



STATEMENT DN055

A “New Age” of Science: An Inquiry into the Influence of Mysticism on Science
New Age series – Part Two
by Elliot Miller

Dianne Kennedy Pike, wife of the late Episcopal Bishop James Pike, expressly represented the sentiments of the New Age movement when she conveyed the following to author Brad Steiger:

“My personal conviction is that the Age of Aquarius has to do with our developing a large overview of how things are related. It’s my hope and expectation that this....will be integrating the various levels of our consciousness—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—in one world view and one vocabulary and one way of talking so that we won’t have the split that we’ve had for so many years, where we think that science and religion are talking about separate things....We need a language in which we can talk about the spiritual forces and energies the way we are learning to talk about *other natural energy* in the universe....

“I think we are now in a stage wherein mass consciousness can evolve to the spiritual level, and....it is at that level where there can be a reunification of religion and science....I believe that a merging of the languages of science and religion will be one of the keys to the universality characteristic of the Aquarian Age”¹ (emphasis added).

Indeed, in some scientific circles the traditional distinctions between science and religion do seem to be breaking down. Robert Kirsh of the *Los Angeles Times* notes that there is currently “a drive to enlarge the scope of science, a tendency to examine questions which previously would be asked or emphasized only by those outside the boundaries of science.”²

In this article we will take a close look at this phenomenon. We will consider the central place of mystical experience in the New Age movement, and how New Agers are appropriating science in order to authenticate this experience, for themselves and for society at large. Finally, we will consider possible effects of New Age entanglements with science on that enterprise.

EXPERIENCE THE ALL-IMPORTANT FACTOR

The rise of “New Age Science” can only be adequately understood by reference to mystical experience. Last issue we looked at how meditation, “creative visualization,” chanting and other techniques for altering the consciousness play a pivotal role in the New Age movement. Such “psychotechnologies” are capable of interrupting or even bringing to a halt one’s normal patterns of conceptual thought *without* extinguishing or diminishing consciousness itself. For the responsive subject, these kinds of “ASCS” (altered states of consciousness) can produce a profound mystical sense of “transcendence” of individuality and identification with everything. Such experiences of undifferentiated consciousness suggest to the seeker that ultimate reality itself is undifferentiated everything is one, and the nature of the One must be consciousness (since at the peak of the mystical state consciousness is virtually all that is experienced).

R.M. Bucke, a turn-of-the-century psychiatrist who popularized the term “cosmic consciousness” to describe these states, put it this way:

This consciousness shows the cosmos to consist not of dead matter governed by unconscious, rigid, and unintending law; it shows it on the contrary as entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive; it shows that death is an absurdity, that everyone and everything has eternal life; it shows that the universe is God and that God is the universe, and that no evil does or ever did enter into it.³

The person who actively pursues or passively submits himself to ASCS is setting himself up for nothing short of a religious conversion: he will likely come out of his experiences persuaded that metaphysical reality is something similar to what Bucke

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described. It can therefore be observed that ASCS are either a passageway to Reality, or a passageway to delusion, but they are hardly a neutral phenomenon to which one can repeatedly subject himself while retaining a detached, “scientific” frame of mind. Their impact upon the psyche is too powerful, producing a subjective entanglement in the dynamics inherent to the experience.

By their very nature, mystical states impart a sense of *absolute* certainty. In the words of Alfred Lord Tennyson concerning experiences he had since boyhood: “This [is] not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words...”⁴ After such experiences, New Agers tend to think that they *understand* reality, while other, less enlightened souls can only *believe* it to be a certain way.

Although New Agers do not generally repudiate normal reasoning processes, they do believe that they have experienced something that transcends them. Thus it is very difficult for rational arguments (such as concerning the dangers of subjectivism) to penetrate their mindset they simply assume that the one challenging the experience has not had it — or he also would “know.”

