servant to answer our false needs and illusions (although S/He probably does sometimes) but S/He has a general will or intention, as it has been described earlier, that aims at a special quality in our life.

## **Is S/He in charge?**

There is an expression that is often used in common language referring to the sacred or the divine: "S/He is in charge", which means that we have to abandon ourselves to Her/His will<sup>12</sup>. This is certainly true, but it has, it seems also, to be understood rather in terms of quality and not of actions. S/He is the Ground and the origin but S/He cannot, even for this reason of being pure intention, be made responsible for everything that is happening in our daily experience or that is caused by us human beings; because it would also mean that S/He is responsible for all and each one of our acts and especially also responsible for the mishaps and evil we commit as mankind. S/He cannot be made responsible for Auschwitz, or for persecution or for the destruction of nature by our greed, as we have generated it ourselves by awkwardness or misconception or hate. In situations of suffering the Ground of Being is with the sufferer, as energy of resilience and as a form of compassion (presence) and deep understanding of what suffering means.

## **The Ground as an everlasting quality of solid compassion**

More than a well defined plan for action His/Her will seems to be rather qualitative. It is rather this unfathomable quality of firmness and of love that sustains us and the Universe at any time and without exception. It is this unfathomable liveliness and power of love and the permanent presence of this firm Ground on which everything is grounded and founded and to which everything can go back and find solid and trusting support (even or especially for the victims in Auschwitz). As a solid base that never fails it is truly the rock, the energy, the intention, the will in charge because it is the real foundation of what we are and on what we stand. This permanent presence remains beyond the deep suffering, beyond the crimes of Auschwitz, beyond the destruction of nature. It is there,

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12 There is the striking story of Walter Ciszek SJ (*He Leadeth Me*) who was arrested by the Soviet police and imprisoned at the Lubianka in Moscow and condemned to work in a camp in Siberia (for 23 years). There is in his story a breaking point, during the police questionings when, completely broken, he has to sign a recognition of crimes he never committed. He feels he has betrayed everything but suddenly discovers how he had so far prayed for being supported in his resistance, using God in the purpose of what he thought was right, instead of surrendering completely to His Will. He discovers then how it makes all the difference when he accepts to trust what will come; this spiritual breakthrough is about surrendering to His will because His will is what we need the most, instead of remaining trapped in our false representations. Surrendering to His will means renouncing one's own (based on the false self) and tuning into what is indeed our true essence and our root (our True Self). This seems at first glance a deep contradiction because we believe that our own will is the support for our freedom, and it is partly true because we need our will to make decisions; but we then discover that, by renouncing our own will, we open to a form of adaptation to the true nature of life which is much more life giving than our lonely path of individualistic freedom, even when it is well-intentioned and heterocentric. We can then find the true solid ground under our feet, this unfathomable quality of the Ground of Being. When we become rooted in His will we are then in tune and can thrive because we swim with the flow of life, and no more against it. This is deep and true harmony, the harmony of love.

always, whatever happens; and, to find it, we have yet to learn how to recognise it, inasmuch as this presence is very discrete, as we have explained, in order not to impose itself. When we find then this solid ground, beyond the turmoil of everyday life, beyond the suffering indicted by what we go through, we find the secure and loving base on which we can stand firmly. It is why the expression *Ground of Being* seems so appropriate. It describes this true nature of rock which never changes, which remains permanent in this world where nothing is permanent and everything is ever changing.

### **Attachment as greed**

Having tried to describe this unfathomable quality, we can now come back to the theme of attachment. In the light of what has just been said about this trustworthy and permanent solid Ground that supports all life, we can see how attachment appears suddenly as a form of absurdity or imprisonment that prevents us from being “Grounded”. Attachment is not love; it forms truly the shackles that prevent our movements. The most invasive form of attachment is evidently our greed when we feel we need more than we have or than what is given. As rich people we consume so much more than other people on this Earth and yet we want still more. Greed is just killing us. It is also often accompanied by other unresolved emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety, etc. This is the first major obsession we have to get rid of. As long we are not free of this inextinguishable desire we cannot connect with the Ground because our desires call us elsewhere and prevent us from seeing the Ground.

### **Attachment as projection**

Another of the principal forms of attachment we practise is linked with the expectations we project onto reality and the others. We expect others to behave in a way that fits our desires. We have so much the tendency to write the script for other people because we perceive our own life in an egocentric way as a form of personal action (project), like on the stage (public life), where every other figure of the show (all others) should adapt to our script (our will or desires); it is as if we had already written the scenes and we wanted each one to play their role as we have planned it<sup>13</sup>. But it does not work that way. People do not behave according to our perceptions, judgements, desires, hopes, etc.; they have no reason to act according to our script; they have their own. And we have all consequently to learn to face the unexpected because reality is meant to develop according to surprising tracks that will go mainly against our desires. The first step consists then, in our learning of detachment and in opening to the unexpected, in refusing to plan the future and in discovering how to love what is, as it is. Suffering is always not far and tends to cover our reality by a film of pain which can be very strong and justified; yet beyond this pain, underneath, the Ground is not far, maybe not visible but yet always there, present and perceptible in its depth and faithfulness<sup>14</sup>.

