

Love is the Answer

An Appreciation of Myron Stolaroff (August 20, 1920–January 6, 2013)

JOHN HARRISON



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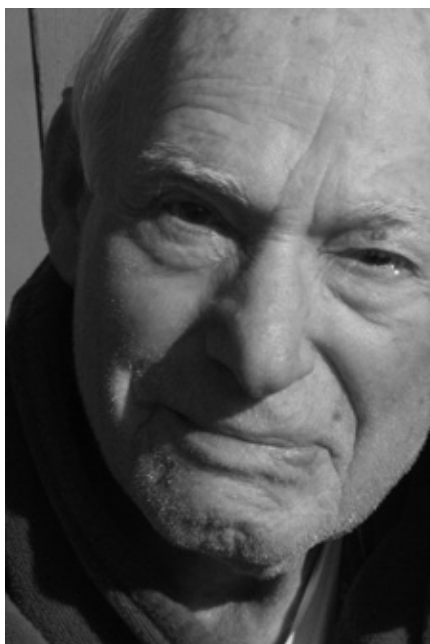
“There is a light that glows continuously in the universe. It is eternal, ever-present, and unending. This light is the source of life. It can be for each of us the source of joy, wellbeing, aliveness, in fact that which makes everything in life charged with exuberance and gratitude at the miracle of being. We can be filled with wonder and excitement at participating in the enormous adventure of life. This light is infinitely expressive, constantly seeking ways to manifest in ever-unfolding, ever-increasing varieties of expression. [...] We, humankind, have the opportunity to be the channel for the expression of this light. As the most developed creatures on the planet, we have been granted attributes which permit us to unite our inner self with this indescribably beautiful light, to be an expression of this energy, and to share in the joy and delight of the unfolding processes of Life.”

—Myron Stolaroff

THESE BEAUTIFUL WORDS OF MYRON’S are faithful in spirit to his life’s work, and genuinely reflect the heart of this remarkable human being. So many who have been touched by, or are active in, the psychedelic movement owe much to this brilliant and humble pioneer.

Born in Roswell, New Mexico, on August 20, 1920, Myron completed his education at Stanford University with a Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering. The bulk of his industrial career was spent with Ampex Corporation, a leading manufacturer of magnetic recording equipment and producer of the first successful video recorder. Here he reached the position of Assistant to the President in charge of Long Range Planning. This position provided the broad perspective of the technical world that permitted him to declare, after his first experience with LSD in 1956, that LSD was the most important discovery of mankind. He consequently made the decision to devote his primary energy to discovering and exploring the potential of psychedelic substances.

In 1960, Myron founded the International Foundation for Advanced Study (IFAS) in Menlo Park, California, where research with LSD and mescaline was conducted for three and a half years, processing some 350 subjects and resulting in six professional papers, including a landmark investigation of the application of psychedelics to creativity. After the FDA revoked all permits for research with psychedelics in 1965,



Left to right: Myron Stolaroff; Jean Stolaroff, Myron, and Sasha Shulgin, out on a walk around their property (photos by Jon Hanna, Erowid.org); and Myron in his early years (photo from the Stolaroff Collection, Erowid.org).

Myron began studying how the knowledge of psychedelics can be employed to deepen meditation practice and achieve personal realization. Myron accurately perceived psychedelics as a valuable tool on the path to self-realization and wholeness, but definitely not the only or final tool.

His inner work through meditation, as well as his many papers and books, reflect this understanding and his ongoing search for self-discovery and the divine within. Some of this inner work included hiking and climbing in his beloved High Sierra. Myron and his wife

Jean lived in the quaint township of Lone Pine, Calif., at the base of magnificent Mt. Whitney. Surrounded by the hauntingly beautiful high desert and the Sierra crest, Myron, Jean, and their delighted friends would take daily hikes and occasional extended forays into the backcountry wilderness, where they would enjoy the mountain air and wax philosophic.

The esteemed Jon Hanna of erowid.org writes, “On January 28, 1978, Myron took MDMA for the first time. The experience produced a ‘marvelous euphoria’ and was a ‘wonderful introduction’ to the compound, which was not illegal at the time. Myron quietly began personal investigations into the effects of these drugs, until the Controlled Substance Analogue Act of 1986 put a damper on that research as well. After this, Myron shifted more focus onto his meditation practice...and soon he joined the Board of Directors for The Albert Hofmann Foundation, which had formed in 1988.” Besides his work with the Hofmann Foundation, Myron also served as a consultant to the Heffter Research Institute and was on the Board of Advisors for the Center for Cognitive Liberty and Ethics. Subsequently,

he began writing his autobiography, *Thanatos to Eros: 35 Years of Psychedelic Exploration*, which was published in 1994.

