



LEONARD JACOBS

PUBLISHER, CHAMPION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Leonard Jacobs has long been involved with researching and promoting methods to improve human development. He received a BA in Human Development from the University of Chicago in the late 1960s, then moved to Boston to study and practice macrobiotics, a practical approach to developing higher levels of consciousness and health. Leonard's enthusiasm for communicating the value of developing human potential led him to become the publisher of East West Journal, long the primary print medium for integrating Eastern and Western philosophies and practices. Leonard has continued his work in print and eventually, digital media as the associate publisher of Shambhala Publications for almost 20 years.

He lives in Asheville, North Carolina, with his partner, Becky Cannon. Together they lead the company Becky founded, Green Sprouts, a manufacturer and distributor of healthful and innovative baby products. He is also an active member and service leader of Congregation Beth Israel.

Can the Unnamable Be Named?

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How can anyone actually prove (or disprove) the existence of the Divine? That inquiry resembles a perfect Zen koan or riddle: "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" Experiencing and holding irrational thoughts is a way of dissolving our rational thinking.

To understand and explain the unexplainable. To see the total unity of disparate and seemingly opposite perspectives. Only when we fully embrace the existence of totally unknowable questions, can we have a true understanding (in a non-conceptual way) of the unity of everything. There is no I and thou, me and other. We understand that there is no division between God and humans – the merging of all life, of all animate and inanimate stuff, is the only reality. Nonetheless, the visible is only visible because of the invisible. Dark is only dark in relation to light. Sacred is only sacred in relation to the profane. Everything has material and immaterial existence. Divine and mundane are two complements of one unity.

When we consider the existence of a "god spirit" or "Divine force," it creates a separation between us and other, between I and Thou, between humans and a transcendence. The brilliant insight of the Lubavitcher Rebbe was that the Messiah will arrive when we all recognize the non-duality of what appears on the surface as separate (me and you, me and the external world) and the integral connection between humans and the natural world. The arrival of the Messiah means that there will be an understanding among all of us that there is no separation between each of us and everything. For us to realize and experience that reality is the purpose of life. The experience or perception of ourselves as separate from each other and separate from our true nature is an illusion – one that continues to keep us in a dualist mindset, unable to experience true Divinity. We can consider experiencing the connection, immersion, and interrelationship with everything as proof of the existence of the Divine.

I believe in the evolution of life, the development of consciousness, and the evolution of the universe. I believe that all of this is possible through the natural order of the universe. I believe there are aspects of life and evolution that science and the laws of physics cannot explain. Some suggest that there is a God who oversees all aspects of creation and evolution. It is possible to let go of expecting answers about the unknown. We can relax into the not-knowing and letting go. The opportunity for each of us to realize our oneness with all things, to let go of our separateness, and to become one with the other can be a Divine experience. That experience, for me, is not about god or godliness, but about the arrival of the Messiah, also known as Enlightenment.