A close-up portrait of an older man with white hair, smiling warmly. He is wearing a vibrant purple button-down shirt. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage.

The Inner Science of Divine Love

Interview with William Keepin, PhD,

*Author of **Belonging to God: Spirituality, Science & a Universal Path of Divine Love***

The fire of divine love burns on every level of existence—from the heart of the sun, to the human heart, to each tiny cell in the human body, to the subatomic particles and the core of every star across all galaxies.

It is a grand fractal fire of divine love! There is no force in the cosmos more powerful,

and nothing propels spiritual evolution as swiftly as love. Ultimately, love is a transforming fire that burns away everything that is not love.

– William Keepin, *Belonging to God*

William Keepin, PhD, is co-founder of the Satyana Institute and the Gender Equity & Reconciliation International project. Keepin has studied and practiced intensively in Eastern and Western spiritual disciplines for 35 years, immersing himself in contemplative practices from the Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Sufi traditions, and he trained with psychiatrist Stanislav Grof. His spiritual mentors include Father Thomas Keating (Christian), Swami Ambikananda (Hindu), Jestunma Tenzin Palmo (Buddhist), Llewellyn Vaughan Lee (Sufi), Ravi Ravindra (Hindu/interfaith) and Sr. Lucy Kurien (Christian).

William Keepin is also a mathematical physicist, social activist, and environmental scientist whose research on sustainable energy and global warming influenced international environmental policy. He was a whistleblower

in nuclear science policy and presented testimony to the US House of Representatives and the parliaments of Australia and several European countries. He holds a Ph.D. in applied mathematics, M.S. in mathematical physics, M.A. in East-West psychology, and an honorary doctorate in Spirituality and Social Change (from the California Institute of Integral Studies). Keepin has over 40 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals, and his books include: *Divine Duality: The Power of Reconciliation between Women and Men* (Hohm Press, 2007), co-author of *Women Healing Women* (Hohm Press, 2009), and co-editor of *Song of the Earth: A Synthesis of the Scientific and Spiritual Worldviews* (Permanent Publications, UK, 2012).

In his most recent book, *Belonging to God: Science, Spirituality, & a Universal Path of Divine Love* (2016), William Keepin sought to recover the esoteric heart of spirituality, which has the potential to create peace and respect between religious traditions and between science and religion. Identifying the “path of divine

love" as a kind of universal spirituality that leads to mystical mergence into the very essence of God, Keepin traces this invisible doorway, deep within the heart, both as it is described in spiritual texts and as it is symbolized in ways observable to contemporary science.


OMTimes talked with William Keepin about his journey and how he found his way from being a scientist to a seeker in search of the divine to now, where he lives a life that integrates science, spirit and helping humanity heal and embrace our unity.

OMTimes: What initiated your shift away from a career in science and toward spiritual inquiry?

William Keepin: As a young mathematical physicist thirty-five years ago, I was researching quantum physics of diatomic molecules, chaos theory, and global energy systems. I had begun practicing silent meditation, and one day I meditated intensively on the question, "Who am I?" At that time, I had never heard of Ramana Maharshi or his practice

of self-enquiry. As I settled into deep stillness within the heart, I let go of the words, and simply focused on the question as a sustained yearning in my heart. After a couple hours, I suddenly became aware that "I" was somehow "floating" about three meters above my body, near the high ceiling of the meditation room. I was startled at first, and briefly alarmed, but then noticed a remarkable luminous silver cord that flowed from me downward to my body below. I quickly discovered I could move freely up and down this cord at will, and realized that I was perfectly fine, and could get back into my body.

I spent the next half hour entirely outside of my body, and the experience was astonishing, exhilarating, and profound beyond measure. I could move around in any direction at will, with no resistance and no physical form whatsoever. Amazingly, I could see everything vividly in the room around me, down to minor details like reading the clock on the far wall, even though my physical eyes "down there" in my head were shut tight. My body below me felt like a very heavy,



lifeless, stone statue, but “up here” I was sheer consciousness, thinner than air, utterly free, and suffused with an ecstatic sense of refined intimacy. I could also think perfectly clearly. Ever the scientist, I performed some mathematical calculations, just to test out that I was all “up here”, along with all my faculties and memories. Finally, I reluctantly and gently slid down the silver cord, and slowly reinhabited my body.

My entire view of reality and life was forever changed by this and other mystical experiences. The orthodox materialist scientific worldview, in which I had been deeply trained for decades, basically had to be jettisoned because I had directly experienced an aspect of the ‘soul’ and its non-material nature as pure consciousness, distinct from the physical corpus. I later learned about etheric bodies and the ‘silver cord’ I had seen, which is severed at death. I also learned of Ramana Maharshi’s self-enquiry practice and subsequently spent significant time at his ashram in south India. I became a research scientist

at Princeton’s Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory, where I studied all manner of ‘paranormal’ phenomena. I also began attending meditation retreats, in Vipassana and Vajrayana initially, and then in heart-centered silent meditation and contemplative prayer which remains a core practice for me today.

