

# NINE POINTS BULLETIN

The International **Enneagram** Association: Providing a Worldwide Hub for the Sharing of all Developments in the Theory and Ethical *Application of the* Enneagram.

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# A CONVERSATION WITH A.H. ALMAAS INTERVIEWED by GAYLE SCOTT

A.H. Almaas is the pen name of A. Hameed Ali, the originator of the psychospiritual teaching and method known as the Diamond Approach. ® Born in Kuwait, his academic background is in physics, mathematics, and psychology. Almaas has developed the Diamond Approach over the last four decades. In 1975, Almaas founded the Ridhwan School.



#### SCOTT: How were you first introduced to the Enneagram...and how did it impact you?

ALMAAS: I first learned about it from Claudio Naranjo in the early '70s. He learned it from Oscar Ichazo. The Enneagram was a central part of Naranjo's teaching.

As I learned it and used it for selfexploration, I became more and more interested to see how very helpful it was. The map really helped me to recognize and understand things about myself and other people. It had a lot of truth about it. It was surprising to see the path it revealed and to see how the various constellations were put together - which showed something about its correctness.

The way Claudio taught it was very in-depth, and so we had to work with it by actually seeing things in ourselves and each other. It helped a lot to see things - some difficult things - some interesting things. I would say my first impression of it in the first year or two was more of a surprise and a fascination. Actually I had more of a sense of its correctness early on. After long-term familiarity with it I have less of a sense of belief about how accurate it is. It seems the more I know it, and the more I know people in depth, it's not as clear-cut as the Enneagram tends to show.

#### Do you mean that people's basic make-up is not as definitive as the Enneagram would have it?

Yes. Like someone who seems to be a Three for instance. After a few years you're really exploring and maybe you find that person's really a Nine or a Seven. It becomes less certain than at the beginning. First impressions seem to be the most certain for me

and I think that's true for many people. I think it's because as we go deeper in seeing people, people become more the same in some sense. So the differences we see in the beginning are actually more on the surface - different manifestations of the fixation. Also the more fixated a person is – the more stuck – the more the Enneagram of fixations is correct.

It sounds like the Enneagram was a significant part of your experience in Naranjo's SAT [Seekers After Truth] group. Did it also play a significant part in your early development of the Diamond **Approach?** 

It was particularly important in my SAT work, and it was the SAT work that helped me to open up in general. My system, my consciousness became more open to seeing other things deeper things. When the Diamond Approach began to develop, the Enneagram was a useful organizing map for the kind of understanding that was arising.

#### The Enneagram is being taught and used in many ways today. How do you see it as being most useful in the process of self-realization?

I see it two ways: the first is the way I learned to use it at the beginning, which is exploring the fixation personally and experientially. It's very useful as a map that helps the self-exploration. Self-exploration at the beginning is really not an easy thing to do. And a person really doesn't know what to look at - doesn't know what's relevant and what's important, and what is the path and what is not. The Enneagram gives good guidance about that.

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# **2005 Conference Update**

Things have really been heating up since event will be a I last checked in with you with news of the IEA 2005 Conference. Just this morning we finalized the program and notified the last of the presenters that they had been chosen to share their work at the August conference.

The conference committee received a record number of scholarly, original and intriguing submissions from across the globe this year, which is evidence that the Enneagram is becoming increasingly relevant and popular around the world and that we are indeed "Widening Our World with the Enneagram."

While there are too many excellent presenters to mention here by name, I would like to welcome one first-time IEA presenter whom I know many people will be eager to meet. Carol Erickson, L.C.S.W., M.F.T., is the Director of the Erickson Institute in Berkeley and the daughter of wellknown pioneer of Hypnotherapy, Milton H. Erickson, MD. During her presentations, Ms. Erickson will be sharing and demonstrating her extensive knowledge of Ericksonian and NLP Approaches to working with the Enneagram.

I've been receiving lots of enthusiastic feedback about the richness of teaching possibilities arising from our experiment with longer 2 1/2 - 3-hour morning sessions with nine - count'em, nine - of our most prominent Enneagram teachers and authors; Tom Condon, David Daniels, Theodorre Donson, Russ Hudson, Kathy Hurley, Eli Jaxon Bear, Helen Palmer, Don Riso, and Jerry Wagner. What a wonderful opportunity to stay longer and go deeper over a period of two or three days with your favorite teachers.

