



# ICR Newsletter

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## The Marriage of Shiva and Sati: How the Spiritual is Integrated in Our Bodies and Lives

By Teri Degler

The theme of this year's upcoming ICR Summer Conference, "Integrating Spiritual Practice in a Modern World", has profound relevance for every one of us who is on a spiritual journey. But I can't help but think the key to doing this successfully lies in first understanding just how the spiritual is integrated in our lives and – more specifically – in our bodies.

Some of the most meaningful teachings on this can be found in the rich, multilayered symbolism of the sacred stories that come to us from the spiritual tradition known as Tantra. One of the most powerful of these is the story of the marriage of Shiva and Sati. A beloved version of this legend is told in the *Kalika*

Teri Degler is the author/co-author of ten books including *The Fiery Muse: Creativity and the Spiritual Quest* (Random House of Canada). Her latest book *The Divine Feminine Fire: Creativity and Your Yearning to Express Your Self* has just been released by Dreamriver Press. For more on her other books and the creativity workshops she teaches in the U.S. and Canada see [www.teridegler.com](http://www.teridegler.com) or blog with her at [blog.teridegler.com](http://blog.teridegler.com).

*Purana*, one of the many Hindu and Tantric texts that focuses on the worship of Shakti, the Divine Mother. The story begins in the mists of time when the great god Brahma – who is responsible for overseeing the earth and all creation – calls Vishnu and the other gods and goddesses to a great council in hopes of averting a cataclysm he sees looming on the horizon. Shiva – that pesky god who smears himself with ash, dances on burial grounds, and crunches bones – is causing trouble again. Unlike Brahma and Vishnu, Shiva is an ascetic: he would much rather be meditating on a mountain top and doing the most austere types of yogic practices than taking care of humanity and the rest of creation. These austere practices of Shiva's build up intense psychic energy, and lately he has been so focused that the energy has become volcanic and threatens to erupt in a cosmic force that will destroy the earth and all the living creatures.

Just when the great council is about to despair of finding a solution, someone suggests marrying Shiva off to an exceedingly alluring

woman. This, it is suggested, would not only distract Shiva from his energy-intensifying practices but also trick him into burning off a good deal of that energy in sexual dalliance. The gods and goddesses cheer the idea, but Brahma has no idea how to put the plan into action. He knows that no goddess – no matter how tempting – has yet been able to entice Shiva. Completely confounded, Brahma decides to fly off to see Shakti, the Great Goddess herself, and ask for help. Shakti listens to Brahma's passionate pleas, and agrees to come to his aid. She says that she will come to earth and be born as a woman Shiva will find irresistible. Her name, she says, will be Sati.

Sati is duly born to earth parents and, once she reaches adulthood, plans her campaign to attract Shiva. Knowing that it is not outer but inner beauty that will win Shiva's heart, she sets out to become an accomplished student of yoga and take on the most challenging spiritual practices. It is not long before Shiva notices this extraordinary yogini. He comes to earth to meet with her and soon falls hopelessly in love.

On their wedding day the gods and goddesses, decked in gold and jewels, arrive in chariots. They are followed by long retinues of brightly clad humans who dance along joyously beating on drums, blowing on conch shells, and striking together cymbals that glitter in the sun. Marching along behind them is a splendid procession of birds, animals, and insects. On the earth below, fragrant winds blow and flowers rain down.

Only one dark moment spoils the spectacle. Sati's earth father, Daksa, has long forgotten that she is really the great goddess Shakti. Appalled that his beloved daughter is marrying the bone-crunching, ash-smearing Shiva, he almost refuses to give her away. Sati is humiliated by her father's reluctance and warns him that if he ever disgraces her again she will destroy herself in front of his eyes.

After this confrontation, the ceremony proceeds and a joyous celebration ensues. When it is over, Shiva places Sati in front of him on the great bull he often rides and the two fly off to his home in the Himalayas. There they stay for many years, delighting each other with their lovemaking. Although Shiva does not abandon his yogic practices during this interlude, they become less austere and much more balanced. Soon the earth is no longer in danger of being destroyed.

