



Western Ways to the Center

Week Three

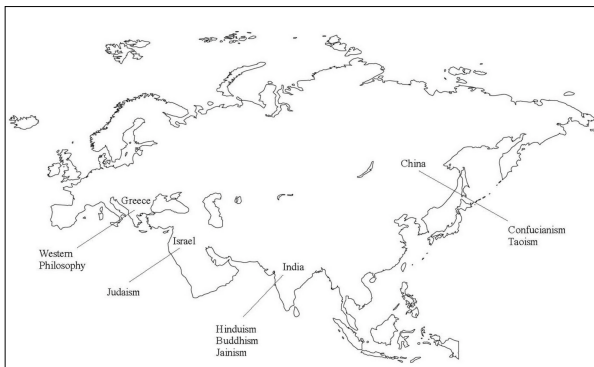
First Axial Traditions

Second Axial Stirrings



The First Axial Age

First Millennium BCE • Epicenter—6th century BCE



Individual Focus

Earlier:
"Civilizational Religion"
(Imperial)

- Religion
- Ethics
- Spiritual Practice

Exclusivist by default
No real knowledge of
the other

The Second Axial Age

We are living it...creating it...and being shaped by it.



Global Focus

- Peace, Justice, Sustainability
- Pluralism
- Interspirituality

The Second Axial Age

Ewert Cousins

Christ of the 21st Century

If we shift our gaze from the first millennium BCE to the eve of the twenty-first century, we can discern another transformation of consciousness.

It is so profound and far-reaching that I call it the Second Axial Age. Like the first it is happening simultaneously around the earth, and like the first it will shape the horizon of consciousness for future centuries.

The Second Axial Age

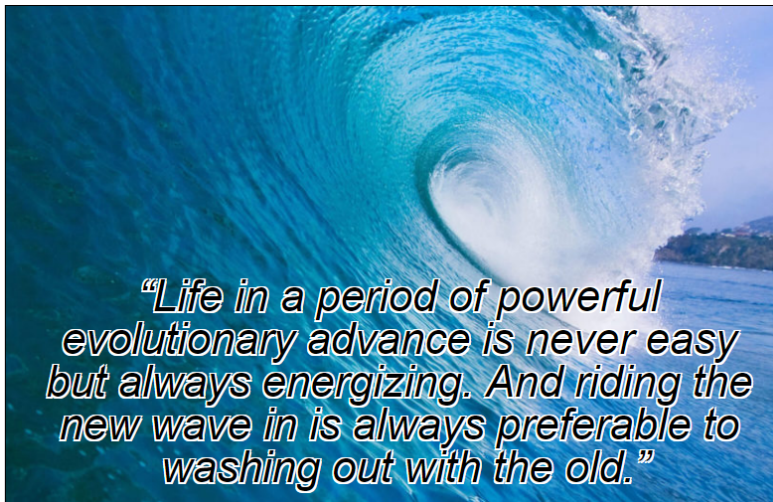
Not surprisingly, too, it will have great significance for world religions, which were constituted in the First Axial Period.

However, the new form of consciousness is different from that of the First Axial Period.

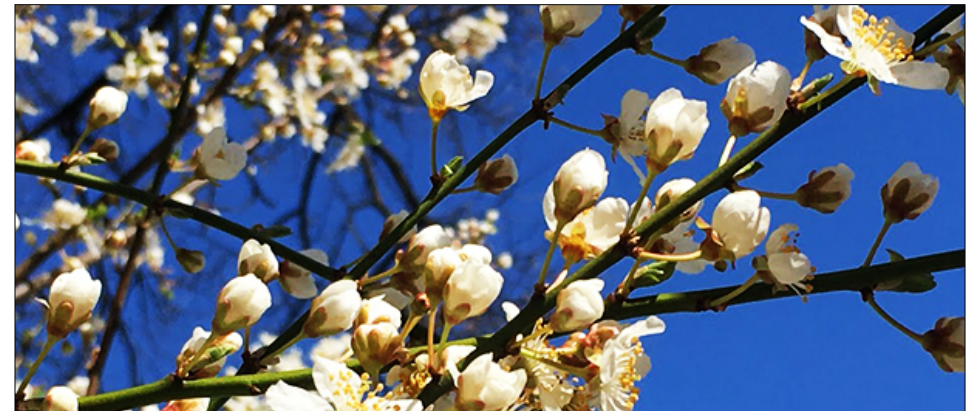
Then it was individual consciousness, now it is global consciousness.



