

# ZERO POINT

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Moments Beyond Conscious Thought

by

**Thomas Paul Emerson**

**INNERSIGHTS**

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**ZERO POINT**

SECTION ONE

# *Introduction*

*To Your  
Silent Witness*



## INTRODUCTION

It was 1968. The Beatles had just gone to see Maharishi Mahesh Yogi at his mountain retreat in Rishikesh, and the Western world was about to be introduced to one of its first New Age messiahs. While at Maharishi's, John Lennon and Paul McCartney worked on songs for their *White Album*,<sup>1</sup> the songs of which would soon rank among the most popular anthems for a new generation. The Woodstock festival and man's first walk on the moon were just one year away. This was an exciting time in American history—and perhaps one of the most poignant—in what was later to be coined a New Age.

I was a teenager then, and Eastern religion, hippies, and rock and roll were a sign of the times. I grew up in California where I found myself surrounded by a New Age generation. I went to conferences and expositions, became a vegetarian, studied astrology, went barefoot, and even had a pyramid over my bed for a while. A Christian since childhood, I found myself fascinated by Eastern religion. The messages of Krishnamurti, Yogananda, Muktananda, Ram Dass, and the like were by this time reaching millions. Christ, Ramakrishna, Krishna, Pātanjali, and Shankara were among the great teachers who influenced me. I used to go to Ojai, California, to see Krishnamurti, whom I considered my guru.

By the early seventies, I began to study meditation and yoga. After twelve years of practice, I became initiated into a form of meditation called Kundalini Yoga, by a spiritual master from India. During this meditation I felt a sensation moving up my spine to a point between my eyebrows, which he called “the third eye.” This energy is known as the Kundalini.

## PILGRIMAGE

Meditation took me to a spot where I was momentarily beyond the concerns of my life, and all I knew was there was so much more to life than what I was aware of. During the mid-1970s and the 1980s, I went to many places trying to understand as much as I could about myself. I wanted to see through as many layers of myself as I could, but there always seemed to be another layer underneath. Mahatma Gandhi once wrote, “If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth you must reduce yourself to a zero.”<sup>2</sup>

Traveling helped me to get out of my more routine way of thinking and to reduce myself toward zero. I traveled around the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, then Europe, India, and Nepal, on a sort of spiritual pilgrimage. I wanted to see through myself and see what others could see. I visited many people, places, and temples. I lived sometimes as a homeless person, roaming from place to place with a knapsack. I slept in the bushes beside the road, and I rummaged through trash bins behind supermarkets. For a couple of years, I hitchhiked through North America, talking to many people as I rode with them in their cars. Occasionally, I worked as a day laborer or at a temporary job to get enough money so I could continue traveling.

I stayed on an Indian reservation in Arizona with a spiritual teacher. She taught me many of the spiritual ways of her people. While in India I met a revered yogi, whose message was so simple and yet sublime. Most of all, I learned the significance of devotion, and how important it is to pray and to think of God. I also spoke to many Brahmins, sadhus, and teachers in various parts of India.

When I returned to the United States, I felt like I didn't quite fit in. I quietly pursued Eastern religion and astrology, and before long I met others who were interested in these subjects. Eventually, I started a part-time business of astrology and hypnosis.

## THE LATE 1980'S

It seemed much of the hype of the counterculture was settling down, and some of the more commercial fads were quickly fading as the mainstream began to take a more serious look at this new fast-growing population. Even the larger bookstores were now dedicating whole sections to "New Age" books. After my pilgrimage I decided to explore a field more related to the investigation of consciousness. It would be several years, however, before I eventually was drawn to the study of hypnosis. What caught my attention at first was when I heard several therapists had reported their patient's had spoken of past lives while under hypnosis. One of my favorite books at the time was *Many Lives Many Masters*<sup>3</sup> by Brian L. Weiss, M.D.

