

Issue 06/Summer 2024
English Original Transcripts

Conversations on the Leading Edge
of Knowledge & Discovery

NEW THINKING ALLOWED MAGAZINE



Quarterly Highlight
**Spirituality
and Death**
Julie Anderson

New Thinking Allowed
YouTube Interviews
Richard Dolan
Irving Finkel
Carlos Eire
Emmy Vadnais

MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE NEW THINKING ALLOWED FOUNDATION

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MAGAZINE

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by Emmy Vadnais, CoHost

AWAKEN YOUR INTUITION AND INTENTION

If you ask psychics, intuitives, remote viewers, and parapsychologists what can help you access and develop your intuition and psychic abilities, most will say meditation. Meditation is focused



attention. For some, meditation may be a form of contemplation or prayer. There are a variety of styles and ways to meditate depending on your interests and goals. Meditation is deliberately working with your own consciousness—presence and awareness.

SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS

In many cultures the goal of meditation is to get into a state of awareness of the realization that the personal self and the Universal Self are one. In Buddhism, meditation is one major step on the path toward enlightenment. It is part of the eight limbs of yoga that assist a person to calm the fluctuations of their mind and achieve a sense of oneness with the divine.

Carl Jung stated,
“Your answer will become clear only when you can look into your own heart.
Without, everything seems discordant;
only within does it coalesce into unity.
Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.”

Jesus said,
“The Kingdom of Heaven is inside.”

Emmy Vadnais

photo: Kathy Van Guilder Photography

HEALTH AND WELLNESS BENEFITS

While there are several types of meditation, the common feature seems to be that it can induce the *relaxation response*—the “rest and digest” response, that is opposite of the *stress response*—“fight, flight, or freeze” response. There is evidence that the more you elicit the relaxation response, the greater your chances are of preventing and recovering from disease. Your genes can literally change to a positive expression that is the opposite of the stress response that can create disease. Meditation is similar, in many regards, to self-hypnosis.

It can calm the mind and body, enhancing spiritual states; assist you to quiet your mental chatter, creating space between your thoughts, judgments, or worrying mind, regulate emotions; and help return your body back toward homeostatic balance. It can lower physical and emotional pain, stress, and tension; ease depression and insomnia; create clearer awareness and insight; improve compassion, sense of well-being, and quality of life; and more.

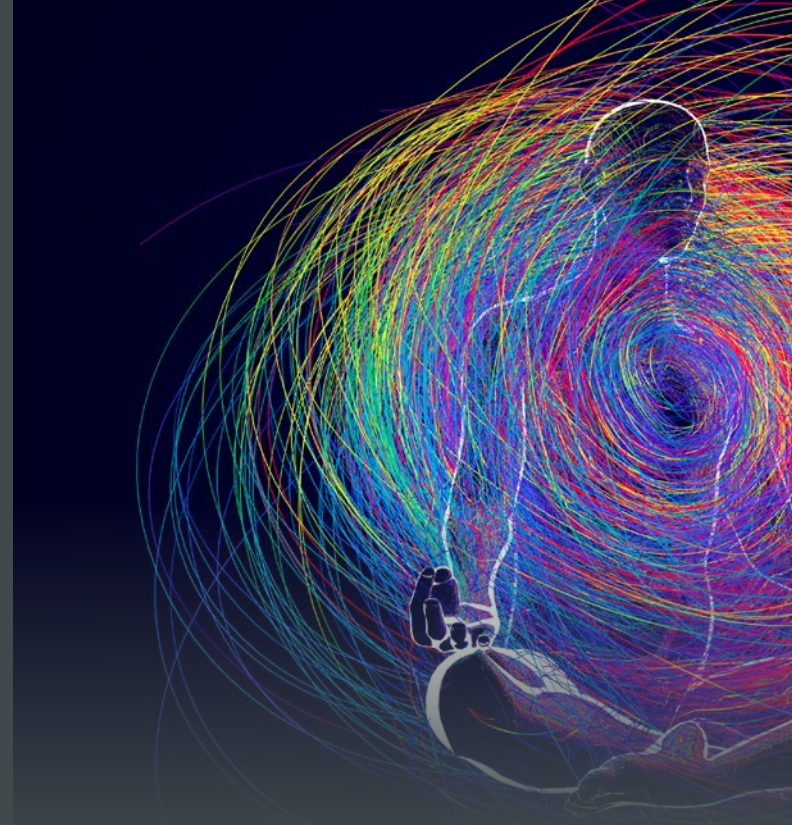
Cultivating this awareness can strengthen:

- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Gratitude
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Self-acceptance and self-love
- Relationships
- Meaning and purpose
- Love and joy

These are all correlated with a happier and healthier life.

MEDITATION PRACTICE

Meditation can be as simple as being in nature, daydreaming, looking at the clouds or a beautiful scene in front of you, or imagining this in your



mind's eye. It can be following your breath, when the mind wanders, let go of judgment, and return your attention back to your breath.

The popular meditation and way of life currently known as “mindfulness” comes from *Vipassana*, a Buddhist meditation that means “clear seeing”—and that is precisely what intuition is. It is being present with nonjudgmental and compassionate awareness, allowing thoughts, feelings, and emotions to come and go, without getting caught up in them. This can increase awareness, clarity, acceptance of the present-moment reality, and resilience. It can create a sense of calm and peace.

COMPASSION

By quieting the mind, we can also connect with our heart center, and shift into a loving, compassionate awareness. From this neutral, nonjudgmental place we may switch into our intuitive awareness. When we are more coherent—not emotional, thinking, confused, etc.—we are able to listen to our heart more clearly. Through a meditation practice you can discover parts of yourself that need attention, care, and love.

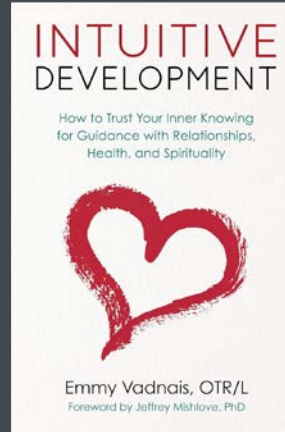




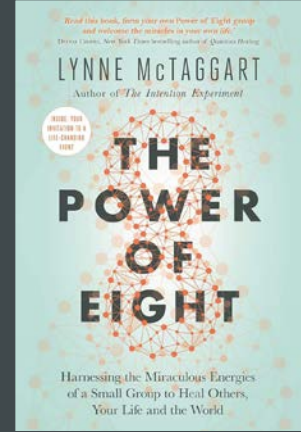
▶ The Giving and Receiving – Tonglen Meditation



▶ Lynne McTaggart’s interview: Group Intention and Psychokinesis



Emmy Vadnais
Intuitive Development: How to Trust Your Inner Knowing for Guidance with Relationships, Health, and Spirituality



Lynne McTaggart
The Power of Eight: Harnessing the Miraculous Energies of a Small Group to Heal Others, Your Life, and the World

While mindfulness meditation has become more popular in mainstream culture and modern psychology, there are similar meditation practices known as lovingkindness meditation and compassion meditation. When we enhance unconditional, positive emotional states of kindness and compassion for ourselves, we can in turn, do that for others. We may experience the other and ourselves as one.

GROUP INTENTION

At *New Thinking Allowed*, we are embarking on an *Intention Project* to help alleviate violence and suffering with the leadership of Jeffrey Mishlove, Host and Producer. **The Tonglen—Giving and Receiving Meditation** (on pp. 112) is the beginning of what we intend will be our Intention Project. This can assist increasing compassion and love for oneself, others, and reducing violence within each of us and out in society. We invite you to regularly practice it to benefit us all.

The research of Lynne McTaggart and others demonstrates how a small group of people meditating with the same intention can have

significant effects on their intended outcome. What’s more, she found that when people engage in positive intentions it can have a mirror effect where the sender may receive pleasant benefits in unexpected ways.

Regularly practicing meditation coupled with a positive expectation and intention that you or others can be well or reach a goal is synonymous with expectation or belief, and capitalizes on what is known as the placebo. Expanding your awareness to include others can have exponentially healing and joyful possibilities for us all, since we are all interconnected.



▶ Listen to all of the *New Thinking Allowed* guided meditations on this YouTube playlist

Thank you for being with us!


Emmy Vadnais, CoHost





www.evelynexposedandfreed.com



Julie Anderson

Julie Anderson, previously known as Whitney Kaine when she was a *Playboy* centerfold in September 1976, has had a multifaceted life. Before her spiritual journey, she gained notoriety as a model, but her path took a significant turn when she became a close companion of the spiritual teacher Adi Da Samraj from 1976 until 1992. During her time with Adi Da she was known by several spiritual names, including Kanya Samarpana Remembrance and Swami Dama Kalottara Devi.

Julie's deep involvement with Adi Da included living in his household and contributing to his teachings. She authored an article titled "The Real Practice of Guru-Devotion" in the *Free Daist Magazine* in 1992, sharing her experiences and insights from her years of close association with Adi Da. Her journey has been marked by profound personal transformations, including significant events such as the deaths of her mother and Adi Da, which she describes as "ego deaths" that have deeply influenced her spiritual understanding.

In addition to her spiritual pursuits, Julie has been involved in addressing and critiquing the organizational issues within Adidam, the global community of Adi Da's followers. Her efforts to

foster open dialogue about these issues have often met with resistance, reflecting her commitment to maintaining the integrity of Adi Da's teachings.

She shares the truth of Adi Da's revelations, experienced personally over decades. Her website aims to expose the shortcomings of Adidam and spark essential discussions suppressed by authoritative conformity. Julie emphasizes the need for a culture that genuinely embodies Adi Da's teachings.

Julie's life story illustrates a remarkable journey from a public figure in the modeling world to a dedicated spiritual practitioner and advocate for Adi Da's teachings. She continues to preserve and communicate Adi Da's spiritual insights through her website and other platforms, aiming to foster a deeper understanding and genuine engagement with his teachings.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

Published to YouTube on February 4, 2024

SPIRITUALITY AND DEATH

JM: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we'll be exploring spirituality and death. With me is Julie Anderson, who has come all the way from Australia. She has been a guest twice before on *New Thinking Allowed* talking about her life as an intimate companion of Adi Da Samraj, a spiritual guru of whom she is a devotee and has been, even though he died 2008. Julie is visiting here in Albuquerque and I'm delighted that you're with us today in the studio. Welcome, Julie.

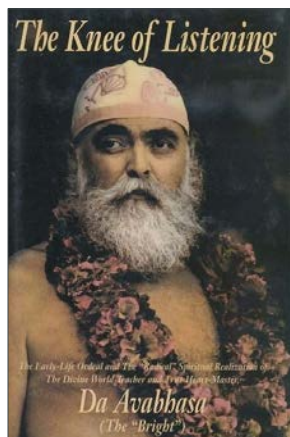
JA: Thank you, Jeffrey. I'm really grateful to be here. I feel I have communicated to you, but I also want to acknowledge to listeners how wonderful it is and how grateful I am to be able to be here with you and to feel your life and the environment within which you work and how rich it is, how full it is of all the forces and possibilities that exist within this sphere within which you've worked. They're very much present here and I can feel the vastness of all of the possibilities that you've worked with. I feel grateful to be able to integrate that in the context of my conversation with you about Adi Da and about consciousness. And, of course, this matter of spirituality and death is key in relationship to it all. I understand that this has been something that you have focused on in terms of your own process and consideration, too.

JM: Death is something everybody has to deal with sooner or later. It's the one inevitable fact of being a human being. We are all going to die.

JA: Yes. Spiritually speaking, this is something that you're very consciously aware of. It's not a taboo to speak about. It's actually a practice, that feeling awareness of the inevitability of that. So in a very real manner, you die and allow that death while you live. That's not a negation of life in any way whatsoever. It's actually a combining with that which is eternal, acknowledging that there is really no death except for the falling away of this psychophysical mechanism that we identify with while we're embodied. That's the fundamental process of being consciously aware and awake prior to and coincident with everyone and everything that arises. This is an extraordinary gift to have that process in yoga alive and awakened in the being. That's the

process that I live in relationship to the transmission of Adi Da.

JM: Let's begin, before we launch into the subject of death, with the very fact that you initially reached out to me. It's been quite a few months now. You felt motivated to communicate to the world something of your own personal, direct experiences with this controversial figure, Adi Da. Back in the days when



he was alive and I lived in California, [he had] a spiritual center in San Rafael, the city where I lived. So I was familiar with Adi Da's community. I think you've felt that he has been misunderstood both by the outside world and by, I think what you're suggesting, even by some of the leaders in the current movement, Adidam, a religious movement that he left behind. This guru in your mind has been misunderstood all across the board and you are hoping to correct the record by sharing from your own heart what you personally experienced and know.

JA: Yes, thank you, I very much want to do that. As we've considered a bit, I would say that my life has included a full spectrum of experiences in relationship to human, religious, spiritual possibilities. When I came into Adi Da's ashram and lived in intimacy with him and with devotees, that was an opportunity to really dive into it, as I've indicated, not only through study, but also through direct experience. As those years passed, which we've touched upon, I also then had the opportunity to test what it was that I was given in terms of direct experience, transmission, and instruction, also in the general life that everyone lives, just as a human being in the world assuming the fundamental responsibilities that anybody has to assume. And of course, they're very different depending upon where you are and who you are and what your interests are.

When Adi Da passed away there was another process that I began to become involved in which is a re-evaluation of both the direct experience with him and then living in the world and reintegrating again with my blood family also. With his passing, there was also the observation and evaluation of the relationship that I had to all the devotees and the gathering that was created around him and the



work that has continued since he passed on. With all of those different factors involved, one of the things that I discovered was really important was that I had to be able to make use of the gifts that I was given in the spiritual process that also affected me humanly in order to be able to really feel the truth of what it is that I had been given directly, my own experience of it, and how that actually then was beneficial in life, and not even in this life but then beyond life. So where would I begin?

JM: First of all, for any of our readers who haven't watched your previous interviews, we are posting links to them on page 37. Second of all, I think I'm going to plunge right in. The one experience that struck me as really worth probing is an occasion in which, while you were living in his intimate company, as one of four intimate partners at the time, he went through what today we might call a near-death experience. He died and he came back and you were present during that event.

JA: Yes. In the context of a spiritual practice and specifically relative to a practice that involves transmission and yoga, my relationship with Adi Da as an intimate of his and also as a practitioner, everything that I lived with him and what I received through his instruction and transmission had a significant impact bodily. It wasn't abstract and it wasn't just a philosophical study. It was the



Jeffrey Mishlove, PhD
Host, NEW THINKING ALLOWED

yoga that combined the whole conscious being and the energy of the being simultaneously. Anyone who's actually practiced a spiritual or religious life that was that involved and that in-depth knows that it has significant impact in relationship to how the body feels, how the energies move, potential transformations, purifications, awakenings, all sorts of different kinds. What was required in my relationship with Adi Da in the process of the practice had to do with taking responsibility for the various awakenings or understandings that came about through that process.

With Adi Da, part of what he did with us that was controversial was that he actually himself, having already most perfectly or fully realized what he describes as reality truth, which is the very self-condition, the condition that's not other than you or other than me, but it's the context within which all of this is arising, that very self-condition, which is consciousness and radiance itself. This he lived with us, and I live that and feel that that is the transmission of his being.

In the midst of our relationship with him through all the years, he entered into living with us intimately and with a large number of people as you indicated, we talked about that in some of our other dialogues. This was in 1986, the particular period of time that you're speaking about. I want to preface it by saying this was a unique event because of its particular significance, but this process

of death occurs quite regularly in the process of real yoga and real spirituality. That has to do with the fact that as consciousness and energy goes through a process of awakening, there are certain aspects of the being that begin to fall away. Then you go through another level of awakening in which there is an actual death of something that falls away and there's an awakening into a new reality or new understanding of reality or certain aspects of reality.

So at this period of time he was working very intensively with a number of devotees who he knew intimately and were available to him to delve deep into the process of insight relative to the manner in which the being functions. So for example, with me, I had to know myself physically, emotionally, mentally, psychically, even beyond what I might experience in this life but the possibilities of previous lifetimes. There are means by which we can enter into this investigation. You would be familiar with these different possibilities because of the many traditions in which you can enter into these subtleties.

And so this period of time was like that. We called these periods of time reality consideration. Each time we would have such a reality consideration, we would focus or concentrate on a certain aspect of psychophysical possibility. This was the way that he submitted. He actually entered into these possibilities with us so that we could express to him what we were experiencing and he could reflect back to us. We could ask him questions. We would see things. And they weren't just universals that we would see. They would be particularities relative to our own psychophysical manifestations. So it was not abstract. It was very intimate. The implications of these experiences in being exposed or seen or revealed as such was very revealing



and very vulnerable and very emotional because the ramifications of what you saw may be significant in some sense. Say something that would be exposed that would be embarrassing or that you didn't understand.

JM: For example, as I recall, when I met you at the airport, I'm waiting outside of security. For a moment I believed I was watching *him* come down the escalator.

JA: Right.

JM: I had to look twice and I realized, oh, it's not him. But for a moment it was a perfect image of him as if he wanted to briefly manifest.

JA: Ah, beautiful. So the coincidence, the coinciding, that's a perfect way to feel what I'm describing. Because even though Adi Da appeared objectively in that manifestation that you viewed, as he did objectively in a body for his devotees while he was alive, as you indicated is that this matter of the manifesting and un-manifesting, being embodied, not being embodied, the process of our relationship to it always occurs consciously. So you were conscious of that event in that moment and saw that. It had a significant communication to you.

JM: You could say I felt it, not just saw it.

JA: You felt it, yes. That's beautiful. Thank you for bringing that up and acknowledging that that exists, those real possibilities. Obviously it exists. This is our life. We exist in this body and it's lasting for a period of time. But it will come to an end, so the fact of the death of it is significant.

JM: Let me just mention one thought that's come into my head. I forget the scientist who wrote this, but I'm pretty sure it's true that because we live in a quantum reality, things occur in—I'm going to try and explain this—that reality comes in and out of existence trillions of times every second. It's at the Planck scale, reality. One might say that we all die trillions of times each second.

JA: Sure, yes. Infinitely.

JM: It happens so fast that our consciousness can't really perceive it, I don't think. But a trillionth of a second it's very real.

JA: Sure. Consciousness is the principle, the constant. Consciousness can manifest as feeling awareness or being conscious of as a mental perception or conception. There are different forms of consciousness, but the consciousness that is constant is not modified in that regard through any kind of a mechanism. So in this event that you were asking about, Adi Da, through his coinciding as conscious feeling awareness from the self-position in relationship to the manifestation in which we are still alive as, he said his specific unique purpose was to help illuminate these different possibilities and these possibilities that you are speaking of that are vast, varied, and infinite, those perturbations that occur. To be able to have an insight and understanding in relationship to what is our real position in relationship to all that arises. Are we identified with the arising or is our position of identification that is true prior to that? That's what he describes as the fundamental self position.

In 1986, in this particular reality consideration, he said to us that there came a point of a death that



occurred for him that revealed that it was no longer necessary for him to have to submit in a particular way that he had been previously, which he would describe as reflecting and teaching about the various manners in which we needed to have understanding about the different possibilities of our manifest life. These yogic deaths always had various forms of psychophysical qualities to them in which one could feel incredible sorrow or incredible passion or incredible anger even, or frustration. There's a peak where you get to where there's a limit that is reached and the limit seems like an end or even a kind of tragic event.

But when you pass through that threshold of fire, then there's a liberation that comes about. This is what occurred in the moment with him where he said that the divine self-condition position had actually fully manifested through this submission of his whole being in coincident with manifestation, his own body, his own physical body, the body of those that he was intimate with, and then not only because we are intimate with others like in this room, we are intimate with one another because we're in this space together. But we also know based on our own direct experience that the world is psychophysical. We're not just combined in this room, we're also infinitely connected with all sorts of possibilities and different vibratory levels of awareness beyond.

JM: I presume that the event you're referring to in 1986, from an external point of view, would have looked like a medical emergency of some kind.

JA: Well, it did at a certain moment in time, but what's important is to also describe what occurred right prior to it so that I can give you more of a graphic feeling of what the environment was like.

Adi Da was in his own bedroom at this point in time. We had the capability on the hermitage island in Fiji to be able to communicate to him just through intercoms, through different rooms and environments and places. We had been involved in one of these intensive investigations and considerations with him. He began to describe to us that he was acknowledging that there was a yogic event that was beginning to occur in him. Now this was not something that was unfamiliar to us, so we knew that it was significant.

On the phone he communicated to us that he was beginning to feel that he was leaving the body and describing that he could feel numbness coming up, convulsions and it was beginning to become difficult to breathe. When he described that, a number of the devotees, including myself, came over to where he was. He was alone in the room at the time, and one of the doctors also then came to attend to him. We had to do this because the impact of the spiritual process in him was so significantly intense that it had an actual effect on the heart, the breathing, the brain; all of it was going through a transformative process. He ceased to breathe for a while and felt that he had died, and yet he came to again. He doesn't really like to call it so much a death event because it gives a connotation that it was some kind of medically validated [event], as if he was in an operating room or something. But it was a death because what fell away in him and was relinquished was a particular form of working that he did not need to do anymore.

He said that in that particular moment he was free then to be able to manifest the fullness of the realization of the self-condition and the transmission of that without having to reflect the limits to us that are possibilities within the human structure and within human life. In this it was really



ecstatic because it meant that he could then more liberally live freely as he manifests his own realization and enlightenment. Then there was a magnification for us to feel that in relationship to him.

JM: In other words, by going through—to an external observer such as yourself—a death experience, he became more himself.

JA: Exactly. Precisely. Yes. His function as a guru or a teacher knows there's a burden of responsibility that you bear and you do actually make a sacrifice, a surrender to the student or to the practitioner or to the devotee to be able to give what you can give and you have such passion you want to give it all because it's ecstatic, it's happy. You want them to understand. He did that so thoroughly that the magnification of his own position of freedom and liberation was magnified. So it's exactly what you're describing. In doing that, that magnification then was also given to the devotees who were surrounding him.

I can speak to that because what occurred in that moment is all the struggle of the being and the passion of the heart to want to realize freedom, liberation, truth, ecstasy and have that be permanent wasn't something that I could do in relationship to life or truth or even the guru as an effort. The yoga, as I've described it and what Adi Da demonstrated, was always a matter of a relinquishment of a particular binding force or a relinquishment of a point of view, a relinquishment of a limit and then opening up and awakening more profoundly and more deeply.

So when that would occur with him, there would be a simultaneity of something that would occur with us. In that moment what happened for me was that I was spontaneously awakened to



what's traditionally described as the witness position of consciousness, the non-dual reality itself. There was a struggle that was let go as he relinquished the process of having to reflect to us the limits within the psychophysical structure and the esoteric anatomy of the body-mind. In that freedom there was a liberality, a lack of concern relative to a way of having to engage the body-mind in a strategic fashion to try to achieve something as a yogic practitioner. It rested me in the certainty that I could trust the position of the self in consciousness itself as being the revealer and the realizer of truth itself. Does that sound complicated?

JM: It sounds pretty vague actually. On this channel, for example, we have done quite a few interviews on a relatively recently described phenomenon called the shared-death experience. It's like a near-death experience, but people who are in the presence of somebody who is going through a death experience often sort of go along for the ride part way. I'm under the impression that something like that was occurring with you at the time.

JA: Okay, that's a good example. It's interesting that you use the word vague. This points to the limit of language in terms of being able to actually describe something that's non-verbal or that can't be fully conceptualized. It can be conceptualized, but the conception of it is not the direct experi-





ence of it. Even the direct experience of it is always modified by a point of view or the feeling of the experience itself when you're talking about a process in the consciousness domain itself.

Now, that may sound abstract or vague, but for me, in relationship to Adi Da's transmission, that is more real as reality itself than even what we're experiencing in this room. Why is that? It's because it's permanent and it's a constant feeling-awareness of being itself as love-bliss, radiance, consciousness, awakeness, awareness that never is absent. Whereas experiences are always coming and going as we were speaking of earlier. There is the process of the death of it and the birth of it, the death of it, the birth of it, the awareness of it, the dying of it, the going away and you can't hold on to it. It's never permanent, all of that. So to me, having been through what I've been through with Adi Da, this is more vaporous.

JM: I get that. That's really fascinating. It's like the one reality; I think you referred to it as love, bliss, radiance, brightness. That's the real reality and *this* is what is often referred to as *maya*, something of an illusion.

JA: Yes, so that is what became tangible repeatedly in Adi Da's company. I could describe numerous experiences that coincided with that, but the context or the actual transmission was the magnification

of that bright condition so that the separate sense of self would fall away and there would be the constant awareness of being *the* self, the only self that is true. Your expression of those who are with people who are in the death transition is really perfect because I just experienced that recently with my mother who passed away a couple of weeks ago, and also with my father and with other people, and with animals also.

Many people will speak about what a blessed event it is to be with individuals who are not fighting the process of the death transition and they are aware that they're involved in that death transition. Or, they may be individuals who have lived a life that they feel at rest with the process because they don't have regrets. Somehow they have dealt with or come to a resolve or a resolution and they're just accepting of that passing. They may have been taught something as a human being about death or as a religious or spiritual practitioner to not resist it.

With my mother, for example, she was very afraid initially of death and did not want to die. When she became aware that it was inevitably going to happen I began to have very intimate conversations with her, even as she had Alzheimers. One of the things that I noticed with my mother having Alzheimers is that even though her memory was not good, I kept reminding her, "You are not your memory, Mom. Can you feel that? You are always present. Your memory may be falling away, but you are not your memory." And she got that, really clearly got that.

So in the process of her transitioning and realizing that she was going to die, I kept saying, "Mom, this is going to happen. There's no point resisting it now. Your body is going to fall asleep. It's just not going to function the same way that it did. There's no point in resisting it. It's inevitable, so better to



participate with the process.” I helped describe to her what would occur as her feeling awareness would no longer cease to be identified with the manner in which she was familiar with the body, her thoughts, her breath, the heartbeat, and there would be the tendency to grasp onto it, to try to continue to live and to continue to identify with it. So I said to her, “You have to let that go.” I could visibly see in her face and in her body when she began to actually understand that, her whole being began to literally relax and come to a point of ease. It was notable even by the carers that were with her that there wasn’t resistance in her body through the fear of being moved and what’s going to happen. I could feel a luminosity, literally see the light of the energetic being which is combined with the etheric body. Then beyond that, there’s greater and greater brilliance of light that surrounds and pervades us if we’re actually open to allowing it to enter in and we’re not so tight as a psychophysical mechanism.

When I saw this in my mother, she then began to cognize and reevaluate her life, reevaluate her relationship to God, and then she was then actually able to let go. The ease with which she passed was brilliant to observe and an affirmation for anybody who is in the room when someone passes. Her presence was still there. She would often say that it was the heart. She called it the heart. It was love, the feeling of love, the feeling of her love for her husband, my father, that had already passed away. That God was love. All of these things become obvious, and they aren’t just metaphors. They’re the actual direct experience of it, but experience then that’s going beyond the psychophysical mechanism.