But just about the time Brahma thinks he can stop worrying about the fate of the earth, a tragedy begins to unfold. One day when Shiva is off meditating, Sati hears tell of a great celebration being held in the universe. Curious, she soon discovers that every one in heaven and on earth – from the great gods and goddesses down to the lowliest insect – has

been invited to the festivities. Determined to find out why only she and Shiva have not been invited, she flies off to the celebration. There she discovers that it is being held by none other than her earth father. Daksa has once again forgotten Sati's true nature and lost sight of the critical importance of Shakti's union with Shiva. Enraged, Sati stands before Daksa, reminds him of her promise, and before he can stop her, bursts into flame and dies.

Immediately Sati's body is transported back to her Himalayan home. Shiva, returning from his meditation, finds her there. Overwhelmed with grief, he gathers her body into his



arms and begins flying in frenzied circles around the earth. His racking sobs quake and crumble the mountains; his tears fall in scalding torrents that boil across the valleys and the plains.

Brahma is horrified, his worst fears for creation are about to be realized. He calls to Vishnu for help and the two begin flying around the earth on either side of Shiva. Realizing that Shiva will never be able to begin to heal his grief while still holding Sati in his arms, Brahma and Vishnu slowly begin taking bits of

Sati's body and dropping them to earth. Eventually, Shiva finds his arms empty. Awakening to the destruction he has caused, he takes control of his frenzied grieving. Brahma is then able to give him the good news that Shakti has promised to take form again at some time in the future: she will be incarnated as a goddess known as Parvati, she will marry Shiva again, and they will live in eternal happiness.

Somewhat soothed, Shiva looks down and realizes that his beloved goddess has been embodied in the earth. Flying to the spot where Sati's yoni – her genitals, the most sacred part of her body – have been embedded, Shiva forms himself into the phallic shape known as a lingam and settles down to await her return. The earth returns to peace and all created beings to a state of prosperity....

Of all the many spiritual lessons hidden within the rich symbolism of this tale, one of the most important is the one that tells us that the cosmic divine feminine is embodied in the very earth itself. And because the earth is a symbol here for all material creation, the story is also telling us that the divine feminine is everywhere and in everything.

The Tantras and other age-old Hindu texts that focus primarily on the divine feminine describe Shakti as the cosmic creative energy of the universe. Although these texts tell us that her divine masculine counterpart, Shiva, is equally important, they make it clear that Shakti is not only the creatrix of the universe, she is the cosmic essence the universe is made of. This means, the texts tell us, that the tree you see out your window is Shakti, that the pebble you discover on the beach is Shakti, and that you, too, are Shakti.

To make this relationship between ourselves and the world even clearer, these texts contain wonderful creation stories in which Shakti bursts forth and manifests as the universe and everything in it. Once this is accomplished, these stories tell us that Shakti's job is to propel the universe along its evolutionary path. Her ultimate goal in this awesome task is to advance the evolution of everything in the material world until it is ready to be reabsorbed into the Absolute – the Divine that is beyond human comprehension. When this moment finally arrives, Shakti is said to reunite with her beloved Shiva, and the two – along with everything in the known universe – dissolve into the Oneness of the Absolute.

One of the most important – and interesting – facets of Tantric philosophy is that it holds that there is an exact parallel between what happens in the cosmic realm and what occurs in the workings of the human body. When considered in terms of this philosophy of the microcosm imitating the macrocosm, the story of Sati and Shiva becomes an allegory which tells us that the divine feminine is quite literally imbedded in the human body. In other words, Shakti – representing spirit and all that is spiritual, is integrated into our very being. Just as cosmic Shakti is responsible for the on-going evolution of the universe, in this embodied form she is responsible for the evolution of each of us as human beings. In this sense then, the spirit and the spiritual impulse, are already integrated into our lives.

The *force*, as Trekkies, would say is already with you!

