

explore *your* consciousness

moving

toward consciousness

*In a world filled with more of everything,
a growing number of people just want a more meaningful way to live in it.*

If you could have more of one thing, what would it be?

More gadgets? More money? More square footage? Probably not, say some sociologists and cultural savants. Although post-World War II America has been all about having more toasters, more cars and more houses, they believe we're entering an era in which people are searching for something bigger.

"The very soul of the American consumer is changing," writes Harvey Hartman in his book *Marketing in the Soul Age*. "They're on a quest — for a better life, which means in contemporary terms, a better lifestyle."

William Arntz, producer-director of *What the Bleep Do We Know!?*, a movie that brought more meaning to the big screen (story, p. 20), agrees. "People are starting to realize, 'Wait a minute. We've done the 'more' thing. The only thing we don't have more of is time. We're all working, and we're not very happy even though we have all this s---.'" Arntz says. "There's a sense going on in the culture that we've got to come up with a different way to live in the world, and interact with the world and each other."

Are We Really Getting More Conscious?

A growing number of people appear to be finding a different way by making more thoughtful, awareness-influenced choices in many aspects of their lives. For instance, more Westerners are meditating (story, p. 66) and embracing spirituality — a poll by The Barnabas Institute revealed that 80 percent of Americans say they feel a need for spiritual growth, up from 20 percent in 1994. This shift in values appears to be impacting their purchasing decisions.

It's plain to see in the aisles of supermarkets. In 2000, for the first time more organic food was purchased in conventional grocery stores than in any other venue, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And Whole Foods Market says its data shows that 27 percent more Americans were eating organic products in 2004 than in the previous year.

What's most significant is why they're buying organic — it's as much for social and environmental reasons as for their health. The Whole Foods survey indicated 58 percent of respondents chose organic because it is better for the environment; 54 percent cited health reasons; and 57 percent said they think using organic products is better for supporting small and local farmers.

con-scious *adj.* Having an awareness of one's environment and one's own existence, sensations and thoughts.

Conscious choices are also being made in venues from book-stores to new car lots. Sales of hybrid vehicles have risen an average 77 percent a year, from 9,350 in 2000 to 88,000 in 2004. And according to a survey of nearly 600 hybrid car owners by the Oregon Environmental Council, less pollution outweighed lower fuel costs by 18 percent as the primary reason for buying a hybrid vehicle. Meanwhile, more publications are catering to conscious consumers. *Organic Style*, a magazine that focuses on living in balance and covers topics including organic foods, ▶



“People are searching for lifestyle changes that will make their lives less fragmented and more connected to community, nature and an authentic, experiential spirituality.”

– Harvey Hartman

natural-fiber apparel, social responsibility and renewable energy, is one example. Since its launch in 2001, *Organic Style* has posted three straight years of growth, rising to a circulation of 750,000, and its advertising revenue has jumped 86 percent.

There’s a Name for People Like This

Spending patterns offer a quick glimpse into a way of life that permeates much more than everyday purchases. Some call this group of conscious consumers “Cultural Creatives,” a moniker coined by sociologist Paul Ray to describe the 50 million individuals who hunger for deep change in their lives. These consumers want to move toward “less stress, more health, lower consumption, more spirituality and more respect for the Earth,” Ray says.

“We call them ‘consciousness movements,’” he writes in his book, *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World*, “because of their common intention to throw open the windows and doors of the musty old mindsets we live in, shake the dust out of the covers we wrap around our bodies, and in a thousand old and new ways, guide whoever is willing to show up and pay attention to a fresh experience of being human.”

Conscious living is not a new concept. For thousands of years, humans have embraced meditation, martial arts, contemplation and sacred practices. “But,” Ray writes, “there has never been a time like ours for the great art and craft of waking up.”

It Runs Deeper than a Fad

Hartman, whose research firm The Hartman Group focuses on health and wellness markets, agrees that people’s values are indeed becoming more “soul-oriented,” writing, “We think this movement is driven by a deep cultural longing to find a more ‘soulful’ way of living. [It’s] the area in human experience where we feel connected to the things that make life worth living.”