One auspicious day in the mid-1990s, a spiritual teacher appeared mysteriously in my life, who led me more deeply inward than I had ever imagined possible. I was fortunate to be initiated into a path of divine love, and my inner psychospiritual structures were radically transmuted, as my teacher (who wishes to remain anonymous) ignited an invisible flame in my heart, and taught that the opposite of ignorance is not knowledge, but rather ‘knowledgelessness’—a placeless place, beyond all knowing, where the soul merges into the divine.

OMTimes: What is meant by the term “interspirituality”?

William Keepin:

Interspirituality goes beyond traditional ‘interfaith’ dialogue

and invites a deeper conversation and exchange of spiritual practices that relate directly to the soul's transformative journey within the various religious traditions. The major world religions—far from being polarized in endless conflicts from which they can never recover—are, in fact, mutually complementary aspects of a larger, unified spiritual reality. This is the central insight of “interspirituality,” a term coined by the late Brother Wayne Teasdale to underscore the systematic metamorphosis that is rapidly emerging at the intersections of the major religions.

OMTimes: What is the fire of divine love, and what teachings on the path of divine love are shared across the scriptures?

William Keepin: The ‘fire of divine love’ is the universal energy of love that flows in and through all things at every level of existence. In physics, the four fundamental forces—the strong and weak nuclear forces, electromagnetism, and gravity—are all regarded as a single, unified force. This unitary force is actually Love, a creative energy

and transforming ‘fire’ that ignites, incinerates, purifies, and burns at the core of everything and being. In different ways yet with one voice, scriptures and mystics down through the ages proclaim the ineffable mystery of the soul's intrinsic oneness with this divine love. The core teaching across the religions is this: the inmost essence of the human being is none other than the very essence of God.

OMTimes: How are the similarities across religions more profound and illuminating than the differences?

William Keepin: The soul's journey across the faith traditions entails a deep alchemical process of radical purification and transmutation that is fundamentally alike across the traditions, despite outward theological disparities. In Christianity, for example, a saying attributed to St. Teresa of Avila describes the fruit of mystical realization in the devotee: “Christ has no body on earth now but yours, no mouth but yours, no feet but yours.” This process is essentially no different from the Islamic Hadith in which Allah proclaims,

“I become the eyes with which he sees, the mouth with which he speaks, the feet with which he walks.” Both accounts illuminate the transformative process in the human soul, and both lead to the same result: the human being is emptied of separate personal selfhood, and ‘divinized’ into a living instrument of divine love and will. As Fr. Thomas Keating expressed it, “the entire purpose of Christianity is transformation into Christ, nothing else.” Similarly, the entire purpose of Buddhism is transformation into Buddha; the entire purpose of (Vaishnavite) Hinduism is transformation into Krishna—nothing else.

This points to a universal inner science of the heart. Our culture is enamored with the love of science, yet we have failed to develop a genuine science of love. The hidden currents of divine love that flow ceaselessly in the depths of the heart are largely lost upon us, due to excessive emphasis on outer physical forms and the conceptual structures of the mind. For this we pay a devastating price! The mind has rightly been called “the slayer of the Real,” and we are left bereft of inner practices and treasures

of the heart, which facilitate the true inner journey and transformation.

OMTimes: What are some of these inner disciplines and spiritual practices?

William Keepin: Inwardly to dwell in the heart, and outwardly to serve others—this is the bottom line. We strive to give ourselves utterly to this path of divine love. Silent meditation and contemplative prayer are essential practices for plumbing the depths of the heart, and for offering oneself without conditions to the ineffable transformation. Remembrance practices for invocation of the Divine throughout the day are crucial. Heart-centered meditation is indispensable; it is the gateway to the infinite. Other practices are also extremely valuable, such as experiential breathwork, dream work, contemplative walking, and spiritual inquiry and dialogue practices.

Outwardly, to give oneself in service to others, putting others first, and staying connected to the inner promptings of the heart, which are often given

only as subtle hints or fleeting glimpses. So one must stay ever attuned for them, and watch for the overriding tendencies of the egoic mind. We delve into all these practices in our retreats and trainings.

OMTimes: What about 'divine love' in the non-theistic traditions, such as Buddhism, which doesn't have a God?

