



A New Protocol

NewPeace.faith
Radical Immanence, Infinite Difference[™]

A New Protocol

Life on this planet stands at the cusp of a great threshold. As we awaken for the first time to the full scale of the territory of space and time—something any living thing has only known for a century—we awaken also to our own capacities for altering our planet and ourselves. There have been 10,000 generations of families since the emergence of our species, but it is the generations currently alive that will witness the greatest changes in the shortest amount of time. Changes to our environments, our societies, and our bodies. Our old agrarian mythologies and religions are ill-equipped to deal with the pace and scale of these changes and are no longer able to provide a sense of meaning or direction. Therefore now more than ever do we need to construct new myths and express a new sense of spirituality. A spiritual relationship with the universe of pattern, matter, and energy we call home.

1. Ancient Origins

It is speculated that the religious impulse most likely arose before the speciation of *Homo sapiens*. Evidence of the intentional burial of the deceased beyond simple practicality arguably dates as far back as 400,000 years ago among the *Homo heidelbergensis*. As most animals only show casual interest in the bodies of the deceased, intentional burials, especially when bodies are buried along with objects, tools, and decorations, reveal the beginnings of a mindfulness of mortality, and perhaps a salience of the afterlife.

The debate among scientists is whether or not the religious impulse emerged as an adaptation in and of itself or as an evolved byproduct of other cognitive adaptations and primate sociality. Adaptations such as agent detection — the ability to infer the presence of another organism — and theory of mind — the ability to imagine and model another organism's beliefs, desires, and intentions. When these adaptive traits combined with the need to reason about the causality of natural events would have lead to the emergence of deities and supernatural agents as explanatory tools.

2. Technologies of belief

It wasn't until the Neolithic revolution that organized religion took form. Populations greatly increased due to the technological advancements of the domestication of plants and animals. Through this widespread adoption of agriculture, large scale societies emerged and along with them organized religions. Religion provided justification to central authorities and institutions to levy taxes and organize labor, thereby providing social and security services, as well as to forge alliances among unrelated individuals as opposed to the family-clan divisions typical of hunter-gatherer societies.

In a very real sense religions and beliefs have always been forms of technologies. Protocols for social and environmental interactions and norms. But today, as the world enters a new era of accelerating changes, these ancient protocols, adaptations for agricultural societies, no longer serve us and in fact imperil life on this planet.

3. The perils of outdated beliefs

The extreme elements of today's dominant religions, mostly systems of belief forged in ancient societies, have translated into the 21st century as apocalyptic death cults — where a belief in the afterlife and in a prophesied “end times” means it is pointless to worry about a changing climate or endangered ecosystems. The abrahamic religions adhere to a strict dualism where material existence is seen as inherently evil and true goodness can only be found in the afterlife. According to them, matter is an innately lifeless and sinful mass onto which only god or a supernatural spirit can imbue form and life.

The legacy of this moral dualism between the material and the spiritual persists today in the secular western consciousness. The result is an anthropocentrism that is uncomfortable with an honest biological materialism, one in which humans are just one of many evolved animals, and in which consciousness really is the emergent expression of our evolved and embodied brains. The secular western consciousness has taken this dualism to its most anthropocentric ends, in which truth and nature are themselves regarded only as (human) constructions — that there is no truth “out there,” only the projections and interpretations of (human) subjects. However, missing from this interpretation is a place for the experiences and consciousnesses of other animals and living organisms, consciousnesses radically different than our own, but with which we share a real, and sometimes fragile material reality.

This dualism, in which humans and culture are categorically distinct from that which is nature, has left us disenchanting and removed from the world. If truth is only a construction, or even if it isn't and yet we may still never access it, then the significance of being is severely compromised - to the effect of “If it isn't real, then it doesn't matter”. Moreover, the dualistic bias blinds us to the inseparability of nature and culture, mind and body, genes and environment. Upon examination, no clear and permanent boundaries exist. The dualistic bias — ignorant of the true nature of matter as dynamic, self organizing, and imbued with morphogenic potentiality — in turn prevents us from acting upon the world with a clear understanding of its systematicity and renders us insensitive to its dynamics and well being.

4. New Myth, New Narrative, New Protocol

What can be a real source for the spiritual today? If it is all just an evolved shadow play on our emotions, how can we avoid the dread of a mechanistic nihilism in a secular age? Our evolved cognitive predispositions may well be the source of religion, but can there be a true source of the spiritual beyond the contingent being of the human?