In his autobiography, Myron describes his own difficult yet rewarding personal journey. It is a journey from the grip of Thanatos, the drive for death that effectively defeats enjoyment of life, to Eros, the drive for life that brings ultimate fulfillment. For Myron, an essential ingredient in the success of this struggle was the use of psychedelic substances. “First of all, these sacraments, as I prefer to call them, are fantastic privileges.

It is an indescribable grace, an indescribable privilege.” Utilizing these “power tools” to become aware of the vast potential available to the human being was a primary benefit, Myron felt:

This is apparent the first time anybody takes one of the stronger psychedelics, like LSD. One of the amazing things is the way barriers to perception fall away and you become aware of more and more that you’ve never perceived before—a remarkable opening. As you continue to use these substances, these openings can continue and grow, until you become convinced that the process is practically limitless.

Myron’s story elicited universal acclaim from brilliant authors and psychedelic researchers world-wide:

“I wish I could have had Myron as a Sunday school teacher to prepare me for my own psychedelic rites of passage: it would have helped me save about ten years of struggle.”—George Greer, MD, MDMA researcher and therapist, co-founder of the Heffter Research Institute

“These sacraments...are fantastic privileges...an indescribable grace, an indescribable privilege.”

—Myron Stolaroff



Left to right: Myron and Jean Stolaroff in 1984; Myron greeting Albert and Anita Hofmann (photo by Erowid); and Myron on the porch. Images courtesy of Theresa Stolaroff.

“Fascinating reading, both as a human story and as invaluable data on the long term, serious use of psychedelics for psychological and spiritual growth! We need books like these, they are too rare.”—Charles T. Tart, PhD, researcher in altered states of consciousness, transpersonal psychology, and parapsychology, author of *Altered States of Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychologies*

“Myron Stolaroff is one of the legendary pioneers of that stubborn shadow-science—the principled personal investigation into non-ordinary states of consciousness—which refuses to roll over and die despite its official excommunication by the orthodox Church of Science. This book is a dispatch from the Neuro-Consciousness Frontier and it has all the qualities of the man who wrote it; levelheaded, implacably honest, boundlessly curious.”—Jay Stevens, author of *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*

No less a light than the great Albert Hofmann (inventor of LSD) wrote to Myron in a personal correspondence dated 11 February 1995:

Dear Myron Stolaroff,

I do not remember that a book from a living author impressed me more than Thanatos to Eros...Reading your book, I enjoyed the security and deep happiness one experiences when one meets somebody with whom one is sharing their own insights into the essence of being and of our role on this planet. My accord with your concepts of life and reality can best be summarized if I tell you that already in the first two paragraphs of the introduction the core of my belief has found its most beautiful expression.

In psychedelic companionship, Albert Hofmann

In 1997, Myron published his groundbreaking book about the work of Leo Zeff, *The Secret Chief: Conversations with a Pioneer of the Underground Psychedelic Therapy Movement* (published

by MAPS). Based on interviews that Stolaroff made of a psychotherapist who used illegal psychedelics in his practice, the book also contains contributions from Stanislav Grof, Albert Hofmann, Ann Shulgin, and Sasha Shulgin. It is a seminal work exploring the early days of underground psychedelic therapy, legitimizing the sort of work that has only recently been given limited governmental approval to take place within legal, above-ground contexts. In 2004, Myron followed with an expanded version of his book, *The Secret Chief Revealed: Conversations with Leo Zeff, Pioneer in the Underground Psychedelic Therapy Movement*. Also published by MAPS, this expanded version finally presents the Secret Chief’s true identity; it also contains a new introduction and a number of tributes that extol the gifts and virtues of this courageous individual.

Myron also contributed a wonderful addition to the important book *Zig Zag Zen* entitled “Do We Still Need Psychedelics?” As always, measured and unfailingly honest Myron makes the

case, and answers, *Yes!* The book’s editor, Allan Badiner, remarked: “Many people experimented with and wrote about the positive effects of psychedelics but Myron Stolaroff not only dedicated a large part of his life to this, but he embodied it. No one in the psychedelic community comes to mind as more compassionate, kind, and wise than Myron Stolaroff.”

