

GARRISON INSTITUTE

Inspired Thinking · Thoughtful Action

Newsletter Issue 7 - Autumn 2008

THREE VIEWS OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The Garrison Institute explores the intersection between contemplation and engaged action in the world, applying contemplative wisdom to social and environmental change. Our program initiatives on education, environment and trauma care are complemented and enriched by the diverse teachers from around the world who lead retreats here, and whose teachings are conducive to personal and social transformation.

It's a privilege to have them under our roof, and we took the opportunity recently to ask three of them—Adyashanti, Father Thomas Keating, and Rabbi Sheila Weinberg—about their views on contemplation and social change. Their answers, individually and collectively, offer insights into what one has to do with the other.

Rabbi Weinberg and Father Keating both draw profound connections between contemplative practices in their traditions and mindfulness meditation. The Desert Fathers, the Sermon on the Mount, kabbalah, Hassidism, even monotheism itself, hint at oneness and nonseparation as the ultimate goal and meaning of contemplative practice. Mind and heart, intellect and spirit, the personal and the transpersonal, Abrahamic and Asian traditions, may not be mutually exclusive but are ultimately on converging paths, parts of a larger unity.

Even given their coherent meaning or convergent goals, contemplative practices still don't make much sense to the ego, because the rational mind finds it impossible to step outside the framework of the self. Contemplation seems to entail some self-annihilation—*anatta*, no-self, wandering in the desert, the destructive trident of Shiva, the Passion of Christ. Fr. Keating sees in the convergence of contemplative traditions intimations of a higher state of consciousness, beyond the rational one, present in all religions. Adyashanti emphasizes what he calls the transrationality of contemplative practice.

Yet from a transpersonal standpoint that recognizes our interconnectedness, it makes perfect sense. From beyond of the boundaries of self, it's possible to perceive our interconnectedness, and this is the foundation of compassion, good works, the vow to save all sentient beings, or commitment to social justice.

Adyashanti, Fr. Keating and Rabbi Weinberg all hint that insight into the interconnected nature of reality, achieved through contemplation, is what animates social action, lending the spark of inspiration or flash of insight that can make it transformative. In this issue are excerpts from our interviews with them. For full transcripts and video, check our website, www.garrisoninstitute.org.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Einstein wrote, "The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive." (See page 13 for the full quote).

The Garrison Institute was founded to incubate this new manner of thinking. But the new mental models we seek are also connected to traditional ones. Einstein speaks avowedly about liberation from the self, freedom from the prison of the delusion of separateness, which evokes the world's great wisdom traditions.

In this issue we explore how these traditions ground social action, and how the wisdom of spiritual teachers who lead retreats here is connected to our practical goal of achieving new mindsets and fresh approaches to today's intractable challenges, from domestic violence to climate change.

New thought and social movement leaders increasingly draw on the wisdom and values of spiritual teachers like Father Thomas Keating, Rabbi Sheila Weinberg and Adyashanti, especially their teachings about nonseparation and the benefits of contemplative practice. Recent research in cognitive psychology shows that contemplative practices can lead to greater mental integration and a wider range of perception, compassion and insight, which are key to the discovery of creative solutions.

Our "transformational" approach to ecology, education and trauma work redefines the core issues and puts individual problems into a larger context of interdependence and systemic change. Our goal is to cultivate new thought and leadership that can mobilize large numbers of people by appealing not just to their minds, but also to their hearts. In her new book (quoted on page 14) Jan Phillips writes that the kind of original thinking today's world needs "inquires into the whole body for its insights...engages the spirit in its process, and... considers the whole of humanity in its conclusions."

For the Garrison Institute, 2008 has been a watershed year of new achievements in developing and applying this sort of original thinking across wide-ranging fields, from teacher trainings and professional symposia on contemplation and education, to our Satyagraha Project applying Gandhi and nonviolent thought to the climate movement, to the fulfillment of four years of developing and piloting our Women's Wellness Project, now entering its replication phase.

In these challenging times, it is more urgent than ever that we continue and deepen this work. This depends on the combined contributions of our diverse community of changemakers, including teachers, advisers, trustees, and especially patrons and funders. Please consider using the enclosed envelope to make whatever contribution you can. We thank you for sharing the journey and for your friendship and support.

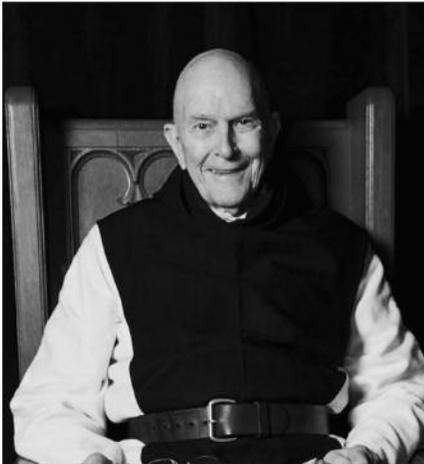
In peace,



DIANA CALTHORPE ROSE
PRESIDENT & CO-FOUNDER, GARRISON INSTITUTE



AN INTERVIEW WITH FATHER THOMAS KEATING



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Fr. Thomas Keating is one the Garrison Institute's founding spiritual advisors, and a co-founder of the Centering Prayer movement. In the 1970s, he was one of three Trappist monks who studied ancient Christian contemplative practices such as the Fathers and Mothers of the Desert, Lectio Divina (praying the scriptures), The Cloud of Unknowing, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila. Fr. Keating helped distill them into a simple, accessible and relevant method known as Centering Prayer, now an international movement. He returned to the Garrison Institute in late October co-leading a retreat and giving a free public talk on "Oneness: Unity in Contemplation." We interviewed him about the Christian contemplative tradition and social change:

The Garrison Institute (TGI): What are some similarities and differences between Centering Prayer and mindfulness meditation?

Fr. Keating: Mindfulness is a wonderful practice and has been refined and honed over the ages. These practices are found in the Hindu tradition and other Eastern traditions, and also the Hebrew tradition. There are similar

practices in the Christian contemplative tradition, but with a slightly different emphasis. Mindfulness meditation is the discipline of the mind. Christian contemplative practices emphasize the heart and heartfulness.

TGI: Can you define heartfulness?

Father Keating: Heartfulness is the cultivation of interior silence in relation to the Ultimate Reality, what in the Abrahamic traditions is called God. It is a cultivation of the spiritual will, the seat of the deepest levels of love in the organism. It has roots in the Hebrew Bible, going back 3000 years.

TGI: What is the relationship between heartfulness in Centering Prayer and mindfulness in meditation?

Father Keating: They are not exclusive of each other. According to my understanding of the Hebrew religion, they are meant to include both mind and heart. The Hebrew Bible in certain passages clearly deals with higher consciousness and contemplative states. Mindfulness also includes the cultivation of the heart, the need for the heart and mind to work together. Modern science now supports this view.

The heart is just a pump, but it has its own way of "thinking." It produces some 60 hormones to deal with various situations in the human organism. That, too, is a form of relationship with the Ultimate Reality. In dialogues I have had with Buddhists, they have the notion of Ultimate Reality, but their relationship to it is impersonal. This is also true in the Hindu tradition, whereas in Abrahamic traditions, the capacity to relate personally through love is very strongly emphasized.

The human organism is such a unity, so you can't have one without the other. You have to have a heart that is at least listening to the commentaries of human reason. Obviously the heart has its limitations. But neither should we get stuck in the limits of rationality. Contemplative traditions are moving towards the integration of both sides.

TGI: So do you also see a convergence between "meditation" and "contemplation?"