Of course it all starts on Thursday, August 11th, with the 'bonus' preconference day, and this year there are three stimulating options to choose from.

For those interested in the global face and progress of Enneagram-related work, we are featuring a Special International Event Thursday morning open to all attendees. This international

chance to meet people from all over the world and hear what is developing internationally directly from the people involved.

Thursday after-



Gayle Scott Conference 2005 Chair noon, A.H. Almaas

will present a rare and eagerly awaited extended workshop on the Enneagram and Spirituality. Almaas graciously consented to letting me interview him for this issue of the 9-Points newsletter. and the unedited, complete text of that interview will be posted on the IEA web site soon. As a Ridhwan student myself, I am extremely pleased that students of the Enneagram who attend this year's conference will have the opportunity to experience Almaas.

And those aren't the only options — Beatrice Chestnut and Toni Marie Clifton, two very skilled and seasoned panel interviewers trained by Helen Palmer and David Daniels, will be conducting revealing interviews of Panels of the nine types Thursday both morning and afternoon. This is an enjoyable and enlightening way to introduce yourself or someone else to how individuals of the nine major variations view themselves.

This is a terrific opportunity for both newcomers and the very experienced to add to their awareness of each type's dominant physical energy patterns as well as many of the subtler behaviors, pet theories, disowned fears, avowed truths and special gifts.

For the price of your pre-conference day ticket, you also get to enjoy a social, sit-down-together lunch catered by the hotel restaurant.

While there are many exciting things to do and places to go in San Francisco after the sun goes down, we have lined up a delightful evening of theatrical comedy based on – what else? the Enneagram! — to keep you amused and entertained without having to leave the

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### A CONVERSATION WITH A.H. Almaas continued from page 13 =

I think for anybody who does inner work or spiritual development, the first few years of the work are bound to be an exploration of the outer part of their personality – and the Enneagram of fixations is a very good description of that. The other way is that I noticed that at certain levels of the inner journey, understanding the Enneagram is a very helpful kind of organization for understanding and dealing with certain junctures — like the Passions and Virtues for instance I don't use the Enneagram for the totality of the path as you know what happened to me is that I followed the Diamond Approach.

The Enneagram of Passions — the more neurotic or distorted emotional expressions of personality — is a very useful map. It shows what are actually the basic emotional orientations — the obstacles to the development of the Virtues in the heart – like anger, envy, pride. It helps to recognize and to see what the Virtues are and how the Passions are related oneto-one to the Virtues. And this is not an easy thing to understand. As the heart opens and the soul is more at ease with its spiritual nature, then the person begins to have attitudes expressed in the self in ways that people recognize as virtuous.

So I would say the first important thing is understanding the map, working with the fixation to understand one's external manifestation, and seeing how they relate to each other. That helps to open up the inner development in general.

The second one is really dealing with the Virtues and the Passions, and then

at a deeper level, what I found useful is the understanding of the Holy Ideas, which is the reversal of the fixations. The way I look at the Holy Ideas the reason I wrote a book about it was because I was working with a certain level of ego manifestation. I was manifesting at a deep place of spiritual realization, meaning there there was openness, there was a sense of unity and oneness, and yet I found that the mind will still have its own ideas and beliefs that will contradict that experience. I didn't know I was working with the Holy Ideas - I wasn't thinking of the Enneagram. But then I started having certain experiences and insights. I saw the whole panorama of the Holy Ideas, and how they become the core of the

When the head center is closed — not developed — we tend to think the way we normally think, and perceive reality the way most people perceive it. And if we explore that deeply, we realize that we have basic beliefs about reality that turn out to be delusional – not true. When we see those beliefs as delusions, that opens the head center, and when the head center opens, we see, instead of the delusions, the Holy Ideas. The Holy Ideas are a certain way we perceive reality - like instead of duality we perceive non-duality. Duality and nonduality are experiences, they are perceptions, but they're also positions that the mind takes. People don't just see things as a duality — they really believe that that's how reality is. There's a very deep conviction. That's what a delusion is.