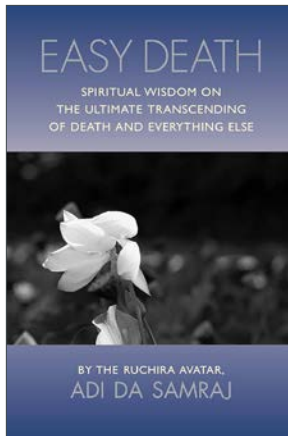
She told me when she finally made the reconnection with God. She said God had told her to take



his hand and not look back. I was suggesting to her to always look into the light, be aware of the light that seems to be above, in relationship to the psychophysical mechanism and just let go. Don’t look for something as if you have to grasp onto anything and then the perfect possibility of if and when there’s a next for you, it will be revealed. To see her go through that process and actually participate in it was a profound blessing because then it only magnified that understanding that it’s true in relationship to someone that I loved. There was a lot of sorrow in her passing because of the familiarity and the intimacy and the gratitude and the experience and the history, and then for my brothers and sisters to see that too. We’re all very different in terms of our process and life and beliefs and styles and all of that. But then for them to feel and see the certainty that mom is okay.

JM: One of the many books published by the Dawn Horse Press about the life and teachings of Adi Da, maybe one of the most unusual of the many books, is called *Easy Death*. I don’t know how many books there are, I think about 30 or so. But *Easy Death* wasn’t just from Adi Da, it’s not just his writings. It included the testimonials of many other people. But I gather that that book is suggesting something that you just described, that death can be a very easy thing. It doesn’t have to be a struggle.





JA: Yes. Anything that he communicated about life was in the context of the embrace of the inevitability of death. This means that when we are born, there is a process of ad-

aptation. Part of that process is the identification that takes place with this, being a body and a sense of self. Adi Da describes that through the mechanism of attention and the feeling of relatedness, consciousness feels related to a body. Consciousness feels related to and becomes familiar with a body and a sense of identity, and then in relationship to others and things and life itself. That's the arena within which we feel that we exist and that we are alive.

JM: Most people would say, I am my body.

JA: Yes. I am myself, I am my body, I am my thoughts, I am my memories. Different ways of describing it. There are sensations. Adi Da is saying, yes, those things are real and true. They are direct and real experiences. But the actual self-position, again—and this can never be repeated too many times, because I've had a lifetime of it—the process of awakening into this is that the true position of self-identity is not dependent upon this mechanism of being a body-mind. Consciousness itself is constant in all different possibilities of manifestation, even if it's not this gross psychophysical one.

In *Easy Death*, the reason it's called easy death is that the process of identification is what needs to be investigated and understood. The act of identification is the act of what defines the ego. The ego as an identity is what will inevitably die when the

body falls away. Aspects of it may linger and continue, but even those levels are undone, as there is the actual ascension into the light in which all of that is dissolved. The potential for something new may occur, but as anyone who studied reincarnation, past life experiences, or even memory loss, or whatever, will know that there can be a continuation without a memory, but sometimes those memories will bleed through again and they'll seem to be a continuum.

[There is] the possibility of the continuum of experiences that any person can remember somehow through transitions in which you might fully forget it, like with a death event, an actual physical death, and then you might remember something about a seeming past life. Those experiences are actually occurring in what could be described as a field, a patterning of possible experiences that consciousness identifies with: actively does, actively chooses, and identifies with it, and begins to form its sense of self-persona, and that's what is described as the ego. *Easy Death* is describing that the way to be able to accept death when it actually happens, for one, physically, is to embrace the process of relinquishing identification while you're alive, and to then be able to be established in the light of the true identity while you are living. So it's a constant process of life and death as a simultaneity in that which never dies and actually is never born.

These are traditional terms and traditional references that many practitioners will understand. For most of humanity this kind of language and kind of speech might not be familiar and would seem a bit strange even to speak about because the fierceness of identification just with the body is so strong, what the body can taste, what the body can smell, what it can hear, what it can see, what it can feel, how it combines with all of the elements in



life, and presuming that's just it. It's not. It's really genuinely not.

JM: But it's so seductive.

JA: Yes, it is very seductive. That is the process of what Adi Da describes as identification, differentiation, and desire. Through the act of identification as a separate self, there's inevitable differentiation as everything else is different. Then if everything seems separate and different where in reality it's not, then there is a desire—like when you say it's seductive—there is a desire to then combine with or have union with what seems separate from you. Where does that desire come from? It's a longing, an intuitive heart longing and yearning of knowledge that actually in truth there is no separation. So the heart itself or the being itself is actually yearning for something that is already natively and inherently true. So that's the lesson of life and understanding that if you yield into the truth of your condition, there is a constant death of identification, differentiation, and desire.

The process that he describes is that of no seeking. But that no seeking isn't about recoiling from life as if life is a negative, or on the opposite end of the spectrum, taboo: either light or dark or something that you want or something that you don't need. In fact, all of those combinations of possibility can exist without being in any kind of a recoil from it. It's only in that *asana* that the truth of your position as conscious light becomes revealed and magnified because you're not superimposing anything on it or squishing it into a box of identity. Does that sound abstract?

JM: No, that's beautifully put. I like the expression *asana* in that case. It's like our whole physical exis-



tence might be thought of from a larger perspective as a posture.

JA: Precisely. I have a wonderful story I can tell you that is an example of this. In 1992 when Adi Da indicated to me that it was time for me to leave his intimate sphere and the ashram and be tested in the world—I think I might have said this to you—he said to me, "Now, little Buddha, it's your time to go out into the world." I really did not want to leave, and I think I've spoken about this in detail, but I knew that the process of my intimacy with him was much more profound, not dismissive of the emotional, sexual, human intimacy as being part of his family and the ashram and all the intimacies that I had to go through another transition, which would be a death. This was a significant change.

In the moment when I realized I was leaving, I kept going into an *asana* of curling up because there was so much sorrow about having to leave, and he kept reaching over to me and taking my whole body and putting it into—I was sitting in a half-lotus pose—and he told me that from going forward... Give me your hands for a moment. He told me that he wanted from now on that my *asana*, my posture, had to be this: he put my hands on my thighs and he said, "From now on, this is your *asana*." In other words, the open *asana*, and allowing that to be completely, fully descended



into the being as going into the world in which I'm leaving everything that I love, everything that I'm familiar with, with incredibly immense gratitude for what had occurred for me, and now I'm going into an unknown in which everything will be tested, re-adapting to life differently than I had from birth till the age of 18, and then reintegrate with all of the wisdom and lessons that I had learned and had to be tested without doing this [gestures of contraction, closure and defense].

The *asana* that he had taught had to be one that was entirely open, an open vessel, flowered out, completely receptive, able to feel everything without recoil. In that, there would be the heart-ability to discriminate and continue to allow and make choices that would magnify bright understanding, the intelligence of the heart, and the certainty that the self-position is not dependent upon the vast possibilities that I would be finding myself in. Is it the choice to identify and then feel the angst of the loss, or somehow needing that thing to be satisfied, to satisfy me as a separate self, or was I going to be able to be in the world without the proximity or the dependency upon what was presumed traditionally necessary as an ashram, sacred space, the guru, the teacher, the sangha, the gurubais that makes it really rosy for spiritual practitioners? Try doing it in the world. So that was a profound instruction. And again, there are these moments—I won't ever forget that—because the transmission of him taking his hands and showing me what that posture was, that's the easy death. Be at ease as life rises and falls.

JM: I gather that transition was hard for you, if I recall. You went through a period of psychotherapy to accommodate the changes.

JA: Exactly. So this is where it's reality consideration, the process with Adi Da as the yoga of the bright. It's because there is no recoil. Because the psychophysical mechanism is made up of patterning, the possibility of patterning that consciousness is identified with, karmas, traditionally *vasanas*, *samkhya*, it's all the different ways through the traditions that name these different...

JM: *Samskaras*?

JA: *Samskaras*, yeah.

JM: In other words, habits.

JA: Habits, tendencies, liabilities, virtues even, all the different ways that a person can be defined. These you adapt not only from this physical embodiment through the bloodline, you adapt that also through deeper levels of manifestation, whether the reincarnated soul, and then the causal dimension. We've touched on that last time that we spoke. There's the causal dimension, which is just the feeling of relatedness and attention itself.

At all those different levels I had to then re-address my life based upon this *asana* and the trust in the spiritual process itself that had been given. I even had to question and went through all of what happened in my relationship to him. That was the most important part. Because even though I have had intimacies with my mother, my father, my brothers, my sisters, my dear friends, and then Adi Da and the Guru Kula, those intimates around him, gurubhai's, ashram, even other spiritual realizers through the study and the visionary visitations of many realizers through the experiences with him, traditions, realizing that all



of the vastness of all of that is in psychophysical feeling awareness of this persona, literally so. As direct as an experience is I can touch *this* (touches the chair). There's that kind of touch that has happened in relationship to so much history and memory and even present time and future. All of that, becoming aware of that.

As time went by I had to re-address all of that. The time that I spent where Adi Da was teaching and reflecting, there was an awakening that was occurring, but it was a fundamental intuitive seed awakening. But that seed had to blossom and flower and be tested to see whether or not it would remain like this or if it would go like this [gesture of palm opening and closing like a flower].

JM: One never knows. There's always the possibility of backsliding.

JA: Exactly. The backsliding occurs if the self-position is lost by virtue of failing to maintain the integrity or the fidelity to that in relationship to any life experience. As you indicated, yes, re-entry as you could call it into the world was a new birth.

JM: Let me jump around a little bit. I want to go back to the moment in 1986 when Adi Da went through a death experience. As I recall from earlier material you had sent to me, he wasn't sure he was going to return.

JA: No, he wasn't. This defines the manner in which he functioned. There was never a certainty that he assumed in advance of direct experience. In that moment and in relationship to life, he never superimposed thought, pre-thought or historical thought upon the moment of that event. Just allow it to occur. What the significance of

it is will be revealed. The revelation can't come through the superimposition of history because the body-mind is a repetition of history. The mind is a repetition of memory. It's all just patterning. Yet for something new to be revealed, you have to allow it without a precognition.

In that moment he couldn't even really speak about what had happened. It became clear over time the actual significance of what had happened for him. That actually took quite a long time; I'm talking about months. [In] a few days or weeks he began to speak about it, but only like, "This is my birthday. This is my real birth as a human being, fully human," not some sort of fantasy you might have about a guru or a god or avatar or whatever you might want to superimpose on him. He was a man, fully vulnerable of all his own psychophysical makeup and patterning that he was living with and we were aware of. He trusted us enough. We respected him enough. He respected us. So there wasn't a fear with just allowing the saying of whatever it was. Even if it wasn't clear in that moment, "That's actually *really* what happened. This is what *really* occurred. Now I'm understanding it more. Oh, now I can speak about it more clearly. This is the truth of what occurred."

It's like the *ah* moment, the *satori*, this is actually what occurred. Why? Because it is an affirmation of the certainty of the position of truth itself. It corresponds or it coincides with that rather than being something that is simply of mind that can come and go. But it's self-authenticating. You may have heard or seen that language in his teaching where he describes, "It's inherently so." It's self-authenticating, self-validating. That is even a common understanding with someone who in human terms feels empowered. You become certain of something because it becomes obvious. Well, it's



the same thing in relationship to reality truth, spiritually or transcendently realized; it's authentic and becomes obvious as being true.

JM: What, as I recall, he revealed when it became clear enough to him, is that one of the things that brought him back from death was a thought of you.

JA: Yes, that's a very significant moment. I could not comprehend the significance of that in that moment. I was surprised when he said that. I still am. I don't think I have a way to cognize that fully, except that I could describe that he indicated to me in the midst of saying that that I was one of the people that he worked with really intensively. I was available to him to completely combine with him in every way and go very, very deep with him, very viscerally, all together, physically and emotionally and mentally and beyond in all sorts of different realms of possibilities. I was available to explore all of this with him so that my feeling awareness with him and his process is so thoroughly combined. My passion for realization and freedom was so intensified that I made a vow with him very, very early on. He said he would take me seriously as a practitioner and as a devotee in relationship to him if I would trust him beyond the fear of betrayal, separation, and death. Having been around long enough to know the significance of what that would mean, I said to him that I did, that I would do that because my longing and my yearning for that freedom was really my only purpose for existence anymore.

At that moment when that happened, I feel that the integrity of my trust in him (heart inuited as the most fundamental self condition) was not just mine alone, but it was the heart of humanity. Why? I'm not separate from the rest of humanity. I'm not merely an individuated being. I don't iden-

tify myself as that alone anymore. So when I speak of anything that occurred in my relationship to Adi Da, I actually feel that I was and am only, as he described, "one of his coins", one of the beings that was available for him to work with humanity as a whole and make the communication that he needed to to everyone through his writing and through the means that he's given. He said that I epitomized the struggle that he had to endure in terms of teaching the lessons that were necessary for human beings to have to learn. So I was brave enough to stay with him.

I saw his gratitude for that, I saw his tears, I saw his love, I saw his passion, I saw his need, the reciprocal need for someone to be sensitive enough to how important it was to stay with him in the process of what he was doing. That expression from him personally, that's what it meant to me, is that revealing or saying that he comes down, the full self-condition manifest through the sacrifice and the reciprocal participation of a lover as one who is willing to stay with the process of truth, to stay with the I Am that is the self in the yoga of realization. In that moment he said he was drawn into that relationship with me, but I don't see it as a separate self, as a "me, me, me." Not like that at all. It was just another expression of a moment of him revealing the nature of the yearning and the fidelity that's required to bring or draw the divine process into manifestation. That has actually epitomized my relationship to him, the revelation that occurs, the manifestation that occurs through that fidelity, the heart fidelity to the yoga of truth itself. There are a lot of stories that I could tell about actual physical manifestations happening.

So when he talks about that coming through, the intimacy with him in relationship to me, that's when he gave me the name Swami Kalottara Devi



Mataji. If you study about that particular name, which I won't go into the details of that now, but it is the surrender of the mind. It's the surrender of identification with the self, the separate self position. To be given over so fully and intimately that it's not just a union, but what remains is only the self condition, simply the self condition. That is the process within which life continues to be lived.

JM: We've talked about the book *Easy Death*. We've talked about your mother's death and how at the end it was an easy death. I've also heard the word "ordeal" used in connection with Adi Da. If I recall correctly, he might have said, "the ordeal of discipleship," or his ordeal as the ordeal of being a guru or an avatar. So it's not just all easy.

JA: No, that's right. Not remotely easy. If you're seeking to be satisfied, if you're seeking to be given something for free, if you're seeking to have what is given to be able to be something that you can own and control independently, if you're seeking to give something that's going to give you a sense of life being easy, that's not the true spiritual process. Anyone who's entered into a life that requires growth psychologically or emotionally or even physically, going beyond the habits of the being, it's an ordeal. It's always an ordeal.

Adi Da would in the very early days speak about just imagine being somebody who's grotesquely overweight, just speaking at a very physical level, what the ordeal is to actually have to go beyond the habits, the addictive habits, the feeling that you have this need connection with food. It's an ordeal. Any kind of growth beyond a limit is an ordeal. The spiritual ordeal is most intense because you are relinquishing certain forms of dependency on a familiar way of functioning and



you're learning new forms of means and arms that you never even knew that you had. You're entering into passageways and ways of living that are unfamiliar.

For example, the energy body is another level of reality that is so significant in relationship to the physical condition. In fact, this is all energy. This is all just energy, modified energy. It's constantly changing even though we perceive it as something that's very finite. So becoming sensitively aware to the energy body and then having the energy body combine with the psyche or the mind and the possibilities, that's an ordeal of adaptation because it's not familiar. Then you enter into the awareness of that and then you get to the point where you even have to go beyond familiarity to actually enter into the domain of consciousness itself, because consciousness is prior to mind. Consciousness itself is prior to mind.

JM: I like that you make that distinction between mind and consciousness. Many people seem to obscure the two. As a result, they think that we are like computers.

JA: Precisely. And that when you're dead, you're dead. When the brain stops, you're dead. That you're only conscious through the mechanism of whatever is computing or happening and triggering in the brain. That's absolutely not true. When





you have that assumption, of course, there's all sorts of... People can become horrified of that, but there's also the flip side of it. It's still fascinating. There's even nothing negative about the fascination with it. It's extraordinary. The whole way that this mechanism functions and the way that it connects with all the different levels of possibilities and the extraordinariness of it. It's all fascinating. As you said, it's seductive. It's alluring. So there's a point in which, if you make a choice to investigate it and to experiment with it and experience it, the yoga of the bright is to have greater fidelity to consciousness itself. Adi Da, in terms of his communication, where he says, "I am the one and only," which a lot of people have a really hard time with, in that communication he's not speaking as an ego. He's not speaking as a separate self-identity that is saying, "I, as Franklin Jones, am the one and only. Look at me."

JM: It's a problem that mystics have had throughout history. Many have been executed for exactly that, particularly the Sufi mystics. They get their head chopped off for simply saying something [like] "I am the truth."

JA: Yes. Ecstatics. Or even an *enstatic*, an ecstatic or an *enstatic*. Ecstatic is ecstasis. It's something that's communicated that is outside or beyond. *Enstatic* has to do with more of an internal, the iden-

tification with, say, the *atman*, that is prior to experiential phenomena, where there's just absolute void, complete and utter stillness, no arising. And in that, there's the I Am. Ramana Maharshi, Buddha, many great realizers in the midst of their ecstatic communications, the samadhis that we spoke about, you speak ecstatically from that, and you do. You make proclamations. So Adi Dham's proclamation of, "I am the bright, divine self-condition," well, people will stop there and react before you continue to listen to the communication of the I am condition, "I am the one and only." That is true of everyone and everything. I am not other than you, as you are. There is no distinction.

JM: It's beautifully put. It's so fundamental and yet so difficult to grasp at the same time. I think in the half-century that I've been doing interviews, the best ones always come around to that very point. We seem to need to do it over and over and over again, because as soon as you grasp it, you can lose it.

JA: Precisely. And that's just a habit. That's the automaticity of egoity, identification, a sense of dependency. It literally is a machine, an automaticity. That is the act of the ego that Adi Da indicates that we can awaken beyond and prior to so that that automaticity doesn't define you. That's the process of bright yoga. But not exclusive of or separate from all of the great traditions that also are existing in and pointing to and have experienced that divine light, that divine truth, that divine self-position, but describe it through the permutations of various forms of experience. What he's saying is unique and why he says that his revelation in seeming time and space is a culminating revelation, because he's indicating [that] it seems like there's all this history



and time and space and it's happening in a linear fashion. There seems to be a future, there seems to be a past, there seems to be a present moment. But in truth, there is only the one divine self-condition that is eternally and always already present, now. And now... And now... No matter what arises.

JM: Let me go back and jump around a little more, Julie. You talked about a kind of a death that you experienced when you left his intimate company in 1992. That was a major transition in your life, after living intimately with him for 16 years in the ashram. But then in 2008, 16 years after that, he died. After all you had been through, you were still intimately connected with him at the spiritual level.

JA: Yes. When I left in 1992 one of the things he whispered in my ear as I hugged him for the last time when I was about to leave the island, he said to me, "Never forget that your relationship to me is a spiritual one." And I said to him, "I promise I will not dishonor you." That was not two separate beings speaking, even though it appeared that way. There was all the emotion of lovers, where a shift had happened, and suddenly I was no longer going to be there intimate with him. We both felt the angst and the sorrow of that. Yet the commitment to truth was greater than and beyond our own coming together and coinciding that way.

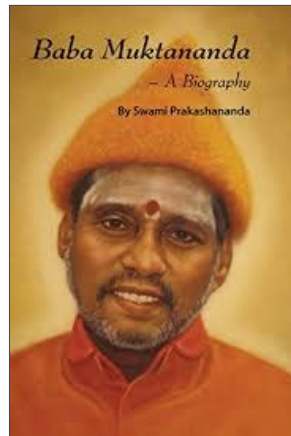
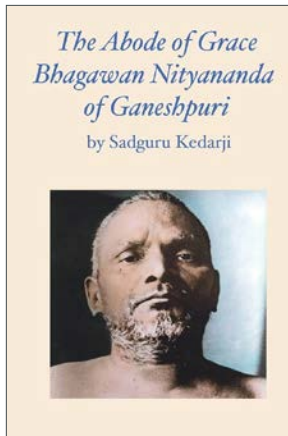
So fast forward through that period of time of having to deal with the seeming loss of that intimacy with him in human terms and even in spiritual terms, even in what had happened with him as guru and the manner in which he worked in his crazy wise way, which triggered a lot for me to have to examine. Did I understand that correctly? Have I responded to that rightly? Do I feel betrayed because of it? Do I feel victimized as a result of it?

Has it failed because I'm not there anymore? Did I do something wrong? All of those ordinary emotions. Or, am I so full of myself that I can go on and I can teach myself, or assume a role because I would get people reflecting things to me and wanting me to do that kind of thing. Even people that I worked with. I did spa therapy and taught yoga and meditation in just very ordinary circumstances, and it would unexpectedly, to me, be reflected that, "Wow, there's something happening with you that seems significant, and I want more of that." I didn't know that that would be reflected to me because I had been in an ashram for a long time and didn't have any knowledge of how I would appear or seem to be in the world.

JM: When you were in the ashram, I understand that you had been designated by him as a swami.

JA: Yes. In that sphere I played a lot of senior advanced roles, even coveted roles, and I'd always say, "Got a minute?" [Laughs] No, you may have a fantasy notion of what this life is like, but I even invited many friends around Adi Da, devotees that I knew that wanted to be close, for whatever reason, unbeknownst to those who were able to be around him, it really didn't have a lot to do with a knowledge or an ownership of it, as if you could in advance know that that's something you could or could not do. It just became something that you found that you were capable of. Similarly in the situation when I left, being around him, is that there was a lot of doubt about my ability to function in the world because I knew that what I had experienced was so unusual, and also because of how controversial it was. Even for me to say that I was a devotee of Adi Da, I didn't know what kind of reaction I was going to get. Oftentimes I got negative reactions from people.





JM: There were scandals.

JA: There were scandals. Even to this day I still get it. I don't react to it anymore because part of what occurred through that period was an ability to be able to fully comprehend without reactivity what is not other than an obvious process that one has to go through and grow beyond in a reaction to identification with the separate self in the context of awakening to the divine process and reality, truth itself, without shaming or negating or making anybody feel like that's really crap or you're less than because you might not understand that or you have to go through this thing. It actually has granted incredible compassion, which I didn't have before. The qualities of being able to be patient and to step back and observe it and feel the angst of it, too. All of these things can be simultaneous without having to recoil from it.

So when I got to the point where Adi Da passed away, I had already been two years in therapy because there was a point—this is an important moment, another death, another moment in which there was a significant transition in my relationship to him—and it was in 2006. I was living as a devotee still, sort of peripherally involved with the gathering, not so much directly living in an ashram or a center, which I had continued to do since 1992, but I was still associated with the gathering in Melbourne, Australia. I was working

at a spa retreat in Victoria in Melbourne, Aurora Spa Retreat, a wonderful place. It was a beautiful temple. I worked there for four years. During this period of time, my husband and I began to invest in properties. We were making money. One of the instructions Adi Da gave me is, "I want you to become completely financially independent." He said, "You don't have to do it alone, but I don't want you to be dependent upon the organization. And also you needed to be able to feel that you, as a woman, were not dependent in relationship to men." So I had to integrate the capabilities of the male-female aspects of the being during this period of time to become stronger while cultivating the feminine simultaneously. He gave me specific instructions this way all through these years before he passed away.

In 2006 it was an interestingly unique time because while I was in Melbourne I happened to come across a lot of swamis [who] were associated with Adi Da's traditional lineage, that was with Baba Muktananda and Bhagavan Nityananda. These simultaneities or synchronicities would happen unexpectedly while I was living in the world during this period of time. Part of the trusting of the revelatory process of spirituality and yoga is that these coincidings will come. It's all part of the perfection of the patterning that's necessary for you to learn from or to be informed by or to go beyond. So I started to associate with devotees that were close to Bhagavan Nityananda as the head of the lineage, and the *shakti* or the *durga* actually as the iconography associated with this lineage. I was communicating to Adi Da about all of this. Of course, these communications became very significant around how he would again use myself, and many, many other devotees. I'm not the only one, of course, this has happened through, just to make that really



clear. I'm one of many, many devotees who could speak this way similarly. I'm just one that happens to be blessed with being able to have an opportunity to speak to more people about it in detail.

So when I was speaking with Adi Da about this, for some reason I began to look and compare traditional ashrams and organizations that I saw thriving in relationship to what was happening with Adidam as an organization. One of the things that Adi Da always addressed about the devotees around him is that we seemed to be failing as a mission. That something about what he was offering—and I think it had to do with the controversies that were out there about the way that he worked—had to do with the fact of the pronouncements and proclamations that he was making that people were finding offensive. It had to do with the fact that he was speaking in a manner that was not exactly the same as all the traditions and it was hard to grasp. Altogether, as a new tradition, as something new being revealed, it was not easily graspable by many people.

He would often describe that those who would come to know of him would be people who would have been born into this lifetime while he was embodied, who would be available for some reason or other to have gravitated towards knowing him in some form. He said it wouldn't be necessary for these beings to have to actually be in his physical company. He was so productive in terms of what he put out and what he created on so many different levels that it actually has infiltrated the world quite a bit. Yet the number of beings who were actually willing to speak about him and become part of the process of helping his work to prosper is



still very limited. This was always a frustration of not only his but for all of us. It seemed to be self-sabotage, almost. We're wondering, what the heck is wrong? Why is this not working? Examining ourselves and the limits of the organization and how come we're not functional, how

come it seems to keep collapsing, we're not getting the resources and there's so many changes in positions and devotees coming and going, like myself.

So in 2005–2007, during this period of time, I ended up having very difficult conversations with him where I fundamentally told him, and I will say it as I said it, "I feel you have created a monster." Meaning that I felt like the organization and the gathering of devotees were not rightly aligned and lacked integrity. I began to see it (the organization) as extremely cultic in relationship to him. I meant that in the cultic sense of which he had revealed because combined with observing that devotees were being kind of fanatical and fundamentalists there was an insular dissociative asana like: "You're the only one and this is the way and you have to be involved in this fashion and do this." I'm looking at it and feeling the way that we're functioning has nothing to do with the manner in which I know living the direct relationship to him demands and what it requires, which completely undoes any way of living that way of cultic relationship to him.

But on the other hand, because he was so combined with us, there was very much a liability to feel that he was the one orchestrating everything that was happening. During this period of time I went through another process of having to examine what actually happened in terms of how things occurred around him. Doing that in the context of



myself becoming more free to accept the gifts of freedom that had been given to me without being dependent upon him as a separate other, giving it to me as though I needed certain something from him as another manifest persona. In other words, “Remember our relationship is a spiritual one and never forget that.” So the spiritual nature of the relationship was no longer dependent upon his physical form.

This was magnified when I began to understand more about his process in relationship to the great tradition of Baba Muktananda and Bhagavan Nityananda and his relationship with these other gurbais in that tradition and beginning to share experiences. Then these other swamis are talking to me in a similar way relative to their own process in relationship to Baba Muktananda. Then there are other devotees from other traditions that I began to communicate with and realizing, oh, this devotee-guru relationship, this relationship between practitioner and teacher. I’ve read about it in the books, but then actually in life to be able to feel the nature of the way all of us have had to process what it actually is to own responsibility for participating in an incredibly intense ordeal.