ASCS can have an especially profound impact on secular humanists who either never were exposed to, or have long since given up on, traditional Christian spirituality. Cultural historian and “new consciousness” advocate Theodore Roszak observes that “the spiritual void in our lives...is the secret of our discontent” After languishing in the and wastelands of godless naturalism, and then encountering the spiritual realm directly through ASCS, the former skeptic’s entire world is shaken. Things he once considered impossible become a matter of personal experience. Ecstatic feelings, psychic power, even contacts from spirit entities, all create hope for a more purposeful, satisfying life. A new world view must be found to replace the shattered old one.

Awed by the discovery of an entirely new and (to him) uncharted world of mystical experience, he will be prone to uncritically accept the explanations and interpretations of the experience that are offered by New Age authority figures (especially if they have scientific or academic credentials). He will then be pliable in the hands of those who desire to conform his thinking to the distinctives of Aquarian Age ideology. The assurance derived from the experiences will easily translate to an ideology that vindicates the experience, even if the same arguments would fail to impress the uninitiated. (This mystically generated credulity should be borne in mind as we proceed to examine New Age beliefs in this and the upcoming article.)

Desperately wanting to retain their new spiritual basis for life, such humanists will seek out ways to reconcile the apparent discrepancies between their old “scientific” (naturalistic) world view and their new mystical one. One of the strong appeals of the New Age movement is its attempt to bridge this gap — it seemingly allows one to accept modern evolutionary science while still offering the comforts of religion (e.g., a purpose to life, the prospect of a blessed afterlife, a basis for ethics, and hope for humanity’s future).

This deep-seated psychological factor has strongly contributed to a recent eruption of New Age intellectual efforts (such as Fritjof Capra’s *The Tao of Physics* and Ken Wilbur’s *Up From Eden*), and their rapid and widespread acceptance. New Agers from a wide variety of disciplines and backgrounds would very much like to “matchmake” a union of science and (Eastern/occultic) religion. Not only would such a marriage vindicate the mystical world view in their own minds, it would offer powerful propagandistic leverage in a culture where science speaks almost *ex cathedra*. According to Marilyn Ferguson:

Abraham Maslow [the “father of the human potential movement”] observed, although our visionary artists and mystics may be correct in their insights they can never make the whole of mankind sure. “Science,” he wrote, “is the only way we have of shoving truth down the reluctant throat.”⁶

New Agers are nowhere near achieving this objective, but their progress has nonetheless been noteworthy (see sidebar). It is conceivable that they could eventually succeed. What then would be the implications for science?

SUBJECTIVE SCIENCE

Objectivity has commonly been considered essential to the scientific method.⁷ In Part One of this series we observed that the monistic world view offers intellectual validation to a subjective approach to life, while devaluing objectivity. Mystical experiences also tend to both produce and progressively intensify a subjective orientation. When this psycho-spiritual transformation takes place in a scientist, it can profoundly affect his work. Dr. Edgar Mitchell is just one of many possible cases in point.

Mitchell, who holds a doctor of science degree, was the sixth man to walk on the moon. He was the lunar module pilot on Apollo 14.

On his return from the moon, while contemplating the earth, the astronaut (who had previously been interested in parapsychology) had a mystical experience. He told the magazine *Omni* that it was an “explosion of awareness, an aha! A wow.”⁸

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Omni adds that what it meant to Mitchell was that God was real — although Mitchell’s is not a biblical God — and something more. He came to realize that the universe is made of matter and spirit but that they are not separate. The bridge is consciousness. God is something like a universal consciousness, manifest in each individual, and the route to divine reality and to a more satisfying human material reality is through the human consciousness.⁹

After this powerful experience, consciousness became Mitchell’s dominant interest:

To pursue these ideas, Mitchell changed his life. In October 1972, two years after Apollo 14, he resigned from NASA and the Navy and founded the Institute of Noetic (from the Greek *nous*, meaning mind) Sciences to study human consciousness.¹⁰

Mitchell became convinced that scientific methodology could be employed to explain telepathy, psychic healing, and other paranormal events. (This is the basic assumption underlying the discipline of parapsychology.) He wrote in the book *Mind at Large* that “there are no unnatural or supernatural phenomena, only very large gaps in our knowledge of what is natural.... We should strive to fill these gaps of ignorance.”¹¹

