

Manifest Nirvana: A Sanctuary for 21st Century Spiritual Explorers

By Andrew Cohen

Manifest Nirvana is a virtual haven for integral spiritual practice, where sovereign souls, radical spirits and integral pioneers will find their home. But it is also a future *vision* for the evolution of humanity – a utopian ideal for those still bold enough to dream big.

Manifest Nirvana is a meeting place where we come together and practice with others who are also passionate about spiritual awakening, and growing into greater human maturity. We aspire to live our lives based on a radical world-embracing non-duality. For us, spirituality is not only about accessing the bliss-intoxicated state of transcendence, but also about wholeheartedly embodying our spiritual realization in real life – in relationship with real people. And so, we feel compelled by the call to co-create a brighter future for all of us by advancing the evolution of consciousness and culture. In short, we actually aspire to manifest nirvana *in this world*. To evolve towards this ideal, we dedicate our energy, attention and awareness to deep transformational practice – rooted in my teachings of Evolutionary Enlightenment.

One of the most remarkable discoveries we made in the course of many years of practicing this contemporary spiritual path is that enlightened awareness can not only come alive in the interior of an individual – as a ‘Higher I’ – but also in the interior of a collective – as a ‘Higher We’. When this mysterious new kind of enlightenment emerges, it expresses itself in the space *between* us – and it effectively becomes the intersubjective experience of the whole group. This is why we came to call it *Intersubjective Nonduality*.

The creation of thriving collaborative “Higher We” spaces – where people come together and communicate with one another beyond ego and the games it plays – is one of the signature contributions of our spiritual work at *Manifest Nirvana*. Yet, the import of such an endeavor also far surpasses the particulars of our work. Cultivating our capacity for trans-egoic communication is arguably one of the skills we now need most, if we want to begin to effectively address the critical emergency of our world in crisis.

We are living through a pivotal moment in history. A series of interlocking crises in multiple domains of life have coalesced into one massive meta-crisis: environmental degradation, the threat of economic collapse, escalating geopolitical tensions, a worldwide public health crisis, a refugee crisis, the imminent danger of global terrorism and nuclear destruction, the depletion of our natural resources, species extinction, the collapse of biodiversity, overpopulation, starvation, political polarization, the crumbling of our democracies, the resurgence of forms of tribalism. The list goes on.

Holding an even incomplete enumeration of these crises in our awareness is more than most of us, who feel overwhelmed and powerless, can bear. Together, they have produced an unprecedented global emergency that impacts not just limited groups of us locally – like our earlier civilizational breakdowns used to do – but all of us, everywhere. If we, as a species, are to survive into the next generation; if we are to leave behind a planet for our daughters and sons that is not in a more precarious condition than the one we were given, we need to learn how to actually get along with each other, start working together, and formulate the global comprehensive response our dire predicament requires.

Yet what we *actually* see in the real world seems diametrically opposed to what we now so desperately and urgently need. Our public discourse is increasingly polarized. We are continuously fighting out bitter culture wars between the apparently irreconcilable worldviews of Amber traditionalism, Orange modernism and Green postmodernism (for an explanation of these color-coded levels, see graph on page 3) – and it isn't clear at all how we can effectively communicate with one another across these value spheres, and begin to co-create new and practicable solutions to our most tenacious world problems. What *is* clear, is that alongside all the external crises we face, our cultural space has become fractured by an interior crisis of meaning-making – a crisis that has been brought to its feverish pitch by the excesses of postmodernity, like extreme relativism, narcissism, nihilism and the deconstruction of all grand narratives. We lost our North Star and ended up in a cynical post-truth world, overwhelmed by a raging storm of information and disinformation – a world in which whoever controls the narrative holds the power. This situation has severely compromised our capacity to truly come together, based on a set of sane shared values; design intelligent and workable solutions; and take decisive action to course-correct the multiple crises that are now upon us. We are living through a cultural watershed moment in which we are clearly running up against the limitations of the postmodern worldview.

Ken Wilber – the founding father of Integral Philosophy – asserts that human beings, in their individual psychology from infancy to adulthood, but also humanity at large, in its culturally shared values and worldviews, move through a series of concrete observable stages of development. His stage-model thus points to an actual trajectory for the evolution of consciousness and culture. With each new stage a person’s self-identity expands, and his worldview, values and perspectives become more inclusive, whole, complex and embracing. As individuals mature through the stages, their circles of care, compassion and concern widen – moving from egocentric, including only oneself (Red Altitude) to ethnocentric, including also one’s group or community (Amber Altitude) to worldcentric, including all human beings regardless of race, sex or creed (Orange and Green Altitudes) to Kosmocentric, including all sentient beings (Second Tier and higher Altitudes). The following graph depicts these successive stages:

The Spectrum of Consciousness: Levels and Lines

LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Color	Tier	Worldview	Value	Need	Self-Identity	Explanation	
CLEAR LIGHT	3rd Tier Kosmocentric	Supermind				Nonduality is structurally ever-present. Total embrace of All That Is. Bright Brilliance of the nondual union of the ultimate, infinite Divine Reality with its everyday, ordinary finite operations.	
ULTRAVIOLET		Overmind				Plugged into every level in existence, all the way back to the Big Bang. Loving constant witness to the entire Kosmos. Causal states become permanently objectified, and wakefulness persists throughout the deep sleep state.	
VIOLET		Meta-mind				Visionary mind. Revelatory intuition. Subtle states become permanently objectified, and wakefulness persists throughout the dream state.	
INDIGO	2nd Tier Worldcentric	Global Mind		Self-Transcendence	Ego-aware	Direct inner sight, outshining thought. Apprehends that the world is not merely physical, but a psychophysical system. Subject-object dichotomy begins to break down. Wakefulness becomes a permanent trait in the waking state.	
TURQUOISE		Late Vision-Logic (Post-paradigmatic)	Integral	Global View/Systemic (Turquoise)	Self-Actualization	Construct-aware (Integrated)	Sees the World as alive and evolving. Holistic & kosmo-centric. Lives from both individual self and trans-personal self. Emerging now.
TEAL		Middle Vision-Logic (Paradigmatic)		Flex Flow/Systemic (Yellow)		Autonomous	Sees natural hierarchy and systems of systems. Holds multiple perspectives. Flexible, creative and effective. Online 50 years.
GREEN		Early Vision-Logic	Pluralistic	Human Bond/Relativistic (Green)	Self-Esteem	Individualistic	Values pluralism & equality. Relativistic & sensitive. Civil rights & environmentalism. World centric. Online 150 years.
ORANGE	1st Tier Egocentric Ethnocentric	Formal Operational	Mental	Strive Drive/Multiplicistic (Orange)		Conscientious	Values rationality & science. Individualism & democracy. Capitalism & materialism. Risk-taking & self-reliance. Online 300 years.
AMBER		Concrete Operational	Mythic	Truth Force/Absolutistic (Blue)	Belongingness	Conformist	Ethno- or nation-centric. Values rules, roles & discipline. Faith in transcendent God or Order. Socially conservative. Online 5,000 years.
RED		Preoperational (Conceptional)		Power Gods/Egocentric (Red)	Safety	Self-protective	Ego-centric, vigilant & aggressive. Impulse and ruthless. Courageous, determined and powerful. Online 15,000 years.
MAGENTA		Preoperational (Symbolic)	Magic	Kin Spirits/Magic-Animistic (Purple)		Impulsive	Sees the world as enchanted. Values ritual & deep community. Individual subordinate to group. Online 50,000 years.
INFRARED		Sensorimotor	Archaic	Survival (Beige)	Physiological	Symbolic	Dawning self-awareness. Survives through instinct, intuition and banding with others. Online 250,000 years.