In age-old Tantric texts the name given to this force is kundalini-shakti

– often known simply as kundalini – which is said to rest coiled like a serpent at the base of our spines. There she stays until, through spiritual practices such as yoga, she is awakened. Once awakened, she travels upwards through the energy centers known as the chakras until she reaches the crown of the head where Shiva is said to wait for her. Just as Shakti's reunion with Shiva brings about Oneness in the cosmos; kundalini-shakti's awakening brings about the realization that we are one with the Divine. But kundalini does not have to “awaken” or rise up through the chakras to be working in us.

These same Tantric teachings remind us that because Shakti is the life energy of the cosmos and all it contains, she is also the life energy in each one of us. In this form, she is sometimes distinguished from kundalini-shakti and called prana-shakti, or simply prana. In yoga, as you may know, prana refers not just to life energy but also to breath, and the exercises known as pranayama are usually thought of as simply being “breathing exercises”. But when considered in this more cosmic light it is clear that pranayama is much more than this: it is a means of filling us with the life energy itself. What's more, in this tradition oxygen is held to be a particularly rich source of prana and, thus, doing pranayama is an especially effective means of intensifying our connection with this divine cosmic power. In fact, we don't even need to be doing complicated or rigorous pranayama exercises to reap the benefits of this knowledge; we only need to breathe properly and with attention – with an awareness that each breath is a confirmation of the divine spirit that lives within us and is already integrated into both our lives and our bodies. This power

is immediate – present – it is the divine with us. It is ready to be tuned into and tapped for inspiration and guidance in how we can best live our lives – integrating our spiritual practice seamlessly into our existence in the modern world.

### Basic Pranayama

If you have never done pranayama, rest assured that – at least in its most basic form – it is simplicity itself. In fact, you begin by simply learning to breathe like a baby again.

Sit with your spine straight and exhale.

Slowly begin to inhale to a count of 8 – expanding your abdominal muscles so the bottom of your lungs fills with air first.

Keep breathing in, allowing the muscles around your ribs to expand so that the middle of your lungs fills next.

As you continue to breathe in allow your chest to rise and your upper chest muscles to expand. By the count of 8 you should feel the air pressing gently on the base of your throat. Hold the breath in to a count of 4.

Reverse the process. Exhale to a count of 8, gently contract your abdominal muscles so that the air leaves the bottom of your lungs first. Then allow the muscles of your ribs and upper chest to fall in succession until your lungs are empty of air.

### For more information on Shakti:

Avalon, Arthur (Sir John Woodroffe). *The Serpent Power*. New York: Dover Publications, 1974.

Feuerstein, Georg. *Tantra: The Path of Ecstasy*. Boston: Shambhala, 1998.

Shastri, B.N., Trans., *The Kalikapurana (Part I & Part II)*. Delhi-7, India: Nag Publishers, 1991.

# You Get What You Need, Not What You Want

By Terry Plotkin

In 1983, a year before Gopi Krishna's death, he was in Manhattan, and I had the good fortune to have a meeting with him. As I sat on the train from Western Massachusetts to New York City, I felt very excited. I'd brought plenty of gear in the hope that I'd be invited to stay a while. I had fancy notions that Gopi Krishna would do something special, as gurus have been reported to do, that would offer me a taste of mystical experience. I thought maybe he would be impressed to see how advanced I was. Maybe he would even take me under his wing. I figured he'd ask me to strengthen my practice by meditating more and with greater intensity. Perhaps he'd suggest I eat less. My greatest fear was that he'd tell me to become celibate.

I arrived for my visit early, and Gopi Krishna was sleeping in the other room. When he came in for our meeting, he asked me to sit down, and said, "Tell me about your symptoms."

"Kundalini energy moves in my body, centering at the base of the spine and at times, especially while meditating, I can feel it in my body." I said summing up as briefly as I could. "It feels anxious while building and then pleasant when it releases inward and upward which helps trigger a deeper and more peaceful state of mind"

"Tell me about your practice," Gopi Krishna said matter of factly.

"I meditate for ninety minutes, twice a day. I do a mantra meditation. I do asanas daily. I am a vegetarian."

"What is your mantra?"

I hesitated and said, "Well, I don't really tell that to anyone."

Gopi Krishna tilted his head back and looked up at the ceiling, his face incredulous. Immediately I felt embarrassed.