William Keepin: There are important differences in the non-theistic traditions, to be sure, and one must not posit a facile equivalence with theistic traditions. Nevertheless, the similarities are deep and far-reaching, particularly on ultimate levels, pointing to a possible underlying unity that scholar Raimundo Panikkar terms 'homeomorphic equivalence.' For example, recent interfaith scholarship unveils remarkably close correlations between what is called 'Dharamakaya' in Buddhism and God in theistic religions. Buddhist scholar B. Alan Wallace says that the cosmogonies of Vajrayana Buddhism, Hindu Vedanta, and Neoplatonic Christianity have so much in common that they

can be regarded as different interpretations of a single theory. Similarly, Islamic scholar Reza Shah-Kazemi's recent book *Common Ground Between Islam and Buddhism*, highly praised in the forward by the Dalai Lama, makes a strong case that the ultimate reality affirmed in Buddhism is none other than what monotheists call the essence of God. As Thich Nhat Hanh puts it, "once the ultimate is touched, God and nirvana as concepts have been transcended."

OMTimes: How does modern science illuminate the fundamental unity of the world religions?

William Keepin: The oneness of all existence, long proclaimed by sages from many wisdom traditions, is illuminated by new discoveries in science that reveal matter, energy, and consciousness to be an integral whole. Quantum physicist David Bohm, a close colleague of Einstein's, proposed that "the cosmos is a single unbroken wholeness in flowing movement," in which each part of the flow contains the entire flow. His insight is based

on breakthroughs in modern physics and mathematics, and is enjoying a major revival in recent years.

Science is evolving, and slowly coming to recognize that there exist invisible dimensions of reality that shape what we observe and experience, yet which are difficult to measure in a laboratory. The material dimension of existence is not the whole truth of reality—not by a longshot! For example, sometime in this century, probably in the next decade or two, I anticipate that science will finally acknowledge that human consciousness survives physical death. This discovery is rapidly approaching, as the empirical data supporting it become overwhelmingly compelling and are replicated across the globe in multiple research and clinical studies, such as the work of cardiologist Pim van Lommel. The longstanding materialistic bias endemic in scientific and clinical research, which adamantly refuses to acknowledge these remarkable data and their full implications, is steadily eroding. Recent reviews of the evidence by people like Erwin Laszlo and

Chris Carter conclude that: “Our consciousness does not end with the demise of the body; it continues to exist in another dimension of the cosmos.”

In short, science will soon discover the ‘soul’ or the *Atman*, or something akin to this. In so doing, science will finally catch up with the basic spiritual teaching, known to mystics for millennia, that the person does not die when the body dies. This is the first spiritual teaching in Chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, for example, and so we could say that in terms of understanding human consciousness, science is currently about 2,500 years behind mysticism.

OMTimes: How is the universe structured?

William Keepin: Everything is connected to everything else, and love is the force that holds it all together.

Nothing exists in objective isolation from the rest of the universe. This interconnectivity is not just a metaphor; it is confirmed by quantum physics, which reveals the universe as exhibiting vast

networks of 'nonlocal' interconnections that transcend spatial separation. Even a tiny electron has an awareness of the rest of the universe and behaves in response to the larger environment. Indeed, systems of coupled electrons or photons exhibit "quantum entanglement", in that our measurement of the state of one immediately determines the state of the other, even if they are on opposite sides of the universe. Such discoveries point toward fundamental interconnections, between matter and consciousness, that transcend time and space.

These interconnections relate to another key feature of the universe: self-similarity across vastly different scales. For example, neural networks in the brain exhibit a similar structure to galaxies in outer space. A recent study on "network cosmology" showed virtually identical patterns of growth in complex networks, ranging from the intergalactic scale in solutions to Einstein's general relativity equations, right down to the 'local' scale in the growth of the internet and social and biological networks. Fractal

patterns in mathematics and in nature are a modern re-discovery of ancient mystical wisdom.

OMTimes: What is a "fractal" and how do fractal geometry and holography relate to ancient wisdom, alchemy, and spirituality?

William Keepin: A fractal is a mathematical geometric structure that contains mirror images or replicas of itself on smaller scales. It's a bit like a set of Russian dolls, except that the smaller dolls inside just keep going forever. Fractals are not a human invention, they are a logical necessity of numbers which existed long before the Earth and humanity came into being. The remarkably intricate fractal patterns on a computer screen are not generated by the computer, but inherent in numbers themselves. Only discovered in the past 30+ years, fractals are applied widely today to model natural systems. Fractal patterns are found throughout nature; simple examples include the structure of tree branches, lightning, coastlines, galaxies, ferns, and Romanesco broccoli, to name just a few. Fractal structures appear

throughout the human body as well, including the respiratory system, circulatory system, and nervous system—all of which exhibit branches that divide and subdivide again and again.