It is not that Mitchell believes that such phenomena have a *purely physical* explanation. Indeed, most scientists who subscribe to philosophical materialism do not recognize the reality of truly psychic phenomena, because their world view has difficulty finding a place for it.¹²

Mitchell’s position can only be understood in the light of his acceptance of pantheism; where nature and God are considered one. Such a view not only makes nature divine, it makes God “natural.” The category of the supernatural is ruled out, along with the miraculous. Once this view is adopted, the traditional distinction between science and religion quite easily becomes blurred. Everything, even God, can be explained in terms of laws or principles, and can be approached “scientifically.” This is why in Eastern and occult literature it is common to read about the “science of yoga” (or god realization), the “science of soul travel,” the “science of karma and reincarnation,” etc. Even the miracle of Jesus are viewed in a “scientific” light: He understood and manipulated nature’s more subtle laws.

Typical of mystical teachers, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh told his followers:

The old religions are based on belief systems. My religion is absolutely scientific....Of course, it is a different science than the science that is being taught in the universities. That is objective science. This is subjective science....¹⁵

Since New Agers believe that the physical world is really made of consciousness, and that the mind of the individual scientist is part of this universal consciousness, the distinction between subject and object, between “subjective science” and objective science becomes difficult to define or maintain. Consciousness becomes the final explanation of *all* phenomena, psychic and physical. In such a context the marriage of science and mystical religion would seem inescapable.

In fact, Mitchell’s Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) openly characterizes the “science of subjective experience” which they are recommending to the larger scientific community as “the esoteric core of all the world’s religions, East and West, ancient and modern, becoming exoteric, ‘going public.’”¹⁴

Several New Age thinkers, including IONS president Willis Harman, are calling for nothing less than a change in the scientific enterprise itself, including its purpose, methods, and scope.¹⁵ Harman calls this proposed synthesis of modern science and ancient mysticism “multiple vision science” and says it

....would foster open, participative inquiry it would diminish the dichotomy between observer and observed, investigator and subject. Investigations of subjective experience would be based on collaborative trust and ‘exploring together’ rather than on the sort of manipulative deception that has characterized much past research in the social sciences.¹⁶

Such talk is reminiscent of a controversy that flourished in psychology over 20 years ago. This concerned (at that time) Harvard professors Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert. (Leary later became the infamous “guru” of the hippie movement. Alpert is now the popular New Age speaker and author Baba Ram Dass.)

Leary and Alpert were not only conducting but *participating* in experiments with chemically induced ASCS. Leary insisted that “the subject-object method of research is inadequate for studies of human consciousness.”¹⁷ His point was that ASCS are so indescribable that they have to be *experienced* to be understood. Thus, competent research on the subject could not be conducted from a non-participatory standpoint.

To Leary and Alpert's colleagues, however, the once respected researchers' participation in the experiments was transforming them from scientists into mystics (an allegation which the years that followed certainly substantiated). Reporter Dan Wakefield observed at the time:

The question of who are "qualified researchers" has become increasingly controversial, and charges have been leveled at Leary and Alpert that their own use of the drugs has destroyed their objectivity as scientists. Dr. David C. McClelland, chair man of the Center for Research in Personality and the man who brought Leary and Alpert to Harvard, has said that the more they took the drug "the less they were interested in science." The *Archives of General Psychiatry* editorial warning against the dangers of the drugs noted that some researchers "who became enamored with their mystical hallucinatory state, eventually in their 'mystique' became disqualified as competent investigators." On the other hand, mushroom expert Gordon Wasson has pointed out that such charges against investigators who have taken the drug lead to the dilemma that "we are all divided into two classes: those who have taken the mushroom and are disqualified by our subjective experience and those who have not taken the mushroom and are disqualified by their total ignorance of the subject."¹⁸

While many New Age scientists would disavow Timothy Leary and the use of psychotropic drugs, it is nonetheless widely acknowledged that such drugs can produce *states* of consciousness and personality changes essentially the same as those experienced through meditation, sensory deprivation, and other psychotechnologies. Therefore, those who, like Mitchell and Hasman, advocate integrating such experiences with science lay themselves open to some of the same objections that were rightly raised against Leary and Alpert.

