

Prophets of the 2nd Axial Age and How to Join Them
OLLI Course Fall 2017
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Questions for Discussion on
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1. Karen Armstrong sees us in the process of transition to a second Axial Age. In her interview with journalist Jessica Roemischer of *What is Enlightenment?*, Karen says that suffering, fear, violence and despair are prime conditions for such a renewal. What are your thoughts on this?
2. What patterns do you see in David Christian's presentation of Big History?
3. What do you think of Lord Moulton's description of the role of "obedience to the unenforceable" in maintaining thriving civilizations?
4. How is "obedience to the unenforceable" similar to "the Golden Rule"? How are they different? Or are they?
5. Jonathan Haidt and Craig Joseph describe innate propensities of mind and emotion that become associated to culturally varied practices as "virtues" or "vices." Does this ring true to you? Speaking from the standpoint of evolution, what value might the innate propensities for care, hierarchy, fairness, loyalty, and purity have?
6. Frans de Waal studies the evolution of morality through animal behavior. How might the innate ethical intuitions be seen as a pattern of evolutionary emergence?
7. What are examples of ethics that seem to be a cultural association of these innate intuitions? Does this mean they can change? Have you seen shifts or changes in your own intuitions over the years?