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The Wider Quaker Fellowship program of Friends World Committee for Consultation is a ministry of literature. Through our mailings of readings, we seek to lift up voices of Friends of different countries, languages and Quaker traditions, and invite all to enter into spiritual community with Friends.

The Fellowship was founded in 1936 by Rufus M. Jones, a North American Quaker teacher, activist and mystic, as a way for like-minded people who were interested in Quaker beliefs and practices to stay in contact with the Religious Society of Friends, while maintaining their own religious affiliation, if any. Today, WQF Fellows live in over 90 countries, and include non-Friends, inquirers, Quakers living in isolated circumstances, and even active members and attenders of Friends meetings and churches. The Fellowship does not charge a subscription fee, but depends on donations from its readers and other supporters to cover costs.

An excerpt from Pendle Hill Pamphlet 299, *Vistas from Inner Stillness*, 1991.

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Crystals and the Breath of God

RICHARD WALKER

Intermountain Yearly Meeting



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La Asociación de amigos de los Amigos

An excerpt from Pendle Hill Pamphlet 299, *Vistas from Inner Stillness*, 1991.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard L. Walker (1938-2005) was a naturalist, astronomer and convinced Friend. He wrote articles on binary stars and satellites of the outer planets, as well as a trilogy of novels expounding his theory that World War II still causes suffering in our world. This essay was excerpted from a Pendle Hill pamphlet, *Vistas from Inner Stillness* (No. 229, 1991), in which Walker wrote of a “knowing of God” which came from his mystical experiences of nature.

have failed and turned to feelings. This remembered description cannot fully convey what happened to me that day. Feelings and emotions were released within me that changed me and the nurturing of my spiritual life began.

Feelings consume me now as I write, and in meditation and in our Quaker silence I can sense them radiating from the very atoms inside me. It is a general consciousness that we share with every atom of the universe. Moving, vibrating, the atoms are ordering themselves within me. They are the same atoms of the quartz oscillators, the same atoms of snow flakes, and ice crystals miles above me, and they are the same ordered atoms, the same vibrating oscillators that stopped a Midwestern city in the 1950s.

The sensations, ideas, and motivating forces within us that we call consciousness are the same as those which order the universal spheres in their orbits. This is not the rhetoric of philosophy. It is, rather, an attempt to express feelings that result from periods of blissful stillness. The consciousness of order is the same as that I know when centering in the peace and silence of our meetings.

Celestial consciousness is a source we all touch. We are all tapping it. It is the Good, the Light, the Spirit. It is an essence that I add to the nature of God. There is no self, no individual, no separation of ego in that stillness, no distinction between a fresh flower and an ice crystal. It is all the same and anything that causes us to feel otherwise is an illusion.

were tears of emotion streaming down his cheeks and I turned to the sky again as he continued, "There are clouds of ice crystals high in the sky, higher than we normally see clouds. These crystals are thin and transparent.

"The crystals are of different sizes, but all are six-sided. Some look like thin plates, some pillars, and there are combined ones that look like mushrooms and top hats, and they are aligned in different patterns high up in the stratosphere. They are in clouds at different altitudes and those clouds are moving between us and the sun. It's called a parhelion, a great solar complex! A great one! I have only read about them and seen old drawings and neither you nor I are ever likely to see one like it again. Beautiful! Magnificent!" he murmured.

Soon dark clouds moved in rapidly from the western sky and we fell silent again. They came to us like a million run-away locomotives and with their motion a black curtain was pulled over the world, and it began to snow.

The snow was still, silent, and without wind. The first flakes to reach my sleeve were fluffy creations of filigreed lace and I looked at them closely and saw that they were crystals, six-sided crystals. How can one view such majesty, such beauty, such an overwhelming vista of celestial power and not grow to feel that everything about us is governed by laws, greater than physical laws? Laws we can only hope to feel.