MODERN PHYSICS AND ANCIENT MYSTICISM

The impact of mysticism on science is not limited to such controversial fields as consciousness research and parapsychology. In 1979 *Newsweek* reported that "...a new school of theoretical physicists, many of them based at the University of California's Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, is using mystical modes of thought in an effort to create a unified philosophy of how the universe works."¹⁹

One UC Berkeley physicist, the celebrated New Age author Fritjof Capra, writes:

As Eastern thought has begun to interest significant number of people, and meditation is no longer viewed with ridicule or suspicion, mysticism is being taken seriously even within the scientific community. An increasing number of scientists are aware that mystical thought provides a consistent and relevant philosophical background to the theories of contemporary science, a conception of the world in which the scientific discoveries of men and women can be in perfect harmony with their spiritual aims and religious beliefs."

Specifically, New Agers like Capra are popularizing the idea that such twentieth-century developments in physics as quantum and relativity theories offer scientific backing to the beliefs of ancient mystical traditions. Many further argue that monistic and mystical perspectives are necessary to *understand* these recent discoveries, and to make further progress in the new frontiers of science.

This article is not the place to attempt a detailed description of the new physics, nor to show the many ways in which New Agers like Capra use (and abuse) it for their own ends.²¹

The following examples of how New Agers make unwarranted "quantum leaps" from the hard facts of physics to their own metaphysical conclusions will have to suffice. To them, the interdependence of physical reality proves the oneness of *all* reality (including God and human souls); the fact that mass and *physical* energy are different aspects of the same thing proves that *psychic* energy is the universal, fundamental reality; the fact that objectivity is restricted at the quantum level "invalidate[s] the classical ideal of an objective description of nature" and "challenge[s] the myth of a value-free science";²² the fact that our understanding of subatomic particles is significantly colored by our own minds suggests "that consciousness may be an essential aspect of the universe, and that we may be blocked from further understanding of natural phenomena if we insist on excluding it."²³

THE END OF SCIENCE

It is clear from our previous consideration of "subjective science" that if the New Age interpretations noted above were to become widely accepted in *physics*, we would witness the marriage of a "hard" science to Eastern/occult mysticism. This could signal the end of classical objective science. Some New Age writers openly hope for this.

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Marilyn Ferguson discusses the view of Gary Zukav, author of *The Dancing Wu-Li Masters* (a book similar to Capra's *The Tao of Physics*):

In one sense, Zukav said, we may be approaching “the end of science.” Even as we continue to seek understanding, we are learning to accept the limits of our reductionist methods. Only direct (i.e., mystical) experience can give a sense of the nonlocal universe, this realm of connectedness (i.e., the realm of modern quantum and relativity physics). Enlarged awareness—as in meditation—may carry us past limits of our logic to more complete knowledge. The end of conventional science may mean “the coming of Western civilization, in its own *time* and in its own way, into the higher dimensions of human experience”

To be fair to Zukav I should point out that if his world view were correct, every statement just cited would be defensible. If consciousness were “an essential aspect of the universe:” then it would be entirely conceivable that in failing to recognize this, conventional science would eventually come to the end of itself. It would also be reasonable to suppose that the various psychotechnologies (representing a new “subjective science”) could pick up where traditional science left off, helping us attain knowledge experientially that had proved inaccessible to our “reductionist methods.”

Let us suppose, on the other hand, that mystical “enlightenment” is really delusion. If supposed insights gained from such an enlightenment were incorporated into scientific theories, science would run aground!

The world of the occult is brimming over with the fruits of “subjective science.” There are accounts of contacts with every conceivable kind of unearthly being; of journeys out-of-the-body and out-of-this-world; of historical events inaccessible to normal investigation, but made available by obliging angels, hypnotically induced recollection of “past lives,” or psychic inquiry into the “Akashic records” (supposed imprints on the cosmic ether).

Information gained from such unearthly sources is taken seriously in the New Age movement, and usually not considered any less reliable for not being objectively verifiable. Such an approach to truth spawns seemingly unending fantasies, most of which contradict each other at important points. If this approach was adopted by science the outcome would be no different.