"OK, I'll tell you," I said desperate to please.

"No, let it go. Show me how you sit."

I got off the couch and sat on the floor in a cross-legged position, sitting up straight a few feet in front of him. He said that was good posture and I stayed on the floor looking upward at him as we talked for a minute more. Gopi Krishna gestured at the couch. "Sit up here," he said. I moved back to the couch, feeling embarrassed again, this time at my attempt at humility.

Gopi Krishna asked about my sexual proclivity and what I did for sports and work.

"Here is my advice," he said when I'd finished telling him about my habits. "You are in the early stages of the kundalini process. You meditate too much. Cut it down, at least in half." He gestured with his hands as if chopping something in half.

"You need to eat more, especially protein food. Will you eat meat?"

I shook my head no.

"Then you should eat dairy and eggs. You need high quality protein—yogurt, hard cheeses, whole milk. You need to stop playing basketball; it is too strenuous an exercise. Tennis is better. Your sex life is fine, as you do not seem to overdo." (Whew!). "Your work is not too strenuous which is good. You should do service work. Get together with other people and do service work. Is there anything else?"

I had been writing down what he told me as fast as I could, while at the same time trying to make sense of what he was saying. His last question was so unexpected that I did not know what to say. I had expected him to tell me to meditate more and deeper yet he was telling me to cut back. I had thought he might tell me to go vegan or fast, instead he told me to eat more, even meat!

Flustered, I referred to the questions I'd written down before I arrived. "Is re-

incarnation what happens to a person after they die?"

He stood and asked his assistant what was next on his agenda, clearly indicating that the meeting was over. When I stood, he reached out and touched my arm.

"You are in the early stages. My duty is to your safety. You are in your prime. I want you to have a safe, healthy, and happy one."

His assistant showed me to the door and I found myself out in the corridor less than fifteen minutes after he'd entered the room. I felt a little silly and somewhat shocked. I walked to the trainstation forgetting about my plans to stay, being any kind of an advanced yogi, or experiencing exciting mystical flights.

I thought for a long time about what he had said. In essence, I'd been told that I was a zealot, a spiritual glutton. My oversized ego needed and received some much-needed pruning. My life was out of balance, and Gopi Krishna told me how to correct it. Soon I realized, through trial and error, that he was right about everything and my life was better for it. I settled in for what I now knew was going to be a long haul. (I still have no idea how long.) No nonsense, no skipping steps. In one of his books, Gopi Krishna wrote, "Heaven cannot be taken by storm." Those fifteen minutes I had with him were very important to me as it helped set the stage for my life going forward. He was the most sober person I've ever met.

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**Terry Plotkin** has published two books: *Love, Diets and Freedom* (This article was taken from that book.) and *Hathor on Mars, a work of science fiction*. He also has a blog of essays at [www.freethethehuman.com](http://www.freethethehuman.com) Terry has been practicing yoga and meditation for over thirty years. He lives in Western Massachusetts and runs a sports program at a charter school.

# REMEMBER MOTHER EARTH:

## *Our Sustainer and Environment*

### A Moment

By Vitold Kreutzer

As these words come to me, I can't help but bring my awareness upon the fragrances and the experience of freshly baked bread, the rhythmic beating of a bread mixer, and the low hum of an electric oven. The mountains of dough are slowly rising under their white bowls, formed bread is rising in individual pans as if reaching for the sky, and...oops, my oven beeper tells me some bread is already to be taken out of the oven. Its time to put more raw loaves into the cooking chamber. The sights, the sounds, the feeling does not seem to be of this world.

Then, my attention is quickly drawn towards my open window, through which a cool breeze moves fresh air into the bakery and from whence fragrances, sights, and sounds of all sorts fill the still and vibrant air. Chirping birds, noisy geese in the background, the soft purring of a mother cat feeding her young, the neighbor's dog occasioned bark and a subtle melody of life oozing under the morning sun, the lifting of morning dew off the leaves of trees and grasses are all signs of a new day, a new life being renewed. The lilacs in bloom, the blossoms of the apple trees, the greenery of life are overwhelming the outer and inner senses. The warm blue sky, the grazing of far off cows and horses, the antics of multi-legged creatures busily going about their business, even my decaying barn, bring joy and happiness to me at this moment. Isn't life wonderful? I feel an integral part of this experience. The connection is clear. My love and respect for the One, the Creator, the Giver of all is humbling my soul.