Well, in 2006, I said some things to him that would seem to be taboo that you would never say to a guru, you’d never say to a teacher. If you were really, really respectful, you would not say these kinds of things. But I had an intimacy with him in a human way that I knew that if I wasn’t real with him and honest, without taboo, without fear, to be able to say to him: “Some of this s*** that happened, I really don’t like it. I don’t like what devotees are doing. I don’t like the way that they’re spending money or what they’re doing, or this, that, or the other thing. It seems counterproductive. What’s the point of it?” I just said it all.

His response to me was so beautiful. He had absolutely zero reaction to it. Zero. As soon as this occurred it reminded me of other moments throughout my relationship to him when a similar thing would happen. Like one moment in a pique of frustration: “You call yourself God?!” You know, like a passionate “What?!” A sense of betrayal. “You promised. You promised!” And again, a moment of reflecting on *who* is it that I am speaking to that is promising *what*? A deeper examination of the nature in relationship to God, guru, spiritual process, reality.

In 2006, when I made this complaint, so to speak, he said, “Okay, I am going to relieve you of any sense of responsibility that you have to ‘righten’ anything about what you observe and feel is wrong. But I want to ask you, please don’t dissociate from anyone or anything in the midst of it.” So on that point, and that’s a big deal... When you’re feeling the volatility of the being, dealing with the depth of emotion in relationship to not only human matters, but religious and spiritual and the whole thing and the traditions and God and really involved in the intensity of that examination, even at a more profound level, he’s saying: “Okay, that crisis, that’s okay that you’re feeling all these things, [but] don’t dissociate.” So again, it goes back to this open asana, because dissociation is a recoil.

JM: At the same time, you are feeling that you have been involved in something that’s hypocritical.

JA: Yeah, I felt that. I really did feel that.

JM: And he’s saying, stay with it. Don’t run away just now.



JA: Don't run away, yeah. Don't dissociate. As a response to that, Nick and I actually moved closer in.

JM: Nick being your husband.

JA: My husband. We decided to pick up where we had established ourselves, subdivided the property, built another property, bought and sold and related to the devotees there, and life [was] really full of all sorts of things that we were involved in. We picked up, left it behind, and moved in closer to the ashram again as a form of response to the instruction, a trust in the instruction. When you follow the guru's instruction or any teacher's instruction, when you're going to go through a threshold or a passageway of difficulty, you can be certain that that's when the fire will actually be magnified, because there'll be a process of purification and there'll be a process of disentanglement from limits that you're identified with. When I moved back in closer, I only saw the very thing that I was complaining about even more so.

JM: Of course.

JA: Yeah. Without dissociation.

JM: He didn't tell you to let go of your realization that something hypocritical is taking place.

JA: No. As a matter of fact, the interesting thing that occurred is that while I was there and I'm beginning to feel like I can't even swim anymore, I felt like I was sinking into a depth of despair about confronting [that] everything I have done in this process has been worthless. Not that I had lost the ability or the feeling awareness of consciousness



itself, that's the paradox of it, that was never lost. But the actual manifestation of the fruition of his work and the ability for the gathering to manifest a sign of integrity or manifestation of the integrity of that radical realization of consciousness itself and the freedom in it. Because I had seen the impact that that had had on him bodily, psychophysically in his own yogic process, that was a piercing in my own human heart of seeing what he had to endure.

And so at that point in time, when I'm seeing it even more clearly, I'm feeling like I can't swim, I just can't, I don't know if I can do this. I began to experience significant and severe depression. I went to a doctor, I needed help. I had already employed all of the things that I knew how from meditation, yoga, and the herbs and the therapies and everything I could possibly do. Finally, I went to a medical doctor and the medical doctor said to me, in no uncertain terms, "You need to get psychiatric help. You need to get someone to help you through this." Because I told her what I was involved in. Fortunately she was recommended to me by a friend and she knew that this doctor would be able to comprehend what it was that I was going through.

JM: Yeah, most doctors probably could not.

JA: No. So there would be these blessings, these coincidings, whatever you want to call it, but you

Jeffrey Mishlove, PhD
Host, NEW THINKING ALLOWED

would find the right person that would be able to help you in a moment of need. So this was a woman who could help me and she gave me on to another doctor, who she said she knew personally and that this man would be able to understand the process that I had been through. I ended up going into a six-year process of therapy relative to integrating everything in terms of hypnosis, deep memory therapy, all sorts of psychotherapy. I went on different forms of medication, to experiment with that, to see how I could even out all the symptoms that I was having psychophysically. Adi Da was aware that this was happening. Everything that I ever did was always in direct relationship with him. No reaction. Constant guidance to devotees in terms of admonishing: “make sure that she has what she needs, that she’s getting help with what she needs and serving her in this, keep me informed,” and then he would say: “make sure that she knows what’s happening with me.”

JM: She, being your therapist?

JA: No, me. But that being said, the therapist was a man. So the female doctor, I had to have a referral from her to be able to go to a specialist. I’m extremely indebted to the man that I went to. In a very real way he knows me better than a lot of people do, even people that I live with. Why? As Adi

Da had taught me, there was no purpose in going through any kind of investigation or exploration or insight wherein everything had to be explored and said, unless I do so without any kind of apprehension, no recoil. Because in that kind of relationship and in that process you have to trust that the *truth* will be revealed *about it* in terms of what’s significant. So that’s the process that I went through with this doctor too.

But going back to 2006, there was an important moment while I was in the midst of this process of examination. He asked about me, even though I wasn’t so much involved with many devotees. He knew I was going to have to take some time out and that I no longer had the responsibility to have to play a senior role of leadership within the institution. He relieved me of that, relieved me of having to try and fix it, because I needed to go through this other process, and I wasn’t able to give myself over to the culture in the same way that I had.

But interestingly he asked me during this period of time to serve as what he called “God’s Eyes.” This is a role that actually isn’t a function of instructing people or being directly related too interactively with devotees, [such] as teaching courses or having intimate considerations with them about their own process. But it was a function in which I was called to communicate the truth of what was actually really occurring that was not exclusive of being able to make some kind of sense out of the dynamic of opposites, of everything that was arising. It was what would be described as being able to communicate the essence in the midst of the mayhem, being able to bring a greater understanding so you don’t lose the thread in the midst of the play of life or the leela of the spiritual process, the ordeal of it. He gave me that function to be able to do that and to



communicate to him and communicate with devotees about what I was observing in the midst of all of this.

JM: In other words, he didn't ask you to keep a secret of the fact that you thought there was a lot of hypocrisy.

JA: No. As a matter of fact, I was known, in relationship to him, to not lie to him. That was one of the virtues. He revealed to me very early on that that virtue was necessary in relationship to the divine process because, who are you lying to? What's the purpose of lying? The divine is indifferent in that regard, and who are you speaking to? An *other* that is the divine process that's listening to you? Or who is going to be injured by lying? Who is going to be served by lying? What's the purpose of deception? What's the purpose of being so opaque and deceptive that you are not available for the spiritual process for real? You have to be transparent. You have to be open and [have] transparency in order for the revelation to occur.

So he gave me this function, and I was asked to choose a few other devotees to do this with, and he specified women. Myself and three women began to engage this process together. But as soon as it began to happen, we noticed that the ones [who] I had chosen to do this with, and he blessed for us to do this together, we hit a wall of the force of the organization and the bureaucracy of functional continuation. This was not meeting. The esotericism of the process and the speak of truth itself and the bureaucracy of manifesting the organization in functional terms were coming at loggerheads and there was a stalemate. We had seen this throughout the years in different ways. The long and the short of it is that that function fell apart. We couldn't engage

anymore because the level of frustration was just a fury to be able to try to penetrate that wall of solidity, because it was like turning the tide of a force of intent to institutionalize the religious and spiritual process.

JM: Which probably is a fundamental conflict in any religious or spiritual organization between the needs of institutionalization, organization, and the true spiritual path.

JA: Precisely. That describes what has been occurring ever since Adi Da left the body. The gathering is in a conundrum. When I say the gathering now, I don't regard the gathering being the institutional organization that has taken hold.

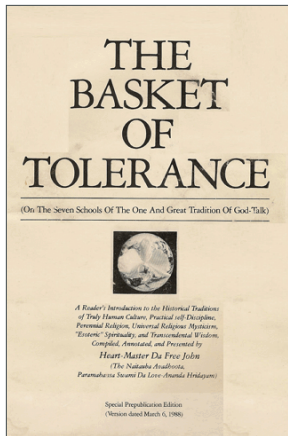
JM: There is an organization called Adidam.

JA: There is an organization called Adidam that is serving a very necessary role in terms of the survival of the literature, the sanctuaries, the art, the different gifts that he's given, all the various forms of instruction. There has been a lot of different instruction that has been given over the years.

JM: An archive. So that's a necessary function. It needs to be preserved.

JA: Exactly. No question about it. The individuals who are doing it, I bow down in terms of the role of responsibility and the capability to stay with it in their own fashion in the midst of all odds. Also, when you get forces of nature that are actually literally trying to shut these things down. I mean, we've had to deal with fires. We've had to deal with accidents. We've had to deal with hurricanes. We've had to deal not only in the place of sacred domains,





but even with individual devotees. These accidents, sometimes you could say, whatever, you can't name what the force is, but you know for very certain that there are dark

forces that are trying to shut down and counter illumination, the divine intervention, particularly when it comes from the necessity for human beings to have to surrender to something beyond their own separate self-identity.

JM: But wouldn't it be the case that you would think of these things, I think maybe the word you might use is *leela*, it's all part of a divine play?

JA: Yes. Traditionally that's the case. There is a unique manner in which *Adi Da* will speak of that, however. In the fourth and fifth stage traditions, which are sort of associated with the seven stages of life that is *Adi Da's* tool of making sense, or a skeletal measure or tool to be able to understand the great tradition of mankind, there's a fourth to fifth stage process that occurs, and these are the ones that are truly religious or spiritual, that can also bleed over into the sixth stage, and then there's the seventh stage process. In the fourth to fifth stage traditions is where you will find this description of *leela*, or the play. *Krishna* is an epitome of that. *Krishna* and the *gopis*; saying "everything that arises is perfect. It's all God. Cosmic consciousness. It's all light. It's the revelation of no separation". The true self is undifferentiated in relationship to the whole play, so you can be ecstatic in seeing this as perfection in terms of how it arises. That's true enough to be said.

However, if you're involved in the process of awakening in the consciousness domain itself, that is prior to the mind and prior to the structures of the psychophysical mechanism that correspond with all possibilities of the cosmic universal domain, consciousness being aware of it, not separate from it, then there's a discrimination that occurs wherein you understand that you can make certain errors of making overly much of experience itself, and you can see that experience itself is not perpetuated by consciousness itself. Consciousness stands free itself. Consciousness itself stands free, undisturbed. It's not the creator or the cause. Once consciousness itself manifests through the mechanism of attention and identification, differentiation, and desire, through the feeling of relatedness and familiarity in the cosmic domain, that is the wheel of *maya*. It perpetuates itself.

However, to call it a perfect play would ascribe perfection to identification of the separate self-manifestation. *Adi Da* is not saying that's not true enough to be said, but he's saying consciousness itself is not the one that is perpetuating *maya*. So the perfection of it is only in the *recognition* of it as a necessity to learn lessons about the limits in itself, which will provide you with perfect opportunities. The coinciding is perfect because you will come across every necessary purposeful and meaningful significant association that will reveal something to you. Like our coming together is not arbitrary. It's significant in the divine process, so long as we stay in the radical understanding in relationship to consciousness itself. The consciousness domain itself.

JM: It's a very subtle thought.

JA: Extremely subtle.



JM: I can kind of barely grasp it, but I think I did. I think I barely grasped it.

JA: Yes. That's the seed, that's the locus of the causal. It's even deeper than the causal. It's the prior domain. The subtle is the middle station of the heart. The intuition, that seed, is in the causal knot, which is the structural passageway via the left side of the heart into the consciousness domain itself. This is extremely tangible, tacitly tangible, and yet cannot be accessed by the mechanism of the brain in and of itself, or the body in and of itself, which does not mean there's anything wrong with the brain or the body or the mind in and of itself, unless it becomes independent of consciousness itself.

JM: In the midst of all of this energy, in the midst of you working with this group and running into the obstacle and going through the psychotherapy, is when he died.

JA: Yes, right in the midst of that. I remember at a certain point I had become so certain that the process and engagement in life was essential. I had ceased to react to it. He had brought me back and forth, by my own choice and by his asking, to be in and out of his physical company. In that there has been a relinquishment of that level of attachment. So when he passed away physically, of course I was devastated mainly because I knew that he had not been able to enjoy the fruition of seeing his work manifest as he had indicated. Many times [he] would ecstatically speak about the way that it would be and could feel the positive impact or intervention or penetration it could have in the world, particularly in terms of bringing it to an equanimity where there would be no conflict potential. It doesn't mean that there wouldn't be fire

and water and all the play in that regard, but there would be an ability to maintain a way of associating or relating to one another in a non-dual fashion, truly non-dual, and that we could live that way with one another. That was what his passion was, to bring about a different manner of living, a new way, a new world order, in order to live with one another completely differently than we had based on history.

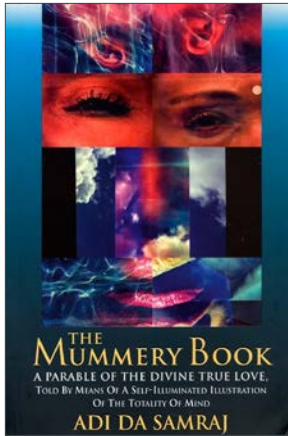
JM: Well, it sounds like what you're saying is he envisioned himself as a world teacher. Like Jesus Christ or Buddha, and although he was greatly revered and still is, one might say that his teachings never had that level of impact.

JA: Oh, absolutely not. He was aware of that, and he actually knew that that wouldn't happen. He never intended and knew that the manner in which he had to work would never be in the public domain. He would not be surrounded by thousands and millions in gatherings, mainly because the kind of work that he needed to do could not be conducted with that many face-to-face. He had to work with fewer that would have the reverberations in the world, universally.

JM: Well, Jesus had 12 apostles.

JA: Right. And look at the reaction he got, even in the small domain that he did. As time went on and Adi Da became more known, because the interconnectedness through the means of technology became more obvious in the world, and which is really widely obvious now to everybody, no matter where you are. You go to very remote places in India and you walk into temples that are so remote and the priests have iPhones. That's one of the things that I was gobsmacked about when I went to India, and





I'm seeing them performing these incredibly sacred rituals in front of these icons, some that are thousands of years old. I'm really delicately quiet, coming into these domains

with the kind of preciousness and tenderness and respect that you would go into these spaces. And then you see they've got the sports glaring and they've got the rock and roll happening in the temples. The combining of the East and the West and the left and the right and the alpha and the omega. It's just the clash of all these seeming opposites just wildly manifesting presently.

Another interesting thing about Adi Da is that he prophesied all of this even before he began to teach, even before he passed away. The last 10 years of his life, he described exactly what was going to occur after he passed on. He addressed devotees about how the gathering would continue to function in a cultic fashion. I told you about the [Orpheum] trilogy, one of the books that he wrote and penned that had the *Mummery Book* in it and the *Scapegoat Book* and the *Happenine Book*, which hasn't been published yet because he was hoping to find a publishing organization that would publish it respectfully, not just hide it away somewhere because what he reveals in there as a literary work of art is as consequential as what he manifested in his visual art forms. It again is a breakthrough kind of communication because he uses language and shapes language in a way that it initiates a process that draws you really deeply into it. Cognizing what he communicates there requires an availability, like a seed recognition of his function as a spiritual teacher and a divine incarnation.

He knew that he would not be glorified. He wasn't looking for that. He wasn't looking for world recognition as something great like that. His passion was much more profound and not about a separate self or egoic identity that was looking to be granted favors for whatever he did. He only had the passion to have what he communicated and had awakened, that wasn't dependent upon the survival of his physical body, to stay alive. What he calls his treasures or his means, coincided with many beings. Compared to many who know about him, only a handful gave our lives over and continue to try to help the means or the gifts that he gave survive so that they can carry through the transmission of what he established.

This Love Bliss Being is permeating and vibrating everyone and everything in the psychophysics of things. You see signs of that, not just coming from Adi Da as a separate person, but it is the divine manifestation continuing to reveal itself in all the great traditions, because all are going through a significant Shift and awakening in consciousness.

JM: Let's talk about his actual death. How was it treated by the community?

JA: He was involved on the island, at Naitauba, in late 2006. He returned to the island of Naitauba to reside there at that point in time saying it was likely he wouldn't leave anymore. Now, something about Adi Da that I think a lot of people know and talk about, he says things and then maybe a few months later he does the opposite: "I'm never going to leave the island again," or, "I'm not going to do this anymore," or, "We're going to only do this," and then before you know it, shape-shifting and something happens differently. So we sort of took



it with a grain of salt, okay, you're not going to leave again and we're thinking he's going to live on and on and on and that's our hope that he won't die fairly soon. We don't want him to. But he's starting to indicate that the resistance in the world to the communication that he is bringing is really strong, and he's saying it's being resisted because the guru function itself is being resisted and there's a misunderstanding about the actual true nature of the guru function or the siddha function or an avataric incarnation or an actual divine intervention, and that there's more and more a stronger inclination for independence. "I can realize this on my own, independent of everyone and everything."

JM: It's an American characteristic, among other things. We regard ourselves as fiercely independent people, pioneers.

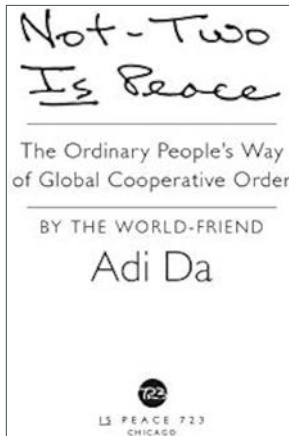
JA: Sure. That in and of itself in the right measure, but not done overly much, is useful to become strong and capable of functioning as I had to myself. If you stop there though, you are not open to further growth. There's always further growth, growing an awakening above and beyond and prior to. So yes, this mode of what they call the dark time or the Kali Yuga, which not only Adi Da has spoken of, but many traditions have spoken of that there will be a dark time. There have been dark times. It's a cyclical pattern of there being resistance, causing calamities and wars. That's not the divine doing that. That's humanity doing that. It's allowing the dark forces to take greater hold of the force within the sphere within which we all live, not just in this red-yellow realm, but in the vibratory spectrum of possibilities, even extremely subtle entities that aren't embodied in physical forms. So there's all sorts of beings that are working at different levels



of manifestation with the forces that are present right now. Adi Da was working with those forces himself. The yoga, the meditation, the puja, the rituals, the invocations that we were taught to do were working at that level also with him.

So at this point when he passed away in 2008, none of us were wanting or expecting him to, but he kept communicating that there's such resistance in the world and, "These dark forces are impinging upon me because there as been an inability for my function to be able to be respected and be given a circumstance with the right sacred context, with enough numbers recognizing me to be able to move with a force of protection in the world." So, he said, dark forces are coming onto his body. He said that he was feeling yogic symptoms of another death that was about to occur. He said that if there wasn't going to be an advancement of enough numbers of devotees to be able to incarnate the advanced practice, to carry on. It would become our collective burden of responsibility without there being a physical guru necessary anymore. Which is an interesting twist in him playing the *siddha* role, the guru function. Where now he was actually indicating there would no longer be the necessity for a single (living individual) guru function. That the actual truth of the esoteric process of the incarnation of priorly established non-dual truth required the force of every man and woman, non-differently realizing (awakening in)





the self-position itself. That would liberate mankind.

JM: That's an optimistic vision.

JA: Incredibly. Reality idealism (eternally alive), a bit of a paradox, right? So, this is what's communicated in *Not-Two Is Peace*, which I've brought up before, the call to global humanity. And so just before he passed away, he said that he started working at a more profound level, where he was working with his writing and working with his artwork. He was attempting to work with a number of practitioners that he was hoping would move into, again, more advanced practice. He said, it's not happening. Adi Da is the epitome of integrity in terms of saying it like it is. He's not going to say, this is okay, and this is it, if it isn't. He's going to call it what it is. He's going to say, "You are still relating to me culturally." What that means is, "You are not relating with me in right relationship, relating to me, realizing me non-differently." In other words, "Taking responsibility for the full force of the brunt of realization itself and doing that in relationship with one another so that you take on this responsibility. It's not mine. I've done everything I can possibly do. Don't scapegoat me for the failure of it."

If you look at the thread of his communication, he was always saying exactly the same thing about the pitfalls of relating to the world as an I-other dynamic in relating to God or the divine force or spirit in that fashion. Then also relating to guru in that fashion, relating to any other being in that fashion and constantly indicating; "if you continue to do that, you're going to scapegoat

me. You're going to scapegoat God. You're going to be the victim of the failure in relationship to life. You're going to blame the universe for your own inability to awaken."

When he passed away, he was simply working one day in his art studio. It was a set-apart space, not dissimilar to this. It actually had the walls and the space where he could actually do photo shoots and there could be specific music playing. He had high technology with a lot of artists and devotees and technicians coming on retreat and working with him to be able to manifest his visual art and the auditory art combined with the visual art. He was also working with a lot of writers and a lot of editors. Basically, the island was this incredible university of artists. Not only technically speaking, but also sacred artists serving the temples and the sacred grounds, as he always did. Huge numbers of people came around him, influx and outflow and influx and outflow. Thousands and thousands of beings have had this opportunity with him. At this time it wasn't any different, yet the frustration of him confronting the resistance was excruciatingly painful. So much so that it was difficult for me personally to even hear about it, because I also knew synchronously exactly what needed to occur for it to completely be different. It was just paper thin.

JM: But you were relieved of all responsibility for changing it.

JA: I had no role, absolutely no role. I was continuing to fulfill the practice that I was given by him. As a matter of fact, Nick and I had bought a retreat property that could actually have the capability of housing Adi Da on this property. I came so close to inviting him in 2008 to come there at that time. To



give him an opportunity for another refuge. But immediately when I would feel that I wanted to do that, to relieve him of that sense of frustration, [I got an] incredible sense of the forces which would come into my sphere of what would be required and the responsibility of it. Humbly, I wasn't prepared. I didn't even know who I would call on to help do this. How would I know? These are all the individuals that I know or ones that have worked with him so closely. So then I'd finally fall back.

He stayed there on the island doing this work intensively, communicating through a few devotees that I had been very intimate with through all the years around him. Then one day as he was working in his studio, lo and behold, he had just completed a work of art. He had finally done the cover page for the *Aletheon*, one of his final works. Later that day, he dropped the body. No drama, nothing happened. He was just in his studio and fell. He kept warning people prior to this, "If something doesn't change, you can't make use of me anymore. I have nothing more to give. I have nothing more to give. I've left it all to you. It's all yours. You do what you will." He dropped the body. Of course, people tried to resuscitate him, because we'd seen him have these kinds of yogi[c]...

JM: You talked about the earlier [incidents].

JA: Yeah. We had seen this kind [of thing]. I was called up by a male devotee, calling Nick and I saying, "Adi Da's dropped the body again. He probably will come back." We sort of assumed that might happen. He didn't. Getting calls again, he's not coming back. He's not coming back. And finally it sunk in. He left. He left. It was traumatic. It was shocking. Because we never thought it would happen. I mean, we knew it would happen. But not then.



JM: You were not prepared.

JA: No. I felt it's not complete. Or it doesn't appear to be complete. Every devotee could describe something unique for them in terms of the profundity of that moment for them. My response personally was that I immediately went back to a moment in 1976 (or so) when I was on the airplane with him and we were going to Hawaii. I was sitting next to him on the plane. We had this very simple conversation when I think back on it. It's so mundane. It's ridiculous. We were talking about, what's your favorite color? What's your favorite animal? What would you do if the plane was about to crash and you knew we were going to die? He was posing these questions to me, which seemed like very simple questions. And I said, "Well, probably maybe the color yellow and lions. I would probably, of course, give all my energy and attention to you and the process. In the moment of death, I would be given over in the spiritual process." I asked him, "What would you do?" He said, "I would just continue reading my newspaper."

That was what came to me. At that moment when he said that to me and when I remembered that in the moment of his passing, it was an extraordinary communication of no drama. You're simply present and then you're not. No reaction, no drama, no recoil, no fear. It's going to occur and you just let go. It just is an inevitability. So I remem-





bered that moment at the time of his passing and I could feel the angst of what was occurring. Then, of course, immediately: “What’s going to happen? What will devotees do in response?” I went home and I sat [and] entered into a meditation (vigil) for days, entering into the process of feeling the significance of what occurred. The principle thing I felt was a magnification of the divine self-position, the bright love bliss, magnified immensely so that there was the communication that there was no loss. Absolutely zero loss. Never left, never gone, always present, always was present, the divine was always present as revealed, that divine light, not dependent upon his physical form. That certainty has always only been magnifying even in the midst of every possible test and challenge and seeming adversity. It’s constantly the magnification of that so long as there is no dissociation from life. It’s a complete paradox.

JM: As it occurs to me, you went through several 16-year phases, 16 years living with him, 16 years after you left his intimate company until his death. And now it’s been 16 years since his death. I gather what you’re telling me is that his presence has only grown stronger.

JA: Yes.

JM: And constant.

JA: Yes, constant. The precipice that I feel not only myself but as a seeming separate self, I feel so combined with the certainty of the psychophysics of our condition that humanity itself is at an incredible threshold of a transition of awakening. It’s a potential. But it entirely has to do with what our relationship to consciousness itself is. It is interesting to observe and feel that that is the field of focus in so many arenas of study and learning and experimentation and growth, this matter of consciousness, and who, what, and where is consciousness? What is its nature? How does it influence the material world? This is the reality awakening that’s necessary in order to not destroy the world fundamentally, to not destroy one another, to cease the conflict in relationship to what is arising.

This precipice is not just a spiritual awakening, like knowing that the world is psychophysical in nature. Like we’ve been speaking recently about the phenomena of realization that there are other dimensions of entities, and they cross over, that there’s an awareness between all different forms of incarnation and conscious awareness of different forms of vibratory incarnations. People are in upheaval about even the acknowledgement of that level of awakening. So that’s a really important transition. Once a greater humanity is aware of that fact, then there is the possibility of moving into a more subtle or causal awareness of what consciousness is in relationship to manifestation as a whole.

But the key necessity, though, even in the midst of all of that awakening, has to do with a fundamental responsibility relative to not living cultic relationships that cause conflict in relationship to one another, as though we are threatened because we are separate beings. Therefore, in physical,



emotional, mental, and sexual and psychophysical terms, we are troubled, at war, complicated, unable to even have an equanimous way of living with one another, being at peace with one another. If humanity can't come to that point of feeling discrimination, responsibility, "independence" in terms of being able to be responsible as a humanly mature being, available to keep growing in relationship to one another as a whole, then all of these subtleties of the religious and spiritual and transcendental process will not be accessible. That's what I'm aware of in the midst of the education and opportunity that I've been given, and I don't feel separate from *it*. There's nothing that "I" can do independently. You can't force it, you can't superimpose anything on *it* to make *it* happen. *All* it is is just a vulnerability of living in a completely open disposition and trust the coinciding and allow the revelation of the divine self-condition, the bright, conscious light to be revealed and awakened.