As a boy I was hypnotized several times by my best friend's father, who was trying to help me increase my self-confidence. These early experiences showed me hypnosis and meditation are extremely similar, if not identical. I found that what is called a guided

meditation is the same as what is called hypnosis. And self-hypnosis is the same as what people call meditation. When someone guides you into meditation, this is actually the same as someone hypnotizing you. Both result in a trance. The major difference is that usually in meditation you are not trying to specifically change anything. Most people meditate to enjoy inner peace, reflection, and silence, whereas in hypnosis the intention is usually to change a certain habit or belief.

## HYPNOTHERAPY

At the beginning of the 1990s, I became a certified hypno-therapist, and then eventually a neuro-linguistic practitioner. I opened an office and it wasn't long before I began to receive calls from people who wanted to use hypnosis to remember a previous lifetime. In the beginning, I had my doubts about whether I was actually going to be able to guide anyone into a past life. In the years that followed, however, I guided many people into what they believed were recollections of another lifetime. One thing became clear: These people believed there was a direct correlation between their spiritual circumstances in a previous life and their current life situation. They explained how their previous life had in some way "sowed the seeds" for their present experiences. They saw many of the same people with them in various lifetimes. I soon realized being born again was like waking up in the morning, after a night's rest, and just continuing your life.

# THIS BOOK

Over the years, clients and students encouraged me to write about my experiences. This book is not about past life stories but about the journey I have experienced during my past twenty-five years.

In one of my favorite books, *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran writes:

*Like the ocean is your God-self;  
It remains forever undefiled.  
And like the ether it lifts but the winged.  
Even like the sun is your god-self;  
It knows not the ways of the mole nor seeks it the  
holes of the serpent.  
But your god-self dwells not alone in your being.  
Much in you is still man, and much in you is not  
yet man,  
But a shapeless pigmy that walks asleep in the  
mist searching for its own awakening.<sup>4</sup>*

The message that underlies this book is that Gibran's "God-self" is the Spirit in each of us. The pigmy-self, or our ego, is an aging person who's born, grows old, and dies—but our Spirit lasts forever. The Spirit watches over our life, and provides us with an awareness of existence, and ourselves if we will just quietly listen. Furthermore, what we call "right" or "good" from a spiritual perspective is what we do out of love.

I want to share an awareness that promises a common ground between science and religion. My parents are kind, honest, and loving people, but very traditional. I remember one day I came home from

elementary school and told my mother I had learned about the theory of evolution. She told me that science was definitely wrong about this theory, and that God had created man out of dust in just one day. I was confused and struggled to understand whether I should believe science or our church. I believe each of us knows deep inside, just as I did as a child, there is a degree to which they are both right. However, if either denies the other, then it will be partially wrong. Science, for example, can't prove that something like Spirit exists. A physical instrument can only measure something else that is physical—like a camera only takes a picture of something visible through its lens. Meanwhile, the church denies the evidence of science, because science explains things we didn't know about 2,000 years ago. This book shares a common ground between science and religion.

In the first five chapters we'll take a look at several of the most popular New Age subjects today, such as prophecies, Zen, yoga, meditation, Tantra, near death experiences (NDE), and past life regression (PLR). In the last eight chapters we'll look at some questions regarding these subjects.

It is my sincere wish that this book shed light on some of the spiritual issues today that can become clouded during these changing times.

People in India, after being introduced to another person, say, *Namaste*, which means “to that which is sacred in you, from that which is sacred in me.”  
“*Namaste!*”

—*Thomas Paul Emerson*

## Chapter 1

# LIFE IN A NEW AGE

As we enter the twenty-first century—and a new millennium—we see a mind-boggling acceleration in technology. The world is changing faster and faster every day! We seem to be entering a new age of belief and understanding. Globally, we're becoming a more interdependent world, and there is more a blending of cultures and traditions.