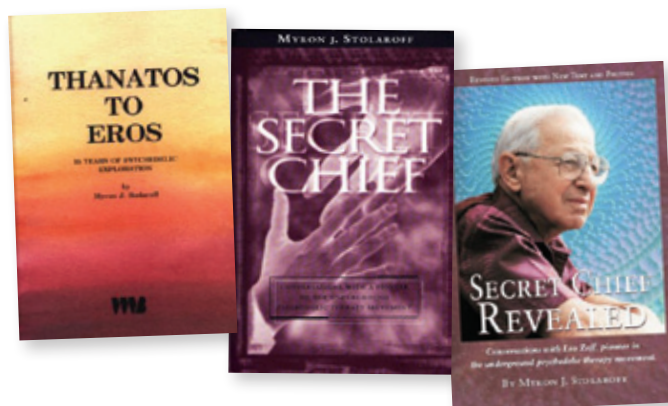
A modern Renaissance man, Myron Stolaroff was at once a force of nature and a true gentle-man. A lover of words, ideas, and the natural world, he was unique. Myron’s life was his laboratory, where he encouraged us, by example, to go even deeper with the myriad tools we have been given through psychedelic exploration and research. He was a fearless explorer of the inner human realms of shadow and light through psychotherapy and meditation, and his life was imbued with a profound wisdom born of his genuine love for this earth that gives us life.

The evolution of his life as electrical engineer, psychedelic explorer and researcher, medicine journey-guide, author, lec-

*His message was simply:
“Love is the answer!”*



A box formerly containing Sandoz LSD (Delysid) from Myron Stolaroff's archive Photo by Jon Hanna, Erowid.org



Myron Stolaroff's books (from left to right): *Thanatos to Eros*; *The Secret Chief*; and *The Secret Chief Revealed*.

turer, raconteur, mountaineer, Buddhist meditator, and seeker of the divine led him finally to exclaim to his son Jerry that "Love is the answer!" His realization was similar to that of another psychedelic pioneer—Aldous Huxley, whose deathbed advice (when asked to distill his life's wisdom) was, "Try to be a little kinder." After hundreds of psychedelic journeys (as both guide and participant), his long years of deep meditation practice, his countless hours reading and researching into the human psyche, and the hundreds of miles he walked in the mountains his message was simply: "Love is the answer!"

We hear you Myron, and thank you! 🍀

FURTHER READING

To learn more about Myron Stolaroff and his important and inspiring work, see:

Thanatos to Eros: 35 Years of Psychedelic Exploration by Myron Stolaroff, Stanislav Grof (Prologue), Ann Shulgin (Tribute), Albert Hofmann (Foreword) and Sasha Shulgin (Epilogue). Berlin: VWB—Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1994.

The Secret Chief: Conversations with a Pioneer of the Underground Psychedelic Therapy Movement. North Carolina: MAPS, 1997.

The Secret Chief Revealed: Conversations with Leo Zeff, Pioneer in the Underground Psychedelic Therapy Movement by Myron Stolaroff, Stanislav Grof (Prologue), Ann Shulgin (Tribute), Albert Hofmann (Foreword) and Sasha Shulgin (Epilogue). Paperback, Revised edition, 176 pages. MAPS, 2004

A Conversation with George Greer and Myron Stolaroff. Maps.org. (no date).

Myron's published writing includes:

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Savage, C. Stolaroff, MJ. Clarifying the Confusion Regarding LSD-25. *J Nerv Ment Dis.* 140(3):218–21. (1965).

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Using Psychedelics Wisely. *Gnosis: A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions* 26:26–30. (1993).

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From Molecules to Mystery. In Walsh, R and Grob, C (eds.), *Higher Wisdom: Eminent Elders Explore the Continuing Impact of Psychedelics*. SUNY Press. (2005).

The Future of Human Consciousness. Transcript of Stolaroff's presentation at the symposium "LSD: Problem Child and Wonder Drug". (2006).

John Harrison MA, PsyD (cand.) is and has been a psychedelic researcher, addiction treatment therapist, anti-Drug War activist, Zen Buddhist practitioner, Gestalt group leader, and mountaineer. John is also a connoisseur of amazing and breath-giving sunsets. He can be reached at jakaileb@hotmail.com.