Is there any doubt that we are all individual expressions of the One, the Creator? In fact, is not everything that is seen and unseen, heard and not heard, felt and not felt; that is all Life, and expression of the One, the Creator. Our connection with all other expressions of

the Creator is now the focal point in my thinking.

If we are connected to all, we are thus all part of the One and therefore, we are all One. There is no separation. Where, then, does humanity fall into an abyss of rationality, intellectual misinformation, and illusion when it comes to our relationship to all other life forms in the cosmos? The culprit responsible for this situation, is of course, the ego; that which survives only when it builds itself up, gives itself importance and separates itself from all other life.

Does the planet earth have an ego: Does the sun have an ego? What about the stars and other planet worlds in our



solar system? Do any of the plants, insects, birds, animals, the land, the sea, the air...do any of these life forms possess an ego?

The egoic mind of humanity has persisted a long time and become extremely proficient at building walls, and separation tools of all sorts in order to maintain its importance. Let's look at a simple example of this onerous treachery that the ego plays on the unaware human soul. When a human being first experiences a particular being in nature, the first response is one of acceptance of

a life that is precious, unique and divine. We can witness the aliveness in its actions, reflections, movements, stillness, etc. We are enamored by its beauty, majesty, and its' joyfulness with itself and its surroundings. We begin to feel a connection, a love that goes beyond our perception of the life form. It's as if we see and experience a part of ourselves that is in this life form. Then, suddenly, we give it a name, a label, a mold, an identification, a device that gives our mind the initiative to give this life form a story that we can examine, study and intellectualize about. We have, in fact, lost this deep connection of love with it, by deadening our relationship with it through the use of this label and identification that becomes a shadow of the life form itself. This becomes the reality of the egoic mind and puts all other life into compartments, into pictures that remain separate from us and therefore are of less importance than ourselves. This harsh, impersonal separation brings new strength to the egoic mind, while at the same time, cuts the chord of communication and connection that is our birthright with all life. We, now, are able to live in harmony with our egoic mind but be in direct opposition to and in disharmony with other life forms. This loss of kinship and oneness allows us to rationalize our behaviour for the good of the ego and justify our actions, no matter what the consequences. In fact, these consequences remain mostly hidden from the egoic mind, and thusly any creative brilliance and insight remain elusive to this ego awareness, until the repercussions of our actions become insurmountable. And yet we wonder daily at the mysteries of life, the causes of health and illness, of love and despair, of time, of timelessness of birth, of death, of our fortune or misfortune in life. Is this a waste or a necessary evolutionary lesson confronting us?

Show me any other life form that spends time worrying and trying to determine life's lessons and tribulations, why this or that happens, what is right or wrong, what is good or bad. On a personal level, I find myself privileged to share life with nature and nature beings. These beings live in a state of awareness that can overwhelm an egoic mind. To them, there is no question of why things are as they are, or why something is happening or not. These beings that share the farmland with me live in such a state of egolessness that I find myself tempted on occasion to change them, i.e. to domesticate them

into a state where they may seem unrecognizable to their ancestors, but fully recognizable to the egoic mind. Thank the Creator that their instinctual connection to the rest of their species overpowers my feeble attempts.

The choice that was made to incorporate this parcel of rural Ontario to be my teacher has been greatly appreciated by my inner soul. The love and affection that is embraced by all on the land, has, in recent times, left me speechless and in awe at the magnificence of nature, and therefore of the love and omnipotence of its architect.

Well, its time I went back to my baking before total chaos runs rampant in the rising dough, and so I can fulfill my obligations to my friends and neighbors. Such moments will come again as my awareness of being evolves. Oh, what's that on my window's ledge? I can't believe it. A groundhog!! Here comes the next moment. Thank you God.