NO CRITERIA?

The absurdity of such New Age revelations, and the conviction which always accompanies them, underscore the fact that spiritual or psychic experiences can be profoundly misleading. Christian author and lecturer Pat Means points out that

...the non-mystic might well interject the argument that no experience *can* prove anything to anybody except that one has, in fact, *had* an experience....does the fact that someone feels “enlightened” during meditation prove that he has had an experience with the Divine? No — it merely proves that someone feels “enlightened” during meditation.

Even pro-mystic psychologist Carl Jung admits....“We can of course never decide definitely whether a person is *really* ‘enlightened’....or whether he imagines it. We have no criteria for this.”²⁵

Jung exhibited commendable objectivity concerning the limits of spiritual experience. But what of his belief that “we have no criteria” for distinguishing authentic from imagined enlightenment? The seeker of truth dare not *assume* this to be the case. If perchance the Ultimate Reality has at some point in history made itself known, then the seeker might avail himself of what Plato called “a safer and less hazardous passage.... in a more secure conveyance, to wit, some word from God.”²⁶

A survey of world history reveals that amid the commonalities that can be observed in all religions, the God revealed in the Bible, the God of Israel and the Christian church, is unique.²⁷ Moses appealed to this indisputable fact when exhorting the children of Israel to keep Yahweh’s commandments:

Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it?...has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him (Deut. 4:32, 34-35).

A scientific approach to the histories of Israel and the Christian church will turn up data (like the Exodus from Egypt) that can only be adequately explained by reference to miracles. Nineteenth-century higher-critical efforts to discredit Israel’s own account of her history have themselves been progressively discredited by twentieth-century archaeology.²⁸ Efforts to explain away

Christian claims have similarly been futile. The only satisfactory explanation for the rise of the Christian church is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.²⁹

Only an anti-supernatural bias would compel someone to seek alternative explanations for these events. Such an approach is indefensible since it assumes miracles to be impossible *before* checking the record of history to see if any have occurred. The available empirical evidence supports the claim that a unique divine revelation is available to us in the Bible.

God *has* spoken, therefore, and given us answers to basic questions concerning Himself, man, and the spiritual and physical worlds. From this disclosure we learn that while God is intimately involved with the world, He is essentially distinct from it (Ps. 90:2; 102:25-27; 113:4-6). We also find that God has created spheres and personalities (angels) that are fundamentally not of this world (2 Cor. 12:2-4; Matt. 18:10). In light of these facts we conclude that the supernatural is a legitimate category.

Throughout the Bible we find that the supernatural realms are capable of interaction with our natural world. However, because of willful rebellion against God, men and some of the angels are morally fallen. Therefore, as a protection to man, the communion that they are capable of is forbidden (e.g., 1 Cor. 10:20). Thus the entire range of occult practices are prohibited (Deut. 18: 9-14), as well as passive, trancelike states of consciousness, which increase our susceptibility to demonic influence (we find this chiefly in biblical condemnations of mediumistic trances, but the same spiritual dangers can be shown to accompany other ASCS as well).

Man's need for communion with the spiritual realm is not denied, but it must be met in the manner that God prescribes:

And when they say to you, "consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter should not a people consult their God?...To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn (Isa. 8:19-20).

Scripture ("the law and the testimony"), then, is the historically reliable, objective criterion whereby the nature and value of spiritual experience must be determined.

THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE

It would seem that the primary failing of contemporary thought is its neglect of the logical and empirical evidence for biblical claims. This neglect, in turn, seems to result from a deep-seated anti-supernatural bias. For modern man, *everything* must be explainable in natural terms.

Why, Christians ask, should it be a settled issue that all phenomena have natural explanations? What evidence is there that the universe is self-generating? What is there *within* the universe that is capable of *explaining* the universe? Why should science be equated with the philosophy of naturalism?