JM: Julie Anderson, what a lovely discourse.

JA: Thank you.

JM: We set out to talk about spirituality and death and I think we have accomplished that.

JA: Yes, thank you. Thank you.

JM: It has been heartfelt and inspirational. I'm so glad that you went to all of the trouble and expense to come here to Albuquerque to share this story with me, Julie. Thank you so much.

JA: Thank you.

JM: And for those of you listening or watching, thank you for being with us. You are the reason that we are here.

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She Is Mind Leela

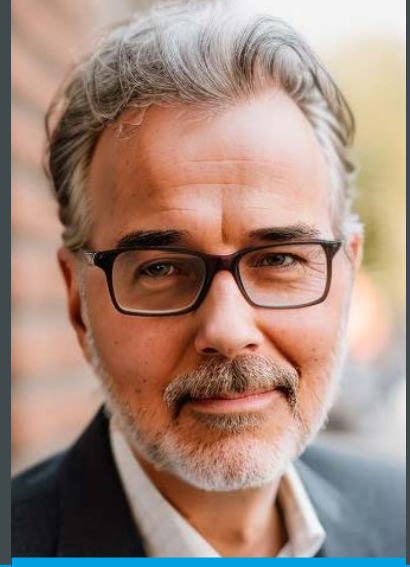
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www.richarddolanmembers.com



Richard M. Dolan

Richard M. Dolan is a prominent UFO researcher, author, and historian, widely regarded for his extensive work on UFO phenomena and government secrecy. Born in 1962, Dolan holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and English Literature from Alfred University and a Master's Degree in History from the University of Rochester. His academic background has provided a solid foundation for his meticulous and scholarly approach to UFO research.

For over twenty years, Richard Dolan has been one of the best known UFO researchers in the world. He is the author of several groundbreaking books in the field, opening up fresh ways of understanding this perplexing subject.

Dolan's interest in UFOs was sparked in the mid-1990s, leading him to publish his first book, *UFOs and the National Security State: Chronology of a Cover-up 1941-1973*, in 2000. This work, followed by a second volume covering 1973–1991, established him as a leading authority on the historical and political aspects of UFO phenomena. He argues that governments, particularly the U.S. government, have systematically covered up evidence of UFO encounters and extraterrestrial presence.

In addition to his writing, Dolan is a sought-after speaker at conferences and has appeared on numerous radio and television programs. He co-authored the book *A.D. After Disclosure: When the*

Government Finally Reveals the Truth About Alien Contact, exploring the potential social and political implications of UFO disclosure.

For many years he has hosted *The Richard Dolan Show*, a usually weekly podcast for KGRA and his YouTube Channel. He has appeared on countless television programs, including *Ancient Aliens*, *Hangar One*, *UFOs: The Lost Evidence*, and many others. He also wrote and hosted the television series *False Flags*, which appears on GaiaTV, and has written and been featured in an extended series relating to UFOs entitled *History of Aerial Phenomena*, appearing on multiple platforms.

Richard is currently completing an original study of USOs (Unidentified Submersible Objects, or Water-Based UFOs) and continues to work on his third volume of *UFOs and the National Security State*, bringing the history of UFOs up to the present day.

Dolan hosts his own online platform, *Richard Dolan Members*, where he shares research, interviews, and insights with a global audience. His balanced, well-researched perspective continues to contribute significantly to the field of ufology, making him a respected voice in the ongoing discourse about extraterrestrial life and government transparency.





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SECRET SPACE PROGRAMS

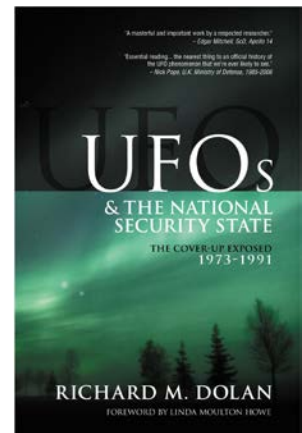
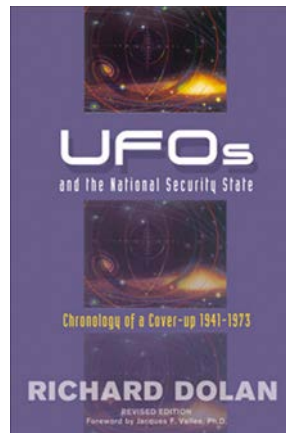
JM: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Our topic today is Secret Space Programs. My guest is Richard Dolan, probably the most qualified person I could imagine to speak on this topic. He is the author of *UFOs and the National Security State: Chronology of a Cover-up, 1941-1973*, and then Volume 2 of the same book, *The Cover-up Exposed, 1973-1991*. His other books include *A.D. After Disclosure: When the Government Finally Reveals the Truth About Alien Contact*; *The Secret Space Program and Breakaway Civilization*; *The Alien Agenda: A Speculative Analysis of Those Visiting Earth*; and *UFOs for the 21st Century Mind*. Richard lives on the East coast and now I'll switch over to the internet video. Welcome, Richard. It's a pleasure to be with you today.

RD: Hi, Jeffrey. The pleasure is mine and I'm actually very happy and a little bit excited to be a guest on your program. So, thanks for having me here.

JM: Well, it's been a long time coming. You've certainly been a topic of discussion on this program for many years. Many of our other guests have referred to your work, so it's a special pleasure for me to be with you today. We'll be talking about secret space programs. I'm using that in the plural because we now know quite a bit about the AAWSAP¹

program. We've done several interviews about that on this channel, but I know that you're aware of many other programs. Additionally, you're aware of various claims about a secret space program that you think are not justified. So, I hope to get into both of those areas. I suppose a good starting point ought to be the early years of UFO secrecy. Your work takes it back, as I recall, to 1941.

RD: Yes, that's right, through my volume, *UFOs and the National Security State*. That's exactly right. When we're talking about the origins of the secret space program, it's very related to the origins of UFO secrecy in general, I would say. That is, both of them have geopolitical rationale behind them. Maintaining secrecy on UFOs—or UAP now—in general, I think a lot of it had to do with managing the technology, keeping the technology as secret as possible, or largely with the aim of weaponizing it,



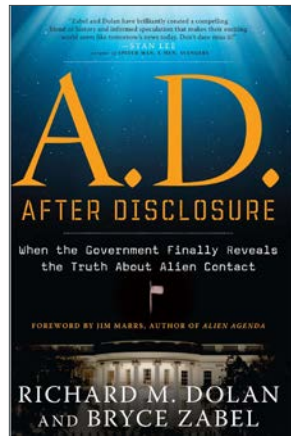
1 Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications Program



I believe. I think it was a big part of it. But also just utilizing them in any advantageous way imaginable.

So, [with] secret space, I think it's similar. One thing to keep in mind about a secret space program is how, from the viewpoint of geopolitics, from the United States' strategic perspective, a secret space program is essential from their point of view. Space is a theater of operations in terms of communication globally, but also in terms of military projection of power. One hundred plus years ago it became necessary for powerful nations to dominate the seas in terms of international trade. But once the space age began, increasingly it became obvious that space also was a theater that needed to be dominated to the maximum extent possible. We're talking pure military strategy, pure geopolitics. This has nothing to do with what's right, what's wrong on a moral, higher ethical level. This is purely national power play here.

And so, from the United States' point of view, during the 1950s and in the 1960s and beyond, controlling space as much as possible has always been a paramount interest. They've never been able to do that fully because the Russians, from the beginning, have been a powerful actor in space. But the United States is constantly engaging in every bit of one-upmanship that they can engage in vis-à-vis the Russians or now the Chinese or anyone else. So toward that end, there is always going to be a secret, deeply classified component to many things that the US does in space. On that basis, you can say the necessity—the perceived necessity—of a secret space program is a given from the



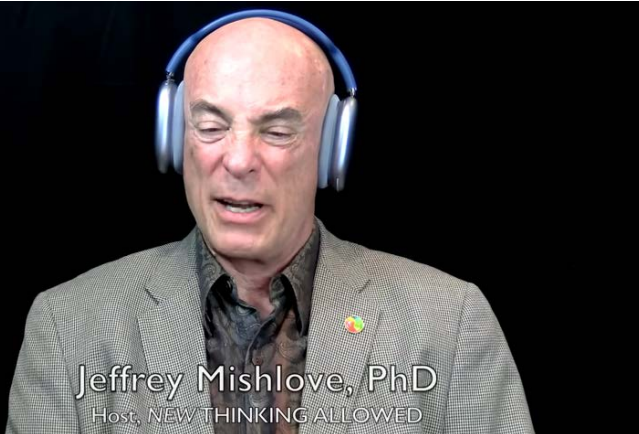
point of view of these people. So that's one thing to keep in mind.

Toward that end we could talk about the National Reconnaissance Office, the NRO, which has all kinds of spy satellites in Earth orbit that are doing God knows what because they don't tell us anything. But obviously a great deal of espionage goes on and that's all classified. That technically would be a secret space program when you get right down to it.

When we in the community related to UFOs, UAP, when we talk about a secret space program, inevitably we're talking about something beyond that. We're talking about things having to do with extraterrestrials or aliens, however that works out. So that's what we're discussing. Toward that end, I would definitely say, yes, there is a powerful argument for an ET-related secret space program.

I would just end my preface by saying there is an overwhelming trail of documents relating to UFO/UAP evidence over the years going back to the 1940s. I won't belabor that. I've talked about many of these documents countless times, but suffice to say they don't hint, they don't suggest, but they do prove that the United States military establishment, the US intelligence community, has been deeply concerned with UFOs since the 1940s. That's provable. So we know that they are interested in it. We also know that there have been hundreds, probably thousands, but minimum





hundreds of United States military encounters with these objects. Many thousands of legitimate UFO sightings every year, all kinds of variations of that, combined with the United States' need to dominate space. A lot of these UFO sightings have been in Earth orbit. Even we have records of some of these objects coming in from deep space, believe it or not, coming into US orbit.

All of those would mandate, from the US point of view, a genuine secret space program if for no other reason than to monitor and hopefully manage whatever it is that's going on out there. Whatever the motivations of these other beings are, whether they're benign or not benign, one would have to assume that the United States military command structure would be looking at space saying, we need to have a presence out there, we need to have our eyes and ears and our sensors out there to find out just what is going on, who are these other beings, do we have anything to worry about, and so forth. All of those issues to monitor, if nothing else.

But then beyond that, we have, I think, an abundance of good claims, testimony, that there's even more than that, that the United States has been doing its best to replicate whatever ET tech it can, and to have its own capabilities in Earth orbit, and indeed potentially beyond, to deal with this matter. Now we're getting into what I have sometimes called a breakaway civilization, this

idea that part of our civilization, part of the classified world, has broken away, as it were, with their own science, their own technology, which are off limits to the rest of us, and their own, let us say, cosmology and understanding of the greater reality that they utilize, that is off limits to us, in their attempts to deal with this reality as they perceive it.

So there are a lot of dimensions to this. There is, I would say, credible, believable testimony toward that end. We have to keep in mind, we're dealing with a national security apparatus that is not transparent to us, that has frequently lied to us. They can have their own justification for that, but they're not truthful on this matter. It's very difficult, even now at the end of 2023 when you and I are talking, to get genuine transparent honesty from them about what it is that we're dealing with. We're not getting honest answers. Therefore, FOIA requests about a secret space program haven't been very useful toward proving this point. What we have is testimony and lots of testimony from very interesting people. That is where we are at. That may change down the road, but right now we're still dealing with strong testimony, but not supported by verified official fact coming from the United States government.

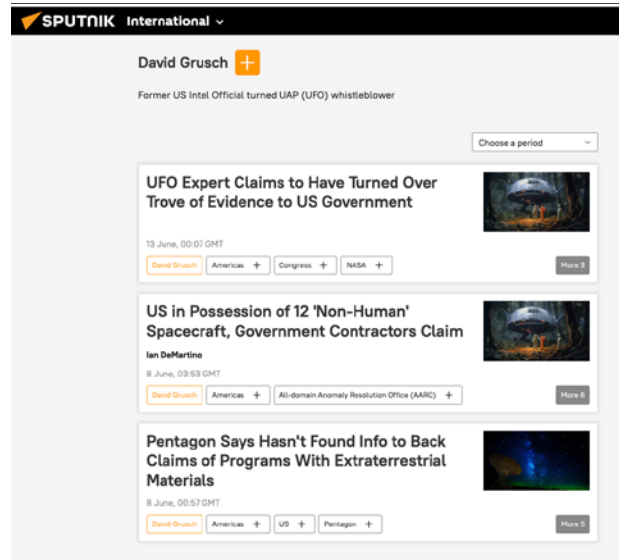
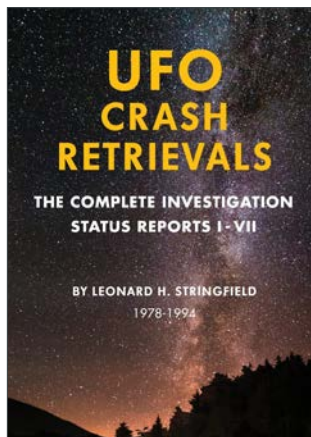
JM: A lot of that testimony, I know, has to do with the idea of crashed UFOs that have been retrieved by our government. To my knowledge, the government has yet to officially acknowledge this, but the whistleblowers and the informants seem to be very numerous. And yet at the same time, I hear from viewers who say, "This can't be true. How is it possible that some alien civilization is capable of traveling light years across space to come to Earth and then crash their vehicles?"



David Grusch appeared in public and talked to Congress in Summer 2023

RD: Yeah, we hear this a lot. I'm going to point out that I find a very logical problem with this argument, which is that it basically puts the cart before the horse. In other words, rather than examine the actual evidence and claims, we frequently will hear skeptics looking at this issue saying, "Well, this is impossible. This can't happen. Therefore, your evidence must be discarded because we're not able to understand how it is possible for a civilization from around the star system or another part of our galaxy to get here because we don't know how to do it. Therefore, we're going to discount all of this evidence that is piling up in front of us." That's something that we've heard countless times. People will perceive something is impossible and discount it, whether it's in UFOs or anything else. Whereas I would say the logical thing to do is let's look at the evidence and see how that evidence might make sense. Are there things that we're missing in our construction of reality that we need to modify so that this does make sense? That to me is a much more logical way to look at the problem. So I don't like that question, but I've heard it many times.

I would say the US plan to build its own UFO secret space fleet, let's just say that that's the case, comes in several steps. Step one is to recover the ET tech to understand how they do it. Step two is to build and replicate it. Step three is to test it. And step four, maybe get a little help from the aliens themselves, if that is possible. But let's look at step one, which is recovering the ET tech. Why is this a valid argument? I would say it's a very strong argument indeed. Last summer, as many people are aware, we heard



David Grusch, who was previously unknown to the world, talking to Congress about the fact that the United States military and the private contractors have in their possession ET tech and also what he called biologics, alien bodies. But the tech. He also said along those lines that there were quite a few instances of these. Some of these craft were damaged. Some were not damaged. I think he said there were more than a dozen examples of this, and that seemed very shocking to people.

What I would say is that is actually perfectly in line with what we had been learning for the past 50 years of research into UFO crash retrievals and recovery operations in general. I would cite probably, I think, the greatest of these researchers of

the past was Leonard Stringfield. Stringfield, from the late 1970s until his death in 1994, overwhelmingly led the pack in interviewing over 100 witnesses, either direct witnesses or sometimes the spouse of those direct witnesses that related to the acquisition of ET craft, ET tech and bodies. There is just so much of that testimony. I have discussed this countless times in my books and in interviews and in



my own channel. But essentially, we can just say Stringfield, by the late 1970s... He lived not far from US Air Force headquarters. Stringfield was in Cincinnati, not far from Dayton, Ohio, and had a very excellent connection, we could say, with a lot of these military folks who were then coming to him in droves to tell their story.

You could ask, was this a disinformation campaign and whatnot? Many of us have looked into this. I do not see that at all as a viable answer to this. I think Stringfield was getting legitimate information. And he wasn't the only one, by the way. He just was, I think, getting more than many others. Lots of different retrievals. He interviewed a doctor extensively who had claimed to have autopsied an alien body. And I happen to believe that that was true in that case. Lots of other witnesses of all kinds of encounters. I just think it's an overwhelming case that he made.

There have been other folks who've come out over the years. Some of them are well-known. Many are not well-known at all. I think of a fellow by the name of Captain Bill Uhouse, US Marine Corps fighter pilot back in the 1950s. He was also a flight tester for the Air Force of their exotic aircraft, worked for defense contractors for decades as an engineer, and stated that he tested flying disks, including one that had crashed or had come down in 1953 in Kingman, Arizona, one of the famous UFO retrievals. He argued that this was a gift, he believed, to the US government, which took it into a secret location to be worked on. And on and on and on.

One can say, well, I don't believe this guy's story or that guy's story, but the problem that I have with all

of this is that there are so many. There are actually quite a few of these types of claims out there to show that the US has actually recovered ET craft and then has had a dedicated program for decades to build its own versions of these, to test them, and to fly them operationally. As outrageous as that sounds, I think that's a significant part of the reality that is being kept from the public.

JM: I'm going to assume that everything you've said is true and valid. On the other hand, there are a lot of stories out there of people who take it even further, who say that the US government already has starships capable of leaving the solar system. In fact, one very prominent researcher was recently reported at a major conference saying that the US government possesses three of these starships and they were each given a name. There are people who claim we already have a secret base on Mars and they've visited it many times and interacted with aliens from numerous other civilizations at that location. So I guess the average person is going to be puzzled. What can they believe? What don't they believe?

RD: Yeah, it's difficult. I agree with that. It's a very difficult situation. A number of people have described this field as a hall of mirrors, and there's truth to that. I will just say, how far does the replication go? How far does the secret science go? Do we have the capability to traverse the galaxy? I'm not going to say no. There's no way that I'm going to deny that that is possible. I've myself spoken with some very knowledgeable and respectable researchers and people who've got



their own perspective on this that I respect who believe this, that we have such capabilities, including things like bases on even Mars or the Moon. Now, I will just hasten to add I don't know that any of that is true. I do believe that there is an opening for some exotic possibilities there, and so I would not rule it out.

My only problem over the last number of years when I hear some claims is when they strike me as belonging to a kind of movie script in which the teller of the tale is the star of the movie and the next new hero of the human race in dealing with these extraterrestrials. Over the last decade, particularly, there were many such claims that were coming out, really flooding, I would say littering the field with what were obvious, to me, self-aggrandizing claims. Essentially: look at me, what a big hero I am, and so forth. I'm dealing with the aliens for you. So that I've not ever believed. But I do think that there is a possibility that the technology can go pretty far. The only thing is I just don't know. It's very difficult.

So for me, my attitude is I've been studying this phenomenon for 30 years now, and I've gone down a very long road of what I once thought that I believed and what I now believe. What I now believe is much bigger than what I believed when I started. But still, even now, I try to remind myself that I don't have all the answers and I don't have factual confirmation of a lot of the things that I would like to have confirmation of. So I think caution is still warranted in many cases. And, you know, the rule of science is that conclusions are provisional. They're not religious. They're not for all time. In science, you arrive at a conclusion that is good for now. When we get more data, better data, we can revise those conclusions, and that is what I try to have my attitude be.



At this point I've got a firm conclusion that there's something real going on out there and that we're being lied to. I have provisional conclusions that it's pretty advanced. I have a lot of personal speculations that I'm happy to share. But I share them only as speculations, not as firm conclusions. I just think it's a tough position because we all want answers. We all want to know. But that's not always possible. It's not always within our capability to get every single answer to every question that we have. So we just do our best.

JM: I think it might be fair to say in summary that the credibility of witnesses regarding events that have taken place in the past regarding retrieval of crafts and of alien bodies, those witnesses seem rather credible. Whereas the witnesses who claim that they have been aboard these crafts and have traveled outside of this planet to Mars or even further, the credibility of those witnesses is less secure.

RD: I suppose. Let me just... I'll be the devil's advocate for all sides here. There are a large number of individuals over the years who did not seem to me to be seeking publicity. But they were interviewed by various researchers. Some of these people said, "I was taken for a ride," essentially, "on some flying saucer and I visited this place or that place." There have been many such claims. Now, are they credible? It's hard to know. It's very difficult to know.





The individuals all seemed to be sincere, as far as I can tell, reading their accounts many years later. Were they accurate? Well, maybe they were accurate. The issue, however, with many, let's say, of some of the more recent claims, there's fewer of them today than there were, say, five years ago, thankfully. But those claims did seem to have an agenda and always struck me as false and also as disingenuous and dishonest.

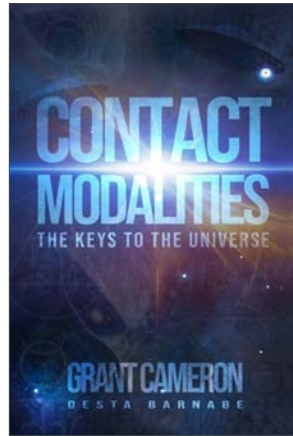
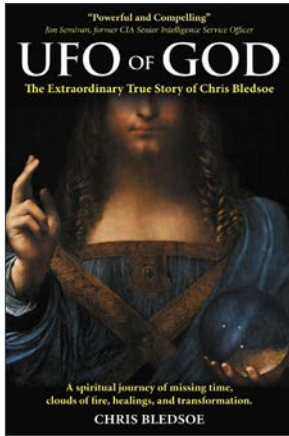
Partly, there's a smell test involved, I admit. It's not purely objective. We do our best. This is a difficult phenomenon. It's not simply that we're dealing with government secrecy and obfuscation. My view of it is that the phenomenon itself is a challenge. It stretches our cognitive capabilities to understand, just what is this? It would be like if we went back in time a hundred thousand years and looked at early humans in a much simpler hunter-gatherer situation, we would ask ourselves, what could we possibly talk to these people about that wouldn't just blow their minds into a thousand pieces? It would be very difficult. The science that we know about how the world is structured would be utterly foreign to our ancestors. Similarly, it's entirely possible that the reality of these other beings would be difficult for us, even now in the 21st century, fully to grasp. I suspect that that would be the case. So, we struggle to understand on top of the government secrecy that makes it even more difficult.

JM: I think a whole other level to the phenomenon is the aspect relating to consciousness. Ufology considers itself a science and most sciences are based on materialistic metaphysics. And yet, when you dig into the reports of credible people who have had a wide variety of UFO-related encounters, almost inevitably the topic of telepathy comes up, which is one that really challenges materialism as a basis for understanding the universe.

RD: I am with you 100% on that. I'll just add, on a personal level, when I began studying this subject about 30 years ago in the early 1990s, I didn't have any particular bias one way or the other about consciousness in general. I think I've been open to a number of conclusions about nonlocality of consciousness and things like this. But my orientation was much more materialistic than it might be today, I would say that. When you look over the long history of apparent communications that people have had with these other beings, telepathy is the norm, it seems. It's a very small minority of cases, I think, in which one of these alien beings is actually talking out loud to us. There are many cases of these beings who look completely human, and some of them do speak, according to the witnesses. But even with a lot of those human-looking beings, there's a telepathic component.

So that brings up consciousness, clearly. What is the capability, not just of them, but of us? That's one of the most amazing things that comes out of this. We begin to realize we have capabilities that we have dismissed, that we have not been aware of, that we have not tried to develop ourselves, generally speaking, and that this phenomenon absolutely is waking many of us up to the fact that we are more than we thought we were. So that's exciting. There are a lot of other things about this





phenomenon that are uncertain to me, but the fact that it opens up a capability that we have is actually a genuinely exciting thing.

JM: I'm also under the impression that secret government agencies are opening up to the realities of telepathy and consciousness as part of this problem. A good example of that would be the case of Chris Bledsoe, who has been on this channel a few times, who likens his contact with various UFO appearances and orbs to a religious phenomenon. He wrote a book, *UFO of God*, and he reports that among his contacts are people from NASA and from the CIA and other areas of the government who are taking a very serious and friendly interest in his case. It does suggest a whole new tone as far as the government is concerned.

RD: That interest and knowledge goes way back. I owe thanks to the researcher Grant Cameron for pointing out a phrase in a document from back in 1950 from the Canadian government. It's a famous document in the research by Wilbert B. Smith. He was an official with the Canadian government back then. He was writing about this and stated, "In my contacts with the US science official who knows all about this, that the government fully understands there is a mental phenomena associated with these saucers," as he put it, mental phenomena. This is something that the US intel-

ligence/military have known about. No question about it. You think about US government interest in something like remote viewing starting in the early 1970s. Before that, MK

Ultra, which we don't know this for a fact, but I believe probably had several psychic components to it as well, where they were exploring these types of modalities of human consciousness. This is within the intelligence community, their interest in things that we would call just straight-up consciousness, nonlocality. There has always been this thread that has been there.

You mentioned Chris Bledsoe. His case is an interesting one in my view as well. I've spoken with Chris. I agree with you. His case is quite interesting. He's definitely had a lot of interest from the CIA and NASA and who knows what other agencies. They're aware of it. We can also take to the bank that there are debates about this within that community. My friend and colleague Nick Redfern wrote about something called the Collins Group back a couple of years ago. This is evangelical Christians within the defense establishment who also recognize the UFO reality but see it as demonic. It's not difficult to see that you'd have a kind of war within the national security state over what this all represents.

JM: I guess from the point of view of secret space programs, the way I envision it, if there have been multiple crashes of vehicles the government is going to assign, I would imagine, a variety of entities, some within the government and some within private corporations, to explore, reverse engineer if



possible, these vehicles. I'm inclined to think that these various projects centered around different retrieved vehicles might not even be aware of each other.

RD: Entirely possible. I had a conversation not that long ago, a couple of years ago, with retired CIA official Dr. Christopher [Kit] Green. He's quite enlightening. He's a brilliant man. He simply pointed out to me, "Look, when you're talking about space, oh yes, there's a lot going on out there." It was his opinion that the majority of that stuff, of the advanced craft, are corporate, not even officially military. There may be relationships there, national security protocols that they must follow, very likely, but corporate.

And to your point, are they all aware of each other? Think back a couple of years ago when the Davis-Wilson notes came out. That's notes by Dr. Eric Davis and his conversation with Admiral Thomas Wilson. When those notes came out in 2019, I happened to be, for a little while there, part of the center of that controversy because I was initially, I think, the only significant person in the UFO field to definitively give them strong support because I knew for a fact that those notes were real. They have since been fully validated in my view.

But if you read those notes, Wilson tells Davis back in 2002 that the gatekeepers of the program that he was denied access to, which were all private contractors, the corporate attorney, the program manager and the security manager of the program, said to him that we have an intact craft not made by man, not of human hands, not from this earth, and that they had been struggling to understand it and to replicate it. That was the main message they gave him. Now, that's an interesting point. Now, do we believe this? Is it true that the black budget

world has made little to no progress in advancing along these lines? I don't believe that. And I do believe that those individuals lied to Wilson. I don't think they were telling him the truth. But is it possible that they were partially telling the truth, that they were having a difficult time with it? I would imagine it is possible and that as you were suggesting, there could be and probably are multiple programs that make it much more difficult to make progress in, but that from a security point of view might be mandatory and necessary.