Fractal geometry and holography are modern scientific rediscoveries of a more profound ancient alchemical principle called “the Correspondence Principle.” Articulated in *The Corpus Hermeticum*, this principle of “as above, so below” affirms that the microcosm replicates the macrocosm, and is a fundamental key to spiritual wisdom across the traditions. For example, it appears in the well-known saying, attributed to Hermes (Trismegistus), that “God is an infinite circle whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere.” Another vivid example is the concept of Indra’s Net, found in Buddhist and Hindu mysticism, which portrays reality as a vast array of exquisite shining jewels, and in each facet of each jewel, all the other jewels are reflected. So each jewel contains, in a sense, the entire universe of jewels.

I propose that consciousness itself has a fractal structure

– that the human heart and mind are a microcosm of a much larger cosmic intelligence which can be regarded as the consciousness of ‘God’. Mystics across the religions report profound experiences of realizing the full infinity of God within the heart. The fractal structure of consciousness shows how such experiences are possible, for just as the mathematical infinite can be contained within the finite fractal geometric form, so too the infinite consciousness of God can be contained within the seemingly finite heart of the human being.

OMTimes: You speak of an emerging revolution in religion that parallels recent scientific revolutions. How might this happen?

William Keepin: Let’s take the example of Einstein’s relativity theory, which revolutionized classical scientific understanding that had stood for centuries. Einstein showed that space and time are not absolutes, as we had earlier believed them to be. Einstein derived his special theory of relativity from just two postulates: 1) The laws of

physics must be the same in all reference frames, and 2) The speed of light is a universal constant across all reference frames. If we apply these same postulates metaphysically to spirituality, we have: 1) The "laws of spirituality" must be the same in all religions, and 2) The divine light is universal across all religions. These postulates prompt a parallel spiritual revolution in religion: there is one ultimate spiritual Reality, which is infused with a universal divine light. This observation reveals the world religions to be mutually complementary, rather than contradictory. Different religions constitute distinct rays of this universal light, refracted through the 'prism' of divinity, and each religion constitutes a valid pathway to realizing God, or ultimate truth, or supreme reality.

OMTimes: *What do you mean by the 'epistemology of the heart'?*

William Keepin: This refers to subtle ways of knowing that are revealed through the invisible doorway of the heart. It is a revelatory knowing, in contrast to the rational epistemology of

science that utilizes empirical data and mental reasoning. The epistemology of the heart entails illuminative disclosures, or layers of subtle realities unveiled. Like science, the process is equally 'evidence-based' and follows where the data lead, but draws upon qualitatively different kinds of evidence, and therefore produces an altogether different kind and quality of knowing. For example, the out-of-body experience recounted earlier is 'data' gathered from an inner research 'experiment' on the question, *Who am I?* It has been replicated by many other 'researchers.'

Two keys to this inner epistemology of the heart are the intricate mysteries of the breath, and the Hermetic axiom "as Above, so Below," which is the Correspondence principle mentioned earlier. "Whatever is Beyond, is also here; whatever is here, is also Beyond," says the Katha Upanishad. Or in the non-canonical Gospel of Philip, "That which is above opens Itself to us who are below, so that we, too, enter the secret of the truth." As my spiritual teacher told me one day, "This is something so sacred and so secret, it cannot

even be whispered!”

Simple though it may sound, the breath provides a profound bridge across these dimensions. “The Breath is a double name, for it is everywhere: above, below, visible, in the invisible,” says the non-canonical Gospel of Philip. “The same breath lights and extinguishes the Fire. If you know the Breath, you are the Breath. If you know the Christ, you become the Christ.”

OMTimes: What is the relationship between your interspirituality work and your Gender Equity and Reconciliation International project?

William Keepin: There are several key parallels between these two projects. They both work to bridge divisions in the human family by working with the power of love through the collective alchemy of the human heart. This alchemy can transcend differences and boundaries, whether gender-based or religious, and leads to a conscious realization of our inherent oneness.

Another connection is that

gender inequality is ultimately a spiritual crisis. Social, political, and psychological reform on their own are not enough to transform and heal this massive structural injustice; a ‘higher’ wisdom and universal love are required. In virtually all cultures, women have been systematically regarded as intrinsically inferior, even in religious communities where one might have expected far better. The female prophetic voice has been repressed in all religions, and a strong masculine bias has marginalized women’s spiritual experience, which differs from men’s in many ways. A plethora of sex scandals involving religious leadership has afflicted many faith traditions, betraying their cherished scriptures and highest ideals of relational and spiritual integrity. All these travesties cry out for systematic implementation of gender equity and reconciliation in religion, and in society as a whole.

Related Links:

Path of Divine Love Webpage:
<http://www.pathofdivinelove.org/wp1/>

Dawn of Interspirituality

Website: <http://>

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