



## Marc Gafni Interview Notes

*Marc Gafni, of Oxford University, is author of numerous books including the forthcoming Unique Self: The Future of Enlightenment, and is co-founder of the Center for World Spirituality.*

- *Though I'd say that Fatherhood is certainly my primary work, I'm incredibly passionate about this earnest invitation by Spirit to really participate in the evolution of consciousness, to form a new framework for Spirit.*
- *When you have new evolutionary conditions (as we do now), you need a new evolutionary response on all levels, including Spirituality. What would it mean to pull in the best of integral principles and actually create a new vision of world spirituality? This would not be a new religion—rather, a new framework.*
- *There are 5 new factors that have never before existed in history:*
  - 1) *There are no "local" problems anymore—there are only global problems (meaning everything affects everything else—no isolation)*
  - 2) *The best insights of all the great traditions are available to us*

3) A critical mass of people are at world-centric consciousness (a pre-requisite for establishing a world spirituality)

4) Dual citizenship: You can locate yourself in a spiritual tradition and also be part of a larger vision of Spirit as a "global citizen of Spirit." World spirituality also speaks to all those not members of any tradition; they're looking for a framework of meaning that is non-fundamentalist and beyond all first tier worldviews.

This second-tier consciousness spirituality is genuinely global and addresses the essence of who they are.

5) We have a new universe story, which is the matrix of this emergent world spirituality. We can now trace the unfolding of the universe through the travelling of light. We were born of stars. The initiating energy of the Kosmos lives in us; it was us who initiated the Kosmos.

That's a very positive, big-picture perspective with a lot of good news. How would you contrast this optimistic view with the more pessimistic picture we see when we turn on the news? You and I agree that something seems to be happening—a quickening—and it appears to be two-pronged with things getting both worse and better. What would you say about that?

- *We have a triune (3-part) brain: 1) the neocortex (highest evolved, and rapidly continuing to evolve; 2) the amygdala (emotional brain—lagging in its evolution); and 3) the reptilian brain (limbic—primal, survival, not evolving).*
- *In every moment there's both the potential for enormous evolutionary progress (neocortex), and the reptilian brain ready to hijack that great possibility for expansion. We have to do a great amount of work within ourselves, our relationships, communities, and the larger contexts to actually ensure that the great promise of the evolution of consciousness takes place.*

*It's interesting how we can look out into the world at what's going on and notice the corollary within our own selves. Is that connection between what happens within ourselves as individual participants in evolution and what is manifest "out there" what has you so fascinated with spiritual development?*

- *Yes. We need to evolve the consciousness necessary to hold a new reality. We have this enormous technological capacity within the vehicle of our cortex, but if we haven't engaged in a parallel process of emotional and spiritual development, we're sunk.*

- *This is not woo-woo, New Age, green level "gunk"—we need much more than that. We have to take the best values of blue/amber (law, structure) orange (fairness, due process), and green/pluralistic (multicultural understanding) and up-level them to develop a trans-logical intelligence. A "flex-flow heart-mind-body logic" is what's needed to develop and manifest the "possible human" as ourselves in our own lives.*

*If we take on an evolutionary view of the human race, there have always been leaders—leading minds, leading spirits, all of those who pave the way. What's your perspective on how leadership comes into play in the emerging world spirituality?*

- *Let's consider what we need in leaders. First, we need to not kill them. We have a tendency to murder life force. We must allow space for leadership to both provide vision and let it emerge. This means supporting our leaders, especially in allowing them to be imperfect. We are all imperfect vessels for the light. Look at politics. Anyone serious about leadership doesn't look for positions because they don't want to get crucified. We're losing our best leaders.*

- *There are 2 things we need in leaders:*
  - 1) *Vision. We don't have a crisis of resources, we have a crisis of imagination. A leader must re-imagine, embody, and evoke amazement at a new vision of what's possible.*
  - 2) *Implementation. A leader must be able to answer the whats and hows of manifesting this new vision and provide practical ways to get it done.*

*That resonates with my experience teaching leaders. People want to follow someone who knows where they're going and who can actually take them somewhere. Now let's discuss the idea of spiritual leadership. The image of these vociferous, ethnocentric characters typically called "spiritual leaders" do not represent what I sense is needed. Where does actual spiritual leadership emerge from?*

- *One thing the integral community can do is let the leadership emerge. We need leadership that's world-centric; leaders who are holding this meta-picture, showing the patterns that connect within the grand story.*

- *A leader needs to be an embodiment of the best expressions of pre-modern (traditions), modern (sciences), and postmodern (context, deconstruction). That's a vision of world spirituality...leaders alive, passionate, and appropriately yet unapologetically connected to Eros—alive, a-love, aflame.*

*I'm imagining a very noble picture of a conscious leader, yet perhaps quite idealized. Is there some version of that which can emerge from an ordinary man and woman?*

- *Absolutely. It's emerging and available right now. It's up to us to allow it, to avoid our need to crucify it.*
- *We're past the age of having one single leader—it's collective now, and many of us are living that with delight as a collection of many bright stars.*
- *Even the nature of following today is different than it ever was. I follow, I submit, and I also self-author.*

*On this theme of emerging leadership, I'm reminded of my daily work with leaders. Leaders often intuit that there's something to be done, and that perhaps they are the one to do it. You work with an idea called "unique self" (akin to the "life purpose" I use in my work). Can you apply this*

*idea to an ordinary person wondering if they have what it takes to take on some degree of leadership?*

- Every human being is born already part of the One (I call this "true self"), yet is also an unrepeatable expression of Divinity, with a unique set of eyes.*
- As part of that unique emanation of all that is, I have a unique gift. There's a way that I can show up in the world that no one else has been or ever will be able to do.*
- As a unique expression of a larger process, I'm leading. In the sense that I'm part of that larger process/context, I'm serving. So leadership and followership merge into one.*

*What would you have people take away from this conversation as a final idea?*

- I would point to you, Brett, and this Integral Leadership Collaborative. You've used integral leadership to create this conference. People from 82 countries are gathering to be inspired and connect, and to create new openings for all kinds of possibilities going forward. It's not "How can I save the world?" It's "How can I take a step now, in my community, in my context, to*

*address a particular need that's mine, as a function of my unique gift, to address?" Everyone has that ability to participate in their unique way towards shifting something in the source code of where they're living in the world.*

- *From a non-dual perspective, recognizing the wholeness and connectivity of the All, anything you do changes everything else.*
- *Don't just hold the vision, implement it. That is the great invitation of your life, and we need you to do it—because no one else can do it the way you can.*

## **Marc Gafni**

Dr. Marc Gafni holds his doctorate from Oxford University and has direct lineage in Kabbalah. He is a Rabbi, spiritual artist, teacher, and a leading visionary in the emerging World Spirituality movement. He is a co-founder of The Center for World Spirituality, a scholar at the Integral Institute, and the director of the Integral Spiritual Experience; as well



as a lecturer at John F. Kennedy University. The author of seven books, including the national bestseller *Soul Prints* and *Mystery of Love*, Gafni's teaching is marked by a deep transmission of open heart, love and leading edge provocative wisdom. Gafni is considered by many to be a visionary voice in the founding of a new World Spirituality and one of the great mind/heart teachers of the generation.