So when the head center opens it's like the fog clears, there's a clear perception of non-duality – how nothing is dual, it's all one interconnected unity.

So I was seeing that for myself, and then I started looking at my students and started seeing the manifestations of the delusions and the Holy Ideas, and little by little I recognized that what I was seeing constituted the whole map of the Enneagram.

#### So what would participation in the Ridhwan School and the Diamond Approach bring to sincere Enneagram students?

So that's the other side of it. The Enneagram, as you know, is a map of the mind or of reality, at any level of reality. The Diamond Approach is specifically interested in spiritual development. The focus of the Diamond Approach is not business or social organization or institutions. The interest is the spiritual development of the human being. The Diamond Approach can help people who know about the Enneagram who are really interested in their spiritual development. It helps a person open up to that depth.

#### Are there other concepts or teachings in the Diamond Approach that are particularly relevant or related to the Enneagram?

I've published one book about the Holy Ideas. Besides that, there's a teaching in the Diamond Approach about the Passions and Virtues. Sandra Maitri, a teacher in the school, has a book coming out this summer about the Passions and Virtues. The map of the Diamond Approach has to do with what we call the Essential Aspects, which are the qualities of spiritual nature. So there is some work that relates the Enneagram to the Essential Aspects, exploring which aspects are relevant to which type.

Do you find that different Enneagram types respond more or differently to different Essential Aspects or qualities of Essence? For instance do you find that students with the type Eight fixation have a particular ease or proclivity in response to the Red Essence of strength?

Yes, that's really what I'm referring to. There's an arrangement of the Essential Aspects within the Enneagram, and the way the teaching goes has to do with what's called the Enneagram idealization. Each fixation idealizes something in reality that they try to aspire to – that they emulate and try to be. If we explore the idealization, we find that the heart of that idealization turns out to be an Essential Quality. So that makes a person develop it more, but it's also something that they aspire to. And it expresses a particular strength of that type.

So, conversely, is it your experience that a given Enneagram type finds it more difficult to access other qualities of Essence that are not particular to, or not emphasized by their fixation?

I wouldn't generalize it completely like that. It's not like it's difficult for them to access — it's more that they tend to be interested in their own idealized aspects. That's what they're naturally interested in, so they gravitate toward that. It doesn't mean that the other qualities are not accessible to them they might be and they might be developed in them – but they don't seem to think of them as important. As a result they tend to develop more of their own qualities.

#### Do you see the human distinctions made by enneatypes as structural differences originating more in personality – or in Essence?

It's neither, actually. From what I see there is also a middle ground that I call the soul. The soul is individual consciousness that can become more ego-oriented or more essentially oriented. This is our consciousness – which in the old days we called soul. Its nature is essential. Spiritual nature is its deeper nature, but it can be *continued on page 13* 

# = 2005 Conference Update continued =

hotel. Sheilah Glover will perform her one-woman show, "Is Enny-body Home?"

At last year's conference we raised funds toward the design and construction of the all-new-and-improved IEA web site (arriving soon) by hosting an amazing Silent Auction. It was so much fun we're doing it again, and this year the proceeds will go toward the publication of a new peer-review journal, to be initiated in early 2006.

The auction committee members have been roaming near and far, gathering lovely and exciting gifts to auction off — everything from original art, handcrafted jewelry, and all manner of desirable gift certificates, to autographed Enneagram books, tapes and CDs, and free or deeply discounted tuition to several Enneagram training courses.

fixations

And of course we'll all want to kick up our heels after so much intense Head Center activity, so don't forget to pack your party frocks for the Saturday Night Social and Dance Party, this year hosted by one of San Francisco Bay Area's most popular DJs, guaranteed to get everyone out on the dance floor.

And there is a rumor going around that a group of musically-talented enneafolks from Europe and other lands are making secret plans to spring some surprise entertainment on us.

This year's conference won't wind down until 1:30pm on Sunday, so give yourself plenty of time to make that homeward-bound flight, because you won't want to miss the Special Closing Session from Noon to 1:30 — a truly enjoyable and moving (literally) community-building event. No, I can't tell you what it is – yet.

And finally, the Word for the Day is: blog. Why? Because starting in 2005 the IEA is going to host a web log – or 'blog' – during the conference weekend. This means anyone attending the conference can log on to a computer and share their impressions of the day's activities, highlights, gossip and insights, and dialogue with other Ennea-enthusiasts around the hotel and around the world.