Father Keating: What the Eastern traditions call meditation is called contemplation in the Western tradition. They are basically the same thing. Just as in Buddhism, there are many different Christian contemplative methods. For example, when we use the faculties of imagination and reflection, it is called "discursive meditation," whereas non-conceptual forms are called "contemplation."

TGI: Is that awareness of identity between meditation and contemplation a recent phenomenon?

Father Keating: That sense of the word "contemplation" is now being renewed and refined in the direction of its original meaning in Christianity. You find that meaning active in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries AD. At that time contemplation as spiritual practice was preeminent. It was expressed in the blossoming of monastic life in the deserts of Egypt, Syria and Palestine, by figures like Anthony the Great and Evagrius, theologian of the Desert Fathers. Their practices come out of years of solitude, living what's called the eremitic life, or the monastic tradition of living apart but in community, which is called the cenobitic life.

...continued on page 4

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TGI: St. Anthony was presented as the one who vanquished the Devil's temptations through prayer and asceticism. I think of later European paintings that graphically represent the Temptation of St. Anthony besieged by devils and demons. They always reminded me of *thankas* depicting the temptation by Mara of the Buddha under the Bodhi Tree.

Father Keating: Yes, they are very similar experiences.

TGI: But in Buddhist meditation the basic aim is nondualism, nonseparation. Does the Trinitarian object of Christian contemplation make Centering Prayer any different?

Father Keating: Everything in Christianity is rooted in the fundamental mystery of the Trinity. Nondualism is an important aspect of the spiritual journey, but needs to be understood in the cultural context.

Let me give you an example: If you are in love with someone and trying to experience a feeling of being two in one flesh, love is intense. There is a great deal of nonduality involved.

One aspect of the Christian tradition is the spiritual marriage. The erotic love poem in the Hebrew Bible is the symbol of an intensely personal relationship with God. It is also true that even though you are in love, there are still two people. So beyond spiritual marriage, there is the Night of Self, the total surrender of personal identity. Expressions of this by Meister Eckhart, the 13th century mystic, sound something like Zen, Mahayana, or Vajrayana Buddhism.

The practice of nonduality is interesting. It raises the question, can it become a permanent state of consciousness

in this life? It is rare indeed to meet with someone in that state. Perhaps this is the direction we go after death. I have met a lot of outstanding teachers in many traditions, and I don't know any who claim to be permanent in this state. One Zen master told me that you can live in non-objectified reality for an hour. As long as we live in this world, we are in and out of this situation and have to adjust to it. We go back to our old habits of eating, drinking and walking around.

“I believe in spiritual evolution... Our rational level of consciousness is not the end of biological evolution. It is the gate, the beginning of higher states of consciousness, of developing the brain beyond where it is now.”

—Father Keating

TGI: The Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield wrote a book about this called *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*. Even teachers who have attained enlightenment have to go back to the challenges of day-to-day life, and in a sense, that is the real work of spiritual practice.

Father Keating: I know one person in the Christian tradition who claims to be in that [non-dual] state all the time. If we had more people pursuing that state, we would have a bigger reservoir evolving in this direction.

TGI: Is that the resource required to create positive social change at this time in history?

Father Keating: The work of social action involves getting through the difficulties of seeing people suffer and our inability to change things in

a short time. You have to work, plan, educate, collaborate. It would be a help if all the world would collaborate, transcend our doctrines and different opinions. Imagine if humanity agreed to cooperatively address poverty, hunger, healthcare and problems facing us everyday, not to speak of ideologically-based violence. We might climb out of the swamp of unevolved human pitfalls. Obviously that's not happening yet. People aren't free enough in their attitudes or behaviors. Millions of people are now serious meditators and contemplatives—more than we have ever had before. If more did it, we could begin to change society.

TGI: Is that the aim of the Contemplative Prayer movement?

Father Keating: We are trying to translate the basic teaching that comes from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

Closing the door, praying in secret, suggests nonduality, retiring into a place where you can forget yourself. Then God will reward you, transform your being, bring forth your full human potential. This is an interpretation of the text, but it is deep in the Christian tradition.

This passage was interpreted by the Ninth Conference of Cassian, who investigated and preserved the practices of the Desert Fathers and brought them to Europe. St. Benedict drew on them in creating his Rule, which became universal in the West.

TGI: So deep within the Christian tradition, then, is the idea of personal



transformation through contemplation. What is the connection between that and social transformation? Modern ideas, recent brain research for example, would argue for a kind of “application” of one thing to the other, as in applied science. And given what we face today, all our acute environmental and social crises, are you optimistic?

Father Keating: Of course. As a Christian you have to be. But that doesn’t mean you exclude death. That is the way to resurrection. That is the way to the triumph of positive energy. My attitude may be more realistic than optimistic. No matter what happens, the goodness of God will triumph and is more powerful than evil or any limitation.

I believe in spiritual evolution. Teilhard de Chardin thinks the biosphere is completed, and that bringing our species to higher intelligence completes it. So now it is intelligence and interrelationship that need to be transformed in Christ, which is looking at humanity as the body of God.

It is a way of describing continuing evolution to higher states of consciousness, which is present in all world religions. In other words, our rational level of consciousness is not the end of biological evolution. It is the gate, the beginning of higher states of consciousness, of developing the brain beyond where it is now.

It is a prelude to a divine-human way of functioning, to all the virtues of which humans are capable but which we have not yet learned to put into practice. It is inchoate in animal or vegetative life functions, and manifest in the tripartite brain.

Why could it not develop beyond the neocortex, and why could it not develop

beyond the frontal lobes of the brain? It will unless we destroy ourselves too soon. We have to evolve to respond to violence in a new way, and I trust that we will. I have more trust in the future than optimism about it.

A complete transcript of this interview, along with another on-camera interview between Fr. Keating and Garrison Institute co-founder Jonathan F. P. Rose, is posted at www.garrisoninstitute.org



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Father Keating addressed an audience of hundreds on “Oneness: Unity in Contemplation” at the Garrison Institute in October 2008

AN INTERVIEW WITH RABBI SHEILA PELTZ WEINBERG



Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg is a founder of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality (IJS), as well as a poet, educator and nationally recognized pioneer in contemplative practice. She has published widely on feminism, Judaism, spirituality and single parenting, and has contributed commentaries to *Kol HaNeshama*, the new Reconstructionist prayerbook. As a faculty member for IJS programs, Rabbi Weinberg teaches mindfulness meditation to rabbis, Jewish professionals and lay people, and will co-lead a by-invitation retreat at the Garrison Institute in November with Sylvia Boorstein for IJS staff and faculty and alumni of the Institute's professional training program. We interviewed her as she was preparing to celebrate Rosh Hashanah with her family.

TGI: The stated intention of your upcoming retreat is "to make connections between mindfulness practice, Jewish prayer and living in the presence of God." How are they connected?"

Rabbi Weinberg: First I should explain that this particular retreat is for rabbis and cantors and some Jewish educators, but mostly rabbis and cantors, who have already

trained at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality.

They have been part of an 18-month program including four retreats. Elements include Jewish prayer, Jewish text study in the Hasidic tradition. It's oriented towards understanding the mind, working with one's own emotions and character. We also include yoga, which is not in the Jewish tradition. But we teach it in alignment with Jewish text and practice. We teach mindfulness, which at this point in the West is a kind of a universal practice of paying attention.