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13 See the method of Byron Katie (*Loving What is*) and her four questions she asks to make us aware of the way we twist reality and deprive ourselves from enjoying what is. She asks the participant to first write down what s/he thinks of a person who causes him/her troubles; then secondly s/he has to answer the 4 following questions about what s/he has written: 1) Is it true? 2) Can you absolutely know that it is true? 3) How do you react when you think that thought? 4) How would you be without the thought? Then, in a third stage, s/he has to turn the sentences s/he has written around, in the negative form or inverting the truth or exchanging the object and the subject, etc. and see how the new versions are surprisingly very telling. This method and simple questions reveal so powerfully how much we get entrapped in false perceptions and expectations which prevent us from seeing the light.

14 There is the powerful example of Etty Hillesum (a young Dutch woman who died in Auschwitz at 29) when she writes in the concentration camp (*An interrupted Life - Letters from Westerbork*) and describes her deep joy (gratitude) and trust although she sees all the suffering around her and is so deeply involved in alleviating it as much as she can. This is a true example of deep rootedness in the Ground of Being.

Another example of this true firm groundedness is Sri Ramana Maharshi (the Hindu sage). He was in bliss by nature since an early age and inspired so many people by his natural compassion and peace that radiated from him. Or there is also, in a more normal setting, the example of Sri Nisargadatta (*I am That*) who is well rooted in a peace that relies on solid Ground, much beyond the passing and changing events or aspects of everyday life. Yet he can take

### **Attachment as a denial of time flow**

Beside our attachment to our greed or to our own expectations and projections, there is a further form of attachment we practise often which works mainly in our relation of conflict with time. We refuse to see that things are changing ceaselessly in our lives and we resist change. We get principally attached to what was and is no more, because we have loved it in the past. It is great to love what is given but this joy in receiving should not be turned into punishment or self-flagellation when the object of our love has disappeared, whether it has passed away, been destroyed or has gone elsewhere. We should rather celebrate what we loved, instead of, too often, turning it into a cause of deep sorrow when it is no more. When we loose a dear one, we should celebrate his or her life and rejoice about what he or she was for us, instead of mourning the absence. The joy is exclusively in the being of this loved one, and in nothing else. The source of this joy (the being) is yet the real cause, the disappearance (the non-being) only the shadow which shows more clearly the real source of this joy. We have then to remain focused on this indescribable quality and source of joy instead of focusing on the loss. Attachment does the contrary; it keeps us unmovable in time; we are getting attached or stuck at a certain point in time and believing that nothing should move anymore but remain all as it is, lifeless. By contrast if we could flow with the time and enjoy what is given without getting attached, we would be in bliss at each instant for what it gives us. This would be the perfect way to flow with life, without hindrances. Attachment is precisely, by contrast, the prison which prevents us from flowing freely. It is the concrete block that keeps us immobilised in a given stage in time and incapable to move on. When I learn to flow with time I can rejoice who my loved one is or was. When he or she disappears (goes away, leaves me or dies) I can celebrate his or her life in bliss because it has been the true source of my joy. When I loose my house by destruction through natural forces I can celebrate the beautiful place it was yesterday and be ready to move on. Of course I have the instinctive tendency to worry about my future life without my loved one or about the place where I will live, but this worry is not sorrow; it has nothing to do with attachment; it has rather to do with trust, or lack of trust, in the same firmness of the Ground of Being, i.e. trust that should allow me even not to worry anymore. Detachment is then not indifference but on the contrary passion to live in the present, focused onto the gifts of the present time, on flowing relationships. As the saying puts it, the present moment is a constant gift, it is why it is called present. This new way of perceiving life as a flow that has to leave behind the past and focuses on the present is evidently the core of most spiritual teaching. But from teaching to practice there is a long way.

### **Attachment to the false self**

The source of these different forms of attachment - attachment in our greed or in our illusory expectations or in time, to what was and is no more - is probably the consequence of the basic attachment we have to our false self. We tend to identify with our body-mind-memory because it looks like an independent entity that moves through time and space as if it were our distinct and total identity. But this trinomial is indeed only a hull that is the physical support or envelop in our incarnation for what we are truly, which is infinitely broader. We are evidently physically distinct from one another as bodies but we are also, at the same time all of us, parts of a same wider whole, as a living body in unity. This is precisely the role of our evolution into further (higher or deeper) stages of consciousness to lead us into the discovery of our deep bond with the Universe and the Ground of Being of which we are a tiny part and of which we are also a discrete form of expression. When we can be free from our illusory identification with the false self (the trinomial body-mind-memory), we may then learn detachment from our false identity as separate creature and we may experience the bond that links us all together and perceive the oneness of creation; we can let go of

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part fully in life and not be disturbed or be frustrated by unfulfilled expectations, because he has none, knowing the everlasting joy (the Ground).

our sorrows and our false attachments, and be open to the full experience of life and be free to practise true love.

### **The great liberation**

Detachment on all these different levels becomes indeed our true freedom and opens us to be ever transformed by the Ground of Being who becomes then the truly active and creative energy in us. We can truly surrender; and detachment becomes life and trust, as well as real freedom to be what we are meant to be and to discover what it is and what is. Attachment is then no more the wall we hit against continually; we can be rooted in the Ground of Being and become the ever changing expression of His/Her nature which is our True Self. This happens in our daily life; we do not need to deny our incarnation. We can continue to chop our wood and draw our water and go to the market place and meet our fellow sentient beings. This is precisely what life consists in: to be here and now in flowing relationships, aware of the wonder of life. This experience of course challenges deeply the false representations our modern “civilisation” has developed over the centuries, deaf to perennial wisdom teaching, and it calls us to radically different practices. This new practices of liberation can be the source for the revival of what we can experience as a society or a community. Simply a new way of living to the full. Let's start now!