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*Vitold Kreutzer is a custodian of a little piece of Nature, a baker of organic goods and a promoter of alternative forms of energy and human sustainability. He is committed to studying the spirit in Nature and humanity and their connection to the cosmos.*

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# ICR's 25th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## Integrating Spiritual Practice in a Modern World

One of the main purposes of the research on kundalini is to provide a theoretical basis for individuals interested in or in the process of having mystical related or consciousness expanding experiences. This should provide a framework into which the individual can integrate their experience and offer guidelines that will help keep the process on a course that will lead to a healthy conclusion.

Much of this research is based on the Eastern esoteric concepts of Kundalini and Prana (the subtle intelligent life-energy). The concept of Kundalini provides an established and time-tested model with which we can measure and judge our own as well as the experiences of others. Information about Prana is key to understanding and interpreting consciousness expanding experiences. In addition to this, the lives and writings of mystics and geniuses provide examples of what to do and what not to do when in the throes of an expanding consciousness. They also provide an indication of the state of consciousness to which the entire Race is evolving. This does not degrade or diminish the role of the average person. For each of us has an important role to play in this life. We must always remember that human consciousness is experienced on a con-

tinuum and each individual's brain is its own laboratory. And, in this sense, each and every one of us has an opportunity to observe the changes occurring in our own consciousness and add to humanity's understanding of the process.

Our Presentations include:

**Lifestyle: Why We Should Care .** In this presentation we discuss the lifestyle generally recommended by all religious and esoteric traditions. Current breakthroughs in the findings of empirical science, like neuroplasticity and epigenetics, underscore the importance of these recommended lifestyles and the value in being aware of the Kundalini process in each of us. **Paul Pond**, has a doctorate in physics and has been involved in Kundalini experience and research for more than 30 years. He has written and spoken extensively on the subject. His focus has been on lifestyle issues and their impact on individual spiritual experience.

**The Process of Awakening .** Our purpose in life is no secret and the guidelines are available to all of us. With examples from the teachings of Gopi Krishna, Eckhart Tolle and other spiritual disciplines, we will examine the commonalities of the spiritual laws that govern the evolution of the human spirit. **Eileen Holland** has been involved in the study of Kundalini for over 30 years. She has researched and written several essays on the characteristics of Kundalini awakening in mystic/geniuses. She leads workshops on creative living,

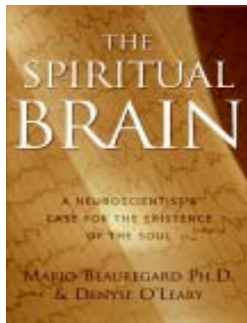
participates in ongoing spiritual studies and is presently expressing her own creative process in poetry.

**The Goal and the Prize of Life** is based on Gopi Krishna's Revelations directed to our continued and accelerated evolution toward a predetermined target, representing the next plateau in our evolutionary journey. **George Tompkins'** career began in the advertising industry where he served as a television executive prior to establishing his own motion picture and video company. In time, his firm grew to become the largest non-theatrical motion picture company in the world. Mr. Tompkins sold his business in 1970 and began to explore the then emerging fields of the west-east religions, humanistic psychology, and a wide range of self-improvement schools. In 1971, he met Pandit Gopi Krishna, who was then introducing the subject of Kundalini to the west via his many books based on his own personal experiences. Mr. Tompkins and Gopi Krishna became close personal friends and co-workers with others in the dissemination of Gopi Krishna's global perspective of human evolution toward a predetermined target. In 1991, seven years after Gopi Krishna's passing, Mr. Tompkins went to India for the purpose of advancing the unfinished work of Gopi Krishna. He founded the Kundalini Research Association International -Indian Chapter, where he is President and Executive Secretary. Many of India's most prominent scientists

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# The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul

by Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary

Harper Perennial, 2008, 368 pages

Reviewed by Ted Wood

Mario Beauregard states in the introduction of *The Spiritual Brain* that “Most scientists today are materialists who believe that the physical world is the only reality. Absolutely everything else - including thought, feeling, mind, and will - can be explained in terms of matter and physical phenomena, leaving no room for the possibility that religious and spiritual experiences are anything but illusions.” Mario Beauregard is a non-materialist neuroscientist at the University of Montreal. His groundbreaking research on the neuroscience of consciousness, which is based partly on his study of the brain activity in Carmelite nuns, has led him to the conclusion that there is something more involved in religious, spiritual and mystical experience (RSME) than just the activity of brain matter. In this book written with Toronto freelance journalist Denyse O'Leary, they assert that the soul or mind is not just a product of the brain but that there is something outside the brain that is causing RSME's.