With the advent of people like Jon Kabat-Zinn, who applies it to a medical model, mindfulness has been taken out of an exclusively Eastern context. We teach mindfulness in a Jewish context. We feel it is an authentic interpretation of the traditions of Judaism. Judaism is an evolving civilization, American and modern as well as ancient. The people coming to this retreat at Garrison are either already teaching or preparing to teach mindfulness in a Jewish context. They are coming to deepen their own practice and advance their teaching capacities.

TGI: Can you give us some examples of contemplative practices in the Jewish or Hasidic traditions?

Rabbi Weinberg: Shabbat, or Sabbath, is a kind of retreat. During a Sabbath you do not engage with your environment in order to change it. Shabbat means literally to sit or to cease. When you sit or cease, you become present to the created world. We are so busy creating more, trying to survive and reach goals during the week. Sabbath is a meditation, a 25-hour-a-week mini-retreat. When we go on retreat in a way we are recreating a Sabbath.

Another core Jewish principle is the principle of freedom. We celebrate it in Passover, getting out of Egypt. We ask ourselves: "How do we become free moment to moment in order to be a model to others?" Mitzrayim means "narrow," referring to Egypt, to coming out of the narrow place of slavery, into freedom.

Another fundamental Jewish idea is of turning or returning, called Teshuvah. The high holy days, this time of the year, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, have that theme. We come back to our attention, our own sense of being worthy or being beloved or in God's presence. Coming back to attention is meditation practice. It describes how the mind moves away from attention and needs to be brought back. It is natural to turn away. How can we cultivate the willingness, the desire to turn us back to attention?

So those are some examples of what you might call "Jewish mindfulness." Judaism is mindful; mindfulness is also Jewish. That's how I think of it and that's the way we teach it.

TGI: We recently interviewed Father Keating about deep contemplative practices in early Christian history, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries. What are some historical examples of actual Jewish contemplative practices?

Rabbi Weinberg: In the Talmud (some 1800 years ago) it is said that the holy men of old would sit for an hour before prayer. We don't have an exact idea of what they were doing, but it was probably a kind of contemplative practice. In the Prophets, Elijah says God doesn't appear in a thundering storm cloud but in a still, small voice. The primary unpronounced name of God in Hebrew is made up of vowel letters that are



sounds of the breath itself. The name denotes Being itself. The very rejection of idol worship is akin to liberation from attachment. Hasidism was a popularization of Jewish mysticism or kabbalah. It originated in eastern Europe in the 18th century and drew on a long and complex history of Jewish meditative literature and practice. Hasidism emphasized practicing with intentionality. It taught a notion of dissolution of ego, expanding consciousness, through ecstatic practices but also through contemplative practices.

We are not Hasidim, but we are inspired by their teachings. I work with a colleague, Rabbi Jonathan Slater, who teaches a weekly course unpacking Hasidism as a mindfulness practice. Was what we think of as mindfulness meditation exactly what they were doing? Probably not. We integrate other contemporary influences into our worldview such as pluralism, egalitarianism, feminism. But we are in their lineage. The Zohar, the classic mystical text, says that there is no place devoid of God's presence. The Hasidim say: the whole world is filled with glory. If one is able to come to awareness, one is able to realize one is in God's presence.

TGI: It reminds me of a Sufi doctrine which says the world is sacred and does not need improvement. We recently interviewed Adyashanti, who quoted Suzuki Roshi saying the world was perfect but could always be more perfect, meaning that an awakened person can cultivate non-attachment, understand impermanence, let go of the self, and discover the truth that all is well. But people with deep awareness don't generally sit on their hands, they dedicate themselves to saving sentient beings, or they work for peace and justice.

Rabbi Weinberg: It goes back to Genesis: God created one human being, who was male and female. That means ultimately all of us are interconnected. That there is one God means we are all connected. Individual well-being depends on the greater well-being of everyone. There is no separation. This is a call for inclusion. Jews see it as including the weaker, the marginal, the orphans, the stranger. We were slaves in Egypt. Our task is not to replicate Egyptian power. We are free so we can operate differently, and not replicate slavery. Judaism is a complex, ongoing civilization, in which there is more than one view. Judaism is a religion of interpretation. We believe interpretation is part of the unfolding of creation and Divine creativity. Our interpretive tradition draws a connection between spirituality and social justice.

*“Judaism is mindful;
mindfulness is also Jewish.
That's how I think of it and
that's the way we teach it”*

—Rabbi Weinberg

TGI: Is spiritual insight necessary to make social change?

Rabbi Weinberg: Yes, this idea is evident in our history. If people who want to make change lack awareness, they can cause side effects that aren't desirable. Developing our own inner wisdom increases our capacity to see cause and effect, have patience, have more harmony and wisdom in human relationships, and be open to new ways of doing things. There is an Einstein quote about not being able to solve a problem with the mindset that created it.

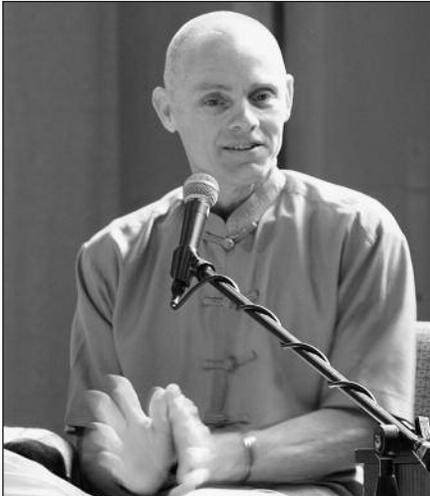
TGI: You know that quote is a kind of motto for the Garrison Institute, we've often cited it.

Rabbi Weinberg: I resonate so much with the Garrison Institute approach. Your board member Rabbi Rachel Cowan and I also work with Jewish social justice activists, collaborating with Jewish Funds for Justice (JFSF). JFSF is active in several areas, community organizing especially. Many activists have wonderful intentions and are so passionate. They often tend not to take good care of themselves. Anger can be self-consuming. We believe that helping them take better care of themselves, to work with their own passion and anger and to have greater self-awareness will contribute to their good work. By giving them skills and helping them deepen awareness, we are inviting them to cultivate spiritual practice, even if they are not “religious” people.

TGI: If there ever was a time social activists needed that kind of help, it's now. Do you have thoughts on coping with the crises of this moment, with global warming, terrorism, sectarian conflict and economic crisis converging?

Rabbi Weinberg: We need to deepen our capacity for equanimity, compassion, wisdom, faith and connection to one another amid change. What brings value? What is value? What is of value in our world today? These crises invite us to explore habits of consumption and to investigate what it means to be satisfied and happy. Satisfaction doesn't come from compulsive consumption and manipulation. Current crises offer a spiritual opportunity to learn this. Unfortunately there are many who will suffer. Many of those will be the poor, the children and the unprotected. We need to call upon wisdom and clarity to help the weakest among us. Here we are going right back to the Biblical teaching.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ADYASHANTI



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Adyashanti is an American-born spiritual teacher based in California, whose teachings have been compared to those of the early Zen masters and Advaita Vedanta sages, in which living truth emerges out of emptiness, free from any tradition or ideology. Adyashanti's latest book, *The End of Your World*, is forthcoming on SoundsTrue. He regularly leads Open Gate Sangha retreats at the Garrison Institute, where we recently asked him about his practice and its connection to social change:

TGI: What is the basic difference between your practice and Zen? Both are focused on nonduality.

Adyashanti: That's always a challenging question. I try to boil things down to something as simple as I can possibly make it. One's life revolves around one's self, ultimately, even if we're trying to be altruistic or compassionate. Whatever it is, for most human beings, it's driven by a certain self-concern. Often there is a goal being chased, whether it's enlightenment, or God or peace, or love or whatever it is. But what's forgotten about is the person—one's self—who's chasing that. All the intention goes to what's being sought, and how to go about getting it.