The scientific method deals with *empirical* data: it does not concern itself with whether metaphysical reality (that which is beyond observable processes) is natural or supernatural. Therefore, naturalism is a philosophical presupposition no more demonstrable by the scientific method than theism (belief in a transcendent God). And, the Christian would ask, is it more reasonable that a universe which exhibits temporal and dependent qualities throughout is *self-producing*, or that it is the product of a power that is *not* temporal and dependent, existing *outside* the system?³⁰

Once the possibility of a supernatural creator is granted, there is no logically compelling reason to hold — as did the deists of two centuries ago — that supernatural forces could not continue to bring influence to bear upon the natural world.³¹

Biblical theism establishes both a basis for, and limitations to, the scientific endeavor. It provides a basis because (unlike monism) it states that the world is objectively real, and was founded on rational principles capable of being discerned by rational minds (Ps. 104:24; 139:14). It sets limits, however, because — unlike naturalism — it teaches that the universe is not a closed system. Certain kinds of phenomena (both divine and devilish), not originating in the system, cannot be wholly understood in terms of natural processes.

Biblical prohibitions of occult involvement apply to researching scientists as much as anyone else. But useful scientific inquiry will not be stifled by this. Rather, biblical guidelines, if followed, would provide for the continued fruitfulness of science. The reasons for this will be evident as we proceed.

Almost anyone who has been deeply involved with the occult will testify from experience that, regardless of how much fakery may also exist, paranormal phenomena *do* occur. The survival and growth of parapsychology — in spite of 100 years of ridicule

from outside the field, and experimental disappointment with in — would be difficult to explain if there was *nothing* truly paranormal happening, goading researchers on to further experimentation.

When psychics are brought into the laboratory, however, the phenomena do not demonstrate the repeatability necessary for scientific verification, although they will at times occur. Furthermore, the energy employed in psychic healing, psychokinesis (the movement of objects by psychic power), and other demonstrations of “psi” (psychic ability) is physically unmeasurable.³² As John Weldon has demonstrated in *Occult Shock and Psychic Forces*, there is little or no evidence in science or Scripture to support the hypothesis of “latent psi” within man.

New Ager Mary Coddington observes that

...for centuries men of genius have tried to harness this strange enigmatic force and enlist it to the aid of science. Thus far it has renamed slightly out of grasp, eluding its would-be captors with an almost capricious tenacity and always escaping definition.³³

These results defy the expectations of naturalism, but conform to biblical theism’s supernatural/natural distinction (which depicts the energy source behind occultism as both nonphysical and personal — therefore unmeasurable and unpredictable).

This inability to explain psychic phenomena in physical terms results in many conversions to the New Age world view. Unwilling to part with their anti-supernatural bias even after encountering the paranormal, the researchers resort to pantheism. As we saw earlier, this allows for a “natural,” though nonphysical, explanation. In this way they feel they can retain a “scientific” frame of mind.

From the Christian perspective, there is nothing scientific about theories based upon nondetectable, nonphysical energy systems. Nor is it unscientific to believe that science should be limited to the physical (i.e., non-spiritual) world.

Just as the usefulness of the scientific method is exhausted at the point of explaining psychic phenomena, so with certain kinds of ASCS. The clear limitations on doing “competent research” of mystical states (such as was evident with Leary and Alpert) point to the fact that the participant has, to some degree, a spiritual (supernatural) experience. This requires biblical revelation to be adequately explained. The naturalistic observer will be unable to relate to experiences that are not strictly natural. The scientist who *participates* in order to understand may well encounter the spiritual realm, undergo the mystical conversion process, and lose his objectivity.

I do not mean to suggest that acceptance of mysticism equates to a loss of scientific competency (in fact, Einstein was apparently a pantheist, and some of the leading formulators of quantum theory were attracted to Eastern thought). However, where New Age thinking has penetrated science a disturbing loss of scientific objectivity is already evident. Were New Age influences to move from the fringes to the mainstream, there would be serious consequences.

It may seem ludicrous even to suggest that such a secular stronghold could be taken over by mystics. Certainly, it is hard to imagine. But the present dominance of naturalism in scientific circles is no safeguard against this eventuality. As long as scientists assume that there are *no limits* to scientific inquiry and explanation, they lay themselves open to the beguiling influences of supernatural darkness. Only theism, which provided fertile soil for the birth of modern science, can ensure its perpetuation. Through theism science can come to grips with its own boundaries, and in so doing it would also regain an authentic sense of itself.

