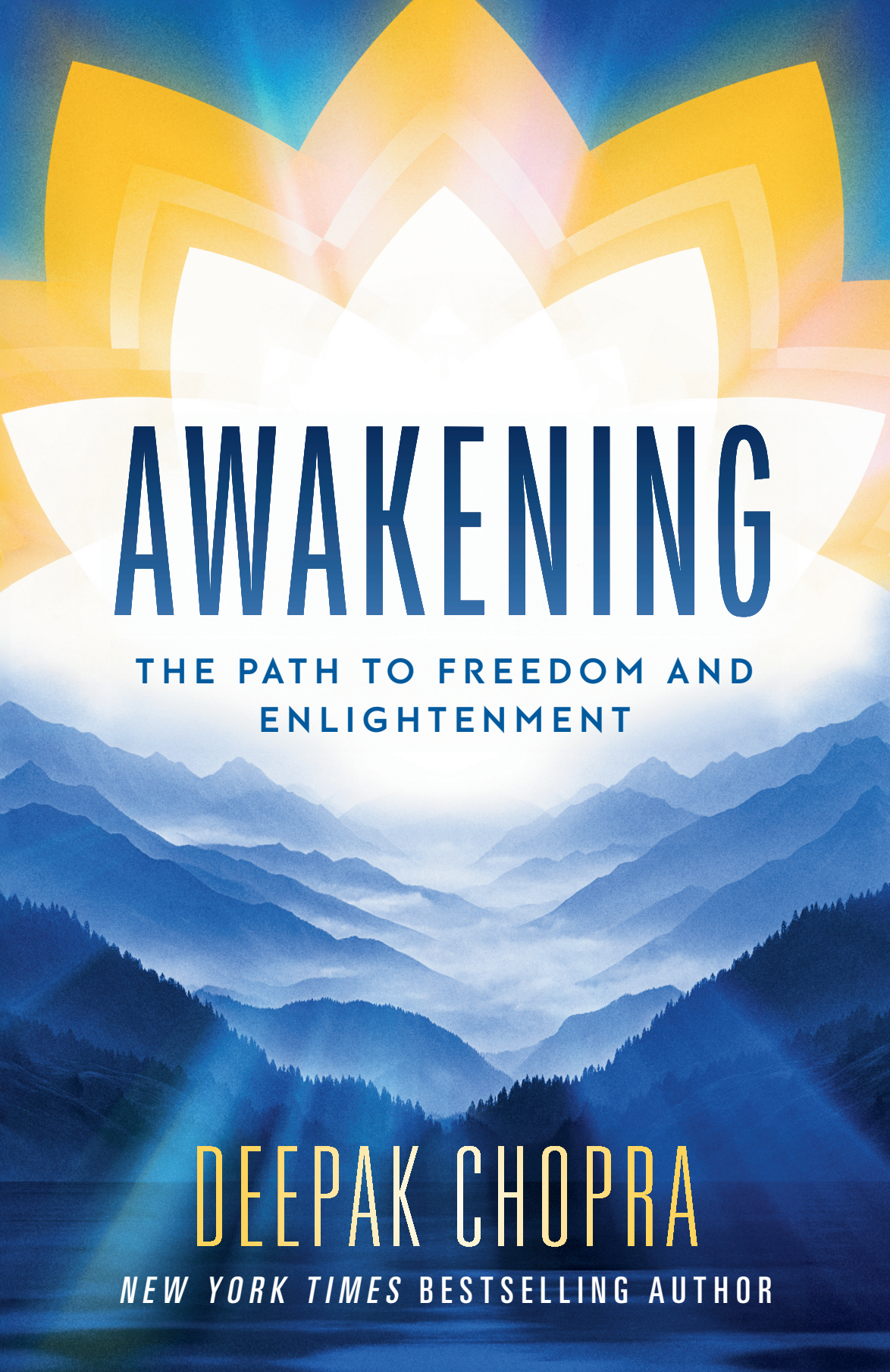

AWAKENING
THE PATH TO FREEDOM AND ENLIGHTENMENT
DEEPAK CHOPRA
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Advance praise for
DEEPAK CHOPRA'S *AWAKENING*

"*Awakening* is possible, and Deepak Chopra's guidebook helps us achieve it."

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"Deepak Chopra has given us a guide to wake up to who we truly are. *Awakening* is powerful, practical, and life-changing—it shows us how to move beyond fear and step into freedom, purpose, and possibility."