I've reversed that whole process, bringing it down to the first existential concern, which is, what is this thing called "me?" Do I actually know what this thing called "myself" is? It's living and life's happening to [it]. But if we don't have a direct experiential, existential realization of what it is – then we're driving a car without a license.

TGI: So your practice uncovers delusions about the self?

Adyashanti: Of course. Because if we really look at it and if we really inquire meditatively, we start to see that everything we think has self-nature actually doesn't. Looking at our self-image, what we think about ourselves, how we feel about ourselves, we come to see it's just thoughts—thoughts that refer to a self that we can't actually find. Or feelings or memories that refer to a self that we can't find. So the practice is a kind of peeling away or pulling back the various layers of self-identity.

TGI: Is this connected with the Buddhist teaching of *anatta* or non-self?

Adyashanti: Yes, ultimately that's what will be uncovered. What's uncovered isn't a better self, or a spiritual self or enlightened self. But what anybody will find if taken far enough—and that's a big if—is very similar to what Buddha and many others found. Everything we think has self-nature, actually doesn't. Buddha called it *anatta* or no-self where nothing has self-nature. That means, you and I and all of us are not really this thing called a self, or me. This is strange because it's almost impossible for the Western mind or the human mind to think of itself in any terms other than self. The mind doesn't even know where to begin how to do this. But, with deep insight this orientation toward self collapses. We see that—wow—none of this has self-nature in it!

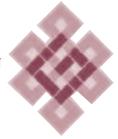
TGI: There's no there there, as Gertrude Stein said.

Adyashanti: Right, there's no there there. Which of course ties right in with the core fear of our existence, our fears about survival. If I look inside I'll find that there's nothing there—which is kind of funny, because the only way that the mind can compartmentalize this is by saying, "If I'm not there, then there's nothing there." Funny isn't it? If I'm not there, then it's total oblivion, nonexistence. Again, the rational mind finds it impossible to consider that what we are is something other than self.

TGI: This is difficult for the mind to grasp. But why then is it so popular?

Adyashanti: That's a good question! I've wondered that myself. I tell people all the time that the real impulse toward enlightenment, or reality, is a very irrational impulse. It's irrational in the sense that there's no good reason for it from the ego's standpoint. It doesn't hold out much promise; it doesn't tell the ego, "you will end up being better, or happier." To me that yearning, despite being kind of irrational to the mind, is an indication of authenticity. It transcends simply wanting to feel better.

Will one wind up feeling better when one discovers there's no separate self? Of course. But that can't be one's motivation. It's very ironic, I'd have to say, that we'd even be drawn to it in the first place. But in the end, we are the Buddha nature, we are the reality, we are the suchness. So the call is a call from that, a call to itself. On that level it makes perfect sense. And I suppose that's why people respond. You don't have to package it in something really enticing to lure people in. Just tell them the truth. I've been surprised by how many people resonate with it.



TGI: Your teaching seems light on method and technique.

Adyashanti: The idea is to have as little technique as possible. The technique could be summed up as “accept everything exactly as it is.” That’s not really much of a technique at all—it’s the technique of letting go of technique. One element that I find really important is the inquiry, the questioning, a questioning attitude similar to what we had as children. How far away is the star?—something innocent like that. I think that such questioning adds a dynamic energy. When combined with meditation it’s conducive to a flash of awakening. So there’s a little technique.

TGI: What do your students do when they are not on retreat with you? Do they meet in *sanghas*?

Adyashanti: Nothing official. I don’t really put a lot of time and attention into fostering *sangha* in its regular sense. There are groups that have formed, basically spontaneously... On an organizational level we’ve made no attempt to form them, or encourage them, but they just sort of pop up. To me *sangha* is wherever we come together. That’s it, you know, there’s no club to join, there’s no membership. We just show up here at the Garrison Institute and, Ah, this is our *sangha*. Like a Tibetan mandala, we create it, then, vooom, the *sangha* is gone when we leave. Wherever it reforms, it disappears.

TGI: At TGI our mission is to explore the intersection of social and personal transformation. Our main goal is to bring contemplative wisdom and practice to the social and environmental challenges of our time. We see ourselves as creating a loose association of teachers and leaders in sync with that. Can you address this in relation to your teaching?

Adyashanti: I got involved in spirituality to begin with because of my childhood. Fortunately I grew up with a nice family (which I found out was pretty rare), a good home environment with love, support, all the rest. But even so I had a very acute sense from a very early age of being able to watch adults and listen to the way they interact and communicate. We adults forget that children can do this, but they can be very acute at hearing the inconsistencies and contradictions in what someone is saying, when in a conversation one starts to subtly manipulate or avoid something. I could pick up on this really early all around me. There was a certain insanity in it.

“It’s almost impossible for the... mind to think of itself in any other terms other than self... But, with deep insight this orientation toward self collapses.”

—Adyashanti

As I grew older I saw it all around me. We see it in the newspaper, the wars, and as Buddhists say, the normal amount of hate, ignorance and greed. I didn’t want to contribute to that. I saw that transformation is going to have to come from me first, before I can actually do much for the world. My first realization as a kid was, “Adults are kind of insane.” As I got older, when I got into my late teens it was, “Oh my God, I’ve become insane. Now I’ve internalized it.” I took that very personally, so that was very much a part of my spirituality. I didn’t want that to be my gift to humanity.

I think real spiritual practice incorporates both of those drives. There is a sort of personal motivation and I think that if it’s coming from an

authentic place, it also has more of a transpersonal aspect—something that’s altruistic, something that has a concern for the whole of humanity. As our realization deepens, we ultimately end up realizing that we are the whole of humanity. I mean, the whole universe is us! Part of the deepest realization is the sense that all is well, even if it’s a mess. There’s a lot of mess, many terrible things are happening. And yet there’s an unknowable sense, not rational to the mind, but transrational, this knowing that all is unimaginably well. And my experience is that when this realization is authentic, something very unexpected happens. All is completely well, and out of this, life can really move in a creative way through you. Life responds and has a way of responding to itself. And I think that is just a natural, altruistic response that comes from the heart of reality.

As Suzuki Roshi said, “Everything’s perfect, but it could always be a little more perfect.” It’s hard to tell people about it because it’s so contradictory. Either everything is terrible and we’ve got to rush to fix it, or it’s all perfect, as some spiritual teachings say. The mind wants to know, which one is it? Well, it’s both. Historically, the people who tend to have the deepest realization don’t seem to be totally anxiety-ridden about the state of humanity. But Jesus, the Buddha, many people we’ve never even heard of, actually dedicate their whole lives to the benefit of others, even though they know all is well. It doesn’t make sense in the mind, but from the direct experience, that’s kind of all there is left to do. When you’re done with yourself, that is what there is left to do.

You can view a video of this entire interview at www.garrisoninstitute.org

DOCUMENTING THE DIFFERENCE THAT CONTEMPLATION MAKES

By David I. Rome



Garrison Institute Senior Fellow
David I. Rome

Contemplation can change the world; in fact it is changing it. There is an enormous and expanding range of contemplative teachings and practices being used to address current social and environmental challenges worldwide, and having significant impact. A 250-page “survey-in-progress” by the Garrison Institute entitled “Contemplation and Cultural Change” is working to document this rapidly growing phenomenon. Here are a few examples it describes:

- At UCLA’s Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, researchers have found that mindfulness and awareness practices can improve the ability of teenagers or adults with ADD/ADHD to stay focused. They offer trainings in Mindful Awareness Practices (MAPS) to schoolchildren and also to educators and professionals in medical and mental health fields.
- The Zen Hospice Project, the oldest Buddhist hospice in America, has provided hospice care to 2800 San Francisco-area residents and has welcomed 1400 volunteers, 5600 family

members and friends, and 16,000 event attendees to raise awareness and build skills in end-of-life care.