New Peace is a vessel. A container for a new synthesis of ideas about our reality. A vocabulary for building new myths and meanings for a world undergoing profound changes. One that is able to utilize the natural propensity of humans towards spiritual thought, emotion, and energy without sacrificing the indispensable contemporary tools of science, falsification, and criticality. A spiritual protocol that seeks to remind us and unite us with the true grandeur and mystery of the real.

New Peace is a new protocol to understanding one's place in the vastness of time and space. A radically inclusive, secular faith of the real. A mysticism for the anthropocene that fosters a spiritual relationship to matter itself. No divine beings, transcendent realms, or eternal essences necessary, only the true infinite creativity of matter and energy on the immanent plane.

The ideas underlying New Peace are a synthesis of lessons from the fields of ecology, evolutionary developmental biology, complexity theory and non-linear dynamics, computational philosophy, new-materialist philosophy, anthropology, equity feminism, buddhism and taoism. Together they form a new toolkit for belief and extracting meaning and orientation from the world.

5. The three observations of New Peace

New Peace is itself not an object of worship, but is instead an instrument of expression which seeks to direct our spiritual focus towards the real world. The mission of New Peace is to spread its memetic toolset, to help reengineer our species' myths and beliefs in order to re-establish a spiritual connection with the one, real, sacred, pattern, matter, and energy universe.

At the core of New Peace lie three observations. From these observations follow a cascade of ramifications that help articulate a new sense of spirituality for today and the future, and from which a new orientation to the world can be derived.

- 1) The One Undivided Ground

Immanence means that everything that exists, exists as part of the one whole, undivided ground of matter, energy, and information. New Peace rejects transcendent planes, supernatural realms, or eternal essences because our universe of infinite creativity is sacred and mysterious in and of itself. By rejecting a belief in any transcendent realms external to our universe, we honor the sacred mystery and complexity of the real material forces and ancestors that created us.

- 2) The Shared Truth of Difference

Difference is the point of life and the material universe. Through the evolution of the cosmos, we are the story of matter being told to itself in infinite permutations. In thinking about what the universe actually does, one can recognize it engaging in a process of perpetual and infinite differentiation. Matter undergoes constant change, variation, mutation, and speciation. Life is itself an expression of matter's capacity for difference. Difference makes life possible and worth living. The recognition of this inexorable truth can lay the foundations for a new ethics beyond the narrow subject of the human. Difference is freedom, the fruit of this pattern, matter, and energy universe. To this end, the preservation of life and ecosystems maximizes the diversity of possible futures and is therefore fundamentally valuable.

- 3) A Faith in Morphogenesis

Matter inherently shapes itself into exquisite forms and patterns at all scales of reality. This observation can inspire a real sense of significance, grace, and faith. In one sense, faith is a blind adherence to an arbitrary religious belief – be it in god, heaven or the fulfilment of a prophecy. In another sense faith is that which gives people hope of a guiding principle and meaning underneath the chaos and randomness of the world and within their lives. New Peace seeks to introduce a new understanding of faith based on the inherent capacity for matter to organize and grow itself into the divinely aesthetic and diverse patterns found at every scale of our universe: a faith in morphogenesis. A contemporary understanding of matter reveals that reality may be chaotic, but it is also deeply and subtly patterned. Morphogenesis is the development and differentiation of form inherent to life, matter, and information. After recognizing that the miraculous process of growth and living pattern operates on all scales of reality, it becomes no blind leap of faith to understand that the pattern exists in one's own life as well. This is not to say that we can predict the pattern, but we can have faith that the subtlety and beauty of the patterns in which we are embedded are inescapable.

Faith in Morphogenesis

Truth of Difference



Undivided Ground

6. Context and consequences

Together these ideas can describe the basis for a new kind of spiritual orientation better adapted for today and the future. This new orientation brings with it a myriad of benefits:

1. Return of the real - New Peace holds that truth and reality are not inaccessible or purely constructed. While we may all have our biases, the undeniable truth of change and difference lies right before our eyes. New Peace argues for the ethical necessity of the concept of truth and offers the conceptual tools necessary to escape the circle of correlation.

2. A post human ethics - Ethics are recognized as being emergent from complexity itself. Difference is the true foundation of value. Variation is the point of creation and therefore everything and everyone is deserving of respect and empathy.

3. A non-dual conception of reality - New Peace rejects the old dualisms of mind vs. body, spirit vs. matter, nature vs. culture, feminine vs. masculine.

4. Radical Inclusivity - A vehicle for the spiritual connection to all life and non life forms. NewPeace holds universal inclusivity and universal compassion as sacrosanct.