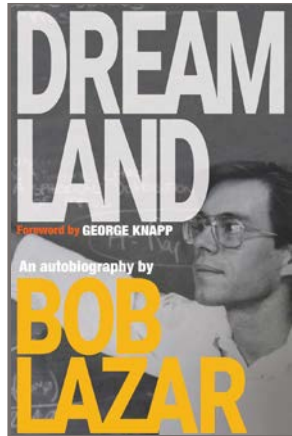
By the way, Dr. Eric Davis, in his own way, multiple times, has sort of given credence to this line of thought. He has said, I hope I'm paraphrasing correctly here, but that the secrecy has inhibited genuine sharing of scientific information on this matter. I think this is what we are seeing potentially.

JM: Well, it may be the case that the government figures that competition increases the possibilities of success.

RD: Yes, I think so. But I think probably their number one concern is maintaining security. I was just reviewing some of these ideas last night. I was chatting with my wife Tracey about this, in fact. We were just reading another source that indicated that at deeply classified levels, some of the people working on these programs, their lives could very well be at risk. If you're a scientist working on this tech, you might think that you are indispensable, but there's a good reason to think that you wouldn't be. If you were a security risk, your life would very likely end very quickly. I'll just point out that my wife and I both know of specific instances in which high-level classified scientists appear to have been assassinated. These individuals are relations of friends of ours that we've come to know. And I

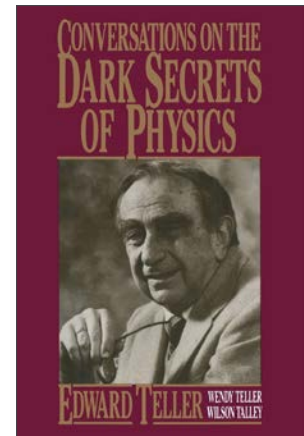
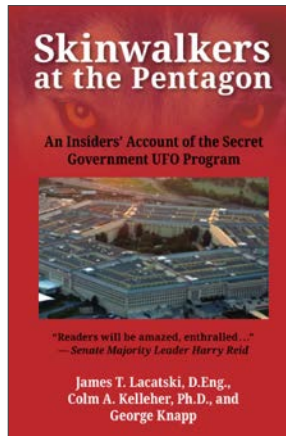


do think it's true that those people probably were targeted for essentially assassination because they became security risks. Despite how advanced their science was and how invaluable they probably were, nothing overrides the security, very likely.



JM: Now you're reminding me of the famous case, I think the name is Bob Lazar, the fellow who claimed that he had been at the Los Alamos laboratory where they had a retrieved vehicle and part of his job was to help reverse engineer it. To my knowledge, he's been very public about all of this and nobody has come after him, except his career has probably been ruined.

RD: Bob's actually doing pretty well these days and I'm glad for that. But what you said previously is basically on the mark. Bob Lazar did work at Los Alamos National Labs in the early 1980s. This has been proven. George Knapp, the journalist, did find the directory where Bob Lazar's name is in there. It is further likely that Lazar's claim that he met physicist Edward Teller while there is true. Teller did speak at Los Alamos. Lazar was there. He did probably have a relationship with Teller who probably then helped him get a job at EG&G years later at what we now call Area 51 or S4. Yes to all of that. Lazar did feel that his life was in danger after he, one could say foolishly, took some friends out to watch the test craft that he knew when they were being flown and where they were being flown. They got video the first weekend they were there and then the second time they went there, they were



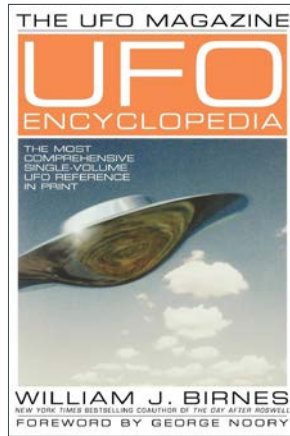
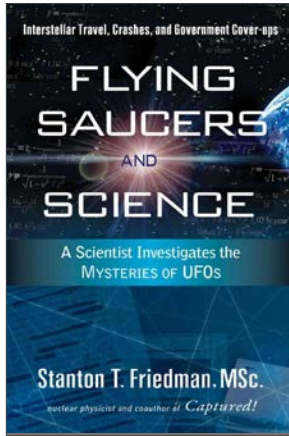
caught and Lazar got into trouble and became very worried over his safety. One thing led to another. He lost his job there and then eventually went to George Knapp at KLAS in Las Vegas and then the rest is history.

Now, Lazar was subject to many attacks during those early years, legal attacks and smear campaigns. The late Stanton Friedman, who I was always friends with, but Stan always went after Bob Lazar and called him a fraud at every opportunity. I never agreed with that. So Lazar has had his detractors. But I think it's true that he has weathered the storm. I think he's in a good place. He has actually done defense contracting work for the United States government with this company called United Nuclear. It's kind of an amazing story and he's now an icon. So Bob's doing just great. But is his story true? I've always believed that it is true. I think that he is truthful. And I guess I'll just leave it there for now. But yes, I believe Bob Lazar's story.

JM: Another controversy would be around Colonel Philip Corso who wrote the book *The Day After Roswell*, and claimed that he was responsible for transferring technological innovations captured in retrieved crashed UFOs into private industry.

RD: I know, it's amazing, and he died very quickly a year after that book was published. I talked with Phil Corso's co-author a number of times about



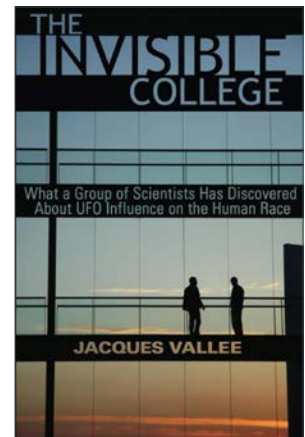
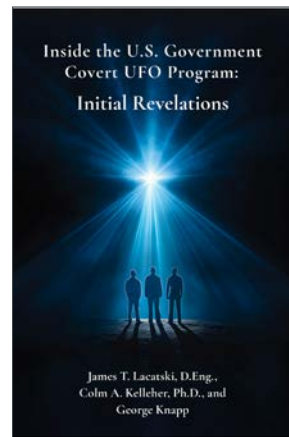
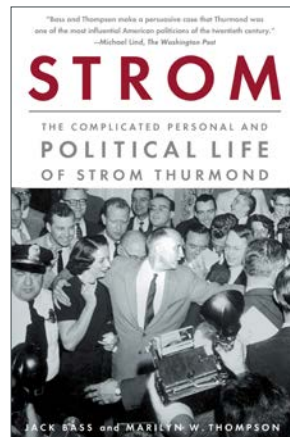
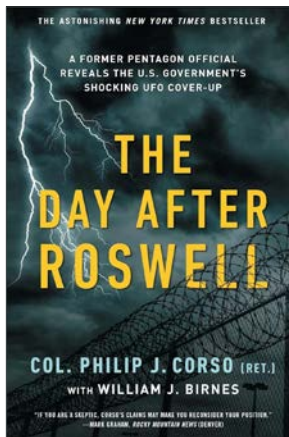


that book. That's William Birnes, former publisher of *UFO Magazine*. When I read that book the first time it came out—I have the version with a foreword by Senator Strom Thurmond who Corso worked for, before Thurmond pulled it. Thurmond said, "Yes, Corso is a great American hero. I stand by this man." He did not know that this was a UFO book and then pulled it. But when I read the book, I recalled seeing things that looked like historical errors to me. And of course, you go to the blog sites back in those days and people ripped Corso to pieces over those mistakes.

But as Bill Birnes pointed out to me, [when] Corso wrote that book he was practically deaf, his health was terrible. He hand wrote it all. It was not an easy manuscript to decipher at times. It's what you would expect often from someone in very advanced years doing his best. So could he have made

mistakes? I'm thinking, yes, of course, he could absolutely have made mistakes here and there. Does that invalidate what he was saying fundamentally? I think, no, it does not. We have to be careful—I don't want to sound against per se—but we do need to be careful when someone is in very advanced years engaged in recollections because it can be that those recollections are not accurate. I saw that with my own dad as he was approaching his 80th year. My dad was a former New York City cop. He told me every story he ever went through, I think. And I noticed how they began to change in his last few years. I'd point this out to him and he would say, "No, no, that's exactly how it was." But I knew it wasn't. So you have to be careful.

Having said all of that, I think Corso's story is true. It's also worth pointing out that there is a whole invisible college out there. Let's call it the "behind the scenes" guys. A lot of them are connected to Robert Bigelow. You mentioned Colm Kelleher at the beginning of our conversation. Colm Kelleher, of course, is very close with Bigelow. Hal Puthoff, Kit Green, John Alexander, Eric Davis. I know that a lot of those folks interviewed Philip Corso very carefully. My understanding from them is that they had full confidence in him.



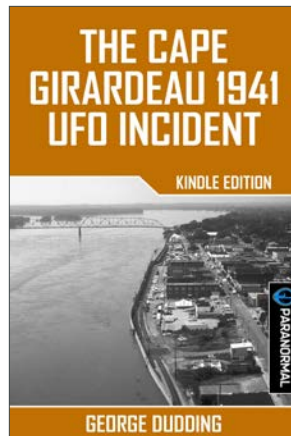
So I take that as well as important. I think Corso was telling the truth.

JM: You brought up John Alexander, who has been a close friend of mine, especially when I lived in Las Vegas.

RD: Oh, really? He never cared much for me.

JM: He wrote a book about UFOs and described how when he was in the military he had an informal group of people trying to find out what the military actually knew about UFOs. He concluded that they knew almost nothing and that they weren't really capable of knowing things, that the government mindset was simply not subtle enough to grasp the complexities of this phenomenon. But he also questioned Corso. He felt that the various discoveries, like night vision and fiber optics that Corso implied came out of the crash at Roswell in 1947, Alexander said, "Well, there were obvious antecedents to those discoveries known in the industrial world decades before the Roswell crash."

RD: That's true. You can make the argument about the transistor. Many people have said the transistor came from ET tech. If you go by Roswell, it's way too close. It doesn't make any sense. Of course, Bob Wood has talked about the Cape Girardeau crash of 1941 leading to the transistor. He may be right about that. Relating to what John Alexander said about the inability of the cover-up to really be that sophisticated, I have always had a 180 opposite opinion from him. And in fact, I've debated with him publicly on this matter and I think I've



made my point far better than he did, to be honest about it.

He stated—this is 10 years ago and more—that the US government would be incapable, as you say, of maintaining the secret. His attempt to get to the bottom of it was known as the Advanced Theoretical Physics Group, which he did organize starting in 1985. He brought a very good group of people around him to do some study of this matter. Let me just say this. I spoke to one of the members of that group. I'll leave his name out of it for now, but a very brilliant man. But I asked this individual, do you believe John Alexander's claim that he looked and that your group looked for evidence of a UFO cover-up within the Pentagon and didn't find any? Absolutely, he said, "No, not true. We knew there was a cover-up."

Now, why would John Alexander say what he did? Well, that's for him to know and for us to find out. I heard, I haven't gotten this confirmed, that he just recently revised his opinion on the nature of a UFO cover-up. If that is the case, then I would say good for him. It's long overdue. They are more than capable of engaging in decades-long cover-up. My God, we're talking about the group that did MK Ultra, did mind control experiments, sometimes terminal on individuals that only was learned by a mere roll of the historical dice, the way that MK Ultra came out. It could easily be a rumor to this very day. The UFO cover-up, same thing. It's been very, very important for them to keep that secret.

JM: I know the individual who you just referred to, who was part of John Alexander's group, and as a matter of fact, you write about him in your book on the secret space project. He describes having encountered an alien, if I recall correctly, at one of the casinos in Las Vegas.



RD: That is the man, yes. I interviewed him and his wife.

JM: They're both friends of mine.

RD: He's a great guy and his wife is very nice too. Yes, that's right. He said this to me explicitly. I just don't want to give up his name publicly because I don't know that I have permission for that.

JM: I totally understand and I agree and I know that his opinions are at odds with John Alexander, but it raises the question of aliens among us, aliens with complete human appearance, although obviously greater telepathic ability. You report his observations and a couple of others in your book and you say we need to take this seriously.

RD: We absolutely do. You know, if it's just one case, a couple of cases here and there, you might have the luxury of dismissing it and living within your reality box still. But when you get case after case, some of which have come to me directly, and then there's countless others that are out there of perfectly human looking beings who seem to have this capability that don't seem like they're from here, then I feel it's incumbent on me to take them seriously. And actually, the more I've thought about it, the more it makes sense to me that this would be the case. It doesn't mean that these human looking beings are actually from another world. They could be directly from here. They could be absolutely genetically part of the human race that developed here on Earth.

But why would it be impossible that an alien group from elsewhere would come here and recognize: okay, our biology is really not well suited for Earth. Wrong gravity, wrong solar radiation, wrong microbes, all of those things would make it difficult for them. Well, what might they do? Work with Earth-based genetic organisms, modify them for their purposes to work for them on that basis. And why not simply take the leading species on the planet, these human beings, take a few of them, breed them for yourself, genetically enhance them as you wish, and have them work for your society? How is that so difficult to fathom? To me, it's a very... I would do it. If I were an alien, that's exactly what I would want to do. You'd want to use humans and open up whatever genetic capabilities they have for telepathy and whatever technological enhancements you can put in along the way too. Why not? So I think that's actually likely. I [also] entertain the idea that these other alien types that people have reported may very well be derived from Earth-based DNA. I don't see that as impossible at all. I don't know that to be true, but it doesn't seem illogical to me.

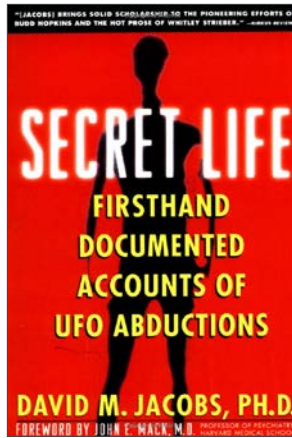
"The STRAT" – The Stratosphere
Casino & Hotel in Las Vegas



JM: What you're raising with this suggestion is that the many reports that we have of UFO abductions, and particularly the reports involving the exchange of genetic materials

and sexual experiences and the people who report pregnancies and their fetuses were taken from them. There are even people who report repeated abductions where they come and visit these young children who are apparently their offspring and are being raised somehow in an alien culture. That these also would need to be taken seriously.

RD: I agree with that. Yes, I think they must be taken seriously. It's easy to dismiss the claims when one hasn't really gone into the weeds and read the specific accounts. The fact is there is so much credible detail provided in them. You could just give a blanket statement and say, well, there's a hypnagogic fantasy or the hypnotherapist was leading the witness. That could be possible. I would never say that that's impossible. But the reality is that there is so much consistency across the board. I can't see that it's explained in that manner. I think there's a *there* there. How difficult is it to really imagine that you would have a number of different types of ET programs in place for different purposes? One would be to have completely human looking avatars working for them on the surface. Another would be to develop a kind of hybrid or various types of hybrid species between humans and ET. I'm thinking of the scenario that was outlined by Dr. David Jacobs in several of his books where he's talking about the creation of human looking hybrids—he calls them *hubrids*—that are basically



infiltration units. I don't think that these are impossible at all.

My guess is that we're bringing in the whole neighborhood right now, we human beings. I mean, we've got an amazing planet. Yeah, there are probably other beautiful life supporting planets out in the galaxy and in the universe. I would not doubt it. But how common are they really? It's worth asking. You start getting into what appears to be the history of planet Earth, at least as scientists currently understand it. There are a lot of things about this world that are beautifully unique on many levels, which we don't have to get into all of them. But we got really lucky. We hit the jackpot. We have incredible genetic diversity. We have all this beautiful water. This is the only planet in the solar system where I think you can have fire. We've got a lot of really neat things going on here that are a draw in and of themselves. We have a unique situation where a lot of heavy minerals are on the crust of the planet. I think that's simply because of an early asteroid collision that created our moon. Be that as it may, we've got all that.

Plus, now we have this standing up primate species, human beings that have finally gotten to a place where we are conscious of ourselves, increasingly conscious of our place in the universe, conscious of our spirituality, conscious of now creating... We're on the fast track here. We've discovered the keys of science and we are reinvent-





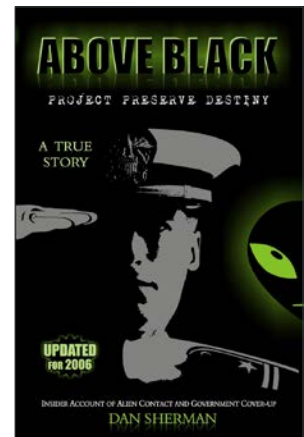
ing ourselves and becoming something exciting and terrifying at the same time. We're moving into some kind of transhumanism with very strong AI, nano engineering of who knows what and quantum computing. Where will it stop? Who knows? So we are leaping into their world right now. Progress doesn't go incrementally like this. It doesn't go like that. It goes by leaps, leaps. It only seems incremental to us because we're living in the weeds. When you take a few steps back, it's a leap. A couple of generations and we're like, wow, we've gone straight up, almost vertical up. And they see this. They see this.

You compare where we are to the time of Abraham Lincoln, not that long ago, where we were in a society of horses pulling wooden carts. And now I'm having a conversation with you. God knows how far away you are. Perfect video. It's amazing. And this is only the beginning. So they know this. We're about to leap into their world. And they *must* be wondering, what's the story with these standing up primates? They've got nuclear weapons. They love to kill each other. They're aggressive, as all apex predators are. That's us. We don't play around, man. We just take it for granted that we can conquer all other forms of life on this planet and make them work for us. I've got a beautiful cat in this house. Her name is Yeats. I love my cat, but well, she does what she does. She lives here because I bring her in and I feed her. She's got it

good. But we have other kinds of animals that we just dominate them. We dominate plants. We take it for granted. We're used to getting our way.

Now we're moving out into the larger universe and I think that we're bringing in all kinds of attention, the good, the bad and potentially the ugly. I don't know that all of these species out there are spiritually evolved. It's not a given to me that they are. Maybe some, maybe not. I think, therefore, it's incumbent upon us to have as open and adult a conversation about this in public as we can so that we can actually examine this. Whether or not we as a society really have the capability to discuss this in a mature way is a whole other question. But that's what we need to do, in my opinion.

JM: In order to discuss it in a mature way, it would be very helpful if we knew what the actual facts were. We have people who are seemingly credible, like Haim Eshed in Israel, a very high official in the Israeli space agency, who claims that the United States government has actually signed some sort of agreement with alien entities, presumably. The implication seems to be that we've agreed that they can go around and abduct people occasionally in exchange, perhaps, for technology transfer.



RD: Yeah, he did say something to that effect. That's a claim that was brought out by John Lear almost 40 years ago, actually, 35 years ago. Is it true? Haim Eshed is no one to trifle with. He's a very significant individual who is extremely high up prominent in the Israeli defense community without a doubt, a highly respected man. I certainly take seriously the claims that he has said about this. What I think is probably true is that organizations like NASA, whatever Israeli space organizations that are over there and in other countries, they do know this is true. They know that there are non-human intelligences operating out in orbit. They know this. I think it's impossible for them not to know. Certainly, NASA higher-ups absolutely know this.

As far as the treaty goes, it's entirely possible. Look, there are claim after claim of human-ET collaboration on whatever level. I mentioned Bill Uhouse earlier. He is one of those individuals who made such claims. There's Dan Sherman. I read his book, *Above Black*, several times, and I believe that book. I think it's true, where he says that there's a kind of human-ET form of communication that goes on, backchannel. If you look at Bob Lazar's story, the hint is that there is an ET collaboration element there, too. So I think if that's the case, would there be something like a treaty? Totally possible.

One thing that I think we would all want to know—I was thinking about this recently—we're in an era where there is a strong push for transparency or even disclosure on UFOs. We are reminded of what David Grusch said last summer about the holding of alien biologics. So I think that is true. If we ever get to a point where we can get an honest answer from the national security state on this matter—the honest answer being, “Yes, we've got alien biologics”—then I would absolutely want to

know what is our relationship genetically to these beings? Is there a relationship? Do they have anything in common with us? That would actually be one of the first things I'd want to know, personally. Is there anything in alien DNA that connects them to human beings, the *Homo sapiens*? And if so, who comes from whom? Are gray aliens derivations from human biology, as they very well might be, of human and ET biology, combination thereof? I think it's totally possible. Are any of these other alien beings derived from us, rather than the reverse? We tend to think, oh, we come from them. But what if some of them come from us and are manipulated by an even more advanced group that no one has ever seen? I wonder about these things. This is what I think about as I'm falling asleep at night.

JM: It raises all sorts of possibilities. One of the points that you make in your book about the secret space program is that some of the witnesses have said that the truth of these matters is so horrendous that it's questionable whether we could handle it.

RD: Every now and then this comes up. I shouldn't even say every once in a while, it almost seems to come up with regularity in that this demand for secrecy is overwhelming and paramount. I've told a story of President Jimmy Carter being briefed on this matter in June of 1977. I have this on one very good source, a very good source in my opinion, who said to me that when Carter was briefed—this is his first year in office as president—he was briefed in June of 1977 on this matter. The individual did not know what was said specifically to the president. But what he does know is that when the president was seen at the conclusion of his brief-

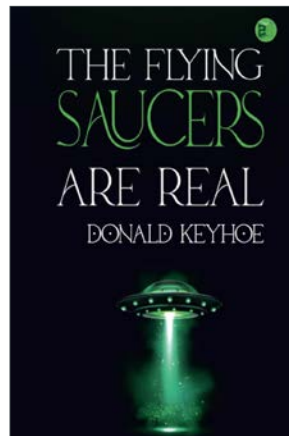


ing, that his head was in his hands, his elbows were on the desk, and he was holding his head kind of like this and either in tears or nearly so. He was deeply upset.

Now, what does that mean? Well, there are lots of different possibilities here that could have upset him deeply. But it's not difficult to imagine someone saying to him, "This is a difficult situation. You have no control over it, sir. You're just going to have to live with this reality. They're doing whatever they do." I doubt that he would have been head-in-hands if he had been told something really wonderful about the nature of these ETs, "They're good guys. They're here to help us out." I just doubt that it would have affected him that negatively.

But the "watch out" stories, you can call them that, have been with us for a long, long time. Even the early researcher Donald Keyhoe back in the 1950s and 1960s, I know that he got a couple of them. I've been trying to track them down and I haven't had success. But I know in the back of my mind, Keyhoe got a couple of them as well. They've been floating around. In other words, there's a kind of a dark element to all of this. It may be true. It may not be true. But not knowing the answer, I do think it's incumbent on us to at least keep open that possibility that there could be wonderful things here and there could be some unsettling things going on as well.

JM: Many people draw the comparison to when European cultures encountered various indigenous groups in Africa or in Polynesia. The results were very unfortunate for those groups who became colonized. We may be encountering some sort of superior consciousness and the results could be



similarly unfortunate for us, similar to the way we've treated others.

RD: Maybe, yeah. That's an interesting example. Because when the Europeans came to the New World, as everyone called it, they were looking for gold, they were looking for riches.

It was all about getting cash, making money and enslaving the indigenous people for their benefit, which they did not hesitate to do. They did all of that and ended up destroying those original cultures, as we all know. Now, ET being here, we're not seeing that happen overtly. We're not seeing that. We are seeing a very significant presence that they seem to have. My view of it is that they blanket the globe. They are everywhere. There is no place where they don't go. And I continually ask, what are they doing? What's their infrastructure like here? What are their goals?

But even if those goals are benign, it's just worthwhile for us to remember that these other beings represent radical change if nothing else, radical change in terms of the technology that they have, in terms of the level of consciousness that they appear to have. If and when those are introduced to our society, there is no way that it won't cause radical, rapid change. That could be a good thing in the long run, but it's going to be disruptive. There's no way that it can't be. Even under the best of circumstances, there are going to be infrastructure interruptions and difficulties and fear, and all of that, I think, is going to be unavoidable. That doesn't mean we shouldn't move forward with this. All significant change is scary. It's always frightening, the unknown. I've always believed that success is more frightening than failure, to be honest. When you succeed at something,



now you're on a higher level and now more eyes are on you. You have more responsibility, more to do. Everything becomes bigger. If you fail, you're right back to your old comfortable position where you were. It's easy.

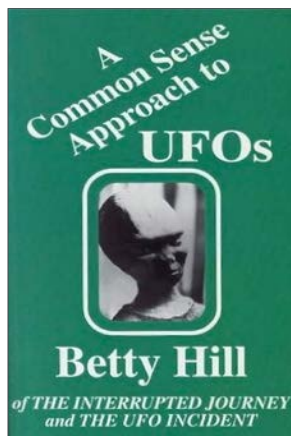
We are at the verge of reinventing ourselves as a species, as a society, as a civilization, with or without these other beings. It's happening. We're already going through what I call the fourth stage of humanity. I firmly believe we're moving into a new era of human existence, from hunting and gathering to settled agriculture to science and industry, and now to stage four, which is essentially, I don't know, transhumanist 24-7 digital surveillance and digitalization of human society, essentially. We don't know all of the outcomes that that will have, but it's going to be a radical transformation of people and of our society. So that's happening regardless. Will it turn us into a hive mind to some extent? Many people believe that's possible. I do. I think that's possible. It could be that we're becoming like they are already, that they have become.

It could be that the technological changes that are inevitable for us at this point—there's no way to stop this train—are making us like the aliens on many levels. And that this may take a number of generations to work itself out, maybe even a couple of centuries. But that could be the case, and they see this and they know this. They're like, "OK, these human beings. It's not just that they have nukes. It's not just that they have computers. It's the whole thing," the whole kit and caboodle, as people used to say. The whole package is bringing us into their world so that an open connection with them is probably inevitable. But there are



a lot of questions as to how that will work out. What are we going to gain and what are we going to lose in the process? To me, these are important questions. Do we lose any part of our traditional humanity in the process or can we somehow enhance our traditional humanity? These are going to be questions that will probably take centuries to resolve.

JM: There is also the issue raised by researchers like Jacques Vallée that they've been here for centuries, maybe millennia, watching us. In fact, I think it's not at all unreasonable to think that they've been around since the dawn of human civilization. One of my faculty advisors when I was a graduate student was James Harder. He was the research director for one of the early UFO groups called APRO, Aerial Phenomena Research Organization. He specialized in hypnotizing UFO contactees and abductees. In fact, I met Betty Hill at his home on one occasion. But he told me that his research revealed to him that these aliens were very different from us. For one thing, they had an average lifespan of about 20,000 years. And for another thing, he said their civilizations are relatively small in terms of population, maybe 20,000 individuals, not 2 billion or 8 billion.





RD: I didn't know that. So thank you for relaying that. James Harder, of course, was a great researcher back during that period of time. It's awesome that you knew him as well as you did, by the way. I think it's really cool. I had a whole thing I was thinking about and the 20,000 year thing just took over my whole consciousness. I'm like, my God, because I've heard hundreds of years, many centuries. I had not heard 20,000 years. So that's quite fascinating. But now I can't...