- In the Hudson Valley, 18 religious orders joined together to form Religious Organizations Along the River (ROAR) to “explore the interrelated issues of poverty, justice and ecology.” Sister Nancy Ertz of the Mariandale Center in Ossining, New York, calls for “a new understanding of stewardship as our *interdependence* with the natural world.”

- Inspired by his own adolescent experience with drugs and violence, Noah Levine created Dharma Punx, igniting a movement of young spiritual seekers that has spawned communities all over the United States and Canada.

- In Cambodia, the Trauma Healing Initiative adapts mindfulness methods to help victims of the Khmer Rouge regime with the psychological effects of war, torture, death and destruction.

In all, “Contemplation and Cultural Change” describes 13 different contemporary contemplative traditions at length and surveys over 60 organizations working in 11 different sectors such as Health, Environment, Education, Prison Work and Peace and Reconciliation.

The way the report’s findings emerged through the collaborative efforts of a community of volunteers has been remarkable. Under the direction of Bill McKeever and Craig Kaufman, a group of 40 volunteers worked over the past year to identify and document a broad sampling of groups doing noteworthy work.

The Garrison Institute proposes to build on that momentum by establishing a publicly accessible web platform, where contributors can continuously update and enhance content. We are looking at collaborative, wiki-type programs that allow for real-time contributions from a self-selecting community of interest.

We will also publish this information in the form of a Garrison Institute Report. In addition, our academic advisers have suggested publishing a textbook drawn from this research for use in universities.

For now it’s a work in progress, but when completed, “Contemplation and Cultural Change” in its various forms will meet a real need for a central source of information about the burgeoning field of contemplation and social action.

For more information or opportunities to get involved in and support this effort, contact: davidr@garrisoninstitute.org

“Socially, economically, politically and technologically our world is evolving in new ways we could scarcely image even a few years ago. Now, more than ever, we need to close the gap between our professional and personal lives, bridge commerce to compassion, sustainability to profitability, and move from insight to action.”

—Stanley Westreich, Board of Directors, Capital One Financial



REPORT FROM BARCELONA

By Jonathan F. P. Rose

In October 2008, the Garrison Institute was represented at the World Conservation Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held in Barcelona, Spain. TGI board chair and co-founder Jonathan F.P. Rose attended and participated in a plenary session on spirit and the environment, along with our environmental advisors Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim. Jonathan also spoke in a plenary session on the greening of the building industry addressing ways of making development and revitalization more socially and economically responsible. He brought back this report from Barcelona:

Although climate change is on the top of all environmental organizations' agendas, the IUCN World Conservation Congress focused on the critical issue of global biodiversity loss, which is already devastating and accelerating. The World Wildlife Fund estimates the world has lost more than a quarter of its biodiversity in the last 35 years. Biodiversity loss is caused not only by climate change but also by sprawling development, toxic pollution and overharvesting of the world's forests, fisheries and other natural resources.

The 8,000 attendees at the World Conservation Congress included heads of state and leaders of environmental ministries from over 150 countries, as well as leaders of indigenous peoples' organizations working to preserve their communities. Many came from less developed parts of the world, which suffer the most severe

impacts from climate change and biodiversity loss. The extraordinary disparity in consumption patterns between the most developed nations and the least developed means that the indulgences of the richest are paid for in the impaired quality of life of the poorest. So a topic throughout the conference was the ethics of development.

Against this background, Garrison Institute board member Pavan Sukhdev presented important recent work as the leader of a study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), initiated by the environmental ministers of the G8 +5 countries. Leading a team of scientists, economists and researchers from around the world, Pavan is managing an ongoing global assessment of the economic impacts of biodiversity preservation and loss, quantifying them in a way analogous to how the Stern Economic Review quantified the economics of climate change. The report raises a vitally important question, "What is the appropriate discount rate for biodiversity loss?"

Contemporary economics presumes that having a dollar in hand today is more important than having a dollar in the future and thus discounts future value. The TEEB report, now entering its second phase, rejects this idea as far as biodiversity is concerned. For example, most of the oxygen in our atmosphere comes from trees and plants. For that service, not to mention fixing carbon, filtering water, providing

habitat for 90% of the world's species including medicinal plants, and many other vital but unpaid services, forests are critical to human survival. Yet under current economic theory, having a forest 100 years from now has almost no value today.



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Garrison Institute chair and co-founder Jonathan F. P. Rose at the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona

In fact, current economic theory would say to maximize value, it makes more sense to harvest the forest's economic worth today by cutting it down now, rather than save it for later. Such perverse economic incentives are driving deforestation around the world, especially in developing countries, even though they would be better off environmentally and economically if they resisted them and kept their forests standing. So if we are to preserve forests and other critical ecosystems for future generations, we must rethink the way we value their services and assets. The TEEB report tackles this task, and attempts to assess the real value of

...continued on page 12

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ecosystems and biodiversity. But it also goes further, and asks whether our current economic systems are even capable of creating an adequate framework for valuing the long-term viability of life on earth.

That question of what framework would be adequate became a recurrent theme running through the conference. The international community has adopted a global treaty on biodiversity, a Kyoto Protocol on climate change, laws of the sea and many other multilateral agreements on global environmental threats.

Yet, by every measure, the quality of the environment is rapidly deteriorating along with the quality of life of the world's poorest people, who are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss.

In light of this, there is a growing call to supplement legal and regulatory efforts to protect the environment through governments and markets with a third way, based on a deeper framework of moral values. At the

IUCN Congress, Garrison Institute environmental advisors Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim and I participated in a plenary session on spirit and the environment addressing this.

We examined the role of the world's religions and contemporary spirituality as a source of values that might generate new thinking, outside policy or regulatory or economic frameworks, necessary to transform human impacts on the environment. Encompassing compassion for the poor, recognition of climate change and biodiversity loss, expertise on the impacts of development and the challenges of today's economics, the discussion focused on the underlying pro-ecological philosophies of the world's religions as major carriers of values, and their potential to be part of the solution.

While the Congress detailed ongoing, large-scale degradation, of the environment, it also showcased some effective on-the-ground solutions and inspiring leaders. For example, Narmin Othman Hassen, Iraq's Minister of the Environment, described how her country is working to restore 80% of the great

wetlands destroyed by Saddam Hussein, and to clean up the chemical wastes of the two Gulf Wars. Prince Turki Bin Nasser Bin-Abdulaziz, chairman of the Saudi Environment Monitoring and Protection Authority, told an intimate meeting of global environmental leaders that "Our globalized technological civilization could break down in chaos and anarchy, or it could break through to a more human and sustainable world. To master our destiny, we need new thinking, new values and a new perception."

This is in fact the premise of the Garrison Institute's Initiative on Transformational Ecology. On a personal note, it was extraordinarily heartening to attend the Barcelona meeting as a representative of the Garrison Institute, and discover how many people around the world are aware of our work, have visited our website, read our papers and been influenced by our thinking. Nicole Baker, a young conservationist from Australia, wrote, "I want to say thanks for doing this work as it is a great gift to our planet and it is an inspiration to me."