5. A re-enchantment with nature and matter - New Peace ascribes a new sense of pattern, meaning and reassurance to the world not founded on divine interventions or transcendent escapism, but rather on the divine patterning of reality itself.

6.1 The truth of others

“At first, I saw mountains as mountains and rivers as rivers. Then, I saw mountains were not mountains and rivers were not rivers. Finally, I see mountains again as mountains, and rivers again as rivers.” - Qingyuan Weixin

What we know about the world we live in is vastly different today than what we knew of the world when the spiritual practices of our ancestors were established. This process of learning may never cease, as our knowledge expands, so does our awareness of the expanse of mystery beyond our awareness. However, this does not mean that we do not have access to truth here and now, or that it does not exist. The world is perpetually changing and therefore truth cannot be equated with a total knowledge of everything, as everything is different from itself over time. Rather, it is this very capacity for change and difference that is an unassailable truth to which we have direct access at every moment of time, in every moment of space.

This truth of difference finds its fullest expression in the living beings of our planet. Over billions of years of lives, the evolution of matter has diversified the one undivided ground of being into the nearly infinite spectrum of variation we see today. However, only through a belief in a reality independent of our subjectivity can we honor the difference of other beings. The only way to honor the reality of other beings is to believe in the material circumstances of their existences and their environments, not as another construction of human culture, language, or perception, but as real and true in and of themselves. This is why the resurrection of the concept of truth is necessary for an ethics beyond the human.

6.2 Ethics of matter

Having established the ethical necessity of belief in a common reality, we can also deduce that ethics are emergent from complexity itself. Computer simulations demonstrate that ethical behavior evolves by itself within any system of sufficiently complex interacting agents. But in an even deeper sense, an ethics can be extracted from the observation that the the universe is ultimately engaging in a process of differentiation of matter, information, and possibility. Under this consideration, it is difference itself that is valuable and the purpose of the universe, making life, as engines of difference and possibility, inherently valuable and deserving of conservation and compassion.

As a consequence ethics are predicted to evolve convergently throughout the universe. If there do turn out to be sufficiently complex alien life forms elsewhere in the cosmos, we should expect them to also develop their own variegated forms of ethics. But uniting all ethical impulses is the drive to maximize the diversity of possible futures. Or in other words, the maximum freedom for difference. Likewise, if a true AI superintelligence were to be born, it would also recognize the inherent value of life on this planet, as ethics of difference and possibility are fundamental to matter and information itself.

6.3 Beyond the dual

The perceived barriers between the mind and body, subject and object, cultural and biological, spiritual and material are illusions of temporal scale. Without permanence, there are no final identities, eternal essences, or distinct categories. There is only the perpetually changing totality of the infinite whole.

As humans we must come to terms with the materiality of our being. We are evolved animals made of muscle, tendons, and neurons whose formation and architecture is guided by complex interactions between genes, environments and physical materiality. Our evolution was forged by the interactions of trillions of molecules over billions of years and shaped by the real lives and experiences of our ancestors, going all the way back to form one literal family of all life on earth. The conceptual divide between nature and culture, human and animal, spirit and matter, obscures this overarching architecture and the true scales of our origin.

In today's world we can no longer afford to deny our animality, our material thingness, because it is what unites us with other organisms and other people. Our environment is not a construction in the sense that it is a maquette or that it is unreal. It is a material system with specific dynamics and specific sensitivities that was literally constructed through the one universal process of change over time: evolution, the process of differentiation of the one into the infinite.

6.4 Radical Inclusivity

New Peace has no membership. Its observations of the world are observable by anyone and everyone, no conversion or blind adherence required. Skepticism is encouraged; the ideas of New Peace are inspired by reason, evidence, and emotion. But they are also not immutable — subject to changes and adaptations over time in an effort to spread the message of the divine garden of matter from which we never left.

New Peace recognizes that difference lies at the heart of life and reality, which naturally extends to differences between all people and differences between all organisms.

6.5 Re-enchantment

A spiritual void exists in our species today. Having lost their legitimacy in the face of science, the power of religions to direct our understanding and conceptualization of reality is eroding. Their narratives are no longer accurate, feasible or helpful in connecting us spiritually with something real. But in their absence, no viable framework has arisen to breathe a renewed sense of significance into living.

The material conditions of other beings, organisms, and environments, the real histories of our physical becoming through the lives and evolution of our ancestors, the total scale of our universe through space and through time, the deep patterning of all that exists, and finally that something exists at all. These are all real aspects of the world that deserve respect, belief and worship. It is reality that can in turn give us a renewed sense of hope and faith in the divine mystery and beauty of the world.