Hartman believes our culture is leaving the Age of Reason and entering the Age of Soul — a time when intensity of experience, art, wellness and authenticity will rule over rationality, technology, mass marketing and synthetics.

“We are convinced this is not merely a superficial, faddish phenomenon,” Hartman writes. “People are searching for lifestyle changes that will make their lives less fragmented and more connected to community, nature and an authentic, experiential spirituality.”

Of course, consumers beating a path to the Soul Age still have material desires. A recent article in *The New York Times* pointed to a group of “oppies” — organic professionals — in the Hudson Valley who fled New York City for a quieter life in the country because a “spiritual component” was missing. They still have corporate jobs, picturesque homes and gourmet food. But by making purchases with more thought and awareness of their impact on life on the planet, consumers like these have found more of what they were really looking for: soul.



*“There has never been a time
like ours for the great art and craft
of waking up.”*

– Paul Ray



fresh, hot pilates stays true to the CORE

Chances are, nobody's going to ask for a side of Pilates with their burger anymore.

"It used to be that I said 'I teach Pilates,' and people would say, 'Pi-what? What's that? Is it a vegetable?,'" says renowned Pilates instructor Ana Cabán. "Now when you mention Pilates, they say, 'Oh yeah, I've seen that on TV.'"

According to a 2004 survey by the IDEA Health and Fitness Association, Pilates has been the fastest-growing fitness program in America since 1998. It's great news for longtime Pilates instructors such as Cabán. And with new Pilates props and offshoots cropping up, it doesn't appear to be showing any signs of letting up.

"Hollywood does it. Olympic athletes do it. It's on everyone's lips right now," says yoga and Pilates instructor Suzanne Deason.

There's a Pilates Studio on Every Corner

Pilates is the word of the day, partly because "people want to do what the stars do," Cabán says. But she also thinks it's because most gyms now offer mat classes — and because the variety of Pilates workout options today make it easy to fit into a busy lifestyle.

"There's really no excuse, especially with technology," Cabán says. Thousands of people have her Gaiam Pilates workout DVDs. "But I even have a client who downloaded me into his Palm

Pilot," she says. "He was in Italy for a month, and he was doing Pilates with me on his Palm."

Ironically, it's because Pilates is so accessible now that Deason, Cabán and other Pilates instructors are a little worried. Their businesses have boomed, but as Pilates studios pop up on every corner, they say there's a danger for the practice to evolve away from the "tried-and-true" exercises introduced in 1926 by Joseph Pilates.

If It Says It's Pilates, It's Not Necessarily Pilates

"My only concern is the person who learned on a weekend and teaches something that doesn't even resemble Pilates," Cabán says. "Anything you learn in a weekend you're not going to be a master of. I wouldn't go to a hair stylist or a massage therapist who learned in a weekend. Why would I trust my body to someone who learned in a weekend?"

By contrast, Cabán says she and other longtime instructors studied for 600 hours before they could get their licenses. Now that Pilates is more accessible and has become so popular, it's much easier for instructors to become certified. As a result, Cabán's liability insurance doubled last year, and she finds herself disoriented at times when she sits in on other people's classes.

"I've taken mat classes — I do a little market research this way — and in the whole hour, I recognize maybe five of the exercises," Cabán says. ▶

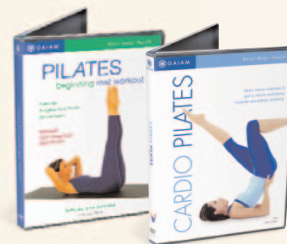
*Instructor Ana Cabán says
props and technology make
Pilates accessible to more people,
and emerging Pilates hybrid workouts
keep things fresh.*





“I highly recommend the Pilates Beginning Mat Workout DVD with Ana Cabán. This was my first introduction to the Pilates method — it was fun, easy to follow and low-impact. Ana gives several ways to adapt the workout to varying levels of fitness so everyone can benefit. Plus, I was able to complete the entire workout and not feel exhausted or strained — a great benefit for beginners!”

– Gaiam customer Michelle Gardner,
Edgewood, Md.