COGNITIVE LINE	WORLDVIEWS	VALUES LINE	NEEDS	SELF-IDENTITY	EXPLANATION
Commons/Richards/ Piaget/Aurobindo	Gebser	Graves/Spiral Dynamics	Maslow	Loevinger/ Cook-Greuter	

ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS of Ken Wilber's integral approach is the recognition that human consciousness evolves, develops or unfolds through a fluid but hierarchical sequence of levels or stages. Integrating over one hundred developmental models into his framework, Wilber uses a rainbow-hued scheme (based on the colors traditionally ascribed to the seven chakras) to generically represent these different levels, which are grouped into three major classes or tiers.

First tier spans all levels from primitive, infantile consciousness (infrared) to postmodern, pluralistic consciousness (green); **second tier** represents a leap into holistic, systemic, and integral modes of consciousness (teal and turquoise), which some believe to be the leading edge of development today; and **third tier** reaches into even more integral, transpersonal, and higher "spiritual" territory (indigo and above)—levels that remain largely unexplored.

Many of the developmental models on which Wilber's spectrum of consciousness is based are the results of research on specific "intelligences," or developmental *lines* of growth and maturation, within the psychological makeup of human beings. This diagram includes the *cognitive* line, the *worldviews* line, the *values* line, the *needs* line, and the *self-identity* line, but many others have been identified, including the moral, emotional, aesthetic, interpersonal, psychosexual, and kinesthetic lines.

By observing the transformation of individuals over time, numerous researchers and theorists—from Aurobindo in the East to Piaget in the West—have shown that each of these developmental lines do indeed unfold through distinct levels- of increasing consciousness, order, and sophistication. But what Wilber's spectrum reveals is how the various lines of development actually relate to each other: evolving, side by side, through the same general levels of increasing consciousness. It also makes clear how any given individual can be at a high level in a particular line while at lower levels in other lines, one example of which would be Nazi doctors: individuals who were highly developed in the cognitive line, but dramatically underdeveloped in the moral line.

Evolving Worldviews, Expanding Self

Although the spectrum of consciousness includes twelve colors to denote twelve specific levels, stages, structures, or waves of development, for ease of explanation Wilber often uses a simpler, three- or four- level scheme pioneered by developmental psychologists like Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan. Tracing the most general contours of psychological growth, this scheme highlights the fact that increasing consciousness corresponds to a broadening of worldviews and an expansion of one's sense of self.



Egocentric ("me"): A stage characterized by narcissistic self-absorption, bodily needs and desires, emotional outbursts, unsocialized impulses, and an incapacity to take the role of the "other"; seen today predominantly in infants and young children, rebellious teens, wild rock stars, and criminals, (Infrared to red)



Ethnocentric ("Us"): An expansion of self-identity to include one's family, peers, tribe, race, faith group, or nation; the adoption of socially conformist rules and roles; commonly seen in children aged seven to adolescence, religious myths and fundamentalism, the "moral majority," Nazis, the KKK, right-wing politics, patriotism, sports teams, school rivalries. (Amber)



Worldcentric ("all of us"): An even greater expansion of self to embrace all people, regardless of race, gender, class, or creed; a stage of rationality that questions rigid belief systems and transcends conventional rules and roles; commonly seen in late adolescence, social activism, multiculturalism, science, moral relativism, liberal politics, the "global village," New Age spirituality; the emergence of integral cognition. (Orange to teal)



Kosmocentric ("all that is"): An identification with all life and consciousness, human or otherwise, and a deeply felt responsibility for the evolutionary process as a whole' "super-integral" cognition and values; innate universal morality; spirituality beyond merely personal motivations; an emergent capacity, rarely seen anywhere. (Turquoise to clear light)

In his groundbreaking book, *Trump and a Post-Truth World*, Integral philosopher Ken Wilber boldly argues that the failure of the postmodern leading-edge to effectively *lead* has caused an impasse at the very edge of evolution itself:

“(...) the green postmodern leading-edge of evolution itself has, for several decades, degenerated into its extreme, pathological, and dysfunctional forms. As such, it is literally incapable of effectively acting as a real leading-edge. Its fundamental belief—“there is no truth”—and its basic essential attitude—“aperspectival madness”— cannot in any fashion actually lead, actually choose a course of action that is positive, healthy, effective, and truly evolutionary. With all growth hierarchies denied and deconstructed, evolution has no real way to grow, has no way forward at all, and thus nothing but dominator hierarchies are seen everywhere, effectively reducing any individual you want to a victim. The leading-edge has collapsed; it is now a few-billion-persons (or so) massive car crash, a huge traffic jam at the very edge of evolution itself, sabotaging virtually every move that evolution seeks to take. Evolution itself finds its own headlights shining beams of nihilism, which can actually see nothing, or narcissism, which can see only itself. Under this often malicious leadership (the mean-green-meme), the earlier levels and stages of development have themselves begun to hemorrhage, sliding into their own forms of pathological dysfunction. And this isn’t just happening in one or two countries, it is happening around the world. (...) Evolution, in a decided move of self-correction, has paused and is in the process of backing up a few paces, regrouping, and reconstituting itself for a healthier, more unified, more functional continuation. What virtually all of these regroupings have as a primary driver is a profound anti-green dynamic acting as a morphic field radiating from the broken leading-edge itself.”¹

This evolutionary congestion, however, has also begun to show its silver lining. In response to it, a space for emerging integral conversations is opening up in our culture, as philosophers, public intellectuals, cultural creatives, visionaries and an ever greater

¹Wilber, *Trump and a Post-Truth World, An Evolutionary Self-Correction*, 2017, p. 73-74.

number of concerned citizens with an open view, feel ready to move beyond the old ways, and are entering into a serious exploration of a viable path forwards. Examples are manifold, but include informal networks like the Intellectual Dark Web² – an amorphous group of loosely affiliated public intellectuals, like clinical psychologist and cultural critic Jordan Peterson, mathematical physicist Eric Weinstein, his brother the evolutionary biologist Bret Weinstein, neuroscientist and philosopher Sam Harris, alternative media personalities like Joe Rogan, and several more bold thinkers from both the left and the right of the political spectrum. But also sense-making platforms like Rebel Wisdom and Future Thinkers, and many more courageous souls who dare to think way outside the box can be seen as part of this growing stream of integral thinking and Teal consciousness. And it is in this cultural space that the creative juice of post-postmodern evolution is now most alive.