The intention of the authors in writing this book was to show that our mind does exist and is not merely the result of brain activity. The brain is not the mind but “is an organ suitable for connecting a mind to the rest of the universe. By analogy, Olympic swimming events require an Olympic class swimming pool. But the pool does not create the Olympic events; it makes them feasible at a given location.” Does the brain create the mind or does the mind create the brain. The authors use scientific methodology to refute the idea that mind, conscious-

ness, self and RSMEs are a product of the brain. They take the view that “Individual minds and selves arise from and are linked together by a divine Ground of Being (or primordial matrix). That is the spaceless, timeless, and infinite Spirit, which is the ever-present source of the cosmic order, the matrix of the whole universe, including both physics (material nature) and psyche (spiritual nature). Mind and consciousness represent a fundamental and irreducible property of the Ground of Being. Not only does the subjective experience of the phenomenal world exist within mind and consciousness, but mind, consciousness, and self profoundly affect the physical world.

Beauregard is concerned with developing a “spiritual neuroscience” that recognizes humankind's spiritual nature. In *The Spiritual Brain*, Beauregard and O'Leary provide ample scientific research and argument from both the materialist and non-materialist points of view and provide a well-researched and well-reasoned scientific basis for supporting the non-materialist, spiritual nature of humankind.

Beauregard's research into the brain activity of Carmelite nuns included functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to determine areas of the brain which were involved in mystical experience and quantitative electroencephalography (QEEG) to study the neuroelectrical correlates of mystical union. The fMRI study found that there is no single God

module in the temporal lobes, as some scientists have asserted, but rather RSMEs are “complex and multidimensional and mediated by a number of brain regions”. The QEEG study found “that the life of silent prayer and contemplation allowed the Carmelite nuns to reach deep mystical states simply by intensely recalling and reliving a previous mystical experience.” These results were different from recalling autobiographical memories indicating that “the mystical state is something other than an emotional state.”

*The Spiritual Brain* covers a wide range of topics including near death experience, epilepsy, the placebo effect, pop science, free will, the psi effect, evolutionary psychology, prayer, spirituality and RSMEs. It is a wide-ranging approach that clearly refutes the materialist approach to neuroscience and the study of consciousness. The authors clearly demonstrate that science and the spiritual are not mutually exclusive but rather must be understood as complementary when studying the human mind and consciousness.

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*Ted Wood is a founding member and director of the Institute for Consciousness Research and has been an active supporter of Kundalini Research for more than 25 years. He facilitates a Living in Spirit group at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto where he is also the Social Responsibility Convenor. Ted also chairs an Amnesty International local community group.*

are members of the governing body and scientific advisory board. Mr. Tompkins has now shifted his energies to the United States, because of the rapid advancements in technology and research directed to the brain and human energy systems that are happening in the U.S.

#### **Spiritual Activism and Kundalini.**

Michael Molina will take the audience on a journey of personal healing, exploring the link between spiritual activism (karma yoga) and Kundalini. Recounting his own personal experience of transformation, Michael will discuss how the evolutionary processes within us can be enhanced through our own ability to heal both ourselves and the planet. Michael will introduce the Emerging Sciences Foundation, and will offer practical ways in which each of us can recognize the spiritual activist within. **Michael Molina** is the founder and CEO of the Emerging Sciences Foundation [www.emergingsciences.org](http://www.emergingsciences.org), a California non-profit dedicated to the grassroots expression of emerging fields of scientific investigation, such as Kundalini research. He resides in Los Angeles, California with his wife Linda and their two children, Adam and Ian.