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GARRISON INSTITUTE STAFF ARE CONTEMPLATIVES, TOO

Pictured here at an October 2008 outing at Storm King Art Center, the Garrison Institute staff are an integral part of the Garrison Institute's collaborative community of changemakers.

They do the daily work of keeping operations, initiatives, and administration of the Institute running. But they also take time out for staff retreats and contemplative practice, as a way of deepening the Institute's work.

THE GARRISON INSTITUTE PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Meeting Social and Environmental Challenges with Contemplative Intelligence

The Garrison Institute tackles problems by working to shift the prior mindset that created them, combining contemplative wisdom with evidence-based methodologies to create the conditions for positive environmental and social change. Our Program Initiatives bring the wisdom of the world's contemplative traditions to bear on education, the environment and trauma care. Here is an update on our current work in those fields:

INITIATIVE ON CONTEMPLATION AND EDUCATION

Founded in 2004, Garrison Institute's Initiative on Contemplation and Education (ICE) has played a central role in developing the field of evidence-based contemplative techniques for K-12 educators and classrooms. ICE works to introduce relevant contemplative techniques to educators, helping create healthy school environments conducive to children becoming responsible, productive, caring adults, while at the same time helping improve student academic performance.

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE)

CARE, a project of our Initiative on Contemplation and Education, is a professional development program for teachers, supporting their ability to deal with their own daily stresses and giving them tools to support their pupils to overcome difficulties and flourish socially, emotionally and academically. Developed by ICE director Tish Jennings, Richard Brown of Naropa University and Mark Greenberg and Christa Turksma of Penn State University, CARE training typically involves a two-day intensive session with a four- to six-week period of one-on-one mentoring from faculty, followed by a second two-day intensive. The curriculum combines exercises for recognizing emotional patterns (one's own and others') with

“A human being is part of the whole called by us the universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is kind of a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive.”

—Albert Einstein

contemplative practices such as mindfulness meditation, loving-kindness and group awareness.

In 2008 we conducted trainings for teachers at the Episcopal Academy in Philadelphia, part of a collaboration

with the University of Pennsylvania to study the trainings' psychosocial and neurocognitive effects on students and teachers. We also conducted the first residential teacher trainings at the Garrison Institute.



The August 2008 CARE training attracted teachers from around the US and Canada

The Garrison Institute Program Initiatives continued...

In August 2008 we hosted a five-day CARE summer retreat for teachers, training them in contemplative interventions to reduce stress and improve mental concentration, emotional awareness, responsiveness and resilience. Chaired by Tish Jennings, Richard Brown and Christa Turksma, it attracted 32 teachers from around the US and even Canada, including eight who are being trained to become CARE trainers themselves. Participants told us the training enabled them to read their own emotional experiences better, to recognize unproductive patterns in how they relate to students and parents and to consider ways of shifting them. Since the school year has started, a number of teachers who took the training reported that they have been applying these skills in their classrooms, which is helping them be better teachers. "This is the program I've been wanting for twenty years," said one. A second CARE retreat for teachers is planned for August 2009.

Creating Sanctuary Within

Building on our CARE program, the Garrison Institute is collaborating with the Andrus Children's Center in Yonkers, New York to provide specialized training for K-12 teachers working with at-risk traumatized children. Andrus serves students who have been diagnosed with one or more mental illnesses and/or developmental disabilities; most have experienced significant loss and trauma. It employs the Sanctuary model for building non-violent, democratic therapeutic communities that can effectively address and resolve traumatic experiences. At Andrus's request, we are creating the "Creating Sanctuary Within" (CSW) pilot project, using mindful-

ness skills and other elements of CARE training to support Andrus's implementation of the Sanctuary model, and to expand its work in teaching emotion management skills to students, teachers and staff.

CSW training will help alleviate teacher burnout, improve emotional regulation, promote empathy, combat vicarious traumatization, and introduce age-appropriate contemplative techniques to children. Studies show that when teachers are more self-attuned they are also more flexible,

"We are standing on the edge of a new world... There has been an eruption in consciousness and never has anyone stood in this place. The thinking that is called for now is truly original—not revolutionary or reflexive, but evolutionary and reflective."

—Jan Phillips, *The Art of Original Thinking*

skillful and empathic, and better attuned to their students. A master teacher who has been at Andrus for 35 years said, "When a child shouts a four letter word at me, instead of getting angry or punitive I just say in a gentle voice, 'I'm sorry to hear that you're so upset.'" The "Creating Sanctuary Within" pilot will be replicable not only in alternative schools, but in all K-12 school settings where behavioral problems are present—which is virtually any classroom.

Cultivating Emotional Balance in the Classroom (CEBC)

ICE Director Dr. Tish Jennings is the principal investigator of this randomized, controlled trial assessing the classroom impact of Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB) training, in cooperation with San Francisco State University's Marian Wright Edelman

Institute. Originally developed at the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the 2000 meeting of the Mind and Life Institute in Dharamsala, India, CEB was the first training to combine mindfulness-based techniques with emotional awareness training to reduce destructive emotions and promote compassionate, caring behavior. Our CARE program is an extension of CEB designed specifically to address the emotional stress of teaching. Testing has shown CEB significantly reduces depression

and anxiety and improves well-being among teachers. The CEBC study, due out this year, will assess how this affects classroom social and emotional climate.

Professional Meetings

ICE convenes semi-annual multidisciplinary meetings for leading researchers and educators. Our October 2007 forum, co-sponsored by Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the Fetzer Institute and the Garrison Institute, surveyed assessment systems and methodologies for fostering social-emotional development and academic performance in preschool and elementary school children.

Our April 2008 symposium on "Developmental Issues in Contemplative Education" was a "watershed event" according to



The Garrison Institute Program Initiatives continued...

Dr. Mark Greenberg, director of The Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development at Penn State and ICE Leadership Council Chair. It was the first large professional meeting open to the public examining how different forms of mindfulness training for young people in various settings may support specific developmental goals for specific age groups. It featured demonstrations and commentary by scientists such as physicist Arthur Zajonc, scientific coordinator for the Mind and Life dialogue with H.H. the Dalai Lama, and a keynote presentation by Dan Siegel, author of *The Mindful Brain*. We will build on this exchange in our next symposium July 10-12, 2009, "New Findings in Contemplative Education," presenting new research on the effects of contemplative education.

Our October 22-25 forum on "Envisioning the Future of Contemplative Education" discussed contemplative education as a catalyst for change in educational policy, as a way of improving educational environments and curricula, and as a subject to be taught in its own right. Facilitated by Art Kleiner and chaired by Mark Greenberg, Tish Jennings and Garrison Institute senior fellow David Rome, the forum gathered invited leaders in philanthropy, education and developmental science. They included, among many others, child development and social policy expert Larry Aber, New York University professor and chair of its Institute for Human Development and Social Change; Adele Diamond of the University of British Columbia, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Developmental Cognitive

Neuroscience and Linda Lantieri, director of Project Renewal and cofounder of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program.

Our next forum February 25-26, 2009, "Exploring Methodological Issues in Contemplative Education Research," convenes scientists studying the effects of contemplative interventions on teachers and classroom climate, to create a battery of assessments that can be used across studies.



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The October 2008 forum on **Envisioning the Future of Contemplative Education**

Dissemination and Outreach

We disseminate the results of ICE's work to the field through professional conferences and journals. Dr. Jennings has recently presented papers on contemplative interventions for teachers and students at meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Education Research Association (AERA) and the Society for Prevention Research (SPR). She gave the keynote address at the third international conference of PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies), a social and emotional learning program. She will moderate a

panel on teaching children at the Happiness and its Causes conference in San Francisco November 24-25, and present a lecture at the Learning and the Brain conference in San Francisco February 18-24, 2009.