Such emerging integral conversations are exactly what we would expect to see, as evolution attempts to remove the impediments to its own further unfolding and course-correct. As my longtime friend and integral philosopher Steve McIntosh³, astutely remarked during a conversation with him: “In order for a new stage to emerge, the previous stage has to become successful enough to manifest its own pathologies. Postmodernism has now become successful enough to provide a platform for its own transcendence, both in what it succeeds in doing, and in the now increasingly obvious manifestations of its pathologies. The pathologies of Green provide the points of departure for our move into integral.”⁴

Many of these emerging integral conversations, and perhaps most notably the ones of the Intellectual Dark Web, explicitly expose the pathologies of extreme postmodernism as they see them show up in contemporary societal currents, like woke ideology, cancel culture, radicalized forms of feminism, identity politics, and over-the-top political

²The name Intellectual Dark Web was coined by Eric Weinstein and popularized in 2018 by opinion writer Bari Weiss in her New York Times article *Meet the Renegades of the Intellectual Dark Web*, May 8, 2018.

³Steve McIntosh is a social entrepreneur and co-founder of the Institute for Cultural Evolution. He is the author of *Developmental Politics—How America Can Grow Into a Better Version of Itself* (Paragon House, 2020); and coauthor, with John Mackey and Carter Phipps, of: *Conscious Leadership—Elevating Humanity Through Business* (Penguin/Portfolio, September 2020). His earlier works on integral philosophy include: *The Presence of the Infinite* (Quest, 2015), *Evolution’s Purpose* (Select Books, 2012), and *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution* (Paragon House, 2007).

⁴Steve McIntosh, Interview with Andrew Cohen, November 30, 2018.

correctness, to name a few. The Intellectual Dark Web thinkers are willing to have these difficult conversations, irrespective of the social cost. They see the process of inquiry and good faith dialogue as more valuable than defending their own personal and philosophical positions, or than winning the debate – and they aspire to be open to changing their minds if their conversation partners make a better point. With this attitude, they intend to model ways to have more truthful dialogues, and move beyond the toxic polarization of our public discourse. Their conversations are honest attempts to reorient our post-truth world toward a higher synthesis between the competing worldviews of our culture wars – and they aspire to evolve our shared cultural We-space by restoring the meaning of truth and rebuilding our capacity for real sense-making.

Some of the Intellectual Dark Web thinkers, like Jordan Peterson, when they are at their best, seem to take their listeners on a real-time journey of inquiry, at times, reaching right beyond the horizon of their own thinking, and as such often leaving their audience with a thrilling sense of novelty. This quality of generative dialogue, in which we remain mindful of what wants to emerge in a conversation is a trait we are cultivating in our intersubjective we-work at *Manifest Nirvana* as well. Yet many of the Intellectual Dark Web conversations – thought-provoking as they are – mostly remain at the level of separate ego's exploring each other's rational thought constructs, with openness, humility and a desire to build on each other's insights.

Amidst the emerging integral conversations, there is however another intriguing stream of thinking that – at least in some of its expressions – strives to master the art of dialogue in yet a deeper way. It too originated in response to our meta-crisis, and it did so as a bold attempt to design a new “Game B” vision for humanity.

In 2013 Jim Rutt, past Chairman of the Santa Fe Institute, gathered together a group of courageous creative thinkers in Stanton-Virginia for a series of meetings to discuss their deep concern that civilization is on a dangerous path – possibly even heading toward its own destruction. They observed how our age-old rivalrous, game-theoretic ways of cooperating – which they called ‘Game A’ – have produced structures that are now in the process of breaking down, often at an alarmingly rapid pace. Their objective was to figure out ways to create an alternative operating system for society, based on anti-rivalrous dynamics – which they called ‘Game B’. This new game would be more sustainable and consistent with human nature and the limits of our ecosystem. Whereas Game A is finite, Game B would have to be an infinite game, designed in such a way that all of us can continue playing it. Transitioning into this new model of cooperation would entail a lot more than simply reorganizing the deck chairs on our sinking Titanic.

It would be based on nothing less than a radical whole systems-change, including new systems of government, economics, politics, education, healthcare,...⁵

In 2014 the Stanton group split into two camps: those who were convinced that real change has to start with institutional reform, versus those who believed that personal and spiritual transformation are a prerequisite for social change – and thus the primary foundations upon which a genuinely new Game B needs to be built. ⁶ Some of the essential future aspirations for humanity of the latter group sound close to the original vision of collective evolutionary emergence we hold at *Manifest Nirvana* as well, and are well worth exploring further. Especially those expressed by inspirational thinkers like Jamie Wheal, one of the world’s leading experts on peak performance and leadership; Jordan Hall, techno-wizard turned philosopher; and Daniel Schmachtenberger, social philosopher and futurist.

In just a few words, Daniel Schmachtenberger summarizes the urgency to implement a new Game B, and why it requires a psycho-spiritual approach: “Rivalrous dynamics, multiplied by exponential tech is self-terminating. Exponential tech is inexorable. We cannot put it away. So we either figure out anti-rivalry or we go extinct. The human experiment comes to a completion. That’s the core thing. Figuring out anti-rivalry is a psycho-spiritual process, inside of ourselves.” ⁷

Alongside their recognition that some measure of psycho-spiritual development is required to move beyond rivalrous dynamics, these Game B philosophers also insist that this radical systems-change needs to be informed by the wisdom of our collective intelligence. The multidimensional complexity of our challenging world problems, they assert, is more than a single brain can process or grasp. As Jamie Wheal once remarked: “We are probably not gonna solve the complex, wicked, existential problems we face

⁵Among the original Game B thinkers were individuals that would later be associated with the Intellectual Dark Web, like the Weinstein brothers, and there are connections and overlap between these two movements, as several Game B thinkers are in dialogue with several of the Intellectual Dark Web figures. In many ways The Intellectual Dark Web can be interpreted as an emerging Game B phenomenon.

