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Elizabeth W. Szatmari Krasnoff

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Reconnecting to the Source

By Ervin Laszlo

A Review by Elizabeth W. Szatmari Krasnoff¹

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Abstract: Quantum philosopher Ervin Laszlo has taken one step further outside of the contemporary mainstream scientific view, which believes in a reductive “scientific” method primarily of highly controlled experiments to determine truth. In this visionary work, Laszlo proposes that the true laws of nature can also be accessed and felt experientially. Here he argues that the new quantum science can support this view, and even assist us as we heal the rift between mind and spirit and reconnect to our source. Laszlo proposes a new paradigm, a holotropic worldview with love as the core attracting force of wholeness. Indeed, as the chaos of our present age engulfs us in a reverberating dissolution and transformation, Laszlo is surfing the forward wave of evolution and offering front row commentary.

Keywords: Consciousness, cosmic intelligence, compassion, science, spirituality, systems theory, non-ordinary consciousness, laws of nature, energy, the field, vibration, the implicate order

Reconnecting to the Source is a four-part book written in much the same style as Laszlo's previous book, *The Intelligence of the Cosmos*, and is a continuation of an inquiry into the nature of this source of intelligence and our relationship to it. Laszlo gives voice to many scholars, thinkers and healers in these last two works. After four pages of praise from well-known authors and speakers in the consciousness field such as Gregg Braden and Allan Combs, his book begins with an introductory foreword and commentary by Deepak Chopra and Neale Donald Walsch, offering a meaningful opus in itself.

Following this thought-provoking offering, Laszlo outlines the substance of his holotropic theory in *Part I, Quantum Science and the Re-Assessment of the Spiritual Experience*, and *Part II, Connecting to the Holotropic Quantum Universe*. Then, to round out the picture, Laszlo turns the stage over to an impressive cadre of colleagues in *Part III, A Bouquet of Spiritual Experiences*, a collection of 18 essays on spiritual experiences of wholeness. The first profundity here lies in love, the common root of the inner experience of so many. Laszlo offers a fine summary here entitled *Spiritual Experiences: The Message and the Meaning*.

¹ Author - Elizabeth@Sound-Medicine.com

In the concluding *Part IV, Essential Lessons and Fundamental Tasks*, Laszlo offers important suggestions on how to frame our distressing global state of affairs, and an insightful commentary on how a holotropic paradigm offers an essential way forward. This is followed by a richly informative Annex on Eastern Perspectives, which draws illuminative parallels between the Eastern and Western views of, and practices for, connecting to source. Lastly, Laszlo includes a deceptively mischievous Appendix on “The Confirmatory Evidence of Duck (and Associated Geese) Synchronicities” by Gary Schwartz. This essay in list form is a light-hearted look at the serious results of intention in the context of a humorous source intelligence.

From Part I: Quantum Science and the Re-Assessment of the Spiritual Experience.

These are some of the big questions we face today: Is consciousness a product of our brain? Or is consciousness everywhere and our brain is a receiver of certain frequencies or channels of this consciousness? Is reality all that we can see and measure? Or are there aspects or dimensions of reality beyond what we can think about? Beyond thought? And perhaps beyond measurement? There is one field that is actively engaging these questions, and that is the field of Quantum Science and its philosophical counterpart, Quantum Thinking, or rather Quantum Philosophy. Einstein won the Nobel Prize for showing that energy has a particle-like nature (Briggs, 1985, p. 88.). This created inroads towards a mind/body unity philosophy. Experiments such as Alain Aspect’s splitting of correlated photons proved Bell’s theory of entanglement (Briggs, p. 88)—i.e., these separated photons were fundamentally connected in a way and a place that we could not measure. This has provided roads of inquiry into the nature of

nonlocal dimensions. In this manner, quantum theories are frequently found at the base of the modern quest for wholeness and source. And it does provide a most interesting glimpse into realities that have been heretofore obscured to us—except perhaps through direct spiritual experience. Enter Ervin Laszlo to draw these parallels.