Articles by Dr. Jennings on contemplative education and youth development appear in the summer issue of *New Directions for Youth Development* and the current issue of *Mandala* magazine. An extensive review article

co-authored by Dr. Jennings and Dr. Mark Greenberg presenting the Prosocial Classroom model is forthcoming in the journal *Review of Educational Research*.

Contact the Contemplation and Education Initiative at tish@garrisoninstitute.org

INITIATIVE ON TRANSFORMATIONAL ECOLOGY

The Initiative on Transformational Ecology works to reframe and solve human-caused ecological problems affecting life on earth through a more holistic understanding of the world as an interconnected web of life,

The Garrison Institute Program Initiatives continued...

informed by modern discoveries of psychology and ecology, and energized by the passion that lies at the root of successful social movements. It moves beyond current approaches to problem-solving based primarily upon scientific research, law and politics, to a more integrative approach, bringing together networks of people with shared values to create change that resonates throughout our culture.

The Satyagraha Project

This spring we launched our Satyagraha Project, exploring how the nonviolent thought tradition—especially Gandhi's *satyagraha* or "truth force," but also Martin Luther King, Jr., Emerson and Thoreau—inspired radical social transformation, and how it might help transform climate change. You can read news coverage and view online video of our April 2008 event, including performances by Philip Glass and Odetta, and presentations by thought and movement leaders, at www.garrisoninstitute.org. The Satyagraha Project continues with more dialogue and planned actions for 2009.

Bold Leadership on Climate Change

Ongoing, by-invitation retreats at the Garrison Institute convene prominent leaders from diverse backgrounds to create new frameworks and support new forms of cooperative, multi-sector action on climate change. For example we are working with the Urban Land Institute to plan a 2009 retreat for leaders in real estate development whose work can help build communities with lower climate and environmental impacts.

"We are at the most critical moment in human history...

Are we going to claim our truth force, our homo sapiens' vital force? This is the vital force of the legacy of Gandhi, of King, and of all future generations, who are here present with us, asking for that vital force of the universe, the earth, and the human community to go into the future as one sacred community."

—Mary Evelyn Tucker

The Hudson River Project

The Hudson River Project (HRP) works with diverse congregations, environmental and civic groups, and residents throughout the Hudson River bioregion. It fosters inclusive, values-based environmental discourse, "greening" of houses of worship and the invocation of spirituality and ethics towards a healthier, more sustainable Hudson River environment.

In January 2008 HRP held an advance screening and discussion of the new documentary RENEWAL, which depicts the greening work of diverse faith groups, from Evangelicals fighting mountaintop renewal in Appalachia to GreenFaith's work to help install solar panels and reduce waste streams in houses of worship in New Jersey. We are currently setting up on-site screenings of RENEWAL for congregations and faith groups throughout our region; screening requests have come to us from as far away as Africa. For information or to arrange a screening, contact James Bambino at james@garrisoninstitute.org or 845-424-4800.

HRP is planning a series of 2009 events in conjunction with the celebration of the Hudson-Fulton-

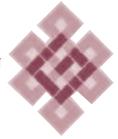
Champlain Quadricentennial 1609-2009, a statewide celebration of the Hudson River. Our events address ways of securing the Hudson's environmental future as a vital part of celebrating and preserving its heritage.

Contact the Transformational Ecology Initiative at: transformationalecology@garrisoninstitute.org

What Is Transformational Ecology?

Transformational Ecology is both a form of analysis and explanation that recognizes the limitations of existing environmental activism, and an active method of problem-solving. It embodies the systems-based worldview, which comprehends the deeply interdependent nature of environmental dilemmas, and uses integrative approaches to both thought and action that transform the way that humans relate to each other and to the natural world. Put another way, Transformational Ecology rejects the Cartesian split between mind and matter....

The above is an excerpt from a new essay on the theory and practice of Transformational Ecology posted at www.garrisoninstitute.org



The Garrison Institute Program Initiatives continued...

INITIATIVE ON TRANSFORMING TRAUMA

Contemplative practices show promise for enhancing healing, recovery and well-being for trauma survivors. The Transforming Trauma Initiative advances the use of contemplative methods for treating trauma, including the epidemic of vicarious trauma (VT) often experienced by trauma workers.

Women's Wellness Project

The Women's Wellness Project conducts trainings for people working in domestic violence shelters, using meditation, restorative yoga and complementary therapies to alleviate vicarious trauma, reduce burnout, strengthen resilience and help caregivers be more effective in their work with clients. "If you're working with people who have experienced trauma, you can experience vicarious trauma," said DaRa Williams, manager of the Project, in a recent interview in *Shambhala Sun*. "As a result of empathetically connecting to clients, you are in a position to actually be traumatized yourself."

In a three-year pilot project completed in 2007, over 300 workers from over 40 shelters in the New York area attended Wellness trainings. The pilot was designed to be replicated throughout the US, and in 2008 it was expanded into on-site trainings conducted on the premises of the shelters themselves.

During the past year, we provided Wellness training to about 160 front-line shelter workers, and for the first time included shelter administrators and directors. "I could see the positive impact on my staff," stated one agency director, "and I realized that directors and supervisors needed a program as

well. Now, we are benefiting from the program on all levels in the agency."

September 25-26 we held the first Women's Wellness Executive Retreat for executive directors from domestic violence shelters and government agencies from New York and New Jersey with responsibility for domestic violence and child welfare. Faculty included Claudette C'Faison, executive director of Youth at Risk; May Krukiel, executive director of Victims Assistance Services of the Westchester Community Opportunity Program; DaRa Williams, program director for the Women's Wellness program; Sharon Salzberg, founder of Insight Meditation Society; Gayla Marie Stiles of OM Yoga and Janet Wise-Thomas, consultant for Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement.

The retreat offered a firsthand experience of Women's Wellness Program trainings for shelter workers, including simulated experience of VT and con-

templative and restorative practices. Participants came away with direct knowledge of how contemplation can transform VT and help create a culture of wellness in the workplace. "Every bit of what you give feels so good to receive," wrote a director of a major domestic violence shelter who attended. "From the setting...to the quality of the presentations, it's all so enriching and comforting. Most sincere thanks."

Studies and Symposia

To further develop this field of study and to inform the future direction of the Transforming Trauma Initiative, we are compiling a mapping survey of contemplative methods in trauma research, under the direction of traumatologist Deborah Rozelle, Psy.D., and planning a 2009 interdisciplinary symposium on contemplative practice in trauma treatment, related research and theory.

Contact the Transforming Trauma Initiative at:

dara@garrisoninstitute.org



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The September 2008 Women's Wellness Executive Retreat

RETREATS AT GARRISON

Retreats at Garrison has been created to put the Garrison Institute's resources at the service of visiting teachers and students from the world's great spiritual traditions. Typical events focus on meditation, prayer and reflection.

"Supporting ongoing spiritual practice by groups in retreat is a central part of the Garrison Institute's mission," says Director of Operations Rob Gabriele. "It complements our focus on the programs that we directly sponsor. The Institute is a tremendous asset for the contemplative community, and we want to share it as widely as possible."

For some, Retreats at Garrison has filled an unmet need. Before, it was hard to find a place near New York City that had the right kind of environment, the right size, and a space that actually felt like a sacred environment. "Because of its location and the kind of people who will use it, the contemplative work that takes place at the Garrison Institute will have a major impact on society," said Sharon Salzberg.

