

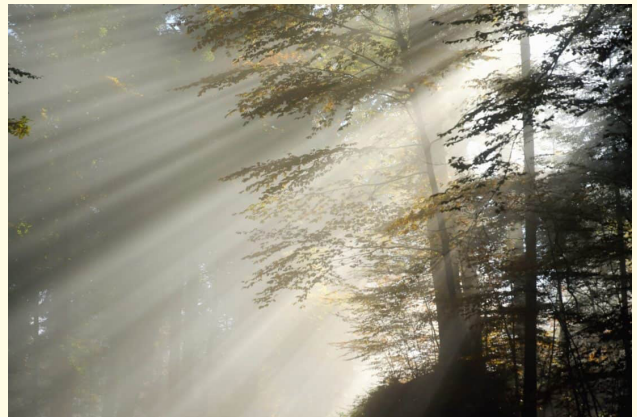
The Marriage of Theory and Practice

On Involution-Evolution

*A Passage from *The Life We Are Given**

By George Leonard and Michael Murphy, ITP co-founders

Cosmologists tell us that our world began as some sort of seed, no larger perhaps than a needle point. There was a moment, they say, just the barest instant of time, when from that seed there arose enough energy to create everything in our universe. This stupendous beginning had no atoms, no elements as we know them now, and yet it contained in potential the billions of galaxies, the millions of species on earth, the human mind and heart. From this womb of our world would come giant red stars and lovers' tears, supernovae and Bach choral masses, animal life and the ecstasy of saints. In that exploding seed was the potential for pain and glory, cruelty and redeeming grace. Our heart tells us that something more than chance was involved. A guiding spirit, an awareness, we believe was secretly there from the start.



For things could have gone wrong at many points in our world's journey. At the very beginning, in that first instant of time, if the density of the budding universe were not what it was, all of creation would have collapsed. In the words of one astrophysicist, that density required "an adjustment not of one part in a thousand, not of one in a trillion, but of one part in infinity." At one point in the evolution of the early universe, had there not been a preponderance of matter over antimatter, the first particle collisions would have yielded nothing but energy. There would have been no stars or planets, no human heart, just radiating particles for aeons to come.

Reflecting upon the stupendous cosmic coincidences and the multibillion-year defiance of odds that evolution exhibits, we sense that a purpose, a telos, calls the universe toward a greater existence. And we find such a calling in us. There is a profound affinity between the world's advance and our capacity for transformation, between the emergence of consciousness from the inorganic world and the emergence of new life in us. This affinity has led many thinkers to propose that the universe's evolution is the unfolding of a spirit, or divinity, involved in inconscient matter and energy, a divinity that presses to manifest itself more fully in the course of time.