Diving Deep



The Second Axial Comes into Focus



The First Axial Age naturally blossoms into the Second

First Axial Age

Avatar

Divine Being Incarnation Sage Emperor,
 Prophet Teacher Jurist, Father
 Exemplar Unified Self Awakened One

Master Story

Master-Disciple Departure and Pilgrimage
 Noble Truths Return
 Life, Death, Resurrection Giving of the Law Co-creation Delivery from Bondage
 A New Revelation

Ritual Patterns

Remembering The Meal Cleansing
 Sacred Time Initiation Prayer
 Avowal Pilgrimage Sacred Space Blessing

Second Axial Age

Moral-Ethical Norm

Peace, Justice, Sustainability

Worldview

- Global Focus
- Spiritual Engagement
- Interdependence
- Pluralism

Western Ways to the Center

The shared center: Jerusalem

Monotheism
 Personal God
 Human-Divine Dualism
 Ritual/Worship
 Sin, Forgiveness Punishment
 Olam Haba (the world to come)
 Heaven, Paradise

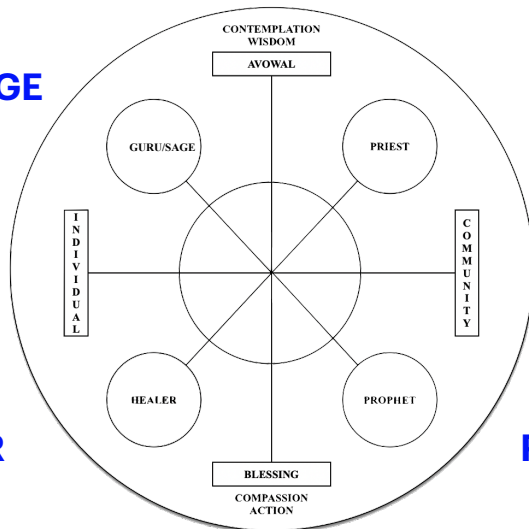


Doorways
 Theology
 Society
 Ethics
 Relationship
 "The Other"
 Nature
 Awareness
 Healing
 Mysticism

All four Exemplars

GURU/SAGE

PRIEST



HEALER

PROPHET

Are to be found along each path

Jerusalem



The Abraham Path



12

Projects

134

Communities

1204

km of Trails

6780

Walkers per Year



Judaism



The Shema

“Hear O Israel, the Lord your God,
the Lord is One.”

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad

In the Second Axial Age, this ancient teaching
gives rise to awareness of interdependence

Christianity



“You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all
your soul, and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.”

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
There is no other commandment greater
than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

Ἄγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν.

In the Second Axial Age, these ancient teachings
offer a new understanding of
interdependence, compassion, and pluralism

Islam



The Shahada

The Confession of Belief

“There is no God but God,
and Muhammad is his Prophet.”

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

(lā 'ilāha 'illā l-Lāh, Muḥammadun rasūlu l-Lāh)

In the Second Axial Age, this ancient teaching
takes shape in the call to prophecy

Zoroastrianism

“Turn not yourself away from
the three best things:
Good Thought, Good Word,
and Good Deed.”



— Prophet Zoroaster
(enters history in the 6th century BCE)

Good-Evil Duality

*Enormous influence on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism,
Greek philosophy, Baha'i (and western thought in general)*

In the Second Axial Age, Zoroaster's teaching of the
sacredness of earth, air, water, and fire
grounds engaged ecological spirituality

Baha'i Faith

“The earth is but one
country and mankind its
citizens.”