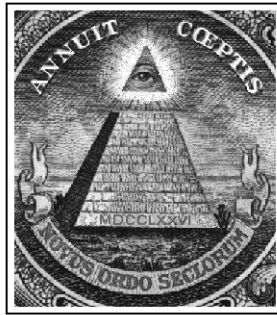
Nowhere has this cultural blending been more evident than in the United States. One such influx was that of Eastern religion in the 1970s. At the time many believed this new way of thinking was just a cult, but by the 1980s, mainstream America was incorporating many elements of this new philosophy into their daily lives. It soon became somewhat trendy, with lots of books on yoga and health management. It wasn't long before bookstores carried an amazing assortment of Eastern books, herbal remedies, incense, and music. Despite some of its more "far-out" or "way-out" proponents, this cultural phenomenon has united the Western emphasis on social responsibility with the Eastern science of self-realization. At the heart of this collaboration is a truly fascinating blend of lifestyle, philosophy, religion, and medicine.

As the world seems to grow smaller, and technology continues to boggle the imagination, we have also developed the means for mass destruction. As earth's population soars, there are more people for all of us to get along with. Researchers expect our world population to double between 1975 and the year 2017.<sup>5</sup> Our current population increases by 90 million people each year. By the year 2017 it is estimated we may be sharing the planet with as many as 8 billion people! We also now have the technology to solve some of our worst problems, like hunger, war, and pollution. So whether you think the "end of the world" is right around the corner, or a New Age with a more unified world—one thing is sure, we're all going to find out together! For peace to prevail, it is vital we develop a strong spirit of brotherly and sisterly love. Each of us can do our own part, by serving and developing a sincere acceptance of others, regardless of another's skin color, cultural differences, or religion. The change begins in our own minds, and in our homes, neighborhoods, and schools. We must be willing to pitch in to help others to help themselves.

The concern for world peace reached a new height in the 1940s with the advent of the nuclear bomb. In the aftermath of that deadly display, it was clear world peace was the key to our survival. Some say this was the beginning of the New Age generation. The first of several landmark books was published in 1946: *Peace of Mind*<sup>6</sup> by Rabbi Joshua Liebman was on the bestseller's list for two years. In 1952, Norman Vincent Peale—perhaps another forefather of New Age—brought us *Power of Positive Thinking*.<sup>7</sup> *Think and Grow Rich*<sup>8</sup> by Napoleon Hill was published in 1960 and is still one of my favorites.



The New Age may actually have begun earlier, even before the time of the U.S. Constitution. American statesmen John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and others were members of a secret spiritual society called the Freemasons. They believed there was an esoteric truth underlining all religion and science. They met in secret for fear that members of other churches might persecute them. The Freemasons society was based on a belief in God and in the importance of charity and brotherly love. When they wrote the Declaration of Independence they declared “all men are created equal” and “one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all.” With their faith in God, their vision of the future, were these also early visionaries of a New Age?



**Figure 1:** Many of our early forefathers were Freemasons. These are some of their symbols that appear on our one-dollar bill. The Egyptian pyramid represents a temple for spiritual initiation. The top of the pyramid is separate from the bottom, suggesting that the spirit is above the earth. From here the all-seeing eye, or Eye of Providence, watches. The eye is also seen within some divine rays, which represents the glory of God. The words ANNUIT COEPTIS at the top means “God has favored our undertakings.” NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM at the bottom means “new order of the ages.” Also (not shown), are the words IN GOD WE TRUST and E PURIBUS UNUM, which means “out of many, one.”

# COSMOLOGY

According to the Hindus the world goes through a slow, continuous evolutionary cycle. This particular cycle is made up of four world periods, called yugas. Each yuga is thousands of years long. Through these long evolutionary periods we gradually evolve from a less spiritually developed state to an increasingly higher one. When the world reaches a pinnacle, it then eventually declines again, like the rise and fall of an empire. This cycle continues through the eons, over and over again. This process allows some souls to move along and others to move up to a higher heavenly existence. Things go from better to worse, and then eventually worse to better. Most Hindus believe our present age is the Kali Yuga, which is the lowest point in our spiritual development (see page 16). Others believe we have already passed through the Kali Yuga, and have begun our slow ascent toward a higher spiritual state.

# APOCALYPSE

In many of the most famous prophecies of the world, such as those in the Bible, of Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce, and others, there are predictions of an apocalypse, or period of mass destruction. Some have predicted this earthly hell may begin sometime between 1999 and 2012 A.D. Some Christians insist the end begins in 2021, and that Jesus is on his way back to save them. Many say this calamity is necessary to uproot the evil that now exists in the world. Regardless of what will actually happen, these predictions are motivating many people to come to terms with their own spiritual understanding.