⁶As the group dispersed, its ideas went into what Jim Rutt called ‘spore mode’. The Game B idea itself, however, lived on and was developed further, independent of the formal group, by those who felt inspired by it. In December 2017 Bret Weinstein reintroduced the Game B notion again into the public sphere to a larger audience on the Joe Rogan Experience, and recently the idea has begun to take root again and is gaining traction.

⁷*Humanity’s Phase Shift*, Daniel Schmachtenberger, Rebel Wisdom, November 7, 2018 (accessed September 23, 2020).

with individual horsepower, playing rivalrous games. We are probably gonna need to get together and be able to create a higher form of collective intelligence and sense-making.”⁸ Whenever we collaborate and harness our collective intelligence, creative novelty is more likely to emerge. And thus, now more than ever, our cooperation is more pressing than our competition.

To cultivate greater coherence between us, unleash the creative power of our collective intelligence, and increase our capacity for shared sense-making, Wheal, Schmachtenberger and Hall suggest a practice injunction for better communication, which they call ‘Rule Omega’.

The practice goes like this: Listen to the messages of your conversation partner(s) from a space of non-reactive openness. Even if what you hear strikes you as completely distorted or even flat out wrong, do not close down. Remain mindful and discerning enough to hear the “signal within the noise”. Every perspective contains a partial truth, and is as such worth the benefit of the doubt. So stay humble, and assume that it might be uttered for reasons you do not grasp. Be curious and ask more questions until you catch the signal in the noise. Then, when you respond, strengthen that signal and reduce the noise. Refine what you heard; express it back to the speaker in such a way that what you say is closer to what he or she meant to express. If you can build on what others say, and allow your own thoughts to be evolved by other people’s responses to you, you increase the truth-level of the conversation.

Turning Rule Omega into an actual skill, and achieving a level of communication in which our collective intelligence breaks through and catalyzes a deeper quality of creativity and shared sense-making, requires deep transformational work – in both the psychological and the spiritual dimension. We need to cultivate the spiritual skill to “move into that level of self that is deeper than belief systems,” as Schmachtenberger instructs us⁹, and then, witness our own and other peoples’ perspectives from that space.

On the psychological level, practicing Rule Omega takes advanced abilities of listening, discernment and expressing our thoughts. But perhaps most importantly, it calls on us to

⁸*Making Sense of Sensemaking*, Daniel Schmachtenberger, Jamie Wheal, Jordan Hall, Rebel Wisdom, September 4, 2019 (accessed September 25, 2020).

⁹*The War on Sensemaking*, Daniel Schmachtenberger, Rebel Wisdom, August 19, 2019 (accessed September 23, 2020).

develop what Game B thinkers have called ‘sovereignty’. Cultivating this noble quality requires us to develop the capacity to stay connected to our most authentic self and respond to the world without being hijacked by our ego and its reactivity – our personal trauma’s, defensiveness patterns, shadow material or ideological certainties – and take responsibility for our own inner state. Jordan Hall defines sovereignty as “(...) the ability to be present to the world and to respond to the world — rather than to be overwhelmed or merely reactive. Sovereignty is to be a conscious agent.”¹⁰ And so, becoming a sovereign soul means learning to see the world around us with clarity; relate to it without closing down; make sense of it intelligently, and act in it wisely from our authentic center. True sovereignty is a mature achievement. It only emerges after we have gone through an unusual degree of catharsis, have gained a solid understanding of the patterns of our own psyche, and are able to sustain a more or less stable quality of presence. It is always a work in progress.

Communicating in the collaborative spirit of Rule Omega creates a container of safety, deep intimacy and mutual trust, in which everybody can allow themselves to be vulnerable and share information truthfully. We don’t need to withhold anything, because we can be confident that we will not use each others’ sharing’s in game-theoretic ways.

And so it is fair to say that some of the Game B philosophers take the notion of co-creative dialogue further than what most of the Intellectual Dark Web thinkers aspire to achieve. Rule Omega dialogues are, in their tenor and flavor, more oriented toward moving beyond our typical ego-dynamics, and achieving a deep intersubjective coherence in which our collective intelligence can flourish and generate surprising new insights. Much like our work, these dialogues aspire to create a Higher We and catalyze cultural emergence.

Yet several Game B thinkers are acutely aware that so far, they haven’t reached their high aspirations – and some, like Jamie Wheal are very vocal about that: “How do we enter this post-conventional communitas, coherence, whatever it would be, without the moment (...) the peak of it wears off, reverting back to Game A – power structures and game theory? Because that’s what I keep seeing. I see people glimpsing it; people being lit up, recognizing it as something new, important, magical, profound, healing – fill in the blank; starting to even agree to organize around it: ‘We are a new family.’ ‘We are a

¹⁰Jordan Hall, *On Sovereignty*, February 19, 2018 (retrieved, September 25, 2020).

tribe.' 'We are the frothy edge of evolution' – and whatever it would be. And then the wheels come off Monday morning when the checks have to be stroked, or when the project plans are late." And he doesn't hide his frustration about what he observes: "(...) it's breaking my heart, slash freaking me out, slash concerning me that our efforts to create group coherence seem to be going so badly, so far." ¹¹ Jordan Hall echoes these concerns: "coherence as it currently is able to manifest (...) is extremely fragile, and quite difficult to hold together, even in just ordinary conditions, much less in quite challenging conditions." ¹²

Time and again these thinkers have noticed that the moment ego reasserts itself, rivalrous Game A dynamics once again take over, and the Higher We collapses. And so, they unequivocally recognize the daunting nature of the task at hand: If collective intelligence is to be liberated among and between many more of us, and effectively contribute to the creation of a better world, we need to figure out how to break out of the centrifugal force of the ego and the games it plays. Yet in many cases, they haven't come up with a compelling answer for how to move into this trans-egoic space with any sort of stability.

In one of his dialogues ¹³ Jamie Wheal observes that the kinds of groups that have so far actually succeeded in dropping into what he – after anthropologist Victor Turner – calls 'communitas', or "high performing true group flow," are almost always ruthlessly meritocratic organizations, like the Special Operation Forces of the military, sports teams and Jazz bands. These groups, he argues, are "tightly controlled, highly focused and quite exceptional." They "massively over-train" and new members are "brutally selected" based on their capability to contribute to the goal. The end result? Small exclusive groups of highly skilled people, able to enter into coherence beyond personal egoic concerns and uphold an unusual level of depth and intensity. Yet these types of groups, with their often top-down, overly hierarchical structures, do not match up well with our evolved postmodern values of inclusion. But perhaps even more importantly, their small-scale elitarian character is antithetical to our aspirations and our sense of urgency to scale up our now much-needed collective intelligence.