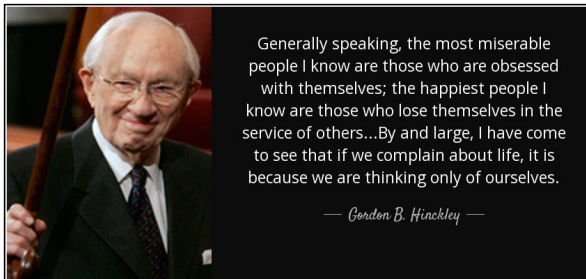
— Bahá'u'lláh (1817-92)
*The Kitab-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy
Book*



In the Second Axial Age, this teaching
emerges as religious pluralism

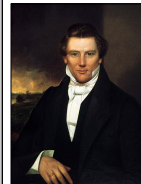
Mormonism

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Generally speaking, the most miserable
people I know are those who are obsessed
with themselves; the happiest people I
know are those who lose themselves in the
service of others...By and large, I have come
to see that if we complain about life, it is
because we are thinking only of ourselves.

— Gordon B. Hinckley —



Christ's Atonement allows mankind to be saved from their
sins and return to live with God and their families forever.

Mormonism remains solidly grounded in
First Axial principles and values

Other Western Ways

Second Axial Stirrings

Swedenborgians



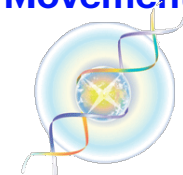
Unitarian
Universalists



Neo-Paganism



The New Thought
Movement





What does it mean to be living in a second Axial Age?

Awakened World 2012 Rome and Florence, Italy

AGNT
IEP 21

The Peace Council

Common Ground

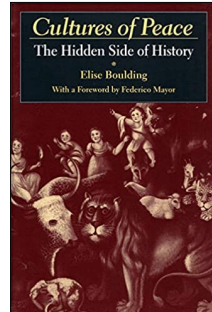
We asked that very question.

		SECOND AXIAL MARKERS			
		Reconciling with the Other	Transforming Society	Embracing the Earth Family	Rediscovering the Sacred
STAGES	Signs of Change	Interreligious Awakening & the Global Interreligious Movement	Peace and the Just Society: Striving for Nonviolence, Social and Economic Fairness, & Human Rights	Care for Sacred Earth and the Planetary Community	Interspirituality: Spiritual Convergence and Mutual Illumination
	Systemic Shift	The Passing of Exclusivism: A New Openness	The Passing of Patriarchy: Women's Leadership and Authority; the Divine Feminine	Global Spiritual Perspective and the Emerging Global Consensus	Celebration of the Whole: Interdependence as the Key to Evolutionary Values
	Engagement	Beyond Dogma: Toward Creative Inquiry	Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement	Healing the World: Sustainability, Resources, and Equity	The Inner Life: Mysticism / Consciousness / Enlightenment
	Embodiment	The Interreligious Story: Spiritual Evolution in Our Time	New Models and Maps for Community, Leadership, and Governance	New Lifestyles: Sustainability, Compassion, Fairness, and Trust	Reclaiming the Great Meme: Living Our Oneness

Cultures of Peace

“War is not inherent in human beings.
We learn war and we learn peace.

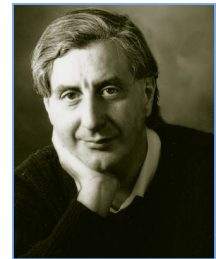
The culture of peace is something which is learned,
just as violence is learned and war culture is learned.”



Elise Boulding (1920-2010)

Bringing together all the great systems of spiritual
wisdom, practice, insight, reflection, experience,
and science provides a truly integral
understanding of spirituality in its practical
application in our lives, regardless of our tradition.

Wayne Teasdale

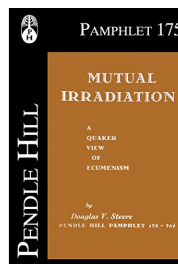


Mutual Irradiation

Something happens in the course of understanding
another's truth that irradiates and lights up one's own
tradition and that on rare occasions may even give one
a hint of a truth that embraces both, a hint of a hidden
convergence.



Douglas Steere (1901-95)



Jalāl ad Dīn Mohammad Rūmī



He saw it coming...