JM: Well, we were talking about how they may have been with us since the dawn of civilization.

RD: I'll just offer my two cents on this. Some people can agree, some people may not. I do think it's very likely that we've been subject to a longstanding monitoring and observation. I do think so. But I would just offer my perspective on this, which is that during most of our existence there wasn't really a whole lot that we could do about them or they about us. We weren't really in a position where we were about to leap into their world, so to speak. When your greatest accomplishment is discovering fire and making stone tip tools, it's going to be difficult to deal with this type of intelligence in any kind of comprehensive way. And so I think what it looks like to me, yes, there are pretty good accounts that would indicate they've been here for a while. Although I will just say, I think a lot

of those accounts are way overstated and not as strong as some people think. That's my opinion of having a look at them. But many of them I would say, yeah, I believe that and it makes sense to me.

I once heard a researcher not long ago say almost offhandedly, "They've been here forever." We hear this a lot. "They've been here forever." But I ask, who's the *they*? Is it the gray aliens? Is it the reptilians? Is it the human-looking beings? Who's the *they*? And have they had a consistent program over 50,000 years or more? Because that's a long period of time. I don't know about that. What I would say is there are two periods of time, historically, where I feel I can identify where they made a leap in their quantity of being here. One would be in the 19th century and one would be during the Second World War, where I think you can see an identifiable jump in the number of good, reliable sightings. Now, part of that might be we develop better capabilities of noticing them. Yes, no question. But is that all of it? I don't think so. I don't believe so. I think something quantifiable happened during the Second World War, especially, to bump this to the next level. I think we brought in a lot of new people, a lot of new observers, not just one group, but very possibly multiple intelligences, entirely likely. So the phenomenon, I'm of the opinion that it is not consistent over the millennia. There may be one group that has been here for all this time, but they're not the only ones around today. That's what I think.

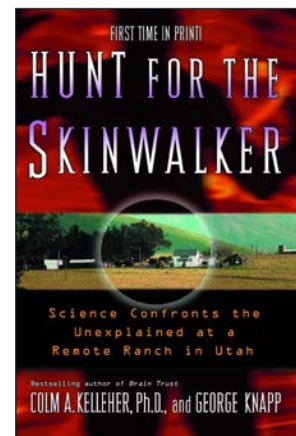
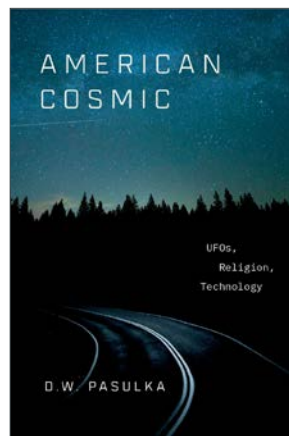
JM: There's also the issue that in earlier eras when such phenomena were reported, it was, I should think, typically in the context of a religious tradition. They might have been identified as angelic or demonic beings because that would have been the language that was most acceptable in earlier eras.



RD: Yeah, that is true. I think that's clearly true. We want to keep in mind that a number of events that we think of as religious could very well be something with extra layers to them that could be extraterrestrial. Yes, absolutely. There are just a number of cases of religious sightings or different types of sightings that I've developed a little bit of skepticism about when I look at them carefully. I'll just leave it at that. I think some of the accounts that are widely discussed in the literature as evidence of ancient aliens, I just don't see it that way. I think we don't always understand ancient cultures very well, the way that people communicated, the reasons they would say this and that. And so I don't believe all of them are evidence of ancient aliens. But I think some could very well be.

And look, there are great mysteries in our ancient archaeology, in our ancient world that I haven't figured out. I haven't figured out how the Great Pyramid of Giza was built. I don't know if I'll ever get that one. That seems to me another level of complexity that is beyond my mind to figure out how that was built with such perfection? Absolute perfection. Did they have help? Yeah, I actually think there probably was help there. So there's a lot of room for an ancient alien presence in our world. I don't know if I'll ever get to the bottom of it, but I do think that there's something there, yeah.

JM: Returning to the case of Chris Bledsoe, in his encounters he describes a being who sometimes manifests for him, sort of steps out of an orb, he calls her the Lady and she has healing powers. It certainly has all of the accouterments of a religious experience happening in real time with many witnesses and videos and people from the government looking at it and lots of concomitants associated with UFOs as well. The overlap between religious



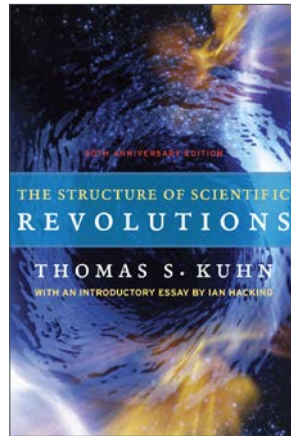
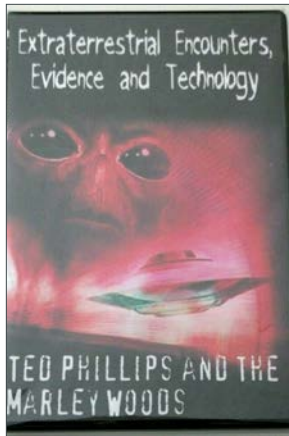
phenomena and alien beings seems to be almost inseparable in that case.

RD: It's really strong with Chris Bledsoe. Essentially, it's a Marian apparition when you really get down to it. It's the Virgin Mary. I think many could make that claim. It reminds one of the Fatima case in Portugal in 1917. What Chris Bledsoe has in some ways overlaps with what you get with Fatima. I mean, not with the number of witnesses perhaps, but a lot of other elements of it remind me of that. There are researchers currently, [like] Diana Pasulka, who of course is looking into a lot of those overlaps as well. I think that's a legitimate area of inquiry for sure. I don't think that it fully solves the riddle of UFOs or UAP, but it's just one other aspect.

It really is amazing when you think about how complex this phenomenon really is. There's a consciousness connection, which we have been talking about. There's what seems to be a spiritual connection. There's also a definite strong technological element to this. There are physical elements to this. You've got the abductions and you've got all of these different elements to it. This is why it's a genuinely difficult thing to understand.

Then you get into the crazier areas like Skinwalker Ranch or a place called Marley Woods, which was investigated by Ted Phillips, these portal type areas where now we're dealing with space





and time in ways that are challenging to us. What the heck is going on here? What is this reality that we're finding ourselves in? I believe that the UFO phenomenon is a kind of portal itself into us understanding this reality.

There was a great book 60 plus years ago—I had to read it back in grad school—by Thomas Kuhn called *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. I knew that you would know this book too. It's a classic. Kuhn introduced the term *paradigm* in that book, from 1962 I believe. What he argued is that it's kind of what I was saying earlier, where progress is not linear, it jumps. Kuhn said that we develop more and more information that gives us a new paradigm, a new way of understanding the world and it happens in the form of a revolution. I have come to feel strongly that the UFO phenomenon is one of these things that opens the door into a totally new paradigm. It's a revolution. We're not fully grasping all of the implications of that, but it's there. It's essentially showing us the way to this new paradigm. I do think at some point we're going to make a breakthrough in understanding it properly.

JM: Before we close our interview, I think it's useful to bring up many cases where there seems to be an overlap between the evidence for an afterlife and contact with aliens. It goes really back to the 19th century when alien beings would show up in spiritualist seances. You also have reports from

people like Whitley Strieber who suggests that when he's having an encounter with the visitors, as he calls them, alien beings who seem to be able to enter his home at will, that they are sometimes accompanied by individuals who he later learns are deceased.

RD: It is a fascinating overlap. I will just tell you and your audience that I believe in an afterlife. I had an experience with my own father when he passed away, where at the moment of his passing four years ago, my wife and I were sitting in our living room 150 miles away and watching our recessed dim ceiling lights flash bright and dim, bright and dim. It turned out [that was] at the very moment he died. I will never, ever believe that's a coincidence. There's something very unusual about this reality that we have not grasped. It includes some kind of existence of our consciousness, our soul—there's a good word—beyond the death of these physical bodies. That's something that I personally do believe in. It's a really great question to ask: What is that relationship to the UFO phenomenon? I don't have all of those answers. I'm aware that Whitley and his late wife, Anne, were deeply engaged in these questions and other people are as well. I haven't made as much progress, but I think it's very important to understand and to grasp these issues. There's something important there.

JM: I totally agree there is something important there. But it also makes me sympathetic to John Alexander's viewpoint that government officials are incapable of addressing a mystery of that level of complexity.

RD: This is a heck of a mystery that goes beyond our normal ability to understand what is reality. It



represents something beyond. It is a new paradigm. I will agree that government officials, even military intelligence officials, really have to struggle to understand just what is going on. But it has always been my contention—and this is when I debated this formally with John back in 2011—that they may not understand it all, but they have a lot more information than the rest of us poor slobs out here in a lot of those specifics. They know many, many things that we do not know. That's just, I think, the reality of it. But it is a challenge. It's true. This is a *difficult* problem.

I think the analogy of looking at early humans compared with us is apt. If we were to go back in time, even one thousand years, a mere thousand years, find the smartest people around back then and try to explain our world to them, good luck. That would be a very difficult, tall order. And so that's explaining it to our own species a mere thousand years different from us. What about the knowledge that a highly intelligent alien species has? God knows how much more advanced they are than us to explain to us the nature of reality. That could be a very difficult thing indeed.

JM: Well, Richard, it's been a great pleasure to talk to you. We've covered a lot of ground. You're so well informed about all of the many details of this complex arena. I'm so glad to be able to share your point of view with our viewers. I hope you'll be willing to come back in the future on *New Thinking Allowed*. You'd be most welcome.

RD: Without a doubt. I would just like to say to you, I was very impressed by the deep level of knowledge that you bring to this subject of the UFO phenomenon. I know that you have been engaged in all aspects of consciousness for your career, but it's

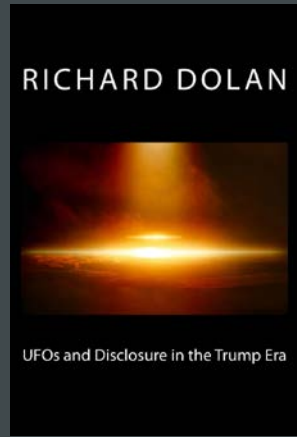
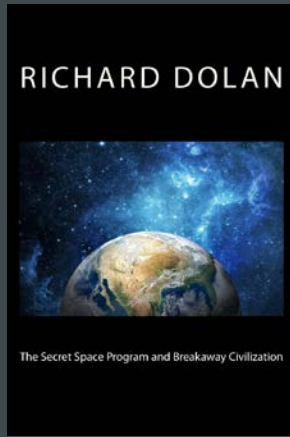
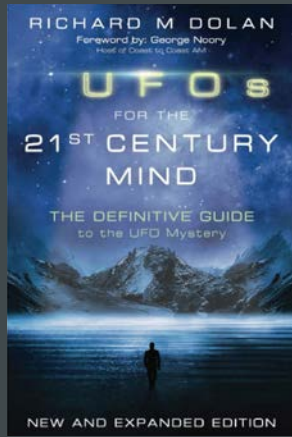
really refreshing and it's really nice for me to chat with you about this area that I have studied for so long and to see that you are right at the leading edge of a lot of thinking in the UFO phenomenon yourself. It was a real treat for me to talk with you.

JM: Well, thank you and I look forward to future conversations. And for those of you watching or listening, thank you for being with us. You, after all, are the reason that we are here.

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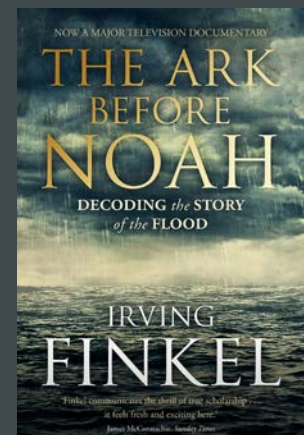
Irving Finkel, Ph.D., is a distinguished British Assyriologist and curator at the British Museum, renowned for his expertise in ancient Mesopotamian languages and cultures. Born in 1951, Finkel has dedicated his career to the study of cuneiform script and ancient texts, particularly those from the Babylonian and Assyrian periods. He earned his doctorate in Assyriology from the University of Birmingham, where his passion for ancient Near Eastern civilizations flourished.

Irving Finkel's academic journey began with his undergraduate studies at the University of Birmingham, where he developed a profound interest in ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, culminating in a Ph.D. in Assyriology. His doctoral research focused on cuneiform inscriptions and ancient languages, laying the groundwork for his career. Finkel's education combined linguistic proficiency and archaeological knowledge, enabling him to interpret ancient texts within their historical and cultural contexts. His expertise spans various aspects of Mesopotamian civilization, enriched by participation in numerous archaeological excavations and research projects, cementing his reputation as a leading expert in Assyriology.

Finkel's work at the British Museum involves deciphering and interpreting thousands of

cuneiform tablets, providing invaluable insights into the daily lives, beliefs, and practices of ancient Mesopotamian societies. He is particularly noted for his discovery and analysis of the world's oldest known version of the story of Noah's Ark, which he detailed in his book *The Ark Before Noah*. This groundbreaking work revealed that the Biblical flood story had its origins in much older Mesopotamian myths.

Beyond his scholarly contributions, Finkel is an engaging public speaker and author, known for his enthusiasm and ability to make complex ancient topics accessible and fascinating to a wider audience. His other notable publications include *The Writing in the Stone* and *The First Ghosts: Most Ancient of Legacies*, reflecting his broad interests in ancient scripts, mythology, and the history of supernatural beliefs.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

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EVIDENCE OF FIRST GHOSTS

EV: Hello and welcome. I'm Emmy Vadnais, CoHost with Jeffrey Mishlove. Our topic today is evidence of first ghosts. My guest is Dr. Irving Finkel, who is Senior Assistant Keeper of Ancient Mesopotamian Script, Languages and Cultures at the British Museum. He is the curator in charge of cuneiform inscriptions on tablets of clay from ancient Mesopotamia, of which the [ir] Middle East Department has the largest collection of any modern museum. He is author of several books, including *The First Ghosts*; *The Lewis Chessmen and What Happened to Them*, narrated by David Attenborough; *The Ark Before Noah*; and *The Last Resort Library*. Irving is located in London, England. Now I'll switch over to the internet video. Welcome, Dr. Finkel. It's a pleasure to have you with us on *New Thinking Allowed* today.

IF: Lovely. I'm glad to be here with you.

EV: To get us started, you are an expert on the cuneiform. Can you describe how you began your interest in translating this most ancient text?

IF: Cuneiform writing is the oldest kind of writing that we know about from archaeology and it comes from the ancient culture of Iraq from ancient Mesopotamia. The writing was invented about 3500 BC

and it was used for at least 3000 years, probably longer. Written in it were two different languages, one called Sumerian and one called Babylonian. When I went to university and I studied these ancient languages, I had a very good teacher, and then I wrote a PhD, and then I went to Chicago, and then I got a job in the British Museum as a curator responsible for these ancient documents, which are all made of clay. We have a very big collection here [at the British Museum].

When I first started work here and ever after, I used to go regularly through the whole collection. There are about 130,000 pieces of clay in various sizes. I went through the whole collection more than once to see what was there. In the course of doing that I collected bits and pieces together, the numbers of the tablets in the collection, which belonged to certain categories. One of the [categories] was medicine, another was magic, and another was



Cuneiform tablets from Nuzi
(modern Yorghana Tepe, Iraq)

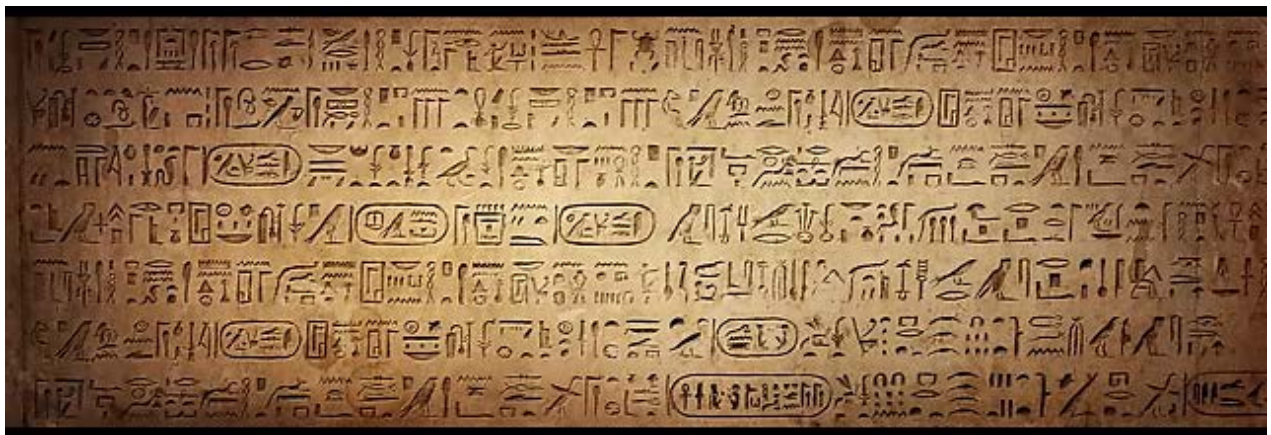


this thing to do with ghosts, because I discovered that there were some tablets to do with ancient ghosts. Then I discovered there were quite a lot, actually, and some had been published in books and journals and some of them had never been published at all. No one had written anything about them as a whole, not so much translating every one in detail like you would do in a scholarly book or a journal, but a book about them as a whole to try and create an idea of what people in this ancient culture thought about ghosts, how much they believed in them, what they did about it and how their ghostly life, so to speak, went forward. It was a bit of a long process.

When the museum was shut for two years because of the Covid problem, in that time I converted what had been a load of bits of paper into this book. It was a perfect opportunity, with nothing else to do. So I produced this book, which I'd always wanted to write about the ancient ghosts of Mesopotamia, and it was quite an adventure.

EV: Beautiful. Cuneiform is a form of writing where it's wedge shaped, pressed into clay?

Egyptian hieroglyphs



IF: Yes. The thing is, before the alphabet came into the world, which we all use and take for granted, there were other writing systems. One of them was ancient Egyptian, as you know what hieroglyphs look like. Another one was cuneiform. The cuneiform writing system was nothing like an alphabet because when the writing first started out, they never conceived of making signs for consonants and vowels separately like we do. The alphabet is a brilliant invention because with 26 letters, you can write any language in the world with the vowels and consonants. But this didn't happen. They had a different idea that they would write in syllables so that you would take a word by ear and divide it up logically into its component parts. For each sound part, there was a sign. You had to learn lots and lots of signs, about 800 of them, or something like that. But when you'd learned them, you had all these syl-





lable signs and other kinds of signs which meant you could write any language you wanted by ear in the same way that we do with the alphabet.

This was a very long time ago. The two main languages they used, Sumerian and Akkadian, are both extinct. They've been extinct for a very long time. But the people who developed this writing didn't start off with wedges, which is what we call the writing because the later signs are made of different shapes of wedges at different angles. They started off doing little pictures and they drew on pieces of clay with a point like you might do with a pencil on a piece of paper. They drew these very simple signs, which at first were very elementary and couldn't express language. Then they had the idea that when they had these signs, they could use them to express sounds as well as ideas. They could have an agreement that this sign meant this sound. Then they could write words made of sounds with these picture signs. Gradually, to write it faster, they developed a thing like a chopstick on the clay. You press the end of it in at lots of different angles to make all the different signs. If you've never seen one of these tablets before, and most people usually haven't, people never think it's writing. They might think they're a piece of breakfast cereal or something you feed to the dog.

But actually, these clay tablets, which can be covered in writing front and back, are the most miraculous things because the people have been

dead for two or three or four thousand years of time, turned into dust. But when you can read their words, then their ideas and their character and what was important to them and what they were afraid of all become clear to us. It's an extraordinary thing. It's a bit like speaking to them sometimes on the end of a telephone because you can tune into somebody's life from their business letters or you can find out who's ill from the medical texts and what they do to make people better and what's going on in the country, from the state, the army and battling with the enemies and all those different things are written down and people who work in this mad field reading these very ancient messages find out a huge amount about this ancient culture, a surprising amount. Part of it is this literature to do with ghosts, and that's what I got very interested in.

I'll tell you why. If you read about ghosts, if you get books out of the library or from a bookshop and you buy them, there are different kinds of books. There are lots and lots of horror stories which are made up with things clanking down a corridor with chains and everybody likes to be frightened by them. There are endless ghost stories and they're more or less all the same and they are more or less all inventions. Then you get hoaxes when people write books, when they pretend they've seen ghosts in houses and they sell a lot of money. Then you get historians who write about ghosts in the past and they know about the Elizabethans and they might know about the Middle Ages, but they don't know about the ancient world.

Actually, the ancient Greeks knew a lot about ghosts and wrote a lot about them. So did the Romans in Latin. There is lots of material about ghosts there, and [among] the ancient Egyptians and the ancient Babylonians. So there's a whole





Cuneiform writing example,
ancient type of Akkad

world of early material about ghosts. It just so happens that archaeologically, the oldest evidence we have is from this cuneiform world. Already by 3000 BC they had a word for ghost and it was obviously something they knew about. It's the earliest of the witnesses to this human idea.

Of course, a lot of people in their real lives say, "Well, ghosts don't exist. It's a load of nonsense." A lot of other people have seen a ghost at one time or another and never dare tell anybody because they'll think they're mad, so they just keep it quiet and they never explain anything about it. There are people who see lots of ghosts, wherever they go they see them, all kinds of different persons. But we live in a world where seeing a ghost, theoretically, is not something that you go to work and tell everybody over coffee. "Hey, guess what? I saw a fantastic ghost last night." "Oh, what did he look like? Did he say anything?" Nothing like that. People shut up very seriously and they never tell anyone because of ridicule. You have in the sophistication of modern England, modern America, a great part of the so-called modern world, a sort of feeling that ghosts are something that, well, it's best not to follow this up, it's something doubtful, nobody really knows, it's probably all nonsense. Best not to make a lot of fuss about it.

Outside of these complacent Western kind of worlds is the rest of the world. In the rest of the world where people are largely untouched by all

the dreadful things that make spontaneous beliefs so difficult, people believe in ghosts just like they all used to do in the ancient world, in villages all over South America and India and Asia. You could walk down the street and anybody you asked about ghosts would tell you stories straight away. If you said, "Oh, I met this person who thought ghosts were invented." "Oh, you come to my house this evening. You'll see after supper." So you have a situation, it seems to me, that you have a kind of rather complacent we-know-better world populated by us, and all around the edge you have a world where people's ideas, real ideas, haven't really changed ever at all. Ghosts are one of those things which are a deep, long lasting, running human preoccupation. In most parts of the world, it still runs without interruption.

In our intellectual capacities, because of, one, monotheistic religion, which is usually very narrow minded about things and very forbidding, and two, science, which will have nothing to do with ghosts, these two things pile on top of what I call the natural attitude to it all and suppress it. One of the interesting things about reading these very ancient testimonies, in my opinion at least, reading their voices and reading their rituals and their hymns and prayers and their descriptions and all the evidence of the different kinds which comes to us, you didn't have a world there where one person believed in ghosts and another didn't. You didn't have somebody going out in the garden and saying, "I think I saw a ghost in the kitchen this morning," and the neighbors saying, "Oh, how can you be so naive? Nobody believes in those things any longer." No such conversation ever happened, because it is clear that in this ancient culture—and I imagine in later times too—that people not only did believe in ghosts, they took them for granted. They had a role



in society where they were part of life. You can see this reflected from the kings down to beggars, that everybody operated in a world where ghosts were a fact of life. You could say they were a fact of death, but they were a fact of life.

This is the reason, and it's something which is still perceptible in the modern world, which is this. When people die, which they did, of course, and were buried, the special bit inside them which made them different from everybody else, their essence or whatever you like to call it, their spirit, left the rotting body, which was buried and, according to Mesopotamian ideas, went down to the underworld or the netherworld where all the ghosts of the dead were supposed to wait, hang around and congregate. So this was the mechanism. You buried the person in their grave and in some period or another, food and drink was poured down a special thing down there for the ghosts in case they were hungry. That's where they were. So they were there, but they were somewhere over there and you didn't have to think about them.

But sometimes these ghosts, like later ghosts, weren't happy. Sometimes there were troubles where they were in the netherworld. For example, in the description of the Babylonian netherworld, there were people like pickpockets and thieves and gangsters. There were places where people didn't go because the ghosts were dangerous, which seems to me hilarious. But this is one thing. Another thing is, if there's not enough water, because water is always at a premium in that part of the universe, then they get unsatisfied and they get worried and anxious. And of course, if they died under terrible circumstances, which is not uncommon, then the ghost, even though the body is laid in the earth and the ghost is sent down with all the ritual, it can never find peace because of the circumstances un-

der which it died. This means that they come back and they usually go to the place where they lived when they were alive, especially if the body is buried in the courtyard of the house. That makes a lot of sense. So ghosts come back. I think when people saw ghosts, a good proportion of them were family members, [but] not all of them by any means.

So a ghost might come or suddenly appear in the kitchen or it might pull your hair to annoy you to get your attention and they'd be a kind of nuisance. The point would be that they needed something to be supplied. If a ghost was somebody who was burnt to death, there was no solution. They would roam in the ether without any kind of peace of mind. If a woman died in childbirth, it was quite difficult to sort out the difficulty. But other things could be resolved. The easiest one to resolve was if the offerings of food and drink were interrupted and they weren't regular, then the ghosts would get kind of knocked about it and start coming and making trouble.

You had a situation where people knew that a ghost or other ghosts could come at any time. They might be something that made you jump, which is one thing, and they might be something which really got on your nerves because you felt they were always there or following you when you went in the bathroom or something like that. Sometimes they made people ill because if they were malicious and nasty persons when they were alive, the chances were that their ghosts would have the same characteristics. People who were sadists and Nazis and people of that kind in antiquity, when they came back as ghosts they would behave in their normal fashion.

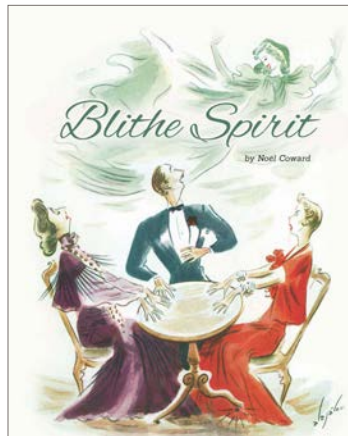
There were ghosts that went in your ear when you were asleep and could make you very ill indeed. The doctors in Babylonia had to recognize



the symptoms of this thing. They sometimes called it hand-of-a-ghost and then do the operations with magic words and things you wear around your neck and things you eat and drink and things you inhale. All these sorts of devices were there to drive out the vagrant ghost to make the person well again.