**Creative Inspiration: Get more inspired; be more inspiring!** Is a look at the development of increased creative inspiration as part of the spiritual journey and how integrating creativity into our modern lives can make them more meaningful, more spiritual, and more inspired. For centuries, spiritual teachers from Christian saints to Sufi mystics have been showing us by example that inspired creativity often goes hand in hand with the spiritual journey. Great yogis have even described in detail how their practice turned them into poets so gifted that words dripped like ambrosia from their tongues. How can this inspired creativity come to be part of our own spiritual journeys? And how, in turn, can integrating creativity into our modern lives make them more spiritual, more meaningful, and more inspired? Award-winning writer **Teri Degler** is the author/co-author of ten books

– including *The Fiery Muse: Creativity and the Spiritual Quest* (Random House of Canada) and *The Divine Feminine Fire: Creativity and Your Yearning to Express Your Self* (Dream River Press USA). A long-time student of yoga philosophy, mystical experience, and highly creative women mystics, Teri has taught creativity workshops in the United States and Canada and made many media appearances. See [www.teridegler.com](http://www.teridegler.com) or [blog.teridegler.com](http://blog.teridegler.com).

**The Goal of a Spiritual Practice.** This presentation will focus on what a spiritual practice is actually trying to accomplish in an individual. It will include the general characteristics of one who has achieved success in this endeavour, and will show how this process relates to evolution in both the individual and collective sense. It will also discuss the merits of intense vs. gentle forms of practice. **Michael Bradford** has been involved in research on Kundalini and the evolution of consciousness for more than 30 years. In 1977 he travelled to India where he spent six years serving as a volunteer worker for the Central Institute for Kundalini Research, founded and directed by Pandit Gopi Krishna. Michael is a long-time board member of ICR, and currently works as both a computer consultant and as a Vedic astrologer.

**Living Life with Love in Mind.** A life of living with love in mind is a spiritual practice that is for the benefit of everyone, everywhere and at anytime. The beauty of it is simplicity itself, with no unnecessary paraphernalia required. All we need to do is surrender to love in all situations. In this modern world, where people are stressed out, frustrated and quick to anger, there are endless opportunities for love. Love is never wasted and it has no boundaries. The true power held within love can be comprehended as it becomes as natural to us as breathing. **Dale Pond**, after being initiated by her own Kundalini process in 1975, has been involved in Kundalini Research for more than 25 years, is corresponding secretary for ICR and works and laughs with the residents of a Home for the Aged in Markdale.

**Human Movement Potential.** In this inspiring and practical workshop, you will be guided through simple grounding, breathing and relaxing exercises you can do anywhere, anytime. We will discuss the significance of these practices in our daily lives and share personal experiences. Together we will explore the power of rhythm and how it bypasses the mind's role in questioning, doubting and negating. Music inspires movement from our very core. Through simple movement practices we will feel the freedom to move from within, exploring ways to awaken the force of creativity and power within us all. Together we will lift our spirit and energy and perhaps even discover an original movement that is our trademark. We will teach our cells new ways of being and take time to affirm our hearts, our creativity, our individuation as well as our connection to the One Spirit. This is a hands-on transformational workshop you don't want to miss! **Julia Ray** is the owner of Yoga Vibe in Toronto where she runs classes and workshops that encourage students to explore their possibilities and inner potential through the practice of yoga and movement. Having studied a multitude of yoga styles and healing modalities including bio-energy, dream work, movement therapy and shamanism, Julia's focus is on guiding her students to continuously process and embody their human potential. The way she teaches allows for the epiphanies of the student's experience to emerge and be recognized towards the path of individuation and wholeness. She teaches from an intuitive understanding of the human body and psyche and strongly believes in the collective creative experience as a way of healing and health.

**ICR: A 25 Year Journey.** An open forum that will incorporate past and present experiences with a look to the future direction of ICR. Facilitated by **Vitold Kreutzer**.

To **REGISTER:** Online at [www.icrcanada.org/events.html](http://www.icrcanada.org/events.html)

OR mail payment to:

ICR c/o D. Pond, 165 Valley Crescent, Markdale, ON N0C 1H0

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