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"Who am I? Why do I act as I do? Am I making the best use of my time on earth? As I've grown older, I've become increasingly intent on discovering the truth about myself. In *Awakening,* **Deepak Chopra renews ancient Vedic traditions, offering a contemporary path to enlightenment. In this highly readable book, he both challenges and guides us toward a deeper self-awareness—an incomparable reward in itself.**"

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"Spacetime is a headset. My body is an avatar in a spacetime VR. I may think I am my body and must perish with it. But I create this headset and countless others. **Deepak Chopra expertly and compassionately guides us in awakening to our true nature and creative power** beyond our spacetime headset."

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"Deepak Chopra's *Awakening* is totally compelling. It radiates the liberating wisdom of Buddha, Jesus, Blake, and Rumi—expressed in Chopra's own unique, present, and timeless way. I love how it arrives as a perfectly timed manifesto for the difficult moment we are all facing. This book is a must-read and a true companion for our journey, helping us relax into awakening and discover the beauty, peace, and joy that are our human birthright."

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"Grounded in many decades of Deepak Chopra's own visionary and spiritual path, *Awakening* is perhaps his most timely, transformative, and practical invitation and guide to remembering and embodying the whole-being of who we really are."

—JUDE CURRIVAN, COSMOLOGIST AND AUTHOR;
CO-FOUNDER OF WHOLEWORLD-VIEW

"In *Awakening,* Deepak Chopra distils a lifetime of study, practice, and reflection into a work of luminous simplicity and depth. His words arise from the authority of direct experience and carry the quiet power to return us to the source of our own being. Each page is both a doorway and an invitation into the living presence of awareness itself—the ground of freedom, love and peace. This book is a true companion for anyone drawn to the essence of the spiritual path."

—RUPERT SPIRA, AUTHOR OF *The Nature of Consciousness;*
Being Aware of Being Aware; AND *The Shining of Being*

"Deepak Chopra's new book, *Awakening,* goes to places where few can accompany him—places of new openings, new opportunities, and, most important, paths to an awakened presence, our true eternal Presence. *Awakening* **pushes us to the awakened persons we truly are, beings full of wisdom and awareness. All within reach, here and there.**"

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"I have always believed that conscious living is the key to a better, kinder world. Chopra's words in *Awakening* do just that, helping us to find clarity, wisdom, and happiness."

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"In *Awakening,* Deepak Chopra expands on his classic teachings with his greatest clarity, directness, and kindness yet—pointing the way to enlightenment for seekers everywhere."

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"Dr. Deepak Chopra offers us a beautiful and highly accessible way to bring presence to every experience, so that we may live a fulfilling and meaningful life where anxiety and fear are replaced with clarity and joy."

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"*Awakening* **masterfully guides readers on a transformative journey from the conditioned mind to the essence of fundamental reality.** Dr. Deepak Chopra, a distinguished alumnus of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, **illuminates the path to wholeness, where healing, health, and self-regulation converge through the power of homeostasis. This book is a profound invitation to rediscover inner balance and embrace true well-being.**"

—PROFESSOR M. SRINIVAS, DIRECTOR, AIIMS, NEW DELHI

"In *Awakening,* Deepak Chopra offers a luminous road map to living with greater clarity, freedom, and purpose. Through timeless sutras and modern insights, he shows how awakening is not a distant ideal but a natural possibility available to everyone. This book is a transformative companion for anyone ready to embrace their full potential."

—ROBERT WALDINGER, PSYCHIATRIST; DIRECTOR OF
THE HARVARD STUDY OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT

"*Awakening* is the call we need to wake up from the nightmare of artificial, even if inadvertent, self-destruction. With this book, the path to natural, self-created evolution is open."

—ERVIN LASZLO, PHILOSOPHER OF SCIENCE;
AUTHOR OF *Science and the Akashic Field*

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"When Werner Heisenberg let go of his mental conceptualizing, he was able to become aware of Nature's message in the form of quantum physics, which speaks of a domain beyond the spacetime theater—'a hidden reality that cannot be penetrated by the five senses,' to quote Deepak Chopra's phrase describing the awakened perception of reality. Heisenberg probably didn't see himself as being on a spiritual path, but his choice to become awake to Nature placed him on a path that ultimately unites with the age-old insights of sages. Physics as a spiritual path? Einstein certainly thought so, as did Newton. Physics is just one path, but a potent one if we can hear its message to relinquish our voluntary confinement to the limiting cage that we call 'spacetime' and to recognize awareness as ubiquitous—in ourselves and in everything in our world. **Chopra invites us to become aware in our own way, based on a generous offering of the timeless wisdom of those who have awakened before us.**"

—RUTH E. KASTNER, PHD; AUTHOR OF *Adventures in Quantumland*

"Chopra's sutras are both clear and profound, and through them he generously transmits the insights of the great Indian seers and the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions. This book is the mature quintessence of his teaching that awakening is a possibility for everyone."

