

## Talk with the Author

*Professor Niemz, you are a full professor of biomedical engineering at the oldest university in Germany. You are not only a successful researcher, but also a gifted author and speaker. Why do you write spiritual books?*

**Niemz:** Life fascinates me. Just like everyone else, I would also like to know where we come from, why we're here and where we go someday. My profession requires a lot of investigating into the subject of light, and light itself also holds an extremely powerful fascination upon me. I think of light as cosmic memory. It stores everything that has ever happened in the cosmos. But it gets even more thrilling whenever we ask about the nature of light. What is light? Neither scientists nor theologians can answer this seemingly simple question. Is this the reason why world religions equate light with the divine—with God? There's one thing that we know for sure about light, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to Albert Einstein for it: Within all light, each spatial distance and each temporal distance turns zero. Just think about it! Try to fathom the valuable message hidden in this one sentence! It means that everything in the cosmos is intimate to the light since it is all "here" for the light. It also means that everything in the cosmos is familiar to the light since it is all "now" for the light. If we put these two statements together, we get: A God, who has access to light's memory, loves us all and knows it all! And now we have already built a bridge from modern physics to religion—not made from steel and concrete, but from spiritual thoughts.

*You know how to present complex connectedness of things intuitively. Upon listening to you, we get a feeling for those things that really matter. Should we think more in terms of connectivity?*

**Niemz:** Well, when I look at today's world, I honestly think that we pay far too little attention to connectedness. It's often right in front of us and so obvious. We only have to get a feeling of how one thing effects another. Thank heavens that most of us have learned by now that our lifestyle influences the world climate. But now, the fastest actions possible must follow as a consequence of what we've learned. Even in our daily lives we would be very wise to heed connectedness of things: Whoever is always trying to get his way will never have a successful partnership. Whoever exercises power will never live in peace. Whoever excludes other human beings will never understand the big picture. The cosmos and every living thing that it embraces are an inseparable, continually unfolding process.

*Does connectivity also reveal something about life after death?*

**Niemz:** Absolutely! At this point, I always like to quote the American biologist Bruce Lipton: "If you were just a spirit, what does chocolate taste like?" Lipton wants to illustrate how empty a life would be in which I can no longer perceive anything without my body. I fully agree with Lipton since I myself wouldn't consider that as "life" anymore. Even so, I show in my book that there truly is an eternity. It does not let me live on after death, but it embraces even the smallest thought and feeling of the life that I'm living now.

*Where do you obtain your knowledge about eternity? Have you ever had some crucial experience?*

**Niemz:** Yes, I've even had two of those crucial experiences. During the first one, I somehow "perceived" how my wife's father died 100 kilometers away. I can't explain it scientifically even to this day. A few days after my two parents had died, I had my second experience: Of course, I would have loved to tell my parents so many more things until it suddenly became clear to me how pointless such a communication would be. What news could I share with them if everything is known in eternity? They would have already known it anyway!!! Take your time and just think about it. This one thought fundamentally transformed my conception of eternity. It doesn't make me sad—but happy—and it gives me strength. Now I know that all of those perfect moments that I was able to share with my dear parents are enshrined forever in eternity. It's not me who's immortal, but the life that I live . . . is!

*I thought that Christians believe in resurrection. Don't you have to believe in eternal life as a Christian?*

**Niemz:** I'd rather leave the belief in personal survival after death to all those who deem themselves as indispensable. I don't know of any bible verse that truly holds out the prospect of life after death for us. I suggest that we rethink our conception of the adjective "eternal": It doesn't mean "existing in time unbounded," but "always recallable within the light."

*Professor Niemz, your new book describes the beginning of life as a random act—something that wasn't caused by anything. Is life on earth something unique in the universe?*

**Niemz:** Not necessarily, because we physicists assume that radioactivity is a random event, too, and radioactive decays occur countless times throughout the universe. And so, the beginning of life could also repeat itself again and again—provided that conditions are suitable on any given planet. But I still thank you for this question. I actually conceive life as a random, cosmic act. And for a very good reason: Matter is either not alive or alive. So, the transition from one to the other must have been spontaneous, which tells us that it had no cause at all. Everything that isn't caused, but happens on its own, we commonly designate as “chance.”

*Please give our readers a few short statements to wrap things up—your favorite pastime?*

**Niemz:** To live.

*Your favorite place?*

**Niemz:** Here.

*Your most beautiful occasion?*

**Niemz:** Now.

*Your favorite dish?*

**Niemz:** Swiss hash browns with vegetables and cheese.

*Do you have any role models?*

**Niemz:** Next to Charles Darwin and Albert Einstein you'll find again and again another name in my book that is not as well known—Alfred North Whitehead. This British mathematician and philosopher taught me that there's no "individual myself" and no "individual yourself." There's only a "cosmic ourselves"—the sum of all experiencing in the cosmos. It's precisely this ourselves that we should cherish and embrace instead of clinging to an illusionary individuality.

*What does happiness really mean to you?*

**Niemz:** Happiness is what we're all searching for. For some, it's love. For others, it's understanding, beauty, fulfillment, peace, wealth. However, many people don't become happy in their search for happiness because they confuse "having" with "being." Since happy is something that I am and don't have, there is nothing outside of me that can make me happy. So, it is completely up to me whether I am happy or not. I am happy if I say "yes" to everything that I am and—with this attitude—take my next step forward. Being happy isn't the goal of life—it's the path!

*Thank you, Professor Niemz, for this inspiring conversation.*

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**Markolf H. Niemz, PhD**

**SEEING OUR WORLD  
THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES**

**Thoughts on Space and Time,  
Abraham Lincoln, and God**

**translated by James David Dunn**

**What  
Humanity  
Deserves in  
Times Like  
These**