¹¹Ibid.,8.

¹²Ibid.,8.

¹³*War on Sensemaking 3, the Infinite Game*, Jamie Wheal, Rebel Wisdom, January 24, 2020 (accessed September 26, 2020).

And thus, the kinds of groups we would all want to see flourish in today's world are the more egalitarian, inclusive communities of We-space practice, where everyone has a voice, and the greatest possible diversity of collective sense-making can be given free rein to work its co-creative miracles. Yet, it is exactly in settings like these that coherence is often hard to reach – and when it does arise, it all too easily breaks down. In his at times colorful language, Wheel accurately sums up the reasons for this phenomenon – reasons, which seem to correspond quite well to the pathologies of Green postmodernism: “(...) any singular voice can hijack the thread. (...) Things take an awfully long time quite often, to get to consensus. Consensus is fragile and can be firebombed by anybody playing an SJW card or any other kind of agitator, victim, drama-triangle kind of dynamics. And because we value inclusivity, we are obligated to stop the presses when anyone says: “Help, help, I am being oppressed.” Right? And so the ability to weaponize cultic sensitivity, nonviolent communication and all those things is abundant. And when you have narcissists or sociopaths or just, you know, chatty Cathys and needy Neds infiltrate these scenes, and they often do – and it never gets off the ground.” ¹⁴

And so, as we transition to the more evolved values of inclusivity and wider embrace, the chances that We-spaces collapse seem to increase. And, as Wheel points out, when the whole house of cards comes tumbling down, it is often not a pretty sight. Participants lose trust, and their perception of each other dramatically switches from “seeing each others’ light from each others’ light,” to “seeing each others’ shadow from each others’ shadow” – as he poetically recites. ¹⁵

So even as these more inclusive groups are much closer to what we actually need in these times of crisis, not many of the We-space initiatives that are currently out there can present compelling demonstrable successes in accomplishing their goals. “Most of them,” Wheel underscores, “are all about just fucking talking better with each other – which I don’t find super compelling. I think that’s pretty weak sauce when it comes to overriding all of evolutionary biology, the prison-house of language and game theory dynamics. I don’t think they are really adequate. They are aspirational.” ¹⁶ Meanwhile, our alarming predicament keeps impressing upon us that, now more than ever, we need to learn how to master the skill to communicate with one another beyond ego, and bring

¹⁴Ibid.,13.

¹⁵Ibid.,13.

¹⁶Ibid.,13.

to life the mysterious collective intelligence that lives between and among us, but is not specific to any of us. Skills like these are indispensable to communicate across the value spheres, bring back sanity to our polarized public discourse, and heal the unbridgeable cultural divides in our broken societies. We need to create a new culture in which we can have difficult, open conversations that really make a difference, and have the power to open up a portal into the next stage of our evolution... How to optimize the art of human relatedness is the all-important koan for our time.

And so, if our We-space experiments really are to live up to their promising potential, we must resolve the tenacious dilemma of how to steer between inclusivity and excellence. We want to reach for as much inclusivity as we can create coherence across the group. So how do we embrace both span and depth, and design vibrating, generative We-spaces that integrate the best of both worlds? This, indeed, is the gordian knot.

Some of my colleague-teachers – whose work is pushing the boundaries of intersubjective emergence, like Saniel Bonder's *Waking Down in Mutuality*, Terry Patten's *Integral Trans-Rhetorical Praxis*, my former students' Thomas Steininger's and Elizabeth Debold's *Emergent Dialogue*, or Patricia Albere's *Mutual Awakening Practice* – are keenly aware that achieving a stable Higher We is dependent on mastering the spiritual capacity for authentic ego-transcendence. Their work distinguishes itself from some of the other We-space initiatives out there like, say, nonviolent communication, Bohmian dialogue or some forms of circling, because it is explicitly rooted in a context of spiritual practice. All of them seem to have discovered a dimension of *awakened awareness* that transcends the limits of subjective interiority and emerges in relationship with others. They are, as such, exploring new territory – entering into the deepest levels of human relatedness.

The deeply-felt experience of awakened relatedness and the luminous ecstatic consciousness that often comes along with it, is extraordinarily appealing – so much so that some have come to assume that the days of the guru are over and that the classical guru-role will be enacted by an awakened collective – a community of practitioners. But when I spoke with Ken Wilber about the notion that the guru-role would eventually no longer be necessary, and asked him what he thought about Thich Nhat Hanh's famous phrase, his response took me by surprise: "That's a green meme view! There will always be people ahead of their time and they will be the gurus and teachers."¹⁷ It is clear that

¹⁷Andrew Cohen, *Is the Next Buddha a Sangha?*, June 24, 2017,

the Vietnamese monk's much-quoted adage points to an essential evolutionary understanding that no single individual will be the leader around whom a more integrally mature way of life unfolds; and that no one person, no matter how enlightened or proficient, can be wise enough to solve the complex problems of our time. But it is also true that his saying is often co-opted by the Green zeitgeist to flatten out authority, hierarchy, verticality and deeper attainment, and in the same breath, downscale the function of the guru as a catalyst of such greater depth. Therefore, whenever it is being used in this way, we need to be aware that reducing the Buddha to the Sangha risks invalidating the guru-function – which represents the mystery of enlightened awareness itself. In *Manifest Nirvana*, we feel that the guru-function has an indispensable role to play in the spiritual ecosystem. The transmitting presence of an authentic master creates a powerful developmental vortex of evolutionary energy, able to catalyze breakthroughs into higher states and stages.

And thus, the principle of the guru as the vehicle of enlightened mind must not be sidelined. Since ancient times, taking refuge in the 'Triple Gem' – the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha – is considered to be the most optimum way to disseminate enlightened awareness into the world. This is one of the many precious insights we inherited from the spiritual treasure trove of the premodern era – and it needs to be salvaged, as we upgrade our practice structures to include the evolutionary gains of modernity, postmodernity and emerging integral consciousness. Our sages already knew that The Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha represent three irreducible dimensions of the same underlying reality. They are simply different expressions of Spirit Itself – equally real and equally indispensable. When joined together in a truly integral spiritual practice context, they mutually intensify one another, saturating the Triple Gem with a sacred updraft of exhilarating transformational energy, that awakens us to a unique spiritual depth and quickens our developmental growth.

And so, the spiritual practice structure of the future cannot be a collective or a Sangha only. It needs to include all three jewels of the Triple Gem. "The new Buddha," Ken Wilber elegantly summarized, holding Thich Nhat Hanh's adage in mind, "is not going to be the Sangha, but the unification of the Buddha, Sangha, and Dharma in a single on-going nondual Awareness and Awakening." ¹⁸

¹⁸Ken Wilber, *The Religion of Tomorrow, A Vision for the Future of the Great Traditions*, Shambhala, 2017, p. 625.