In other words, this IEA 2005 Conference is where it's at! I hope to see you there.

Happy Trails,

Gayle Scott IEA 2005 Conference Chair

## A CONVERSATION WITH A.H. ALMAAS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12 =

disconnected from its nature, and once it's disconnected from its nature it becomes what we call the ego. So it's the same thing, right? When we're born we tend to have certain qualities that are more dominant in the soul. And it's different for each person.

#### You're saying that type originates in the soul, and then through a process of coming into egoic consciousness-

Right. The soul always comes into egoic consciousness because that's the nature of development in the beginning. And of course the theory of the Enneagram is connected a little bit to astrology in the sense that the Enneagram knowledge says that the Holy Idea is determined by the time you're born. There is no clear understanding about how or what influences it – it's just mentioned that our Enneagram type is determined by the time we're born.

Are you suggesting that our type is determined by the specific time that we're born, in the way that our time of birth determines our astrological signs?

Yes, but there's no detailed understanding about how. Astrologers won't be able to figure it out because there's no spelled-out theory about it.



It doesn't happen because of your early experience. That's not what determines your type.

Yes, my understanding is that your early childhood experiences can influence the relative level of health or degree of dysfunctionality – how strongly your fixation manifests in your early years.

Yes, exactly. That's how I see it too. It determines how stuck you are in the fixation. But the fixation has already started to develop.

Yes, that's my understanding, but are you also saying that it's determined by the particular time of day, week, month we're born?

Well, that's implied. And I don't know if somebody has knowledge of how that works - I've never heard of it.

Well, how would you say that your particular fixation was instrumental in - impacted or shaped - your experience, your understanding, your reception of the content of the Ridhwan teachings?

Well I think my type is fascinated by discovery - discovery and understanding how things work and recognizing the truth. And in that sense I was fascinated by the Enneagram in the beginning as a map that organized how I think and tend to see things.

#### Do you think it's important for people to discover their primary fixation? And if so, why?

I think that it is especially useful at the beginning, But I think as a person goes deeper, knowing one's own fixation is not as important as knowing the whole Enneagram, because the ego ultimately has all of them.

#### All nine ego fixations.

Yes. One fixation is dominant, is the central one, especially at the beginning, but as you go more deeply into your mind and your soul, things become interconnected. That's why I tell people it's not enough to know your own delusion. You have to know all the delusions because one delusion is not separate from the others they're all expressions of the same thing.

It's the same thing with the Holy Ideas. Knowing one's own is important for the transformation. It's the central key, I think, but just knowing one's own fixation is not enough for the inner development. The ego is a nine-headed thing and we need to know all nine heads.

Could you speak about the Diamond Approach in terms of the principles of the Fourth Way or

WORLD-RENOWNED

AND AUTHORS

**ENNEAGRAM TEACHERS** 

Including Tom Condon, David Daniels, Theodorre Donson, Russ Hudson, Kathy

Hurley, Fli Jaxon-Bear, Sandra Maitri,

*Plus:* An exceptionally diverse gathe presenters will be sharing their lates

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Experience all nine Enneagram types through "panels" of educated self-observers

giving powerful personal testimony on the patterns of thought, feeling and behavior

We have some special events that you won't

Thursday (late afternoon and early

**ALL-DAY INTRODUCTION** 

**TO THE ENNEAGRAM** 

associated with their type.

want to miss.

**EVENTS AND PROGRAM** 

continued on page 14

# **IEA BENEFITS**

The following advantages have generously been made available to all IEA members.

15% Discount on Training, Books & Tapes:

Mona Coates-Surveys and Self-scoring Books (larger discount on 30 or more)

Tom Condon - Workshops and products Credence Communications - Credence

Products

David Daniels - Two videos: "Enneagram in the workplace" and "Nine Paths to a Productive and Fulfilling Life"

Kathy Hurley and Theodore Donson -Books and workshops

Andrea Isaacs -Videos and workshops

Ginger Lapid-Bogda - Products and workshops

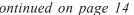
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10% Discount on Training WorkSmartLearning (Barry Keesan)-10% off the "Enneagram in Business' training package

And More To Come!



