

CONVERSATIONS WITH HIMSELF

Review of Neale Donald Walsch,
Conversations with God, Books 1 and 2.

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"This book is an actual dialogue with God," reports New Age author Neale Donald Walsch. It is "God's latest word on things." And how Mr. Walsch loves his Lord. "I love you," he says to God; "you know that?" "I know you do," replies God; "and I love you." Sweet -- until one realizes that Mr. Walsch is writing mash notes to himself. He thinks God and Neal Donald Walsch are the same thing. Theoretical pantheism is practical me-theism; that's why the book has been on the *New York Times* best-seller list for more than a year, put there by my generation and the generation we raised. Read it as a mirror of the age.

Is the book difficult? No, it is all very "logical," as the conversations of people in the asylum often are. Here is how the argument works. (1) God is the greatest entity imaginable. (2) So God is All Things. (3) Naturally, All Things has no consciousness of its own. (4) So God can experience itself as God only through parts of itself that do have consciousness. (5) That's you and me. (6) But All Things is all there is. (7) So there's really only one thing. (8) So we drop the distinction between the All and its parts. (9) So we're not just parts of God -- we're God. (10) But there is only one of us. (11) So God is Me.

Granted the author's definitions, his book really is a dialogue with God. Just as, granted the president's definitions, he really hasn't had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

Best of all, the argument is irrefutable, because All Things isn't just All There Is but also All There Isn't. Contradiction is okay. "And you must understand the greatest truth," says God: "Nothing Matters." Except keeping this profitable racket going as long as possible.

"I believe the material speaks for itself," God says, so let us hear what He has to say.

FINDING TRUTH. "If you want to know what's true for you about something, look to how you're *feeling* about it."

AVOIDING ERROR. "Some feelings are counterfeit feelings Thoughts *masquerading* as feelings."

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE. "I have been speculating about myself a long time."

WHAT GOD DOESN'T WANT. "I do not want your worship. I do not need your obedience and it is not necessary for you to serve Me."

WHAT GOD DOES WANT. "Passion is God wanting to say 'hi.'"

BEATITUDE. "Blessed are the Self-centered, for they shall know God."

GOOD RELATIONSHIPS. "Let each person in relationship worry not about the other, but only, only, only about Self."

THE MEANING OF LOVE. "For centuries you have been taught that love-sponsored action arises out of the choice to be, do, and have whatever produces the highest good for another. Yet I tell you this: the highest good is that which produces the highest good for *you* This is because you and the other are one."

OBLIGATIONS TO OTHERS. "The answer is: you have *no* obligation. Neither in relationship, nor in all of life.... Nor any restriction or limitation, nor any guidelines or rules. Nor are you bound by any circumstances or situations, nor constrained for any offense nor *capable* of any -- for there is no such thing as 'offensive' in the eyes of God."

ADULTERY. "Nor shall you covet your neighbor's spouse, for why would you want your *neighbor's* spouse when you know *all* others are your spouse?"

BEFORE DROPPING OFF THE KEY. "Give yourself abundant pleasure, and you will have abundant pleasure to give to others. The masters of Tantric sex know this. That's why they encourage masturbation Tantric lovers, therefore, often self-pleasure before they pleasure each other."

WHILE DROPPING OFF THE KEY. "Remember, your job on the planet is not to see how long you can stay in relationship, it's to decide, and experience, Who You Really Are."

AFTER DROPPING OFF THE KEY. "So be ready, kind soul. For you will be vilified and spat upon ... from the moment you accept and adopt your holy cause -- the realization of Self."

SELF-IMPROVEMENT, LESSON ONE. "Practice saying ten times each day: I LOVE SEX. Practice saying *this* ten times: I LOVE MONEY. Now, you want a really tough one? Try saying *this* ten times: I LOVE *ME*!"

SELF-IMPROVEMENT, LESSON TWO. "When you have been a man long enough then you may become a woman."

RIGHT AND WRONG. "I have never set down a 'right' or a 'wrong,' a 'do' or a 'don't.' ... To say that something ... is 'wrong' would be as much as to tell you not to do it. To tell you not to do it would be to prohibit you. To prohibit you would be to restrict you. To restrict you would be to deny the reality of Who You Really Are, as well as the opportunity for you to create and experience that truth."

HITLER. "Hitler did nothing 'wrong.' Hitler simply did what he did."

HIS SERVICE TO THE JEWS. "Now your thought that Hitler was a monster is based on the fact that he ordered the killing of millions of people, correct? ... Those souls were released from their earthly bondage, like butterflies emerging from a cocoon."

HIS ETERNAL REWARD. "Hitler went to heaven. When you understand this, you will understand God."

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. "I mean you can't lose in this game. You can't go wrong. It's not part of the plan. There's no way not to get where you're going. There's no way to miss your destination. If God is your target, you're in luck, because *God is so big, you can't miss.*"

WHETHER ANYTHING HAS MEANING. "It doesn't."

ACHIEVING SELF-KNOWLEDGE. "You must call upon yourself the darkness."

CELEBRATION. "Remember this: True celebration is mindless."

How can one do justice to such a book? It covers so much more that I have not mentioned, for instance the true reason for suffering and poverty (people choose to be born sick and poor), how to achieve world peace (it's a "personal thing"), and why we can have whatever we want (the universe is "just a big Xerox machine" for our thoughts).

One can hardly imagine a more mindless tome -- excuse me, a more *true celebration* -- than these volumes.