As we now have established the merit of an integrated Triple Gem practice context, the next question now becomes how this context, and our own development within it, matures, as it takes the journey from its currently prevailing Green postmodern forms into its integral expressions at Teal and Turquoise – which is what we aspire to give rise to in *Manifest Nirvana*. (For an overview of the color-coded levels, see graph on page 3.)

What stands out right away, if we look at the developmental spectrum as a whole, is that its consecutive levels tend to alternate between a more communal and a more individualistic orientation – an observation both Integral Theory and Spiral Dynamics¹⁹ frequently point to. In a conversation with him, Steve McIntosh summarized this intriguing phenomenon: “In the context of history, traditionalism is very communitarian. Modernity moves dialectically toward an individualistic frame. And then, post-modernism moves back – the pendulum swings the other direction – toward an emphasis on community. And then the move toward integral, of which you and I are part, moves back toward an individualistic level.” He then elucidated how our attitude toward the Sangha-aspect of the Triple Gem profoundly changes as we evolve from Green to Teal, and our orientation oscillates from communal to individualistic:

¹⁹*Spiral Dynamics* is a popular developmental model, developed by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, and based on the work of Clare W. Graves. It describes eight levels through which both individuals and collectives move, based on the value systems they hold.

The whole notion of community is essentially Green. Green culture and Green consciousness naturally translates the hunger for spiritual growth into a longing for community. Green craves community, and wants to create community. But as soon as people in a Green community graduate into integral, it sort of naturally destroys the community, just like the chick hatching out of the egg destroys the egg. This is because integralists aren't very interested in pluralistic inclusive communities. Once you become integral, the last thing you want to do is hang out with a bunch of Green, beady narcissists. You don't want any part of a Green community because it's like nails on the chalkboard. Integral people want to be in a community with others who have achieved integral consciousness. When modernism emerged, modernists were not interested in creating an inclusive community. They wanted to create an elite society, like the Royal Society of Science in England, where you were surrounded by accomplished peers who were carefully selected. It's the opposite of Green, which wants to include everybody, especially those who were wounded; those who were victimized. Those are the people who Green really wants to reach out to, parent and love.

When you have integral consciousness, you certainly want a form of communion, but you want communion only with other integralists. Even though it might be selfish and elitist, you find your community with your integral peers. And because so few people, at least in our lifetime, are going to be authentically integral, it's necessarily an elite group. And most of those people naturally have a kind of allergy to Green spiritual communities. ²⁰

Steve's point is clear enough: while Green craves community, Teal once again moves to a more individualistic orientation, and develops an aversion for Green's all-inclusive communitarianism.

The move from Green to Teal – the first one of the integral stages – is a significant developmental progression. Our inner world now opens up even further, as our worldcentric consciousness begins to widen into Kosmocentric consciousness, able to embrace all of manifest reality. Individuals at this stage become aware of the whole

²⁰Ibid.,4.

spectrum of development. They recognize that every single one of the previous stages has a unique and valuable role to play in the evolution of the whole. They perceive the patterns that connect in the structure of the Kosmos, and begin to re-embrace hierarchy – at least in its healthy forms. But there is another, emerging quality that defines the character of this stage. Developmental theorists have referred to it as “autonomous” or “self-actualizing” (Jane Loevinger and Suzanne Cook-Greuter), or “self-actualization” (Abraham Maslow) (See graph page 3). Self-actualization points to the desire to realize our deepest potentials, bring out our innate talents and creativity, and achieve the self-fulfillment that comes along with maturing into our own authentic self. In Teal consciousness, this deep urge to become the most we can be, is one of the primary drives in our awareness. We want to grow into the positive power of our own unique self and stand free from the personal and social conditioning that makes us inauthentic. Self-actualization is the second highest stage in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (with self-transcendence being the highest one). For Maslow “self-actualization” is no longer a *deficiency need*, born out of lack, like the needs that characterize the earlier stages of his model, but a *growth need*, stemming from the desire to follow our budding aspirations and evolve as a person. In other words, as we move into the self-actualization stage, the very nature of our motivation changes dramatically – and this alters the quality of everything we do.

In all of its promising positivity, however, the Teal stage also brings along its own unique challenges. Teal’s dislike for community, combined with its fierce individualism, can become an obstacle for creating Higher We coherence – and it can prevent us from appropriately appreciating the guru-function and the Sangha-aspect of the Triple Gem. Teal individuals often choose to stand alone, rooted in their own awakening sovereignty, and tend to dislodge themselves from the nurturing environment of community. But the very powerful desire to become a sovereign soul can be hijacked by the ego – unconsciously and unknowingly – especially in this climate of culturally mandated independence. This is where the guru-function can fulfil an important role. A real master will intuit where the student is stuck, and when he may not be responding or acting from his own awakened sovereignty. The nature of ego is such that there will always be pockets of egoic resistance in ourselves that we don’t want to see and tend to avoid at all cost. These are exactly the places where our self-contraction is most dense; where we are most stuck; and, therefore, where our *real* work is located. As Carl Jung poignantly said: “That which we need the most will be found where we least want to look.” Deep down we know that working through these knots will be like painful surgery. And so, without the relentless vertical pull of the guru’s awakened mind, we would not so easily

choose to face our deepest obstacles head on. Instead, we are more likely to subtly and unconsciously – or perhaps even rather overtly – exempt ourselves from such a challenging ordeal. Without the transformational incentive of the guru-function, most of us would be more inclined to avoid interventions that would really break the spell of our egoic self-contraction, and change us most fundamentally. And so, one of the functions of the guru is to help us distinguish clearly between our egoic separateness and our awakened sovereignty.

Real sovereignty is a rare quality that cannot be easily assumed or taken for granted. It arises only after we have gone through a soul-level struggle with life's biggest questions; have reckoned with our egoic tendencies and conditioning; and have come out the other side – truly transformed.

As we then evolve out of Teal and move into Turquoise – the mature integral stage – our sensibilities oscillate back toward a more communal orientation, and our positive appreciation of the Sangha aspect of the Triple Gem reasserts itself. In Turquoise, Kosmocentric consciousness begins to blossom, and we experience the wholeness of existence. Where Teal was seeing wholes and paradigms, Turquoise brings all these wholes and paradigms together. To the Turquoise eye everything connects with everything else and the universe reveals itself to be one boundless unbroken whole of holons within holons within holons. Reality is a grand self-perpetuating kosmic process, animated by Eros – a loving intelligence that is driving the evolution of all that is toward ever-greater complexity and embrace – and we are all *both* an inseparable part, *and* a distinctly individual expression, of this kosmic unfolding.