*Pilates Beginning Mat Workout DVD 93-0193
Cardio Pilates DVD 90-0042*

Ana Cabán has been a certified Pilates instructor since 1998. Originally a ballet dancer until a back injury shortened her career, Ana learned about Pilates from her chiropractor. After practicing only a short time, Ana found that Pilates strengthened her abdominal muscles and protected her back from further injury. Her amazing recovery prompted Ana to become a Pilates instructor and open her own studio. Ana’s videos by Gaiam have been featured in many media outlets, including “CBS News,” Weight Watchers Magazine, Los Angeles Daily News, Miami Herald and many other newspapers and Web sites.

A Little Change Is Good ... But Not Too Much

Cabán is a self-proclaimed purist. But she also understands that people like to change up their routine now and then — and that new and different ways of doing Pilates can attract a broader range of people to the discipline she loves.

She and Deason both believe props can be great tools to make Pilates even more accessible to beginners and give long-timers a new challenge. And emerging hybrid workouts such as standing Pilates, Pilates-dance fusion workouts (see inset) and gyrotonic — a fusion of Pilates, yoga and T'ai Chi that works in a circular plane — keep things fresh. But the key, they say, is to stay true to the authentic form that Joseph Pilates put out there.

"People want variety," Cabán says. "And classical Pilates offers that. There are 34 exercises, and there are different variations on the exercises, so it can go on and on. There are hundreds of things you can do."

For example, when working with her clients, Cabán might add hand weights or a latex resistance band. But she says she's always working toward the ideal form. "I haven't changed the exercise," she says. "But I've been able to change the sensation on the body for the client and give them an added challenge or added support without taking away the essence of the movement."

Although the popularity of Pilates has created a few unwanted drawbacks, Cabán says she looks forward to having more people discover the mind-body practice she loves.

"I hope it keeps growing because I really believe in it," Cabán says. "It's good for everyone, and it's so simple to do."



"I have used a Gaiam Pilates DVD for two months now, and it has transformed my body like no other exercise routine or diet ever has. Not only are the exercises effective, but it feels good to do them and I look forward to my exercise sessions rather than dreading them."

— Gaiam customer JeNais White,
Olympia, Wash.

There's More Testosterone in the Studio

As Pilates instructor Ana Cabán watches Pilates classes spring up everywhere, she's also noticing a shift in the types of people walking in.

"There are definitely more men taking classes, and I'm so glad for that," Cabán says, adding that many of Joseph Pilates' first clients were businessmen in New York City.

About 25 percent of Cabán's mat class students are now male. She thinks men are discovering that building core strength can help them excel and stay injury-free during other activities.

"These people are athletes, and I think they're seeing that Pilates can help golf, it can help skiing, it can help tennis, it can help running," she says. "Men are usually tight, so this is really good for them. They need to stretch even when they strengthen. Many need to strengthen the core — they get strong in the extremities from weightlifting, but they might not have the core strength to support their arm or leg strength."



Mariel Hemingway:

front and centered

As the granddaughter of Ernest Hemingway and an acclaimed actress, Mariel Hemingway has been the center of public attention at many points in her life. But for the past 20 years, it's her yoga practice that's at the center of her attention.

"Every day when I touch on my practice," she says, "whether it's 30 minutes, 20 minutes or 90 minutes, it puts me back in the place where, 'Ah, this is what matters — that I move and I breathe, and that I'm OK.'"

Of course, finding peace wasn't always easy for her. In her book *Finding My Balance*, Mariel narrates a life story filled with painful memories and stifling responsibility that fed a feeling of instability. Her family struggles were compounded by the fact that she works in a business that puts incredible pressure on female celebrities to look a certain way. Through yoga, however, she was able to firmly plant her feet, both literally and figuratively.

"I have a lot of issues," she admits. "I think I'm like any woman. Well, not every woman does. God bless them if they don't. But I grew up really insecure. People say, 'You're obnoxious. How can you feel insecure?' But no one really understands what you go through until they go through it themselves. I was having my own experience about my life and my stuff, and I was in the business of insecure vanity and ego.

"Yoga gave me the ability to really step back, because I fall into those places sometimes. These issues come up over time, and they continue to come up." ▶

Richard Reinsdorf

"I started to realize that the way I felt at the end of a yoga class was different than the way I felt after doing any other physical thing. I started to feel peaceful."