—RUPERT SHELDRAKE, BIOLOGIST; AUTHOR OF MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED SCIENTIFIC PAPERS; KNOWN FOR WORK ON MORPHIC RESONANCE AND SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS

"Can mere mortals escape the cave? Is enlightenment possible? I've always had doubts. But Deepak Chopra's warm, wonderful new book, *Awakening,* makes me want to give it a shot."

—JOHN HORGAN, SCIENCE JOURNALIST; AUTHOR OF *The End of Science* AND *Rational Mysticism*

"*Awakening* serves as a profound act of public service, akin to the mission of India's Public Service Broadcaster, Doordarshan. Through its soulful and insightful narrative, **Dr. Deepak Chopra offers transformative wisdom that inspires a deeper connection to wholeness and well-being. This book shines as a guiding light for those seeking meaningful personal growth.**"

—BRIJ BAKSHI, FORMER DIRECTOR, DOORDARSHAN

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"*Awakening* reminds us that true freedom begins within. Deepak Chopra offers a vision of life beyond fear—one where awareness, intuition, and boundless potential become our daily reality."

—CLAIRE THOMSON-JONVILLE, HEAD OF EDITORIAL CONTENT, *Vogue France*

"**As I read the sutras in Deepak Chopra's *Awakening,* it felt like someone was gently leading me back to my own source. Every page has a clarity that clears up confusion and a simplicity that speaks to the heart. The thing that moved me the most was that the book doesn't just talk about awakening; it makes it seem possible, natural, and even inevitable.** I often stopped, not to think more, but to be more. These sutras aren't just ideas; they are real truths that lead us to freedom, wholeness, and the infinite present moment. I will read this book over and over, and each time I do, I will find something new that resonates with me."

—KAMLESH D. PATEL, PRESIDENT OF SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION, AUTHOR OF *Spiritual Anatomy*

"Deepak Chopra's call for our awakening of awareness is very timely and should be heard. I highly recommend this book."

—AMIT GOSWAMI, PHD, AUTHOR OF *The Self-Aware Universe* AND (WITH VALENTINA ONISOR, MD) *Quantum Spirituality* AND *The Return of the Archetype*

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BY DEEPAK CHOPRA

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THE PATH TO FREEDOM AND ENLIGHTENMENT

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TO THE CARETAKERS

OF WISDOM

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Introduction

Invitation to a New Life

A NEW WAY OF LIFE—THE AWAKENED LIFE—OPENS UP WITH a single decision: to know the truth about reality, including the truth about yourself. To be awake is to be fully conscious about what is real and what isn't. Every step along the way brings a greater sense of lightness and freedom. Nothing feels freer than being yourself, as most people realize when they reach a point when simply being here is enough. But mostly it isn't enough. Everyone is preoccupied with an unending stream of desires, duties, and demands. We are so accustomed to this existence that being told to wake up is hard to fathom, or outright impossible.

What keeps us in thrall is a waking dream that is collectively shared with everyone else. Without the strangely surreal happenings in the dreams we have when we're asleep, the waking dream is totally convincing and crystal clear. Once you stretch your arms in the morning after a night's sleep, you automatically enter the waking dream with no thought that you need to wake up twice.

This second awakening is so important that in the Indian spiritual tradition it is called a "second birth." Clarity dawns about who you really are, where you come from, and why you are here. Modern people struggle with all these issues. Even if you don't give a thought to India or any spiritual tradition—East or West—a deep intuition motivates anyone who heeds it; that life can't be as mundane, conflicted, fearful, difficult, and full of pain as the life we have accepted without question.

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The awakened life has always been an alternative. Its promise is

renewed with every generation. The present generation, particularly in the West, has set up its own standards of proof. Awakening must be described in ordinary language, rationally laid out, presented with convincing logic, and, above all, suited to solving the array of problems—both personal and global—that afflict our troubled times. For the vast majority of people, reverence for ancient traditions doesn't enter the picture.

Nodding to those demands, the following pages provide a guide to the awakened life that anyone can follow. There is nothing the reader needs in the way of faith or belief. The argument for awakening is couched in straight talk without offering either a carrot or a stick. The truth must be convincing on its own. Only then can you make a choice about whether or not to open the door to a new life.

I'll ask for only one article of trust. Trust that awakening is natural. All creatures and plants survive because they follow their own nature, without deviation or doubts. A predatory wolf or lion isn't weighed down by its history of past decisions or pining over lost love. There is no reason for *Homo sapiens* to be excluded from this scheme. We have evolved beyond it. As the most privileged life-form on Earth, we are free to make choices, including the choice to wake up. In awakening, we are liberated from the nightmare of our personal and collective suffering, by the natural process of reconnecting with our true nature. We are designed to wake up, which will reveal who we really are.