"Change in the world begins with the individual," concluded Gabriele. "We hope many, many individuals will come here year after year after year to engage in sustained spiritual practice. Then they can go back out in the world and effect that change."

To inquire about holding a retreat at the Garrison Institute, contact Rob Gabriele at 845.424.4800 or rob@garrisoninstitute.org

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR

Over the past year, Retreats at Garrison has been blessed to host some very special retreats. Here are some highlights from a few of them:

CENTER FOR CONTEMPLATIVE MIND IN SOCIETY

In July 2008 the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society hosted a gathering of 23 activists, organizers, social workers and therapists at the Garrison Institute for a weekend retreat geared towards those starting out in careers as social justice advocates. It was led by Lama John Makransky, a spiritual teacher in the Dzogchen tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and author of the recent book *Awakening through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness*, and Leah Weiss, his assistant. Through guided meditations, silence and deep dialogue, the retreat focused on what it called "Meditations of Loving Communion and Presence" and what they might offer to the activist work culture, where a sense of being overwhelmed, fatigue and



Lama John Makransky and Leah Weiss

burnout are often considered normal rites of passage. Those who would help others effectively must learn to help themselves, and to that end the retreat offered specific, accessible contemplative tools, such as breathing and centering techniques. Participants expressed their gratitude for the chance to learn these skills and bring them back to their hectic work settings.

CENTER FOR MEDIATION IN LAW

In May 2008 the Center for Mediation in Law hosted "Self-Reflection in Action For Conflict Professionals," an advanced training for a group of 27 psychoanalysts, doctors, financial planners, lawyers and others seeking to explore the connection between their own inner dynamics and their work mediating conflict. Led by Jack Himmelstein, co-director of the Center, and Norman Fischer, Senior Dharma Teacher of the San Francisco Zen Center, the training was an opportunity to bring meditation and mediation together. Mediators need to be aware of their own subjective reactions to a conflict, Himmelstein has found, because every conflict has a way of taking a hold of people, even those ostensibly on the outside working to resolve it. Meditation can



help them gain awareness of how deeper impulses that fuel their sense of mission can also help them deal more effectively and whole-heartedly with their clients. Participants told us that the training dramatically deepened their appreciation of the importance of self-awareness in the face of conflict.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S RISING WATERS WORKSHOPS

Throughout 2008, the Nature Conservancy held a series of collaborative workshops at the Garrison Institute to develop strategies for safeguarding the Hudson Valley's environment, economy and quality of life from threats associated with climate change. Using a formal scenario development process originally created by Royal Dutch Shell to model plausible futures in a changing climate, participants consider possible impacts of climate change on Hudson Valley communities and the environment, and how various types of human response over a 20-year period might change them. This process brings to life the stakes of the choices we will make as we work to mitigate and adapt to climate change here. Over 150 representatives of regional institutions, from utilities and businesses to environmental agencies, participated. When the scenario development phase is complete in November 2008, the Rising Waters process will shift to dialogues with decisionmakers and the public toward a concerted climate change adaptation strategy for the Hudson Valley.



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Awakening the Dreamer,
Changing the Dream Symposium

PACHAMAMA ALLIANCE

In October 2008 the Pachamama Alliance returned to the Garrison Institute with its Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream Symposium. The Pachamama Alliance's mission is to raise awareness of the critical roles rainforests play within our global life-support system. It was born out of a meeting between people living in the modern world and indigenous elders and shamans living in Amazonian Ecuador. Concerned about threats facing their ancient way of life and how they arose, these elders sought the partnership of committed individuals to face them. The Alliance envisions "changing the dream" of the modern world, using symposia to help to build the movement of awake, committed, engaged people pursuing the related goals of environmental sustainability, social justice and spiritual fulfillment. This retreat was for facilitators and community leaders who have taken previous Pachamama trainings, giving them the tools to create their own symposia.

"I love the fact that the Garrison Institute is [self-]contained, that it doesn't have anybody else's spiritual overtone here. Saying it's "neutral" doesn't quite describe it. It's like walking into a church in Europe: it's neutral but with a full and rich neutrality."

—Adyashanti

THRESHOLD SOCIETY

In September 2008 the Threshold Society, a Sufi contemplative group, held a retreat for 44 members, led by Camille and Kabir Helminski and James Winston Morris. Through exploration of Sufi wisdom teachings and contemplative practices, this retreat deepened spiritual exploration as well as relationships within the Sufi community. The retreat's title, "The Path of Completion" refers to the Sufi teaching that human beings are completed by contact with spiritual reality, as a living relationship with spirit. "Sufism is a spirituality of relationships," said Helminski. "Some forms of spirituality might be viewed as a solitary journey, such as the path of the hermit. But Sufism is more; it is a whole web of relationships. The relationships extend from our relationships with other human beings, and our teachers, to the Infinite itself. We do not view the human being as the ultimate unit of reality—we take seriously the idea of the transpersonal—a oneness that is reflected in community, without the loss of individuality."



2008-2009 Retreats at Garrison Calendar

Retreats that are open to the public are listed with an asterisk.

For detailed information or to register, visit the Calendar of Events at

www.garrisoninstitute.org, call 845.424.4800 or contact retreats@garrisoninstitute.org

November 25

The Nature Conservancy:
Rising Waters Workshop

November 30-December 4

Sheila Weinberg & Sylvia Boorstein:
Jewish Renewal

December 4-7

*Sylvia Boorstein & Sharon Salzberg:
The Natural Evolution of Compassion

December 9-11

*Shambhala Institute for Authentic
Leadership: Organizational Trust

January 3-10

*Lama Surya Das: Annual Dzogchen
Center Winter Meditation Retreat

January 15-18

*New York Zen Center for Contemplative
Care: Retreat for Caregivers

January 16-23

Peter Doobinin:
Downtown Meditation Community

January 20

*Celebration of Peace,
Hope and Transformation

February 6-9

*Institute of Core Energetics

February 13-15

*Sensei Janet Jiryu Abels and Sensei
Gregory Hosho Abels: Still Mind Zendo

February 20-22

*Ann Weiser Cornell and the Focusing
Institute: Focusing Level One, and
How to Teach Level One

February 25-27

Garrison Institute Initiative on
Contemplation and Education:
Methodological Issues in
Contemplative Education Research

February 27-March 1

*Jean Houston: The New Pangaia

March 12-15

*Pachamama Alliance: Awakening the
Dreamer Facilitator Training

March 20-29

*Father Thomas Keating and David
Frenette: Deeper Center, Living Prayer

April 3-5

Council for Spiritual and Ethical
Education: Hinduism and Pedagogy

April 3-5

*Jean Houston: The New Pangaia

April 10-12

Society of Self Realization: Self-
Realization Fellowship Regional Retreat

April 16-17

Toko Kyudojo: Intensive Kyudo Retreat with
Don Symanski: The Merit of Silent Practice

April 16-18

Garrison Institute Initiative on Transforming
Trauma: Women's Wellness Retreat

April 21-24

Center for Contemplative Mind

April 24-27

*Core Energetics

May 3-8

*Adyashanti: Open Gate Sangha

May 11-14

Kurt Hoelting and Rabbi Larry Troster:
GreenFaith

May 14-17

*Kurt Hoelting and Rabbi Larry Troster:
GreenFaith

May 15-17

*Susan Ji-on Postal and Dennis Shofu
Keegan: Empty Hand Zen Center Retreat

May 15-17

*Barry Magid: Ordinary Mind Zendo

“We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves.”

— the Dalai Lama



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