On the Search for a Good Workout, She Found Something More

Mariel says when she tried power yoga on a challenge many years ago, she didn't expect to get anything more than a workout — and she was even skeptical about that. It turned out to give her a workout that was as much mental as physical.

"In the process of trying to get good at it, stay in shape and look cool in the classroom, it began to change me," Mariel says. "And I started to realize that the way that I felt at the end of a yoga class was different than the way I felt after doing any other physical thing.

"I started to feel peaceful. I started to have a different perception of who I was. And that's really what the key was for me. I began to look at myself in a softer way."

That new perception included self-acceptance. Yoga became a place where she was accepted for who she was, and it gave her the security she was looking for.

"It's not dissimilar to acting — if you stay present and inside a scene or inside an asana or inside a breath, it's the same sensation, the same feeling of connectedness. I don't act as much now, but I get the same sensation when I do yoga. I feel this exhilarating connection to myself."

Being Present Helps Erase Pain of the Past

That feeling of being focused in the moment, Mariel says, is what has enabled her to manage painful experiences from her past and better handle whatever life throws her way in the future.

"Yoga keeps you present. It keeps you in the moment. The best thing you can do with that training is take it off the mat and take it with you. If you're in the present, it doesn't matter what pain comes up. You're just reacting and taking care of business."

Yoga also taught her how to step back from situations, rather than get caught up in the panic of it. It's something she recently had to face when she and her husband nearly drowned in rough waters off Hawaii. It was a dramatic moment that made her put the spirituality she gained through yoga into practice.

Mariel writes in her book, "Beneath the water again, yet now above the experience somehow, I could clearly see that I was drowning ... and I became intensely aware of the presence of God and my guru." The acceptance of the situation brought her peace, she writes, and allowed her to keep swimming without frantically fighting the situation.

"Yoga keeps you present.

It keeps you in the moment.

*The best thing you can do with
that training is take it with you."*

"Through yoga you teach yourself to pull away in observation. Some days you can do it and some days you can't. But there are times when you feel very connected. People say that when they have out-of-body experiences, and that's what it is. You look down upon yourself."

Looking down on Mariel these days, you see a happy wife and mother of two teenage girls. It's a fulfilling life that has a lot to do with what has occurred day after day for two decades on a yoga mat.

"Yoga — the physical, mental, the spiritual aspect — is really what brought me home to myself," she says.

Anyone Can Try Yoga Now

Because yoga has made such a profound impact on her own life, Mariel Hemingway teamed up with renowned yoga instructor Rodney Yee to make yoga approachable for anyone — including those who are wary of it — with the new Gaiam Yoga Now system.

"Yoga Now is designed for the person who's skeptical of yoga, who thinks it involves turning their body into a pretzel or that it has to be something religious," Mariel says. "It's hands-on, user-friendly yoga for everyone. It doesn't have to be a woo-woo thing. That's why we call it America's yoga."

Yoga Now is a fusion of yoga, cardio and fat-burning nutrition to help people get the body they were meant to have, she says. "I've been doing Yoga Now since we started it, and it's made a dramatic difference," says Mariel. "Yoga Now will reshape your body and renew your commitment to yourself."



Yoga Now system 90-9074

transform *your* environment



Hot summer temperatures in India create favorable conditions for growing cotton, but not picking it. The women handpick the cotton bolls for four hours in the morning, take a break in the afternoon and return to the fields around 4 p.m.

the people touched by •
**organic
cotton**

*A rural community in India has found
that its shift to organic farming is
enriching more than its soil.*

Cotton is one of India's most important cash crops, but it hardly felt like it to the farmers who were growing it conventionally in Gujarat, India. The saturation of chemicals depleted their soil of nutrients, hardened the land and lowered their crop yields. It also severely depleted their income.

"We used to spend 3,000 to 5,000 rupees (\$70 to \$115) on fertilizers and pesticides, which we had to pay at the time of Diwali," says organic farmer Kailash Burman, speaking of the annual Hindu festival honoring the goddess of wealth. "Now we don't have to do that. The pesticides are natural."

