

The Phases and Future of the Noosphere: Segment 8

David Sloan Wilson: Okay, great. Well, I want to begin with the question as to why anyone would care about Teilhard, why anyone should care about Teilhard and the concept of the Noosphere, using some of your own language from the articles that I've read. Some of the things you write are, it gives hope toward a positive and meaningful globalization. You also write, a contrast, the Noosphere vision provides direction and hope for the future, hope to tackle global challenges, whether they are social, economical, ecological, technological, or climatic. Most importantly, the Noosphere is a holistic idea that forces us to think of these global challenges together as tightly interconnected, the vision of the noosphere might thus be our best bet to tackle meaningfully the global challenges of today. And so I love that description, Clément, because it basically focuses on the outcome of these concepts, and you contrast it to other sort of globalized concepts, such as globalization, which is kind of an economic concept, Gaia, which is kind of an environmental concept and also technocratic visions of the future. So could you just elaborate on that, what the Noosphere adds to these other visions?

Clément Vidal: Yes. Maybe the most general remark we can make is that the future scenarios that gets the most attention are the doom scenarios, the negative scenarios. And yes, for very simple reasons. It's because they are scary. So we pay attention to them. And if you look, there is actually little really vision for the long term future of humanity and planet earth. And so yes, importantly, it's easy to play Nostradamus to explain how things could fail. There are millions of ways evolution could fail and there are not many ways to survive. So the analogy I like to tell is if you go to your doctor and you explain to him what you have, you don't want your doctor to explain to you all the ways you could die. You want to know the ways to survive.

Of course, it's much more difficult to imagine, to foresee a way forward, rather than to say, oh, we are all doomed for one reason or another. And yes, there's many global challenges that we face that give us often not very much hope. Yeah. Probably except people like Teilhard de Chardin who took kind of deep breath and saw the long evolutionary timescale and was able to see a trend of where evolution might be going.