#### TO REGISTER

Call APRIL at the IEA at (513) 232-5054 Go to the IEA website at www.internationalenneagram.org

**IEA 2005 CONFERENCE FEES** 

PRE-CONFERENCE: Thursday, August 11, 2005 Catered, sit-down lunch included

CONFERENCE: Friday-Sunday, August 12-14, 200	5
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By	March 15	After March 15
IEA Member	\$375	\$425
Non-Member	\$450	\$500

**RIDHWAN STUDENTS:** Are you attending the Summer Ridhwan Retreat at Asilomar? Special "Three-Day Rate" for Ridhwan Students

Ridhwan/IEA Member \$275

- evening): Meet new friends and greet old acquaintances at the opening night velcoming reception!
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Ву	March 15	After March 1
A Member	\$375	\$425
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(Thursday, Friday, Saturday sessions only)

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#### HOTEL INFORMATION

#### THE HYATT REGENCY EMBARCADERO. SAN FRANCISCO (mention the IEA) Georaeous views! Spectacular shoppina close by!

Minutes from Fisherman's Wharf! • IEA Rate: \$149 / night (rates good 3 days

before/after the conference)

• Reservations: (800) 233-1234 or (415) 788-1234 July 22, 2005 is the last date that you can secure

this IEA rate. After July 22, the Hyatt will charge their full summer rate for any room that is still available.

	characters of the finite Enfredgram styles
	<ul> <li>guaranteed to strike a chord — as w</li> </ul>
į	as your funny bone.
-	Saturday Evening: Get your bids in at ou

#### friends, enjoy good music and food, and dance till you drop

### conducts cutting-edge research in the area of ogy. Siegel is the author of *The* Inside Out. **PRESENTATION BY:** A.H. ALMAAS (A. Hameed Ali) Founder of the

the Diamond Approach.

self-realization that embraces both modern depth psychology and ancient spiritual traditions to address all aspects of the human soul's development Almaas is the author of Facets of Unity: The Enneagram of Holy Ideas and The

Dan Siegel, an awardwinning educator,

interpersonal relationships, synthesizing clinical expertise with attachment research, complexity theory, cognitive science, and state-of-the-art neurobiol-Developing Mind and Parenting from the

# **A MUCH-ANTICIPATED**

Ridhwan School and

The Diamond Approach is a technique for

Inner Journey Home.



San Francisco, CA AUGUST 12-14

#### **KEYNOTE SPEAKER** DAN J. SIEGEL, M.D. Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry UCLA Center for Culture, Brain and Development.

### **NEW IEA BOARD**

### MEMBER

Flemming Christensen of Denmark joined the IEA Board in January.



I have been working with IT, management and business training since 1986. Until 1997 my core work was concerned about working with developing visions, missions and strategies for business, mainly in the IT-industry. In the mid 1990's I started working with coaching of leaders, managers and teams, and at that time I discovered the Enneagram. Today the Enneagram is the foundation of everything we work with in THINK ABOUT IT, and my new book "Awaken Your Dream."

I joined the IEA Board because my passion for the Enneagram drives me to work for making the Ennegram known to everyone - especially in the business industry, health care and education. I hope that I will be responsible for arranging a conference in Europe and to help grow the number of IEA-members.

I see that the Enneagram 5-10 years will be an obvioius part of the training given at schools, universities and business. The Enneagram will transform itself into something new and easier to approach. I also think that there will be the "old" school and the "new" school. The "old" school will continue to concern itself with a profound and deep respect for the spiritual work of the Enneagram. The "new" school inspired by the 'old' school will work to make the Enneagram more accessible, especially to those with nor formal academic background or spiritual training so they to can join in this work.

### THE IEA IS TRULY BECOMING INTERNATIONAL

The IEA is excited to announce that, as this issue goes to press, affiliates in Brazil, Columbia, Denmark and South Africa are being established and that a partnership is being formed with an established Enneagram organization in Italy.

IEA International Affiliates and Partners will receive an array of benefits of special interest to international members. Look for more details in future issues of Nine Points. Contact Uranio Paes or Arnaldo Pangrazzi for more information.