For the past five years, he and others in his farming village have gotten out from under the debilitating cost and health effects of pesticides. He is one of several hundred farmers in rural India who are part of an organic cotton farming project that teaches natural growing practices, supplies seeds and sells the organic cotton in the marketplace to Gaiam and other customers. This hand-harvested, 100 percent certified organic cotton from India is used in our baby collection, bed linens and clothing, creating a cleaner, sustainable source of revenue for communities on the other side of the globe.

The True Cost of Conventional Farming

This is a significant improvement from life as a conventional cotton grower — as chemical costs accounted for up to 25 percent of a typical farmer's income. In villages that are still growing cotton conventionally, excessive debt and failed crop yields have driven farmers into bankruptcy, and some even to suicide, according to the Equator Initiative of the United Nations Development Programme.

The U.N. initiative puts the cost of chemical insecticides at up to 40 percent of the costs of production. This is exacerbated by the fact that overuse of pesticides has caused the cotton bollworm to become increasingly resistant to the chemicals. To be effective, farmers have to spray more, creating a vicious circle that pushes them into deeper debt with pesticide suppliers. The University of Greenwich's Natural Resources Initiative (NRI) reports that some farmers in India's cotton growing region spray their crops 10 to 12 times in a single growing season. Cotton fields account for just 5 percent of India's farmland, yet NRI says more than 50 percent of the pesticides used there are applied to cotton plants. ▶



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Of course, the real cost of the excessive use of chemicals is the harm caused to everyone who comes in contact with them. V. J., a technical advisor with the organic farming project, says the sprayed chemicals ultimately reached everyone in the village.

"When we were using chemicals in our fields, it was being introduced in the soil, in the environment, in the cattle feed," V.J. says. "And there we are feeding the milk to our kids. It poisons everybody."

Most affected were the farm laborers who applied the pesticides by hand and plucked the crop. These workers developed numerous skin diseases, according to another advisor, M. Tiwari. In addition, the agri-chemicals are often stored in homes; the containers are susceptible to leakage, which allows the chlorine-based pesticides to fumigate. When inhaled for a long period, the fumes are "more dangerous than chloroform," he adds.

Now that the land has been chemical-free for more than five years (a condition of organic certification by international agencies including SKAL and IMO is for land to be chemical-free for three growing seasons), one farmer says he can "smell the freshness of the soil."

Desperate Times Call for Organic Measures

These lush fields are a far cry from how things were several years ago, which is what prompted members of the farming project to step in and work with the farmers to find a solution.

"The land was becoming infertile, and generally it was a very pessimistic scenario all around," says S.K., another technical advisor with the project. "We felt that we needed to create a system to help the farmers earn a livelihood for themselves. It just made more sense to take a step back — on one hand helping us develop ▶



Cotton farmers in the community learn organic farming methods (top left) such as treating seeds with bacteria to ward off insects. No machines are used — the seeds are planted by hand and the fields are plowed using oxen (above).

better quality cotton, and on the other hand helping the farmer have a sustainable livelihood.”

Organic farming was the solution they were looking for. Consultants with the project taught these farmers natural methods for everything from creating pest-resistant seeds to amending the soil with nutrients. The project has also helped the village become completely self-sustainable. Nothing gets wasted, not even oxen dung — it’s put in a biogas chamber, which turns it into methane gas that provides power to the whole community. Oxen urine also has a use. It is applied to the seeds, along with bacteria cultures, to make them pest-resistant.

Organic farming is more labor-intensive, but the technical consultants with the project say the hard work is paying off with lower farming costs, higher prices for organically grown cotton and a better life for everyone in the community. They’re even enjoying an increase in the number of cotton cycles they get out of a single plant. They used to get only one. Now, because they use non-genetically modified seeds, they get up to five.

“Ever since we started organic farming, we have found the nutrient value of the land is returning,” S.K. says. “We are finding the production numbers are going up. People have more income, and they are healthier.”



A Journey into the Heart of India’s Organic Cotton Farming Community

Reflections from GaiaM VP of Product Development Linda West

After a five-hour drive on a dirt road shared with oxen-drawn carts, herds of goats, farmers and women carrying tureens of water on their heads, I arrived at one of the organic cotton farms we work with deep within India’s interior.