At the same time, we relinquish the separate, isolated self. This isn't a sacrifice but an immense gain. Seen clearly, human beings are an expression of pure consciousness, which is the boundless, infinite source at the root of existence.

If I had to describe my entire career in a single phrase, it would come down to *awakening as a possibility for everyone.* Awakening isn't reserved for a select group of sages, saints, visionaries, and poets, inspiring as they are. By its nature, human awareness expands. Yours has been expanding since birth, and if you don't feel aware all the time, the pattern of stressful modern life is chiefly to blame.

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Awareness cannot be destroyed; it is the basis of having a mind in

the first place. But most people are distracted by the constant activity of the mind as it thinks, feels, and senses experiences. Screened behind this activity, your awareness goes unnoticed because it has no voice and doesn't attract attention to itself.

Nevertheless, your state of awareness determines in huge measure how your life will turn out and how your everyday existence is proceeding here and now. A major revelation in the awakened life is that existence *is* conscious. There is nothing in creation without some degree of awareness. This revelation deposes human beings as the only creatures who possess consciousness. The long journey begun by our hominid ancestors did not start from a blank slate of unconsciousness. Certainly a journey occurred from origins over millions of years, but consciousness guided our evolutionary ascent.

If this proposition overturns the apple cart, it is only one of the realizations that arrive spontaneously when someone awakens in consciousness. For the moment, set this aside. The practical challenge I faced when conceiving this book was how to give readers an experience of pure consciousness as the fundamental source of their lives. You can't think yourself awake, and no one can talk you into it.

After pondering this question, I decided that nothing would do but the truth. Give the reader the most profound truths about consciousness and trust that, in the end, the truth will win out. In one sense this is like presenting evidence in court that piles up until guilt or innocence becomes undeniable. In another sense, I'm giving a secular version of Jesus's teaching, "Know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

At its most profound, the path to the truth was meticulously laid out in the Vedic tradition thousands of years ago in India through Gyan Yoga. The purpose of the eight branches, or "limbs," of Yoga is to unite a person with pure consciousness. *Gyan* in Sanskrit refers to knowledge or wisdom. So this is the path of wisdom to achieve a high state of consciousness.

Although my daily routine includes several other limbs of Yoga, among them the postures of Hatha Yoga taught in yoga classes, what comes naturally to me is Gyan Yoga. I thirst for knowledge, read

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voraciously, revere ancient texts, and feel great inspiration whenever I discover an expression of wisdom. I am going to do my best in these chapters to forge a bond with you, the reader, based on a similar thrill of discovery.

Although *Gyan* means both knowledge and wisdom, I want to distinguish between the two. *Knowledge* is generally the word we choose when speaking about external facts and information. You get a college degree based on the field of knowledge you major in. *Wisdom* is interior; it comes in the form of insight, realizing the truth behind the knowledge your mind acquires.

In the modern secular world, wisdom has become suspect, largely because skeptics apply the wrong tests to it. They judge wisdom by the same standards used to validate fingerprints or to measure the molecular weight of plutonium—tests suited for objective facts, but not for subjective insight.

An insight has no molecular weight and leaves no fingerprints behind. Deciding that wisdom is unreliable, like other subjective experiences, is a perfect example of asking the wrong question to begin with. Wisdom is truth gained through inner discoveries in consciousness. I always compare the ancient seers, or rishis, of Vedic India to Einsteins of consciousness. Einstein unveiled the hidden principles governing the physical universe; the rishis uncovered the inner path to pure consciousness, which is just as universal. The legacy they left behind constitutes Gyan Yoga. It reveals a hidden dimension of life that is more real than the physical world because Gyan Yoga can explain the physical world, while science cannot explain consciousness.

It is fascinating to discover that truths revealed in the ancient past pertain to your life today. Pure consciousness embraces everyone. This makes the possibility of the awakened life open to everyone.

To reach the state of awakening, you need access to the deeper truth of who you are and what life is all about. I've chosen the most authentic written form that Gyan Yoga takes—the axioms known in Sanskrit as sutras. There are thirty-three sutras here, modified for modern understanding. Each presents one angle of wisdom in con-

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centrated form, followed by a practical section that addresses how to find your own personal wisdom. The infinite potential that is the essence of being human can't be realized in the written word—only the experience of insight is ultimately valid. But for millennia the sutra has come closer to expressing the truth than any other form. The exalted role of wisdom needs to be revived in our time, which is dominated by external knowledge. If wisdom can be resurrected, untold horizons lie ahead and, more immediately, the urgent global problems facing us can be solved at the source.

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PART
ONE

THE PATH OF AWAKENING

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