We have these texts which cover these different aspects of life in the underworld and why they went there and why they get miserable and how to recognize these things and how to placate them and look after them and be nice to them. Because on the whole, one of the things about it, which is so endearing to me about this matter, is that people forgave ghosts, basically, for coming back. Unless they were really dangerous, then they had some sympathy. They knew that wherever they were, it wasn't going well and they needed some kind of support or some improvement. Maybe the grave needed to be smarter or whatever, but something like that. They were on the whole sympathetic. They weren't frightened of them in the sense that people are frightened today by ghosts because, as I say, they took them for granted.

I often think that a very good analogy is the situation [where] you happen to be in your kitchen peeling vegetables carefully with a sharp knife and a mouse runs across the floor and disappears under the wainscot. This is exactly the same kind of thing. It makes you jump like anything when you weren't expecting it, [and you] properly cut your finger. Then you think, oh, what a pain. Then you think you're going to have to get someone to deal with it. Those are the things which are the same situation with Mesopotamia. It makes you jump, and then you have to get somebody in. Eventually, if it got re-



ally bad, you'd have to get someone proper to drive out with a kind of exorcism, and very forcefully, the ghost which was causing all the trouble. So the response level is, I think, primarily sympathetic up to a point of fear and terror when the ghost is causing a very great deal

of distress.

One of the pictures which makes a lot of sense to me is a kind of ritual where it looks like the situation is a man—probably his wife was dead, almost certainly the wife was dead—and he then married another woman. The first wife appears and comes back into the house because she is jealous and angry and gets into bed and torments everybody. I don't know for certain whether the new wife sees this ghost. It's a bit like that play by Noël Coward called *Blithe Spirit*, which is exactly what happens in this play. A ghost comes back into a new marriage and only one partner can see them. It's a very funny thing.

Well, in Mesopotamia, this was rather complicated and they had a banquet set up where the new wife wasn't there, a banquet with a doll representing the old wife. After that she would be taken out and given some means to go back to the underworld with all the things she will need, like a picnic basket and this, that and the other. So this first ghost [former wife], placated, having spent the night with her former husband, then disappears and goes away. The new wife comes back and forgets all about her.

That is the basic picture. On one level, it is rather comic. But on a deep level, it's actually a very salutary piece of psychology because it is not uncommon in a marital situation where there was either a previous person who has vanished, run





away or died even, which creates a kind of pain and ache in the person who comes afterwards. They can never quite come to terms with what it means, especially if it's unknown what happened. That sort of thing is a real and rather common psychological problem in life probably everywhere. In this [ritual], you have just a moment of witness. Getting rid of a ghost is not just for fun, but it's a very deep and undoubtedly a successful operation for clearing away the detritus of the previous relationship and liberating the new partner from that stress.

Most of the rituals, most of the magic that we have is fairly straightforward. You do all sorts of things, burn incense and offer things up, and make ceremonial declarations of faith towards the family and looking after, and all that. There's a lot of stuff. Sometimes you pour water down the well or figurines are given this, that and the other to do, and they vary from simple to rather complicated. The one with this banquet with the doll was obviously rather costly and took a lot of organization, so it probably wasn't done very often because you have to make the doll and dress it and everything, so that's quite a complex thing.

There are one or two other things of this kind. One of the things I put in this book which is so remarkable [is] a clay tablet from Babylon from about 400 BC which has a drawing on it of a ghost, which is an old man, tall and skinny and with a long beard. The drawing shows him being led away by a woman,

a rather stately and rather shapely woman, who has in her hand a rope. He's walking respectfully behind her and the hands are tied together. These drawings are rather skilfully done. We read from the tablet that they got rid of a very troublesome ghost who had been afflicting the family. What you have on the front is a description of these figurines to be made of clay, what they're dressed in, their positions, what they look like. Then on the back, without much in the way of parallel, line drawings in the clay, done very delicately of what these models look like. It is for a trainee exorcist who might be brought in for a job like this.

This is what we can tell. Firstly, if there was a reiterated visit from a troublesome ghost and a professional was called in, I suppose the professional would sit down with the patient, so to speak, and say, "Well, what can you tell me? Who is it likely to be? Do you recognize the ghost?" Of course, there were no photographs in ancient times. People normally knew what their parents looked like and quite often knew what their grandparents looked like, but they wouldn't know anything beyond that and it would be irretrievable. So it might be, for example, that the ghost of an old person could be someone within memory or not.

But in any case, I imagine a clever thinking exorcists would try to elicit from the patient if they knew who it was, and in many cases they probably did. So with the case of this drawing I think it worked like this. People were saying what they thought. Then perhaps the mother said, "Oh, I know who he is. It's old uncle Ug. It must be him, it's old uncle." So the exorcist would say, "Tell me about him." "Well, I can tell you one thing about him. He can never [go] anywhere without a woman. That's what he was like. He was a terrible womanizer." So the exorcist thinks, ah well, that's the secret. What



we'll do is we'll make him a little wife. We'll do all this magic and she would lead him off with the rope down to the netherworld. They'll live happily ever after and the problem will end. And that is what happened.

If you see this with a critical, mature, sophisticated mind, you think, oh, what a load of superstitious nonsense. If you look at it from another point of view, you think that's really rather comic, rather a funny thing. They've even got a picture of a ghost. But actually, it's much more than that because, A, there's something brilliant about the possibility of analyzing not that you need magic against ghosts, but against the specific case, how to deal with a specific case, which is not with swallowing things or burning things, but actually providing what's needed. This one thing is quite a wake up approach to the question of it all.

But the other thing is that this tablet has become rather famous because it is unquestionably—the picture of this old uncle, if that's who he is—the oldest picture of a ghost ever discovered. It's from about 400 BC, as I said. But it is a drawing of a ghost. We know from the writing that's unquestionably what it is. Well, people don't normally draw ghosts. And so one thing led to another and it got in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. So if you buy the *Guinness Book of World Records*, there is a page with the oldest ghost in the world there, recorded for all time with a photograph of it. I'm very proud of it.

The other thing about that was when the judge who works for that publication came to the British Museum to see the tablet, he said, "Well, before we agree about this, there is a rival case of an ancient ghost." So I said, "Come on, man. I mean, what can it possibly be? This is a dated thing. What is it?" "Well, somewhere in the south of England



somebody thinks they've seen the ghost of a dinosaur." "OK," I said, "Maybe they think so, but I don't think that measures up in comparison with this hard evidence which you could present in a court of law." He agreed. So it's now gone into the *Guinness Book of World Records*. So that was an interesting adventure.

Another thing that's worth mentioning is this. We have texts over 2500 years to do with this situation, so it was a feature of Mesopotamian life for certain. Almost all of the magic is to get rid of ghosts. Sometimes it's gentle and sometimes it's rather brutal and violent, to drive out the evil of the ghosts present. But sometimes the opposite idea takes place. For example, you could have a family. I imagine they would be well off with a family house, with a courtyard and lots of uncles and aunts all living there, lots of children, not a small person living on their own in a telephone box, so to speak. But a family of this kind, like a merchant or something, might have a yen to find out the answer to some particular question. We don't know what the question is. It might have been, "Where is the gold buried that was supposed to have existed in our family? We can't find it." Or maybe, "Who is going to be king of Egypt in 10 years time," or some other question like that. We have no idea what the question is, where it doesn't say.

But the mechanism is the interesting thing because of this: the belief was that the dead who were down there were privy to some knowledge of

the future. That is to say, if you could get a ghost to come back, you can bring it back and talk to it and it would tell you what you want to know. So there are some special tablets with magic and ritual in order to coerce a ghost from the underworld—where it's, I don't know, lying around on its back, gazing at the roof—to come back to the world. Not only that, but to pass into a human skull which has already been made ready on the table as the means for the ghost to communicate with the diviner, the specialist, and the person who had the question. So we have two or three pieces of evidence that this activity happened.

I don't know whether the obvious question can be answered. But if people buried their family members in the courtyard or in a vault under the courtyard, where sometimes there were skeletons that went back a long way, it is theoretically possible that people could have brought the skull for use of the person they wanted to speak to. I don't know whether that's essential or whether you could have any old skull and you'd expect the ghost to come back and use that as a temporary communication system. I have a feeling that many ghosts would find it repugnant to use somebody else's skull, but there's no evidence about it.

So what happens is the skull is there and the diviner is no doubt going full out on atmosphere with probably a darkened room with incense swirling about and candles flickering. The guy who did this kind of thing was probably quite impressive in appearance and not in a three piece suit, but probably wearing a thing like a dressing gown with a belt with things hanging from it and things hanging from his neck and wild hair and God knows, probably a very, very striking and dangerous looking person. If you dealt with this kind of thing, you wouldn't look like a schoolteacher.

This guy would be there doing all this stuff and he would appeal to the Sun Lord to get the character they wanted from the underworld and bring him up. He would go in the skull and then when the thing is there, it says, whatever you ask him, he'll tell you. So the guy [is] probably frightened as hell because you can imagine if the room is dark and there's this gleaming skull on the table and there's all the build up and build up and build up. If there's some noise and the skull goes like that [clicking noise], you'd probably have a heart attack. I can't quite imagine how people pulled it off. But the idea was that you would ask the ghost what you wanted to know. It would be this horrible... You can imagine it for yourself. I mean, we don't know what the voice was like, but you can imagine what it was like. If it happened, it would be quite a frightening thing to do in the night time. But the ghost would tell you what you wanted to know, or it wouldn't.

But what is interesting is that divination with a skull in this way appears also in classical sources and in Hebrew sources. It was passed on to people who knew about this later, even to the point that in France, in the Middle Ages, a very famous rabbi wrote a passage about necromancy with a skull. He says in the commentary about it, "This is what you do. You get the question..." He says the question is whether people *really* heard the voice or whether they imagined it.

So in about 1500 AD, there were thinkers and philosophers who, attracted by this topic and considering it, didn't believe it with their mouths open that everything everybody said was true. But they considered where the possibility was because of the commitment psychologically and the need that the person would hear a voice when, as it were, nobody else would. But that's a remarkable thing, that this corner of the ghost story, which we find from





Babylonian ruins

Close-up view of cuneiform Sumerian text found among ruins on the Processional Way of ancient Babylon, Hillah, Iraq.

a couple of sources in Babylonia, is in fact part of a widespread idea that the skull is a rational means of communication.

It's a very interesting topic. I have this problem [that] I've never seen a ghost myself. I have no opinion about whether they do exist or they don't exist. It's really not my concern. What I'm interested in is the writing about it from the Mesopotamian people and others as well about what they think and what they record. My own feelings are neither here nor there, but I've never seen one. But the thing here is that if you look into the question of ghosts, you find it such a widespread topic of belief in the human race that I think it's a kind of general matter that is characteristic of human beings and that it surfaces at all periods in all cultures. Sometimes it's trodden down, as I said, but it nevertheless is there.

Ultimately, I believe, it reflects the arrogance of the human race that it's never been acceptable for human beings to believe that important me, wonderful me, when I die, I'm really gone for good. It's a hard thing to digest. Therefore, I think this is the origin of the idea that some part of a person, the important part of a person, the kind, intelligent, creative, nasty, malicious and horrible part of a person that makes them who they are, comes swoosh out of them when the body goes back into the soil and it goes somewhere out of sight.

This belief, of course, underpins modern religions today because clergymen often talk about the dead in heaven and spirits with this and spirits with that. So there's a kind of comfortable reference to the idea that more of a person survives in their body. This has always been true. I decided when writing about these texts to not write about them like a scientist with a telescope. "Oh, I see here they believe this, they believe that, how stupid. Or, well, never mind, that's what they believe. They were silly and primitive." Well, it's nothing to do with that. They're just like we are, in my opinion, these ancient people, there's hardly any distinction to be made between them as *homo sapiens* and us as *homo sapiens*. I think the only way to write about it was, as it were, from the inside. So I wrote about it, not naively taking everything at face value, but as from the Babylonian point of view, the big assumption is that what they're telling us, what they wrote over nearly 3000 years [ago] is what they really thought and that we can get some idea of it. The idea we get is a very common human matter, very common indeed. It's a very remarkable thing. So I had a lovely time writing this book and was rather sorry when it came to an end. But there you are.

EV: Perhaps the slight difference might be that they wrote on cuneiform tablets, clay tablets versus the various electronic devices we have today.

IF: Well, that's true. But I tell you something important about that, that people who wrote on clay tablets from about 3500 BC onwards, a very long period of time, made a very intelligent decision because clay tablets survive in the ground or in collections perfectly. They survive. On a dig, you can dig up a tablet which is two and a half thousand years





old, if you're careful. You take it out and you dry it in the air. It will be tough, [but] you can handle it and you can read it like it was just written. There's no electronic thing in the whole universe that in two and a half millennia will still exist. I don't think many of them will last for more than two and a half centuries. It's all transitory. It's all ephemeral and no electronic records are safe. But the thing about clay tablets is if you don't throw them in the river and you look after them, they will last forever. So this is an interesting dimension.

EV: You have over the years of working at the British Museum helped join various pieces together that have been found throughout time.

IF: Yes. Most of the tablets came out of the ground of Iraq in the 19th century and there were big excavations in big cities, sometimes with hundreds of workmen, and they tried to recover the plans of buildings and the temples and the whole of the city, if possible. They excavated objects and pottery and jewelry and weapons and everything else like that. And with them, there were these ancient clay tablets. Sometimes they were found loose and strayed around. Sometimes they were found under the

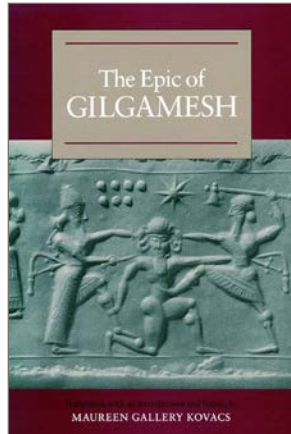
ground where they'd been buried accidentally or they were in a box on purpose. All sorts of things. When they've come back, their experiences in antiquity often meant they were broken. If you have a piece of tablet like this [indicates ~3" x 5" size], it's often going to survive in one piece because it's not so large, but sometimes they're very big indeed, two foot high or something like that. Often they are found in pieces.

Now, if the archaeologists were careful and painstaking, they would have extracted from the ground all the pieces of the tablet from which it was once constituted. We have lots and lots of fragments which came with the tablets, but it's such a huge matter that we can't join them very, very quickly. Sometimes there's internal evidence about which group came with which fragments and we can sometimes make the smallest join. So you have a tablet made out of 30 different pieces and they might be one like this and one like that. Then you get the basic shapes and a bit goes here and a bit goes in. It's very wonderful when, as a result of all that collaboration, because it takes a lot of people, that when it's finally done you might have a complete document or nearly complete document where before you just had little bits and the little



Natural stones with engraved ancient Sumerian writing

bits are hopeless because it says, well, "The God," somebody did dot dot dot, "and then he went..." It's useless. But when you join them all together...



This is very exciting with, for example, the Gilgamesh epic, which has 12 big tablets of the whole story. Lots of scholars have worked on this, identifying pieces. We haven't got the whole 12 tablets, but we've got the whole narrative. It's a bit like Hollywood, you can follow the adventures of this hero, falling in love with goddesses and the flood story and all these marvelous things all written down on tablets which have been gradually pieced together in this gigantic jigsaw pattern. It's very exciting if you are reading something which is hard to understand and you get a little bit that gives you the ends of the line. Suddenly you understand it, that is always very exciting.

EV: Yeah, perhaps you're the world's best puzzle player.

IF: Well, I don't like doing ships and gardens and things like that that you get on jigsaw puzzles, they're usually rather boring. Although I gather that jigsaw puzzles are not what they used to be. For example, you can buy jigsaws with no picture at all, just a load of white things. That sorts out the people who are good or not. Another thing is that when you're a child, they always have four straight sides. But you can have a jigsaw where the sides are completely erratic and you've got no edge. Because once you've got the sea and the grass, it's easy and it's kind of boring. In cuneiform, it's more like that,

the white one or the one with no definable edges, it's more like that.

EV: Right. Did you find that any of these ghosts that returned were benevolent? Or, were they always harmful or causing some type of disharmony?

IF: I don't think there are any which have no bad effects, but I don't think there were any ghosts that people were glad to see and welcome for tea, kind of thing. I don't think that was the case. I think people would always be a bit unhappy if a ghost was there because they wouldn't know what it was going to lead to. But I think most of them were regarded as a little pathetic and to be rescued. But, you know, there's another side of it. The Assyrian army was always going abroad to fight with their weapons and kill the enemy and cut their heads off and massacre them and all that kind of thing, that human activity which is just as alive today as it's ever been. According to Mesopotamian ideas, all those dead soldiers would either rot on the plain or be buried. But all the ghosts of those dead soldiers will be thinking, "Well, I know what I'm going to do," and they go straight to Nineveh and they go into the palace, they pull the hair of the queen and make everybody miserable, and get their own back on the horrible Assyrians.

So I think if you take it logically, if you kill people, you're likely to have trouble from their ghosts. I have a theory, although again, this can't be proved, that when the Assyrian army went on campaign, they'd have with them a small unit whose job was to exorcise the ghosts of the enemy dead so that they would stay there so they wouldn't have trouble with them afterwards. I think it's very likely that that's what happened. Otherwise, they'd have this problem.

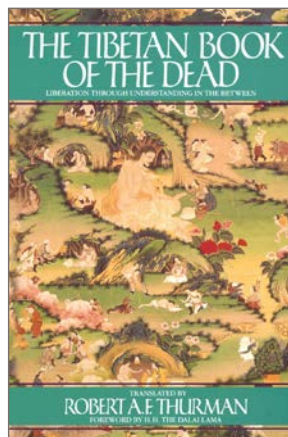


EV: It seems that the ancient Mesopotamians really took care of their loved ones when they died as far as the rituals, so that they wouldn't come back and give them a fright.

IF: Yes, there was a sort of bargain idea in that the oldest son would take responsibility for his dead father's future peace of mind and would make these offerings, and they were regular offerings. If you had a ghost who, as it were, depended on them for food and drink, and was sitting at the bottom waiting for more and nothing came, he'd start looking at his watch, you know, "Hello?" and then resentment would build up. After a while, the ghosts would appear demanding this to be resumed because quite a lot of the magic or the recitations to deal with that problem refer to the responsibility and the fact we would do it. I suppose it's like everything else. You start off being punctilious about it. But after a few months, you think, oh, well, what the hell, and then then you find out. Then they come back.

EV: I just read *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which was translated by Robert Thurman, and had a conversation with him. In reading that, I saw parallels in how the living could assist the dying to have a positive journey.

IF: Yes. Oh, I think that's right. I think they had similar ideas. Certainly the priests were there to see somebody, as it were, over the border. There was an allotted period of time that had to go by before they could be sure that the spirit had left the body. It was not instantaneous in the Babylonian understanding. But it's interesting because I quoted in my book a pas-



sage from a Tibetan source describing ghosts in life, what they are like and how they behave. I printed it in this discussion because it really could have equally applied to the Mesopotamians, the same sort of ideas, the same sort of relationship and consideration. I think it is a human universal. And I think it goes back to the very beginning of time.

EV: Yeah. Defining ghosts in this case seems to be a spirit that one actually visually sees. It isn't just somebody visiting you in a dream, per se. It's actually like an apparition.

IF: Well, the Babylonians talk about seeing ghosts and what room they see them in and sometimes what they were wearing. All the information about it which is collected means that they saw things not in a dream but when they were awake. They saw ghosts. If you're a skeptic about the whole idea of the ghosts and think it's a load of nonsense, then you think it's a load of nonsense. But people who see ghosts don't find this at all difficult.

I went once to a psychic society in London when I was writing this book to give a talk about the Mesopotamian attitude towards ghosts. I said that I thought you had a situation where it wasn't

belief or disbelief, but people took them for granted and that I know that was difficult for people today to understand. But I think that's how it was. When I finished this talk the chairman said, "It's very interesting what you have to say, of course, but you don't have to persuade us about ghosts. We know all about them." So that was a rather interesting thing.

Of course, I've met a lot of people who have told me about what has



happened to them in the ghostly world. At literary festivals sometimes people come up and say, "I was very interested in what you had to say, because let me tell you, when I was a girl..." and then all that kind of stuff. Even somebody I was once at school with about 60 years [ago] wrote and said that she'd seen one. It's amazing. In fact, I have a hunch that if you had a group of people and you...

When I tried to persuade my publisher to publish *First Ghosts*—they're called Hodder—we had a meeting with the editor and the publicity agent, five or six people. I said I thought it was actually an unacknowledged part of the human psyche and that everybody really did underneath believe all this stuff. For example, I said, if you go to a dinner party at the weekend, say there are 12 people at the dinner party, when there's a lull in the conversation, try saying, "Oh, we had a visit today from some idiot from the British Museum who says that everybody believes in ghosts, really, and they're to be taken seriously as a part of human history and evolution. How can anybody be so unscientific about anything?" If you do that at a dinner party there will be silence. Then somebody will say, "Well, when I was at school..." and then they'll say something like that. Then someone says, "Yes, well, actually, my auntie told me..." Out of, say, 12 people, I think eight people—this is my estimate—eight people will either confess to having seen a ghost themselves, or know somebody well that they trust who has seen a ghost and they've heard about it. Those two features. I said this out of my head when I was talking to the publishers about it. When I finished this, the publicity officer said, "Actually, it's a funny thing you should say that because..." and then two people in the room whom I was trying to persuade of the validity of this argument confessed to being in the same position. So that was a cool thing.



EV: There is some stigma around it. Perhaps since we have, quote, science showing that there are germs and that people can have certain illnesses because of some type of poor hygienic conditions or genetic conditions that maybe the ancients are dismissed as being superstitious.

IF: Well, you could say that their theory of disease reckoned that things that they couldn't see, because there are other things apart from ghosts that can make you ill. If you're asleep and a ghost goes in your ear, you don't see it. There are things that you can't see which can make you ill. They definitely, definitely had that idea. If you cut someone with a sword, then they have a wound. But people got ill intestinally and all over the place, in their lungs. Sometimes they got a fever, they got this, that or the other. They attributed them to forces of this kind, which in the main they couldn't see. But you could say that this was the early version of an understanding which in the modern world was put down to things you can only see with a microscope, which caused these effects. You can say that, as it were, the microbe is there. But then if you say that the microbe is the modern equivalent of that belief, then it's all one continuum. It's just that the basic conception is that things that you can not see make you ill. Science has one explanation for it. But the one that they had before in their own terms was





equally valid because no one has ever seen a microbe walking down the street. We have to believe what people tell us about it. Of course I believe it. But it's not that they're diametrically opposed. It's a different slant on the same matter. That's the way I look at it.

EV: There's a 150 year history with parapsychology all about looking at phenomena with spirits and entities that has actually been very substantial.

IF: I know. That's another thing, because as far as I understand it, all the people who operate like that, operate in defiance of science. Science—in the sense of somebody wearing a white coat and telling you what to do—science has a theory that things that can't be repeated are not convincing evidence, that you have to be able to repeat an experiment, you have to be able to repeat a reaction or repeat something in this way to establish the truth of a statement or the truth of a theorem. Well, I find that unsatisfactory because if you have a person of immaculate honesty and clarity and they're sitting playing the piano and a ghost in 17th century costume comes over and turns over the page for you and they never come back, that is an experience which can never be repeated and never will be repeated. So what do you do with that? I'm not saying that is a concrete point, but it's a point that repetition or reiteration of something is not an in-

trinsic rule of the universe, whether it's true or not, at least to my mind.

The consequence is that people who do [these] things are called *parapsychologists*. They are called *para-* because the scientific or the other side of the world dismisses it as not being true. As a result of that, there is in the history of it all a huge amount of faking: fairies in the garden, knockings on the table and ectoplasm in hotel lavatories and I don't know what. If you look into the history of it, part of it is ruined by fraud, either for money or for fame or for making a documentary. So, you have the attack of the science, or the ignoring by science. Then you have the people who latch on to this as a way of making money. What's left in the middle is really rather frail.

The other thing about it all is that somebody, as I see it, someone who's seen a ghost themselves has no interest whatsoever in ever trying to persuade somebody else that they did, who doesn't believe them. It doesn't make any difference to them because if they have, they have. So I think a lot of people are in that category and have had some experience which they can't explain in any other way. They're not worried about whether anybody else believes them or whether ghosts exist at large or whether you're going to persuade somebody in the laboratory. It's just neither here nor there. It's what happens to you. And, of course, everyone can say, well, you eat too much, you drink too much, you're half asleep, you've got a headache, you've got a fever, the curtains wobble in the wind. I don't know what. You can always say, "Yes, but..."

But I'll tell you one small thing before we conclude. When I went to a literary festival, I talked about this to try and sell as many copies of this book as possible, which is what writers like to do. When we were at dinner afterwards a lady came



down to where I was having coffee and said, "I was very interested in what you had to say about ghosts, your sympathetic way of talking about them, because it's something that happened to me." I said, "Ah, yes," because lots of people have begun a conversation like that, "Something happened to me..." She said when she was a teenager, in the late summer, she was upstairs at her desk in front of the window writing or something. She looked out into the garden below and she saw her grandfather walking across the lawn. This was a rather astonishing thing because he was dead. So she gathered herself together, as they say in Victorian novels, and ran downstairs to find her mother. Her mother was in the kitchen and she was slumped on the edge of the sink, looking out into the garden through her window. When the girl went into the room, [the mother] turned around and said, "You're never going to believe this, but I just saw my father walking across the grass."

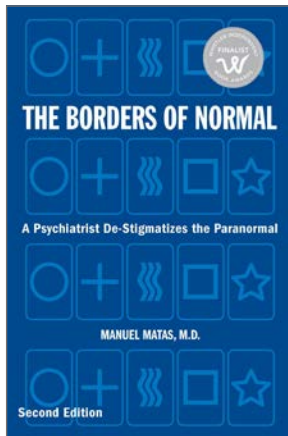
So this lady, I don't know how old she was, about 65, 70. She'd never told this story to anybody in 50 years. I don't think she'd ever talked about it. It certainly didn't come out like a rehearsed thing. She sure as hell didn't make it up to convince me. It was described in such a way that the hairs on the back of one's neck became stiff. It was really the voice of conviction. It was just not an invention and not a misunderstanding. I mean, it is not possible to mistake some old man for your grandfather. It just isn't possible, especially in your back garden. And it isn't possible to mistake an old man for your father when it wasn't, it's just not possible. She said that that was just what happened. There's nothing you could do about it. That kind of encapsulates a lot of human experience that people do have sometimes and they don't talk about it much.

EV: Right. It's very individual for each person. I also spoke with a psychiatrist, Dr. Manuel Matas, who had so many of these experiences himself. He actually wrote a book called *The Borders of Normal: A Psychiatrist De-Stigmatizes the Paranormal* because he also witnessed that in many of his patients. Although he, with the [HIPPA regulation], did not talk about his own patients' experiences, he did however describe how those experiences in his life actually enhanced his own personal journey, if you will, of his experiences as a soul, as a being. So it is very individual to each person, or can be.

IF: I think that's right. I've never seen a ghost, as I said. I hope I do. I won't be in the least bit frightened by it, but I would quite like to one day. I'm always hoping for the best, but so far not. But I have an idea. Religions always refer to the dead being somewhere, they take it for granted, in heaven or wherever. But the principle is that part of a person survives after death, if you have this idea. Well, the spirit that, for example, a clergyman might refer to in this way is no different from a ghost, except in one area, which is that ghosts are usually visible and the spirits of the dead are not. But if you overlook the difference between being visible and invisible, then what people say about ghosts, sensible persons that is, and what people say about the spirits of the dead, sensible persons that is, is the same thing. If you follow this logically, you end up with the theorem that ghosts and spirit are identical.