Every member of this farming community came out to greet us with a ceremonial blessing that included placing a *bindi* on my forehead. One by one, to the tempo of drums, the community elders blessed me with marigold wreaths, coconuts and beans. The generosity of spirit, beautiful smiles and *namaste* greetings overwhelmed me. These people are so poor materially yet so rich spiritually. I could not have been more honored and humbled to be there.

These farmers take their spiritual beliefs into the fields with them. As we walked through the rows of cotton plants, a man dressed in white was performing a *Puja* ceremony nearby. While burning dried oxen dung, he said a prayer to cleanse the air of bad energy and make the crops grow better.

I also noticed that, although they live simply, there is tremendous pride in this community — from the spotless cleanliness of their mud homes to the care and education of their children. This is translated into their love for the land and the blessings that are appreciated in their lives.

When it was time to leave this beautiful place, all the children of the village made a circle around me and performed a *Dandia*. This wooden stick dance set to the beat of drums represents the never-ending cycle of life as the children continuously move in a circle. Caught up in the moment, I joined them, not wanting this special trip to come to an end.

This journey made a profound impact on me, and it is impossible to put into words the spiritual lift I experienced. It deepened my realization that our everyday decisions, large and small, are contributing to the well-being of many other people, including this small village in a remote part of the world.



How They Escaped from Chemicals

The organic farming methods adopted by our cotton farmers are not unlike the methods used by other organic farmers around the world. But the local environment and religious beliefs of people in the community here require unique solutions for controlling pests, amending the soil and harvesting bolls by hand.

Pests Are Controlled Humanely

Pest control has long been a major concern for these farmers. For many, however, the concern is spiritual as well as economical. Some spiritual belief systems that are common in India's communities hold that no living thing should be killed — a major conflict of interest for farmers when their chemicals kill anything that moves.

"Ninety-seven percent of insects in the fields are beneficial," explains V.J., a technical advisor with the project that supports some of our organic cotton farmers (see main article, p. 118). "So by killing all the insects, the farmers were also killing beneficial insects."

Now, in addition to treating the seeds first, the farmers use a variety of methods that trap or repel harmful insects, some of which are evident as you walk through the rows of cotton plants. Birds are now encouraged to rejoin the ecosystem and prey on insects through the addition of large perches that tower over the plants. And sophisticated pheromone traps use the reproductive hormones of female bollworm moths to attract the males. Pulling the males out of the fields results in less mating and fewer destructive offspring.

Meanwhile, deep plowing and crop

rotation are employed to prevent insect infestations, and some farmers use castor oil sticky traps and natural pesticides derived from local *Margosa* trees.

Soil Is Enriched Naturally

Compost is also created from local, naturally occurring material — waste from the community and oxen dung — and added to the soil. Intercrops, such as corn and soybeans, are planted alongside the cotton to replace nutrients in the soil that are depleted by the cotton plants. Intercrops also give the farmers supplemental income in between cotton harvests.

But it's the earthworms these farming families cultivate that may have the most significant impact on soil quality. "One earthworm eats about 3 grams of soil every day, and it gives 3 grams of manure," V.J. says. "On an average day, we'll get about 120 kilograms of manure free."

More important, the worms loosen the soil, causing a key side effect: better water penetration and retention. This is vital in an area drenched with rain during the monsoon season. In the past, the hardened, chemical-laden soil merely repelled the water. Now, the farmers don't have to use artificial irrigation until the end of September, when the monsoons end. Some farmers say their organic cotton plants are taller than their former conventional plants, a probable benefit of deeper root development.

"Earth worms come out of the soil for air during nighttime," says technical advisor M. Tiwari. "That helps the roots of the plants get air. Water and nutrients also percolate to the roots."