#### A CONVERSATION WITH A.H. Almaas continued from page 13 \_\_\_\_

#### Gurdjieff?

We sometimes say the Diamond Approach is the Fourth Way. Gurdjiefff called his work the Fourth Way, differentiating it from other ways – from the way of the monk, or the wanderer. There are different ways of doing inner work. You can live in a monastery — have a special situation for it. The Fourth Way means living your normal life and doing your work — doing it as part of life.

# And that's what you emphasize in the Diamond Approach?

Yes. In the Diamond Approach we emphasize everybody living their own life, and by knowing your life, exploring it, and having it be real and genuine, the inner development happens. You live your life the way you live your life, and just understand it fully – be in it as truthfully, as authentically as possible. And so the Fourth Way is just a matter of "being in the world but not of it."

#### Do you think our contemporary grasp of human psychology has made a difference, has had an impact on the spiritual path?

Yes. Diamond Approach wouldn't be there if it weren't for the new development of psychology, because that made it possible to use psychology in a way that serves spiritual development. We can now understand ourselves – the human mind, human consciousness – in a way that wasn't available before. It's now specifically possible to understand ego and ego development in a new way, and to understand the psychological obstacles.

#### Would you say that modern psychology has made it more possible for Fourth Way schools to exist?

Gurdjieff is the one who first used the term Fourth Way, and at that time [modern] psychology was just beginning. It was around the same time as Freud. I don't know if he ever met him, but Gurdjieff was influenced by psychology. But remember that the Enneagram is a psychology that existed before modern times. So there were psychologies that existed before.

All spiritual teachings use psychology. Some are much more developed. Buddhism uses 'Abhidharma' which is the psychology of the mind.

Our psychology has to do more with unconscious motivation, the idea that there is such a thing as unconscious influences on our conscious experiences, which brings in a different kind of understanding.

Many thoughtful people are becoming cynical and hopeless about the current socio-political situation. Does the idea of "being in the world but not of it," preclude one's direct social activism?

If you read Gurdjieff's history – the time he was doing the work – it was in the middle of the First World War. The whole world was at war and he

### ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF A NEW ENNEAGRAM JOURNAL

#### By Beatrice Chestnut

Beginning in spring of 2006, the IEA plans to publish a new peer-review journal on topics related to the Enneagram. The goal of the journal will be to provide IEA members with an additional benefit in the form of a high-quality publication offering the latest Enneagram work and ideas.

According to the current plan, the journal will be produced twice a year, in the spring and the fall. Early in 2006 we will send out a call for papers, inviting members to send in submissions for review. Papers will be chosen for publication through a blind review process.

In keeping with the vision and mission of the IEA, the hope of the IEA board of directors is that this journal will further several goals of the IEA: to promote the highest values and standards in Enneagram-related work, to be a worldwide hub for cuttingedge Enneagram-related information, to provide valuable benefits to IEA members, and to create a forum for a rich, enlightening, and educational discourse about Enneagram theory, practice, and applications for the Enneagram community.

Please stay tuned for more details!

#### SILENTAUCTION CONFERENCE 2005

The IEA will be raising funds for the 2006 launch of the new IEA journal's . The first fundraising event will be a silent auction which will be held at this year's (2005) annual IEA conference in San Francisco on Saturday evening, August 13, before the conference-wide party.

If you would like to contribute an item for the auction, please contact Sandy Perry-Hatmaker at TheIEA@aol.com or 513-232-5054 or Andrea Isaacs at andreais@earthlink.net or 518-279-4444.

was teaching in the middle of it, and he still thought that the Fourth Way was the correct way to do it. The way I see it, it doesn't really matter what the socio-political situation is. You 'be' in your life and you do it as authentically as possible. Whether there is peace or war, whether there's a dictator or a democracy, is irrelevant. Each situation has its own authenticity. It's a matter of how you are being real, being yourself in that situation. It will be different, depending on the socio-political situation, but all of it has to be oriented toward reality, toward authenticity, toward truth.

So for some people it will mean being social activists, for others it will mean being revolutionaries. Some just go about their business and live their life – it depends on the person. Spiritual work is really a matter of finding meaning, finding true authentic existence in our lives. And we need to do that, whether we are at war or peace.

#### THE NINE POINTS BULLETIN

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