Let’s start with the quantum foundations of Laszlo’s holotropic worldview. *Holotropism* is a view of a world in which natural, implicit, coherent laws drive us to seek wholeness. Laszlo gives us the breakdown in Greek: *holos* is “whole” and *tropic* is “tendency or orientation toward” (p. 20). Such views have been put forth by very good company, from Teilhard de Chardin and his *noosphere* (1959) to Stanislav Grof and his own holotropic breathwork (from where Laszlo borrowed the term) (2010), to Karl Pribram’s holonomic brain theory (1991), and of course David Bohm’s holomovement (2002). Laszlo begins with the quantum view that the world is a hologram. This means that all parts contain the whole. “That which is here is there,” as Neils Bohr showed us in the concepts of complementarity and causality (1948). Laszlo draws on the theories of quantum physicist David Bohm, in which the explicate (visible) universe unfolds from an implicate universe (invisible) that is giving the instructions (2002). Laszlo points out that this view of source was also held by Indian seers (and named the Akasha), and similar ideas are found in the writings and thought of Hellenic thinkers such as Pythagoras, Plato, Parmenides, and Plotinus (p. 12). Laszlo also explains that physicists have looked at our world and they have not found distinct, separate items of matter, but instead clusters of “informed energy.” He writes: “In the most basic and general sense, the in-formed energies that make up the observable world are in-phase patterns of vibration: relatively

stable and enduring standing and propagating waves” (p. 4). In this sense, we have healed the split between mental and material reality: neither came first, they are two expressions of the same thing. Laszlo reminds us of what both Einstein and Max Planck stated that what we think are material things are ultimately illusions. Equally important, the mental aspects of the universe are pictured in a similar process.

Another keystone of Laszlo’s theories is the observable laws of coherence of these “matter like clusters of energy and information” (p. 5), and the “mind-like clusters” that mirror them. Coherence is defined as a result of the connection and communication between the parts of a system, while a coherent system has successfully integrated its parts (p. 18). There is a helpful summary here of discoveries of the natural laws of coherence, including the observation by Arthur Eddington and Paul Dirac that the ratio of the electric force to the gravitational force is matched by the ratio of the size of the universe to the dimension of small particles (Laszlo, p. 8). Contemporary cosmology has discovered that the mass of elementary particles, the number of particles, and the forces between them display harmonic ratios (Laszlo, p. 8). Laszlo’s overall point here is that if any of these coherent relationships from the largest to the smallest of systems were to be slightly off, life as we know it would not exist (p. 8). Coherence is a precursor to life, and observable in all life. Laszlo also makes his argument here for meaningful evolution and creation largely based on the evidence of coherence, a view not shared by mainstream science, which believes the view of Charles Darwin. This view states that the animating force for evolution is a combination of natural selection and chance (1987). Instead, Laszlo sees a “universal and law-like process,” an

implicate order, that intelligently and lovingly directs complex and coherent systems into being through the language of vibration (Laszlo, 2017).

The final key to this worldview is the understanding of a connected field in which all transpires. As Einstein said, it is the field which controls the particle. The laws of nature are present in this field, which is synonymous for the implicate order (Bohm), the Akashic field, “the grand unified field of particle physics, the zero-point field of electrodynamics, and the universal quantum field of quantum field theories” (p. 14), the Greek Kosmos, and enfolded pre-space. Laszlo explains that the theorems of contemporary physics apply to this implicate order, although he notes that the Copenhagen school of quantum physics would not embrace this (p. 15).

Laszlo asks, what is the purpose of this integrated, informed domain of coherence which organizes the chaos into evolution in space and time? He notes the highly structured field in which this creativity takes place, and cites Wolfgang Pauli’s principle of exclusion as an observable example of this structured activity (Cline, 1972). There is also a thoughtful discussion of the concept of evolution itself, tracing the origins of evolutionary study from the biological sciences into the field of process philosophy (p. 18). Although the concept of evolution is well recognized, the reason for evolution is still debated (p. 18). Planck and Einstein are his constant companions on this journey, also believing in a higher force that is the driver and intelligent organizer. For Laszlo, coherence is the basic attractor, the holotropic pattern, driving us towards wholeness. Coherent, complex systems are the observable proof of this.

The final leap that Laszlo makes with this theory is into the world of direct spiritual experience. When we feel one with ourselves, with nature, or with another person, we are apprehending the existence of the holotropic attractor. Laszlo challenges the mainstream view of such oneness and connection as “fantasy,” and instead proposes that this is the most fundamental, natural, and real experience we can have.