In Turquoise the self-actualization process that began in Teal further deepens and matures. Self-actualization is now no longer purely about our personal growth, or for our own sake. It is for the sake of the whole. It is no longer an individual right or a private choice, but a powerful moral imperative, arising from our felt sense that we are here to serve the evolution of the whole. And so, we feel driven to uncover our innermost personal essence at the level of the soul – our deepest soul-purpose – bring to fruition our unique gifts, and develop the skills that correspond to them, so that we actually have the means to contribute to the evolution of the kosmic process. The sense of fulfilment and empowerment that comes along with that is felt to be of secondary importance; it is merely a byproduct of having found our authentic voice in this cosmic orchestra.

The vision *Manifest Nirvana* is working to achieve, and occasionally reaches into, is the marriage of this communal Turquoise stage of Growing Up ²¹, with the state of intersubjective nonduality in the Waking Up dimension. Whenever both cohere, it feels like we are actually opening up a new dimension of evolution; an integral *and* awakened field of shared consciousness beyond ego, allowing all of us to effortlessly relate and communicate with one another from the mind of enlightened awareness itself. In such moments we experience a profound level of “*autonomy and communion*,” as I have at times described the goal of our teachings – an experience that is then to be lived “*in a context of natural hierarchy*”. These principles together are the essence of what I envision a genuinely integral Sangha to be. So what would it be like, if we could live and work together based on these fundamentals? To answer this question, let us dive a bit deeper into what each of these principles mean...

The simultaneous experience of “*autonomy and communion*” seems, at first glance, to be a paradox. We tend to assume that we need to withdraw from communion and relatedness in order to fully grow into our autonomy and bring forth our uniqueness as human beings; or, we might be prone to believe that we need to sacrifice a degree of autonomy or independence if we want to experience harmony and communion with others. But what we found was that when this field of seamless coherence emerges among different groups of students, they would simply notice that their sovereignty was still fully present, and some would say, even *heightened* in that state. That which had appeared so paradoxical and contradictory from their egoic consciousness had simply become perfectly compatible in this trans-egoic state. When nondual suchness becomes the basis of our relatedness with one another, a field of trust, oneness and coherence emerges in which our uniqueness miraculously blossoms, and a more mature kind of autonomy, inherent in our own higher development, is released. In this egoless we-field, our unique creative potential unselfconsciously bursts forth, because we are now liberated from the egoic limitations that otherwise obstruct the free flow of creativity and higher emergence. We are most radically ourselves *and* ecstatically part of the larger whole. The one and the many unite, yet remain delightfully distinct. The paradox between autonomy and communion, we discovered, resolves itself in the direct experience of intersubjective nonduality.

²¹In Integral Theory, *Growing Up* refers to the discovery of developmental psychology that the human psyche grows through a series of interior stages of increasing psychological maturity. With each higher stage we grow into, our consciousness expands and we become capable of greater complexity, care, inclusivity and embrace.

The state of autonomy and communion we experience sounds strikingly close to the “sovereignty” and “coherence” some of the Game B thinkers aspire to achieve. Like them, we are training people how to tap into the rich potential of collective intelligence by going beyond the rivalrous dynamics of the ego and the games it plays, and enter into the seamless collective coherence of a Higher We. For years, our lived experience disclosed to us that when the power of deep spiritual communion combines with the force of our self-actualized autonomy, collective intelligence thrives. When everybody’s unique differences and perspectives are given free rein to arise from a basis of prior unity, the mysterious ascending drive of evolutionary Eros comes alive. Then, the dialogues between people become a crucible of co-creation – a space in which surprising collaborative insights emerge, far exceeding what anyone could have come up with separately, and in which original solutions to old problems are found. And so, the skill of “enlightened communication” – or “Intersubjective Nonduality”, as I call our Higher We practice – is what we now urgently need if we want to create the vibrant evolutionary environment, necessary to appropriately address the wicked problems we all face today.

But the vision of “*autonomy and communion*” only becomes complete if we can enact it “*in a context of natural hierarchy*”. Natural hierarchy refers to the organizing principle of the community. It is the relational order that spontaneously emerges between individuals when the paradoxical co-existence of autonomy and communion is a living reality for the majority of the group members.

Even though hierarchy is itself a most natural phenomenon, inherent in the structure of reality, there are yet no fully actualized examples of how to truly enact natural hierarchy *in a collective of people*. After the unhealthy forms of dominator hierarchy, so characteristic in the early stages of development, and the ruthless decimation of anything exuding even a subtle whiff of hierarchy by the extreme postmodernism of the Green Altitude, we have yet to see healthy forms of hierarchy emerge in any kind of integral context.

So, the question of how to create a thriving evolutionary Sangha with a smoothly functioning, in-built natural hierarchy, is still very much up in the air. How do we set up a truly integral context, in which the actual developmental differences between individuals are being honored; in which those with greater potentials for depth will not be held back in any way; and in which those with more limited potentials are included in such a way that they can blossom and don’t feel demeaned, but fully respected? What would actually happen if spiritually awake, developmentally mature, sensitive,

intelligent individuals would come together beyond ego and the games it plays, and everyone would fully appreciate the developmental distinctions between each other, in all of the different domains of human potential?

Surely, the kind of communal structure that would emerge would be entirely different from any Sangha we have seen so far. What I envision such a community to be, is more like a dynamic organism in which the relationships between the individuals will change according to what the group is focusing on, or doing together. If everybody's unique qualities and perspectives can be freely expressed, and their unique skills can be fully enacted, while the natural authority they create is completely honored and embraced, then the spontaneous flow of roles will no longer get clogged at every turn because of egoic power dynamics and rivalrous games. The natural hierarchy – that is in fact already latently present in every collective – will then be liberated, so that it can truly function as the organizing principle of the Sangha. In this free enactment of developmental differences, the evolutionary impulse will begin to vibrate between everybody – and new insights, awakenings and evolutionary breakthroughs will burst forth. The Sangha as a whole will actually begin to feel like a New Being, brimming with creative dynamism and evolutionary directionality. An extraordinary new form of relatedness will come into being – a Higher We, in which unique individuals live together, based on the recognition of their prior unity, and of each other's self-actualized sovereignty.

Such an integral Sangha, where *"autonomy and communion"* – aka sovereignty and coherence – coexist *"in a context of natural hierarchy"* will be the crucible of a luminous field of awakened awareness in and through which evolutionary potentials that do not yet exist will be born, and from which a brighter future will find its way into the world.