NOTES

1. Brad Steiger, *Revelation — The Divine Fire* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), p. 186.
2. Robert Kirsch, “New Frontiers Explored in Parapsychology, Physic,” *Los Angeles Times*.
3. Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness* (Secaucus, NJ: The Citadel Press, 1961), p. 14.
4. Quoted in William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: New American Library, 1958), p. 295.
5. Quoted in Mark Satin, *New Age Politics* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1978), p. 284.
6. Marilyn Ferguson, *The Brain Revolution* (New York: Bantam Books, 1973), p. xiii.
7. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines “scientific” as “Broadly, having or appearing to have an exact, objective, factual, systematic or methodological basis.”
8. James Gorman, “Righteous Stuff,” *Omn*, May 1984, p. 48.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
11. Quoted In a 1985 Institute of Noetic Sciences appeal letter by Edgar Mitchell.

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12. Efforts have been made to explain “psi” (psychic ability or phenomena) in terms of purely physical (non -spiritual) energy, but they have proved less than convincing:

The biggest barrier to acceptance of psi by conventional science, however, involves neither disputes over methodology nor the suspicion of fraud. It is centered instead on the very real failure of parapsychology to develop a plausible theory to account for phenomena that appear to transcend our concept of time and space. For science requires not only facts but also a way of explaining them. Thus far, there has been no want of speculation; to explain psi various theorists have involved virtually every possibility, from electromagnetic fields generated by the brain to the seemingly chaotic dance of subatomic particles. Yet no researcher has come up with a coherent theoretical framework in which to fit all the fragments of psi research.

(Will Bradbury [ed.], *Into the Unknown* [Pleasantville, New York: The Reader’s Digest Association, 1981], p. 219.)

13. “Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh Speaks Again,” *The Rajneesh Times*, Nov. 2, 1984, pp. 4-5.

14. Quoted in Satin, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Quoted in Dan Wakefield, “The Hallucinogens: A Reporter’s Objective View,” *LSD The Consciousness-Expanding Drug*, ed. David Solomon (New York: Berkley Medallion Books, 1966), p. 61.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 60-61.

19. Kenneth L. Woodward with Gerald C. Lubenow, “Physics and Mysticism,” *Newsweek*, July 23, 1979, p. 85.

20. Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 78.

21. Such an analysis is tentatively planned for a future issue of *FORWARD*.

22. Capra, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87. While there is an element of truth to this, most New Agers take it as licensing an unrestrained subjectivism.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

24. Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1980), p. 172.

25. Pat Means, *The Mystical Mare* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, 1976), p. 43.

26. Quoted in John Warwick Montgomery, *The Shape of the Past* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), p. 295.

27. This theme is developed at great length in J.N.D. Anderson’s excellent book, *Christianity & Comparative Religion*, InterVarsity Press.

28. See Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Moody Press.

29. See John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*, InterVarsity Press.

30. This is a presentation of the cosmological argument. For an elaboration of it see Norman L. Geisler’s, *Philosophy of Religion*, Zondervan.

31. For a helpful discussion of deism, naturalism, and pantheism, in contrast with biblical theism, see James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, InterVarsity Press.

32. New Agers claim that Kirlian photography has detected this energy: “Kirlian photographs verify what psychics often point out, that we are actually interpenetrated with an energy body whose luminescence is the aura” (Geri Afshari, “Kirlian Photos Show Life Colors,” *Holistic Living News*, Dec. 1982/Jan. 1983, p. 28). This is highly debatable, however. Many Kirlian researchers dismiss such claims out-of-hand. Richard Petrini of California’s Lawrence Livermore Laboratory wrote in *Science*: “Kirlian photography, if properly controlled, is an excellent way to measure the moisture content of objects, period” (quoted in Edwards Edelson, “Aura Phenomenon Puzzles Experts,” *Smithsonian*, April 1977, p. 112).

33. Quoted in John Weldon and Clifford Wilson, *Occult Shock and Psychic Forces* (San Diego: Master Books, 1980), p. 158.