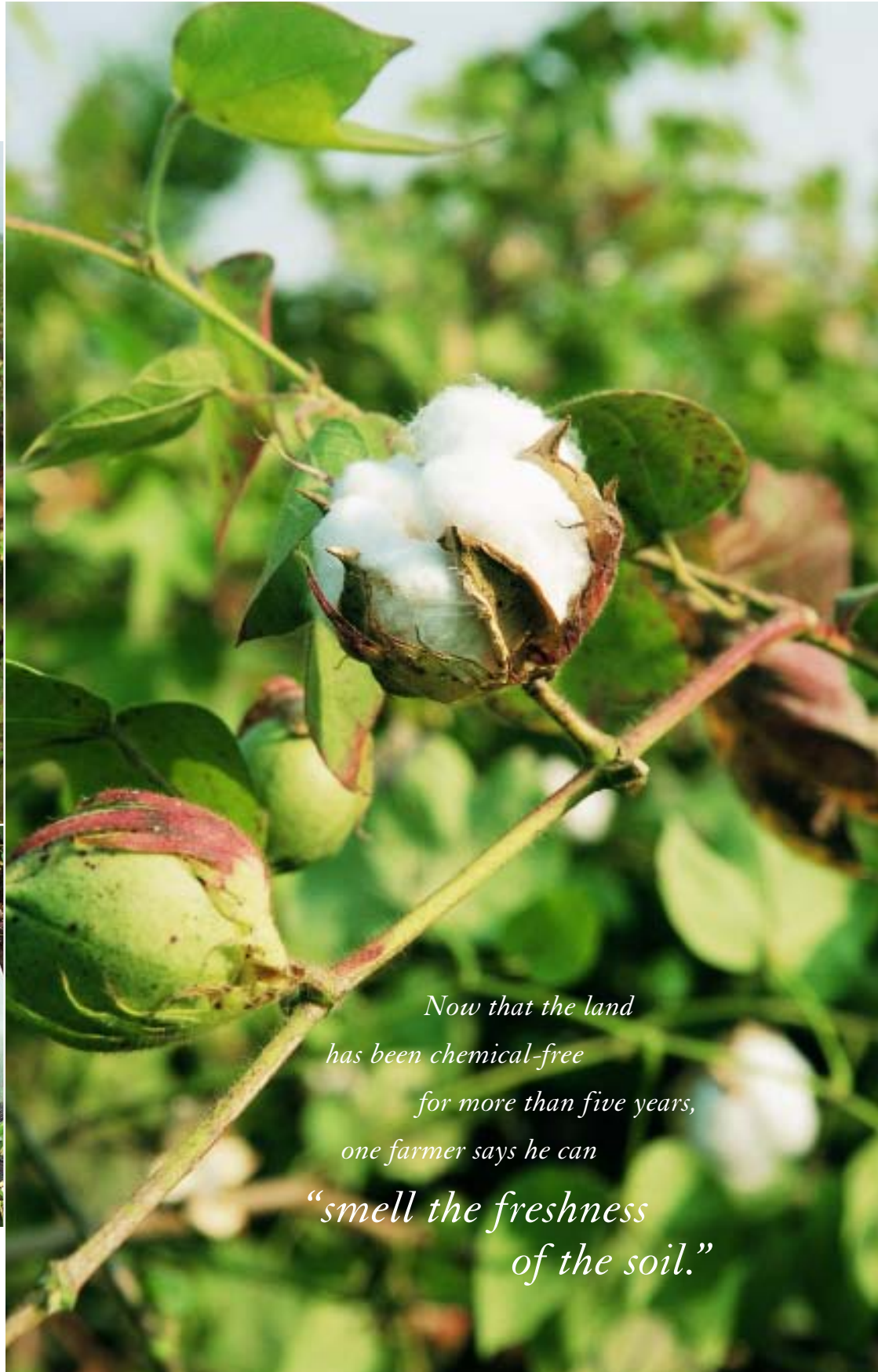
Women Harvest the Cotton by Hand

It takes about 120 days for the cotton plants to start blooming. And while conventional cotton farmers often use chemical defoliants to strip plants of their leaves and hasten the ripening of cotton bolls, here they are allowed to open naturally.

The women of these farming families pick the cotton in the morning — to avoid the midsummer heat and to take advantage of the dew, whose moisture coaxes plants to make picking easier.

Clockwise from top: The women of the farm plant the seeds and mark the spots with straw; a pheromone trap uses female hormones to attract, and humanely trap, male bollworm moths; as practitioners of the Jain form of Hinduism, the farmers regularly perform Puja prayer ceremonies, burning oxen dung, oil and rice to cleanse the air of bad energy; earthworms turn the village's food waste into a nutrient-rich soil amendment and loosen the soil in the cotton fields.





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