At this point in history, however, a truly integral Buddha, Dharma or Sangha that is fully rooted in mature integral or Turquoise consciousness is still mostly aspirational. Turquoise may be the very edge of evolution for a small but significant few of us, but it does not yet exist in any culturally significant way. As Steve McIntosh stated to me in no uncertain terms: "Turquoise can only emerge in any meaningful way if it does so in both consciousness and culture. So if this post-integral Turquoise level that goes back to communitarianism is to emerge, it must wait upon the appearance, the sort of the coming-of-age, of this previous integral stage – the individualistic Teal stage of integral. And Teal hasn't reached any kind of critical mass yet. The vast majority of people, who

identify as integral, are essentially center-of-gravity Green, and don't know it." ²²

Ultimately our integral aspirations will need to be enacted in real life, with real people. If we are serious about creating a new integral culture, able to support the healing of our broken cultural space and help foster its further evolution, we need to create transformational community structures with a pioneering mindset – communities that specifically focus on moving groups of individuals into integral awareness. The effect such transformational communities can generate may feel like a droplet on a hot skillet to some. Others, however, would argue that it might be more influential than we, at first glance, might imagine.

Ken Wilber has often called attention to the intriguing hypothesis that if around 10% of a society's population grows into a new stage of development, a tipping point is reached, and societal change is set in motion. The ideas and values of that new stage then begin to trickle down into the entire society and will be crystallized into new public rules and laws. ²³ As the pathologies of Green are now becoming more and more obvious to an increasing number of us, a tipping point into integral consciousness may indeed be around the corner. Around 5% of the population has already reached integral consciousness, and some developmentalists estimate that this number might increase to 10% within a decade or two. If this is true, a promising set of integral values would become the new societal operating system – which would bring healing, stability, sanity, genuine care and a lot more compassion into this polarized world. And so, the creation of integral practice structures, in which a small but significant number of us devote ourselves to our inner growth, can be truly consequential to increase critical mass toward such an integral tipping point.

Some people, however, maintain that engaging in intensely focused practice communities is no longer the way forward in today's world. To them it feels like a regression to the world-denying seclusion of monastic life in the ancient world. They have concluded that, since the nondual traditions have clearly taught us that there is no place where Spirit is not, practice should be enacted in the midst of normal life. Life

²²Ibid.,4

²³See for example: Wilber, *Trump and a Post-Truth World, An Evolutionary Self-Correction*, 2017, p. 72. Wilber often illustrates this principle by pointing out that the French and American Revolutions occurred when 10% of the population had reached the Orange Altitude, and that the postmodern revolution of the Sixties burst forth as 10% of the population had reached the Green Altitude. In both cases their respective values quickly began to saturate culture at large.

itself is our best teacher and our relationships will offer us exactly the lessons we need to transform us into better persons. The world is the monastery now.

But how successful is this strategy? For most of us, a dedicated practice environment seems indispensable, especially if we care about waking up into the self-radiant brightness of ever-present awareness. Until we can actually see the universe through awakened eyes, and perceive only the all-pervading living presence of Spirit Itself, lighting up every fiber of reality, we need practice structures in which we surround ourselves with others who put Spirit first. As Terry Patten said in an interview I had with him: “Sometimes we have to have an incubator, a safe space in which radicality, uncompromised by relativity, is given a chance to own everything. We need to be able to create an environment in which the highest Awakening has its opportunity to simply make its point in a powerful way. But then we also have an obligation to create the conditions in which that radical realization can find its expression in this relative world.”

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This sense of obligation to express awakened awareness in the real world grows as we further mature into the integral stages and become more passionate about dedicating our lives to the evolution of the whole. Especially in Turquoise – which is fully integral and includes all of life’s dimensions, inner and outer – direct societal engagement will by definition be embraced. This radically integral orientation breaks open the boundaries of our practice communities and connects them to the larger world. The skills and talents we have acquired in these enclosed training environments will then be deployed to directly serve the evolution of society and culture. This is the point where the world truly turns into the monastery – and we will move through it as fully integrated, conscious and inspired human beings, always firmly rooted in our practice.

Steve McIntosh probably said it best, as he envisioned the beneficial influence of this future Turquoise stage ripple out into the broader culture:

²⁴Terry Patten, Interview with Andrew Cohen, November 15, 2018.

“One of the ways that we can envision an integral, communal structure is to think about how this elite society of integralists can mature to the point where they have communal structures that can serve lower levels; that can serve the entire spiral of development. That’s something that’s in the future that we haven’t achieved yet. There are not enough people with authentic, integral consciousness to form a culture of any real impact in the larger world, and therefore, their ability to form organizations is strongly diminished. But we can speculate that in the future, when there’s enough integral consciousness and enough integral culture, authentic integral organizations could start to cohere and begin to tackle the Turquoise task of creating a higher level of community.

Just like scientific medicine is perhaps the greatest fruit of modernity, the greatest fruit of this integral stage of human history will be the technology of raising consciousness. Right now, we still don’t know how to do this in a methodical and reliable way. But once we get those methods down, then that will give us the power to serve the entire spiral – seeing it as one big community – by gently persuading people and fostering their evolution up the stages.”²⁵

If we care to see this promising future vision turn into reality, what we now most need are engaged integral practice communities, where the Three Jewels of Enlightenment – the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha – can shine together and work their transformational miracles. Spaces where inspired souls are *living* an integral Dharma of Waking Up, Growing Up and Cleaning Up²⁶; where an enlightened Buddha is the source of a spiritual wisdom and transmission that awakens the generative power of enlightened awareness among the community of practitioners; and where an integral Sangha, dedicated to the evolution of consciousness and culture and to the ongoing emergence of a Higher We, can thrive.

²⁵Ibid.,4.

²⁶*Waking Up, Growing Up and Cleaning Up* are terms often used in Integral Theory to summarize the essence of an integral approach to spiritual practice. Waking Up refers to accessing higher states of consciousness. Growing Up refers to growing into higher levels of psychological maturity, and Cleaning Up refers to the practice of shadow work – which is designed to re-integrate the unconscious material of our ‘dark side’, and make it conscious again.

All these Triple Gem Integral hives combined – each with their own unique character and project – will catalyze a collective force of integral wisdom, ready to impact the wider world. Together, they will serve the evolution of our human family across the developmental spectrum, and even the whole body of life – because all of it is now at stake. The integral awareness they will disseminate will help heal the pathologies of Green – and it will carefully push through the obstacles that cause the current congestion at the leading-edge of evolution. Their uplifting influence will urge us all to cross the threshold into the brave new world we would all love to live in, and would be proud to leave to our children.

This, indeed, is what we are now aspiring to help foster with *Manifest Nirvana* – our living, evolutionary intersubjective world space, where sovereign souls, radical spirits and integral pioneers will find their home.

May the pursuit of conscious evolution we all share be a light upon the world!