The scriptures suggest this low period will result in an increased amount of greed. According to the scriptures, during this Kali Yuga period, many people will lack integrity. Unfortunately, this greed can also lead us to tamper with Mother Nature. According to the Hindus, this yuga must occur before the “Golden Age,” or the Satya Yuga, can come about. The Golden Age is a time of spiritual renewal, when an awakening of consciousness will again bring a greater virtue and peace on earth. Doesn't this sound similar to the coming of the kingdom of heaven predicted in the Bible?

## END OF THE WORLD

I believe the end of our world is an experience each of us will face sometime during one of our lives—but not necessarily all of us at the same time. Perhaps the end refers to a catastrophic situation in one of our lifetimes, which suddenly changes or ends life as we know it. This event could cause us to unexpectedly lose everything. If we die, we may be sent to the spirit world without time to prepare. The scriptures tell us this doom may come about by a natural disaster; such as an earthquake, or by war, starvation, or an epidemic. We are warned we should get our spiritual life in order because we never know when we may meet with such an unexpected end.

Just as in the Bible, various cultures have also had their own doomsday predictions. Were these just specific predictions for each of these cultures? Can we assume these prophecies refer to the whole world at the same time? For example, in biblical times, people didn't even know that North America existed or that the earth was round. Perhaps many of their predictions refer only to the world as they knew it. In the Bible, the Jewish prophets foretell their people should expect a gruesome

time in the future. Some experts believe that these predictions were about the Roman Emperor Nero, whose number according to their system of numerology was “666.” The “mark of the beast” could have been an insignia of the Emperor that was worn on their armor or uniform. Or, is it possible that Nazi Germany was a later doomsday that the Jewish prophets were predicting a thousand years earlier? These prophets predicted that this would bring about a near complete destruction of their people.

## MAYAN

While I was in Mexico I met a Mayan guide who said his Mayan forefathers predicted the end of the world would come in 2011 A.D. He went on to say he had noticed the numbers of his people were declining more and more every year. They were being pushed further and further from their homeland and into more uninhabitable places. He said that before long, he felt the only real evidence of his ancient culture would be historical artifacts. I couldn't help wonder if the Mayans were predicting the end of their own civilization in 2011 but not necessarily the entire human race. Very little happens everywhere to everyone at the same time. While one country is experiencing floods, another may be having below average rainfall. While one nation is at war, others are experiencing peaceful times. Even the sun doesn't shine everywhere at the same time.

## ASTROLOGY

The last two millenniums are referred to as the Age of Pisces. In astrology, in the precession of the

equinoxes, it takes about twenty-four thousand years for the sun to wobble through all twelve astrological signs. According to astrology, the present age is in the sign of the vernal equinox. The autumnal equinox is now in Virgo, therefore we say that we are in the Age of Pisces. Pisces, among other things, is an Age of imagination and belief, which is a beautiful and fascinating thing. It has given rise to storytelling, reading, writing, devotion, sculpture, stage, music, motion pictures, and dance, all of which have flourished.

At the same time, people in Pisces are also apt to believe what is untrue and act wrongly. For example, the age of Pisces began around the time of Christ, when people were persecuted for their faith. People like Jesus were actually tortured for their beliefs. It is ironic that many have been persecuted for both belief in Jesus and non-belief in Jesus. Ironically, it has also been both through belief in, and also denial of Jesus that many have found salvation.

Pisces is the symbol of the two fish swimming in opposite directions. The fish, which represent the duality of our nature, live in water, which here represents the spirit. Pisces is the duality of our psychospiritual nature.

Many of the old prophecies have occurred during this Piscean Age, and this has led many to believe we are actually still seeing apocalyptic times now in certain parts of the world. Although not everything has happened everywhere at once, many predictions have come true in many countries in a relatively short time. There have been earthquakes, wars, starvation, pestilence (epidemics), revolts, droughts, floods, and even antichrists.