Part II, Connecting to the Holotropic Quantum Universe

What does coherence have to do with compassion? How do we engage with a holotropic view? Where are all the giant structural changes in the world leading us right now? How can holotropism help us? In the next section, Laszlo addresses the remaining key components of his thinking.

First, here is what the holotropic attractor pattern is not. It is not the self-centered, competitive, survival-oriented forces that produce the dynamic of polarity. These forces create a separation rather than a wholeness. And if one were to listen to the daily news and read the headlines at the time of this writing, a politically divisive, structurally crumbling, AC-19 world (after COVID-19), one might come to the conclusion that this is the vast majority of experience of humankind. However, what follows is a valuable list of holotropic developments happening under the surface everywhere, important glimpses of light for us to be aware of and focus upon. Laszlo’s colleague, Kingsley Dennis, gives many examples, from community innovation such as decentralized media, to technologies that enhance connection and transparency rather than support supervision and control (p. 28). Equally important, in the realm of health care, people are returning to holistic models of treating the whole body, and the use of

information, energy, and return to nature therapies is surging. Education is evolving from reproductive learning to co-creation models of teaching. In business, power is shifting to the stakeholder, and the economy itself is increasingly decentralized with a greater movement to the local level (p. 31). Laszlo holds these examples forth as evidence of holism and integration, with the corresponding emotional qualities of “solidarity, empathy and compassion” (p. 33). Laszlo breaks academic form and addresses the emotional and psychological component of holotropism, which is a very “whole body” approach. And we will stay here on this point, because it is the final point: love is at the center of this pull to wholeness.

Reconnecting to the Source was written BC-19 (before COVID-19), which further illuminates the prescience of Laszlo’s words. He sees wholeness as our birthright, and the current state of disconnection from our self and nature as the ill. He writes:

But modern people disregard nature’s rhythms and balances and believe that they can replace them by turning lights and other artificial conveniences on and off with the flip of a switch. But our body does not align with artificial rhythms, and we suffer the consequences. The effectiveness of our immune system is impaired, and diseases can proliferate. We have become “out of sync” with our biological clock. (p. 36)

And here Laszlo travels even so far as to not only promote a return to our own conscious embodiment, but to holotropically champion all consciousness, including plant consciousness particularly, as the slower rhythms of plant consciousness would benefit us as a species (p. 38). Although there are elements of panpsychism present here, it

would be reductive to view this as a purely panpsychic paradigm. The key element of the holotropic worldview is the holotropic attractor pattern generating wholeness, coherence, and its expression of compassion and love. What follows in the text are some helpful practices from Alexander Laszlo, the author's son, and Shamik Desai, the author's collaborator, for finding healthy, connected rhythms when nature is not available for a visit. These rhythms return us to our natural state of integrated wholeness, wellness, and love. And had we ended there, that would be a very compelling target—if somewhat soft and difficult for some analytic or skeptical minds. However, the following group of 18 experiential essays, say what just “one experience” cannot.

Part III, A Bouquet of Spiritual Experiences

This collection of “nonordinary spontaneous experiences” represents states of consciousness which have been found to be measurable at the low or high spectrum of human brain waves. Contemporary bestselling books such as *Stealing Fire* (2017) catalog tools we have scientifically developed to both study and alter our states of consciousness with our new understanding of brainwaves. In this case, the low theta waves represent meditative states and the high gamma waves represent exaltation (Laszlo, p. 47). The piece that Laszlo calls our attention to, is the remarkable consistency of these varied deep experiences: they all find love at the root of their epiphany, a wholeness, a oneness, and a new worldview and life which follows from this initiation. Laszlo exhorts that the heart and the wholeness it brings is our destination and birthright, and the very same coherence that quantum science is beginning to describe. This is not the Hollywood version of love, but a force that holds the universe together, in

Laszlo's words “a holotropic attractor pattern” that is the invisible implicit substance of consciousness and expressed explicitly in its pieces. Laszlo writes:

Atoms and molecules are complex and coherent whole systems, and so is the biosphere. And so is the Earth and the solar system and the galaxy and the metagalaxy. The biological systems that evolved on this planet are prime examples. If they did not come about through chance interactions, something had to bias the interplay of interactions toward the formation of complex and coherent systems. That something is logically considered an attractor—more exactly, a holotropic attractor. (p. 190)

In addition to the wisdom of this collection taken as a whole, the remarkable words here of Jane Goodall following her chimpanzees through a rainstorm (p. 85), or Barbara Marx Hubbard on democracy (p. 103), or Lynne McTaggart on group intention (p. 117), or John O'Dea on the nature of vibratory fields and how they hold memory (p. 121), or Masami Saionji on the projection of our inner ills onto our environment (p. 155), to name a few, are deep information fields for exploration.

Part IV, Essential Lessons and Fundamental Tasks

Laszlo highlights the work of Holmes Ralston who catalogs our present time as the fourth big bang. If we are to survive this fourth big bang, Laszlo says, we must all take this dive into the self, into an expression of wholeness, and use this lens to heal the ills of our fractured world. We must now “break down or break through.”

Was a book ever more timely or ever needed more? Laszlo is a visionary. He writes of a time of challenge that is coming in which the

only constant is change. In which our very survival is on the line. He asks the question: can our spiritual connection help us through this challenging survival? He is of complex mind, able to grasp any system that he sets himself to study. He is a master summarizer, explaining these systems to general readers as well as to the sophisticated researcher. Laszlo is also a humanitarian. He is deeply concerned for humanity, writing: “The bulk of today’s population is frustrated and depressive, and is turning violent. People suffer from a changed climate, pollution, and myriad forms of ecological degradation. Large masses roam the planet in search of a place to survive” (p. 166).

In accordance with the natural laws that Laszlo references, perhaps we are a system that has reached maximum efficiency as is and we must now break apart in order to reform in a more stable structure. In biology, there is a parallel for this. Cells come together and become as complex as their structure can support, and then they break apart and start newer smaller structures, like a natural anti-trust law (Laszlo, 2017). If that was the case we would be looking at many smaller local communities now, rather than the global economy. Indeed, that may be where end stage capitalism heads: back to smaller, local economies. Perhaps we can relax knowing that these laws of structure will hold both us and the chaos at hand, and deftly translate this moment into new structure and coherence. That we are breaking apart is only one part of the truth—as we are dissolving we are also re-connecting and coming together in new ways. The way forward is a reconnection...to the source and to each other.

Annex, Eastern Perspectives

Do yourself a favor and do not skip over the exceptional Eastern perspective essays at the

end of the book. It is a matter of a number of sittings to absorb the many profound insights across the spacious book, which to some may seem rambling and repetitive. However, for the patient, there are gems to be found everywhere. In this section, the essays highlight an Eastern mind that has long been contemplating questions of source and origin and has so much to offer both in the manner of matching our inquiry, and in demonstrating a subtle practicality to conscious evolution. Frederick Chavalit Tsao describes the Source, or creative force, as the Tao, and our state of flow as equivalent to Zen (p. 205). The sparkling insight here is that a materialistic imbalance of the world that we live in generates the greed, ignorance, and hatred we suffer from. A return to a balance with spirituality, or source, which is the resonance of love, is a healing for these destructive, unchecked energies (p. 205). If quantum physics succeeds in linking spirituality and materialism at its most fundamental level, it may do more for healing the ills of humankind and our planet than it had ever dreamed of (p. 205).

Read this book and feel well. Ervin Laszlo practices what he preaches, and delivers a holotropic attractor view of the world as it is right now. A view that is coherent, structured, compassionate, and connected—the very new paradigm that he hopes to show us on these pages. Laszlo has clearly found this place in his great heart and mind and it is to our collective benefit to have such a knowledgeable scholar with so many decades of research champion and usher in this perspective. Ultimately it helps to know what one is looking for—and then one sees it everywhere. The correct lens with which to view the situation is critical. A lens delivers structure to a seeming teeming of rhythms and melodies that appear disorganized. The correct lens gives you access to the whole

symphony of sounds and then the world makes sense again. Laszlo shares with us that he comes to his insights of wholeness through

playing music at his piano (p. 173), so a finishing musical metaphor seems appropriate

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