Crystals surround us everywhere, from table salt to digital watches. They are latticed marvels of atoms, which have a consciousness, a consciousness of harmony and order. They are Spinoza's God and as I try to fathom this by order and reason I

Once, while touring about the area of Cornwall I bought a mineral sample of cassiterite, an oxide of tin. It was a plain, gray mass, but had a small depression filled with tiny sparkly objects that appeared to be crystals. I examined the mineral under a binocular microscope and discovered a world of beauty and complexity, for jutting from that depression were prismatic and needle crystals of cassiterite interlaced with crystals of clear quartz. Studying the fairyland of light and reflections transported me back in time to my first experience with crystals, and how they paralyzed a Midwestern town.

I was thirteen and in class when the principal's secretary appeared at the door and announced, very excitedly, that we were to leave the room immediately and go to the playground. This was not a fire drill and not a fire alarm.

Throughout the week the mercury had continued to fall farther and farther below zero. Down the hall, students were pouring from rooms and buzzed with anxious expectations as coats and mufflers were pulled from wall pegs. The teachers seemed apprehensive, too, and on reflection it is clear that they did not know what was happening, either. We moved en masse toward the door, and a hush came over us.

When we assembled on the playground that day, I experienced a silence in a large group of people that I have not seen duplicated in over forty years. There was something wrong with the sky.

Nearing noon, the sun was as high as it was to get on that

December day. The sky was a milky grey, and a gloom covered our world. Eyes turned skyward automatically because the light of the sun was so weak that we could look at it without discomfort. The cold jabbed painfully at our thighs like knives of sheet metal.

About the sun and in the sky were great circles of light and from the sun grew shafts of light that formed a large cross whose arms arced across the heavens to meet at the cardinal points of that great circle. It was a huge circle and to an impressionable boy it seemed to be bigger than the sky itself. The cross and the circle both displayed the colors of a faded rainbow. The light seemed to radiate from behind the sky.

At the four points, where the cross touched the great circle, there were four more circles, each tangent to the greater one and on their three open cardinal points were arched cusps of yellow, orange, and red light. The light of the sun was rippling outward to these specters with a force unknown to me, but I can remember feeling it with a primal fear. We were standing in awe of a magnificent celestial mystery, a mystery that reflected inside me and still does.

The sky was not static, but rather it pulsed like some heavy breathing dragon and as we stood stunned by this scene, sounds began to fade. Birds were neither heard nor seen flying, and vehicles had stopped about the city as a hush came over the universe, for the sky began to move.

The colors of this apparition were not the true colors of the rainbow. They were not vivid, but pale, an almost sickly composite of colors, but what made it a thing of singular beauty

was that it evolved before us. It was as if it was born of some seed in the depths of space to emerge through that milky sky to a focus of color.

As the circles became more distinct, mock suns formed with focusing brightness within the smaller circles and then crosses emanated from them to touch the boundaries of their circles. Circles and arcs faded only to be born again and sun dogs and solar pillars waxed and waned as if to the will of some supreme celestial conductor. It was a symphony of light and it played both to our sense of beauty and to our fears. I felt I was watching the end of the world, but it was so beautiful I did not care.

The mock suns grew and then shot to earth as if propelled by heaven's guns. Dozens of spectacular orbs moved and faded, focused and danced on this sky stage. The sun dimmed again, its light sucked away to give birth to this display. The mock spheres flashed suddenly and then disappeared and the sun and its supreme complex of lights stilled, and from the crowd rose a simultaneous roar that grew out of the anthem of our silence. It was primordial, an exclamation born at that first realization of light.

The crowd broke and boiled with motion as students began to talk and mill about. It was the crowd's sigh of relief as if we were to be granted a life's reprieve from the sun. The great solar complex held itself fixed as if saying, 'Now, you have been still and seen the edge of my greatness!' I turned and saw our principal, the man who had canceled class. "What is it?" I asked. "What is it?"

Without looking down, Mr. Meeker said, "Crystals." There