

## BOOK REVIEW

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***Beyond the Indigo Children: The New Children and the Coming of the Fifth World***, by P. M. H. Atwater. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions/Bear and Company, 2005, 256 pp., \$16.00 pb. ISBN 0-59143-051-8.

P. M. H. Atwater has always held to the long view in her books, but *Beyond the Indigo Children* is an amazing feat of synthesis that takes the new children, those often termed “Indigos,” and places them in a context whose scope boggles the mind. That context includes the vast and the specific, weaving together metaphysics, legends, the new physics, sociology, child development, gifted education, near-death experiences (NDEs), and transformation. There is so much here that the book warrants reading and rereading just to collect and integrate all the fascinating strands. Although it is a stand-alone unit, it benefits from being paired with Atwater’s 1999 book, *Children of the New Millennium* (revised and republished in 2003 as *The New Children and Near-Death Experiences*). Together they evoke hope, concern, awe, expectancy, and relief that a far-reaching plan is unfolding.

While *Children of the New Millennium* (*The New Children and Near-Death Experiences*) focused on the characteristics of children who are near-death experiencers (one avenue of transformation) and sees a foreshadowing of what is to come, *Beyond the Indigo Children* explains why such children are making waves on the planet and why this is happening now. Its content is the news of today set in a framework of time almost beyond comprehension, where one cosmic

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year lasts 25,920 of our Earth-years. Such time is measured by the wheeling galaxies through space, just as Earth's orbit around the sun counts off a year for us, or as approximately 2,400 years mark the movement from one astrological age to another – such as the swing from Piscean to Aquarian Age, also happening now.

Grounded in an evolutionary and transformational view, Atwater takes a clear-eyed look at the new children, who are supersensitive, confident, antsy, psychic, nonconformist, creative, highly aware, often angry, hard to parent, and challenging to educate. Yet they are also empathetic, creative, gutsy, and great problem solvers. Their most important and unnerving aspect is that they *know*. They are tuned in to intuitive understanding and fail to be impressed by what others tell them unless it fits their inner knowledge. A variety of professionals as well as beleaguered parents are recognizing that “the new kids are different,” and much has been made of the differences, even to unhealthy adulation.

Atwater warns sternly against such limelighting. Her take is that the new children are very like the child near-death experiencers she has been studying for decades. (They also share many traits with gifted children, who tend to be sensitive, energetic, empathetic, have their own agendas, and do not automatically respect or obey adults.) She suggests that the new children, like NDErs and gifted children, are forerunners of the full wave of Indigos yet to come. They give us a taste of the future that we do well to heed.

So much is covered in this book that it is difficult to know what to write about. Atwater looks at sociological studies that recognize the “flavors” of various generations, such as the X Generation and the Baby Boomers, and embeds them within the Hindu context of “root races,” or sequential waves of development of humanity itself. We are currently in the fifth of these root races, and the author sees us moving into a flowering or “Ascension” period, the culmination of thousands of years of experience. She pulls together Bible stories, the Jewish Kaballah, genetic studies such as that of “Mitochondrial Eve” – almost the mother of us all – astronomy, astrology, Edgar Cayce readings, and Caroline Myss's description of the chakra system. She speaks of the noosphere, a term introduced by Teilhard de Chardin to mean that global layer of human thought and interconnection we take for granted today as part of this culmination. Group awareness, interconnectedness, and interdependence appear to be the theme of the now and future time that will eventually bridge into the coming sixth root race, whose thematic color is *indigo*. It is then that the Indigo Children will flood the earth.

A recurring theme is the synchronicity of 5's. There is the fifth root race; the fifth dimension (intuitional sensing); the fifth chakra located at the throat and associated with blue, creativity, communication, will (power-over or power-to); the numerological number 5 (signifying change); and, from child development specialist Joseph Chilton Pearce, a fifth brain. That includes the reptilian, limbic, neocortex, and frontal lobes of the brain, with the fifth brain being the heart. The HeartMath Institute is at the cutting edge of science charting the intelligence of the heart.

All this is happening as we approach "the end of time" according to the Aztec/Mayan Calendar, which measures time up to 2012. Then the "Long Count" ends. Many native peoples likewise are expecting an end to things; some are curtailing pregnancy. Atwater reaches back into the mists of ancient wisdom teachings, including the Kaballah, Theosophy, and the Hindu Vedas, to reassure us that time recycles rather than ends. Although we are in a portentous time, when the shift from Piscean to Aquarian Ages coincides with a full turn of the Great Cosmic Wheel, when the Long Count ends, the sun will rise the next morning and we will shift into an Ascension of the Fifth World, with it colorings, qualities, problems, challenges, and unique solutions.

Everyone will take away something different from this book. Those interested in the New Age, the new challenges of parenting and educating, the increasing spiral of pressure so evident now, ecological crisis, shifting value systems, spirituality and intuition, or a true Big Picture, will each find sections that fascinate. It is likely that each will interpret what is read as a different blend of insight and fable, but no one will read it without being stirred to ponder what is to come and how our choices can influence the future.

## References

- Atwater, P. M. H. (1999). *Children of the new millennium: Children's near-death experiences and the evolution of humankind*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press. (Revised edition published in 2003 as *The new children and near-death experiences*, by Bear and Company, Rochester, VT.)