Therefore you have to explain the problem about half of the people not believing it and half of them believing it. But the simplest solution to me is that whatever it takes to see a ghost, not everybody can do it. For example, I don't know whether this is nonsense or not, but lots of people I know are color-





blind. If you are not colorblind, it's very hard to believe that people can be like that, otherwise normal. I know people who are tone deaf. You think, goodness me, anybody can get by

with a tune; I mean, what's wrong with you? You know, for goodness sake. But it's true. They're tone deaf. These are important, of course, but they're not life threatening or anything, but they show a normal functioning human being who is in some respects blind to a certain kind of stimulus.

EV: Yes, well said.

IF: So I wonder whether that's true of this thing about the dead. People who think about the spirits and that they've gone somewhere, bye bye, and we'll never forget them. It's all well and good. But lots of them come and annoy people, lots of them are there and some people can see them and some people can't. So this would be a perfectly simple explanation of everything to do with ghosts and religion all in one bundle.

EV: Right. Many people today, when they lose a loved one, continue a relationship with that loved one through communicating with them in their thoughts, through visiting mediums, or having dreams, or they might even be visited in their dreams and are comforted by it. There's even research that that can be supportive for people as well.

IF: Oh, I think so, yes. It's common enough for people to dream of their dead relatives, their parents,

especially, or brother or sister, for them to come into a dream. It doesn't mean that they came into the bedroom and took off their shoes and then sat on the pillow and whispered in your ear. It's part of the same kind of thing, but sometimes it's very credible and very powerful.

EV: You brought up religion. How did the ancient Sumerians or Assyrians relate to religion in the context of spirits and ghosts? And also, I'm curious if they ever felt that they saw angels or maybe even what we might consider today, UAP or aliens.

IF: Well, we can deal with those one by one. Firstly, the religion in ancient Mesopotamia, there were human beings and there were gods and goddesses. There were lots and lots of gods and goddesses. They had a very extensive pantheon. There were three gods at the top and then major gods and minor gods. They all had their different temples and small gods worked for the big gods. There was a kind of phone book where it was all laid out, but there were lots and lots of gods. Some were naughty and some misbehaved, but they were all, as it were, on the side of good. Human beings each had a god to whom they were sort of dedicated when they were born, who looked after them, theoretically.

EV: Maybe like a guardian angel?

IF: Well, they didn't have angels. Angels is a later thing. It's a difficult word, angels, because it has nothing to do with Mesopotamia, I don't think. But the thing is, you've got the gods up in heaven and you have us here. There were one or two wicked gods who had been sent to hell because they were very naughty. But on the whole, that's how that worked. In between, in what you might call the ether or un-



seen on the whole, there was quite a large range of demons and ghosts. The demons on the whole were evil. Some of them are very, very inimical. They were immortal demons, devils and demons. They couldn't be killed. They could be banished and exorcized, but they were always there. They made people ill more than ghosts did and caused all sorts of other trouble. The demons couldn't be seen, on the whole, like the ghosts on the whole. There are records of people seeing a certain kind of demon in one place or another, or they thought they did or they did. I don't know which. But anyway, the demons were the enemy and they had to be exorcized and dispelled. You had to wear things against them and you had to be on your guard. The ghosts were a bit of an enemy, but not entirely. You had to take steps there as well.

So you had these three three things. You've got gods up there, the things you couldn't see floating about in the middle and then us on the Earth, that sort of idea. On the whole, there were lots of temples with sacrifices, a bit like in the Bible, in the big ones and regular services. Each village had its local gods and goddess, that sort of idea. It was a rather human thing. The gods weren't vengeful like in the Old Testament. There was nothing like hell, no punishment after death. There was nothing of that kind. People on the whole got on with the gods fairly well. When they were not well, they thought more about them. It was a bit like in India, in Hinduism, when you have such a large number of gods, not everybody knew them all. Some were stories of great, exciting narratives. And some were a bit faceless and you couldn't be quite sure who they were. But that's how that was.

Angels, I think, are an invention of a later time. You could argue, of course, that such figures appear in the world when you move from pantheism,



where you have a huge number of gods, to a central monotheistic religion where you only have one god. Sometimes what were separate gods before, with their own existence and their own right to be worshiped, sometimes get tucked in in a funny way, like saints or angels. I would be inclined to argue that that's what their origin is. They are a recycling of the conception of other important entities that affect the human race and could help the human race in a new version. I think that may be true. I'll probably be burnt at the stake, but that's my view of it. As for aliens, aliens is a load of rubbish, in my humble opinion.

EV: So there's no evidence of these ancients seeing what some people are experiencing these days with that phenomena?

IF: You mean flying saucers and all this sort of thing?

EV: Sure. Is there any evidence of that in your..

IF: In Mesopotamia, there was no fog or smog or pollution. The night sky that stretched over ancient Iraq and the whole of the ancient world was as clear to see as anything. They had a conception that things that happened in the heavens affected things on the earth. The gods up in heaven certainly affected the life of persons. Also the phenomena





observable in the heavens, which they could see very clearly, could be explained not only theologically, if you like, but also scientifically, because they developed a very rigorous understanding of astronomy, which came out of the fact that they could see everything every night and people slept on the roof usually. If you lay on your back with your hands behind your head and looked up at the sky, it was like a drive-in movie. You could see the whole of the heavens and the Milky Way and the various other constellations there. Probably people knew the night sky very well. The thing about it is that some people realized at certain times, probably very, very ancient times, somebody noticed that what used to be over there is now over there. How can that be? You can say, well, it's a dragon chasing the sun and vomiting it out again or something like that, if you're a mythologist.

But if you have a bent for calculation and numbers, then people thought maybe there's another explanation for it, and there jolly well was. They worked out all sorts of incredible things, mathematically and intellectually about the universe. They could predict eclipses. They understood about the tracks followed by different bodies. It was amazing what they knew. A lot of it was strongly influential on the Greeks. So with all that stuff going on, observations of first and last visibility on the horizon and all that stuff, if they'd actually seen space ships, somebody would have said, "Oh,

gosh, we saw a very funny flying saucer with petrol clouds out the back and funny blokes with eyes on stalks. I wonder what that was." They didn't.

They scrutinized the night sky for evidence for thousands of years. There are shooting stars, there are flaring things, I suppose. They knew about everything to be seen there and it was all familiar to them. They studied it as a reference framework for both astronomy and astrology. There's no squeak of anything in cuneiform about one of these alien things. And so I don't like it. It causes a lot of trouble because people write successful commercial books where they explain all this in a convincing sort of way so people believe in it. But there's no evidence for it whatsoever. The evidence of what we do have is much more interesting and much more explicable and doesn't depend on just believing what people tell you.

EV: I completely appreciate that view. At the same time, they were communicating with gods and spirits and ghosts.

IF: Well, they were communicating with them but they didn't get letters from gods and they didn't get letters from ghosts. They spoke to the ghosts and they spoke to the gods. I mean, people speak to the gods today. It's called prayer. Lots of people talk to God all the time. Does anybody ever say, "Well, you never guess what happened after breakfast this morning? Well...!" No, it's a one way thing. But the whole nature of the human relation with all this whole tapestry of entities is that it's one way. It's one way.

EV: Some would say that it goes both ways, but that's everybody's own individual viewpoint. Is there a particular religion that you see in modern



times that echoes this ancient culture? What did you see happen with those beliefs?

IF: Answering it simply, you have the creation of monotheistic religion, what they call the Abrahamic religions. You have Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all three of which are strongly connected. The dominance of this monotheistic system, in each case, supported by holy writ, the Bible, the Quran and the Hebrew Bible, these voluminous statements gave these modern monotheistic religions a great deal of status. They had the effect in that part of the world of killing off all the old gods. They were spurned. In the Old Testament, he's vociferous about idols and worshiping false gods and so forth. The prophets in the Old Testament went on and on and on about it in a rather tiresome way. They regarded any kind of entity beyond a single central deity as anathema. Christianity and Islam followed in their footsteps.

So that is what happened. It was knocked out. It was replaced by a much more direct and pruned down system, which in the history of Christianity and Islam was, in fact, propagated by the sword. It was spread deliberately as a replacement for early religion. It was militant. This is what happened, why it disappeared within other parts of the world. Pantheistic religions did exist in some parts of the world. There are animist religions, which did exist, which anthropologically are regarded as a distinct, possibly earlier phase of thinking to theology with the entities of God's model on human beings. I don't know whether there's any chronological implication of the two. But the fact is that animism is a separate system where beliefs of power in trees and I don't know what, the whole of an animistic approach and living as part of the animal kingdom in this kind of

fashion is a system which still exists in the world. So it's not all one system, but the effects of the stamp of those three religions bonks on the head the gods of ancient Egypt and ancient Greece and ancient Italy, who are now hardly household names. If they do still exist somewhere, they're probably very, very irritable.

EV: Is there anything else you want to share today about evidence of first ghosts, knowing that, of course, there's so much more in your book and I hope people do get a chance to read it?

IF: I think people should have a chance to buy it. I strongly recommend that. My view, as I've often remarked about this, is that for a normal household, three copies is ideal. So you have one in the glove compartment of the car in case you're stuck in traffic and one on the bedside table in case things there are not more distracting, and one in the lavatory in case you get held up. That seems to me a good wholesome approach. It's not very expensive, the paperback version, so probably a bulk buy will be a sensible move.

I'd be glad if people read it, partly because it's got quite a lot about ancient Mesopotamia, which people don't know enough about. Also, I've tried to explain how we know what we know and what the words really mean. Also, I wrote a bit about the belief in ghosts in general and how to regard it. I think if someone has ever seen a ghost and never told anybody and always felt, perhaps I was daft or perhaps I didn't really, if they read that they might find it rather reassuring from that point of view as well.

EV: The ghosts have been with us since the first evidence of writings.



IF: Well, long before that.

EV: And long before that, yeah.

IF: I think from the very beginning of the species, so that is a long thing.

EV: I hope we can have more conversations in the future, Irving. It's a joy to hear all that you have to share.

IF: It will be a pleasure. I'm glad that we talked today, and let me know what happens. Maybe people will send you stories about ghosts that they've seen. Send them on to me because I'll be very interested.

EV: Wonderful. Thank you so much for being with me today, Irving.

IF: It's a pleasure.

EV: And for those of you listening or watching, thank you for being with us. You are the reason that we are here.



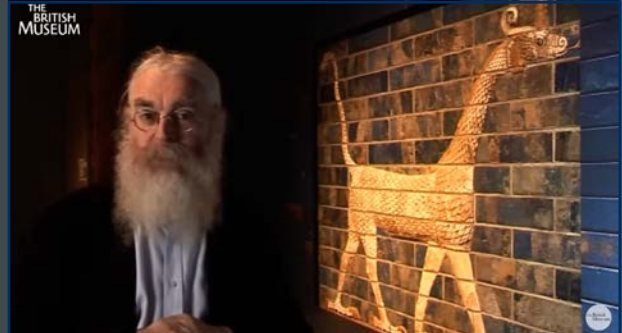
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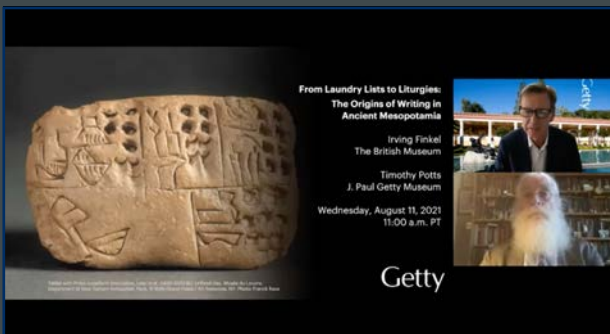
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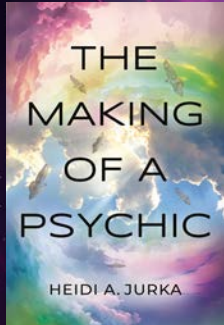
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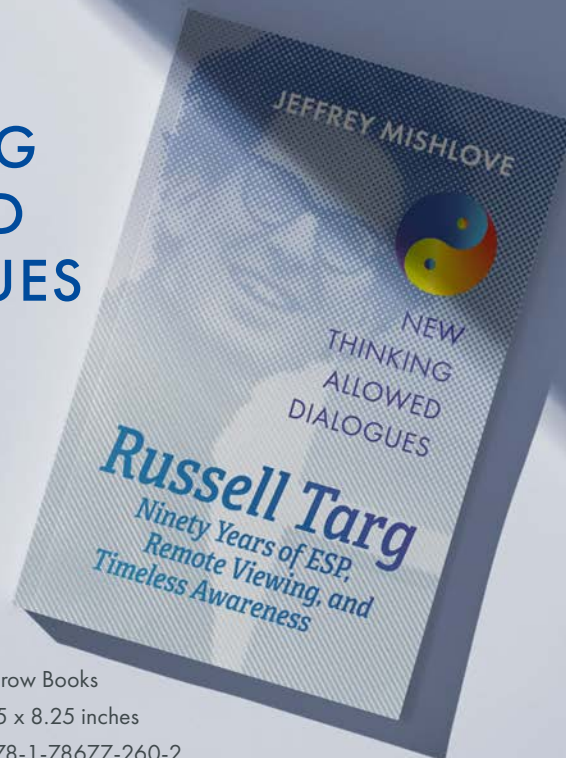
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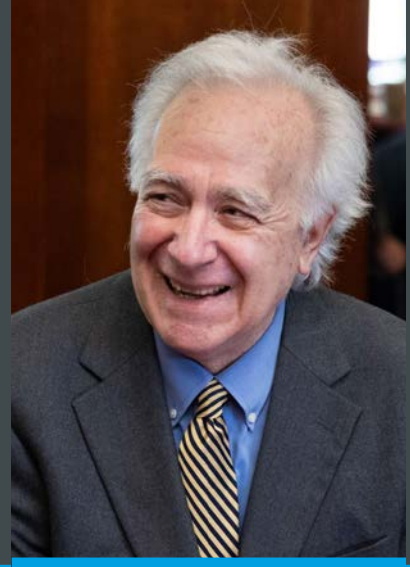
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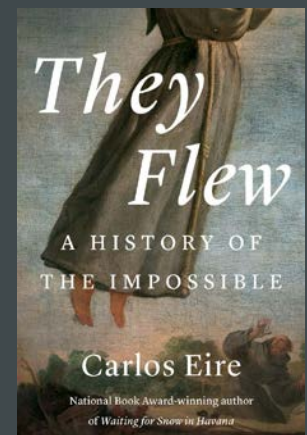
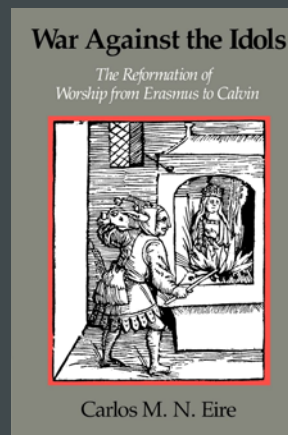
Carlos Eire

Carlos Eire is a distinguished Cuban-American historian and scholar, serving as the T. Lawrason Riggs Professor of History and Religious Studies at Yale University. Born in 1950 in Havana, Cuba, Eire emigrated to the United States in 1962 as part of Operation Pedro Pan, escaping the political upheaval of the Cuban Revolution. His academic career is marked by extensive research on the late medieval and early modern periods in Europe, with a particular focus on the Reformation, religious practices, and the cultural transformations of the era.

Eire's scholarly contributions delve into the complexities of religious and cultural history, examining iconoclastic movements of the Reformation and their impact on European religious practices. He explores the rituals and perceptions surrounding death in early modern Spain, offering insights into the interplay between culture and religion. Additionally, he traces the evolving concept of eternity in Western thought, highlighting its philosophical and theological dimensions. Eire provides a comprehensive overview of the transformative period of the Reformation, analyzing its political, social, and religious ramifications across Europe.

In addition to his academic work, Eire is the author of two acclaimed memoirs that reflect on his personal experiences during and after the Cuban Revolution. His first memoir, *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*, won the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 2003, and his second continues his narrative of exile and adaptation in the United States.

Carlos Eire's scholarly and literary achievements have made him a prominent figure in both historical research and contemporary discussions on memory and identity. His work bridges the gap between personal narrative and rigorous academic inquiry, enriching our understanding of the cultural and religious history of early modern Europe.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

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LEVITATION AND BILOCATION

JM: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we'll be exploring levitation and bilocation. My guest is Professor Carlos Eire, who is the T. Lawra-son Riggs Professor of History and Religious Studies at Yale University. He is a historian of the late medieval and early modern period in Europe. He is author of many books, including *War Against the Idols*; *From Madrid to Purgatory*; *A Very Brief History of Eternity*; *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650*. His memoir of the Cuban Revolution, *Waiting for Snow in Havana*, won the US National Book Award for Non-Fiction. His second memoir, *Learning to Die in Miami*, focuses on the early years of his exile in the United States. His most recent book, which we'll be focusing on, is called *They Flew: A History of the Impossible*. Carlos lives in Connecticut and now I'll switch over to the internet video. Welcome, Carlos. It's a pleasure to be with you today.

CE: Thanks for the invitation. I'm very, very pleased to be here.

JM: You've written an unusual book. You call it *A History of the Impossible*. It focuses on what I would call events of high strangeness: levitation and bilocation. You begin by describing how you really were prompted to this exploration some 40 years ago when you were visiting the convent of Saint Teresa of Avila in Spain.

CE: Yes. I did not plan for this to happen. I was simply traveling with a friend and we went to visit the convent. During the guided tour, it wasn't just him and me, it was a whole group of people. Here's the kitchen where Saint Teresa cooked. Here's the refectory where they ate. Here's the staircase where she fell down and broke her arm. And then, oh, here's the spot where Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross levitated together for the first time. It was the fact that the levitation was turned into a fact, not any different from the staircase or the frying pans in the kitchen. I had a moment of, let's call it cognitive dissonance, or cognitive awakening is probably a better way to put it, that this was a fact for so many people back in the 16th century and continued to be a fact in the 20th century when you would think that no one would speak of it that way. It set me thinking.

And of course, I didn't work on this for 40 years straight. I worked on it in dribs and drabs



Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross



over the past 40 years, building up steam, working on other things in between. I really wrote most of this book during the worst of Covid. I was in my plague bunker like everyone else. My good fortune was that so many old texts are now digitized that I could access them from my house without going anywhere. That was marvelous. Plus, my employer, Yale University, started mailing library books to the faculty to their home address during Covid. Everything I needed came either to my doorstep or was there for me to look at on my computer screen.

JM: You researched actual records from the Spanish Inquisition, for example. I guess they kept detailed files.

CE: Oh, they were manic, absolutely manic and obsessive compulsive about keeping files. I have to say that it's a very modern institution in that respect. I had access to the Inquisition files during an earlier trip, back in the early 2000s. I had been gathering stuff for a while, but the Inquisition is just amazing. You not only find notes of what is being discussed, but let's say the prisoner, or sometimes they're not in prison, [it's just] people being questioned. Letters that go back and forth are also included in the record, so it can sometimes be very complete. Sometimes when people are being, let's say, waterboarded, there's a parenthesis, "We gave her more water." Then the interrogation continues and, "We gave her more water," and so on. So it's amazing what you can reconstruct.

JM: You are a specialist in what you call the early modern period of European history. In particular, we're focusing on the 16th–17th century, primarily a time when the Renaissance has taken place and modernism is beginning to take root in European



culture. At the same time, medieval ideas haven't disappeared by any means. So it's very interesting when you look at, for example, an Inquisition authorized by the Vatican and the highest levels of the Church to determine whether these accounts of flying, monks and nuns literally flying, is it true? And if it is true, how are they going to deal with it?

CE: This is it because, as you say, the transition to modernity is neither quick nor smooth nor easy to comprehend. There are all sorts of different strands that coexist. If you view it as a rope of sorts with different strands in it, there are strands that go all the way back to the ancient world and strands that begin to be inserted slowly and gradually. Not everybody is on the same wavelength so it's complicated. At this time period, which is one of great religious divisions—the Protestant Reformation begins in 1517—both Protestants and Catholics are keeping very close tabs on what people think and say within their own communities. There are Protestant versions of the Inquisition, too, in some places, but not everywhere. And not everywhere in Europe was there an Inquisition either. It was very strong in Spain and in parts of Italy. But really, [there was] no formal Inquisition outside of those two regions.

JM: In some instances—Saint Teresa probably being the most prominent, but certainly not the



only one, Saint Joseph of Cupertino was another one—the Church examined these reports of flying. They weren't really known as levitation, I gather, until the Spiritualist era. But they examined them very carefully, and I think it'd be fair to say with a skeptical eye. It's not as if the Church was ready to endorse these as religious miracles of saintly people. It took a lot of pushing, but in some instances that's exactly what happened.

CE: Yes, and that's the modern dimension of this phenomenon in the 16th and 17th century. Medieval levitators, as a rule, did not become suspect or undergo these interrogations the same way that the modern saints began to experience it. A lot of it, of course, has to do not just with new attitudes towards facts, towards history, but it also has to do with the distrust that arises out of the religious divisions of the Protestant Reformation. We have this modern strand of investigating people to make sure that they're the genuine article, with the background knowledge that, yes, there are fakers, there are people who are faking this.

An older strand takes us back to the Middle Ages when it was believed that levitation and bilocation could be caused by the devil. So that's another reason that these individuals got investigated, to make sure that this phenomenon is coming from the right source rather than the wrong source. So again, that makes it very difficult for anyone who

is considered saintly in the Catholic Church [but] who can perform miracles or levitate or bilocate. On the Protestant side, Protestants kept believing that the devil could make people levitate and bilocate. But God never did so. So on the Protestant side, anyone who goes up in the air is suspected of having a pact with the devil or being a witch.

JM: And of course, in this very same period, we don't know how many thousands of people were put to death for witchcraft.

CE: The numbers have gone down in the past few decades. We have more reliable quantitative research, but it's still in the thousands. It's not as many as tens of thousands as I learned when I was in high school, for instance, or even when I was older in graduate school the numbers were still astonishingly high. From the 1970s on more research was carried out and now we know that [there were] not as many, but it's still a horrific number of people who were processed for witchcraft and executed for witchcraft on both sides, Catholic and Protestant.

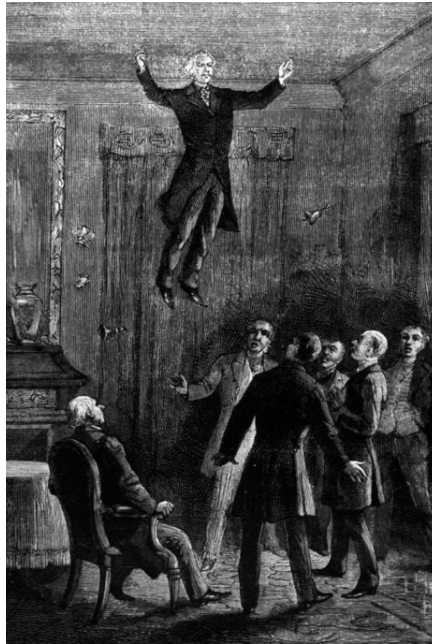
JM: And of course, that even happened here in the United States only a few centuries ago.

CE: That's right. Not too far from where I'm sitting right now. One of the last witchcraft trials here in Connecticut took place in the 1690s. It's not that long ago either.

JM: That to me is the perfect archetypal example of what is meant by a paradigm and a change in paradigms, where we used to execute people for witchcraft, [but] today the mainstream paradigm is that witchcraft doesn't really exist.



Contemporary illustration of one of Daniel
Dun­glas Home's levitations, the most
celebrated medium of the 19th century



CE: Right. Well, it depends on who you're talking to. I'm teaching a course right now on the history of the supernatural and most of my students are very, very interested in witchcraft and the history of it. I think some of them are also pretty sure that there are still witches. We have Wicca here in North America, which views itself as a continuation of an ancient tradition of witchcraft. Benevolent witchcraft, not malevolent witchcraft.

JM: Still though, when it comes to witches flying on broomsticks, I would say even parapsychologists such as myself have trouble with that idea.

CE: Right. Well, even at that time, let's say beginning in the late 15th century, but especially 16th and going into the 17th century, there were skeptics. There was a Lutheran writer who was among the first to say, "Well, you know, these women that we're dragging in as witches who claim that they can fly are just very confused, lonely, perhaps mentally ill women who put ointments on their skin and hallucinate and think they're flying." So there were skeptics. But then there were also people who testified at witchcraft trials: "Oh, yeah, she's definitely a witch. I saw her up in the air. I saw her flying."

You talk about paradigm shifts, one of the funniest moments in legal history in England is from the 18th century where a woman is up for trial for witchcraft and an eyewitness brought forth testimony: "I've seen her up in the air. She's a witch." The judge's legal decision was, "There is no law against flying." So, yes, there have been skeptics for

quite some time. Flying witches come out as images for Halloween. But yeah, that's about it.

JM: You point out that the spiritualists also took a big interest in flying. They're the ones who coined the term levitation, which is pretty much in modern use now. You point out that there are some very well-attested accounts of spiritualist mediums levitating.

CE: Right. One of the most famous ones in the 19th century was Daniel Dun­glas Home, who was a Scotsman, but actually came here to the United States. One of his most famous levitations took place here in South Manchester, Connecticut. But then he went back to Europe and other famous levitations of his took place in London and other places in England. There were many who believed that these levitations were absolutely real.

It's hard to do research on levitation before the 19th century precisely because the term didn't exist. When you do a word search you can't look for levitation. Another term that was invented by spiritualists was telepathy, another term that didn't exist till the 19th century. The spiritualists, not all of them, but many took an interest in having a scientific approach to psychic phenomena, as you well know. There were some very serious individuals, serious in the sense that we regard them as luminaries: Thomas Alva Edison, Arthur Conan Doyle, just for starters, two people. Mary Todd Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln's wife, had spiritualist seances in the White House. So it's not just simple-minded people who were caught up in all this.



JM: I seem to recall that in one of those seances it said that Lincoln attended and a piano levitated.

CE: I never heard that. I didn't run into it, but I wish I had. It would be in the book. But yeah, levitating furniture was another spiritualist phenomenon.

JM: Many, many reports of table levitations witnessed by Nobel laureate scientists like Pierre Curie, for example.

CE: That's right. He and his wife Marie Curie were also very much into it. A levitating piano is very impressive.

JM: It certainly is. I even seem to recall somebody telling me that Lincoln may have been sitting on top of the piano when it levitated.

CE: I've seen an illustration from the 19th century of several men sitting on the piano and the piano is levitating with the men on top of it. I think that once the term came into existence, levitation, it no longer applied necessarily to religion, whereas before it had in some way. The spiritualists kind of took the religion dimension out of it. It was just a phenomenon that involved another dimension, not necessarily a god or a devil.

JM: Yes, it was the action of spirits.

CE: Right. So we're still in another realm, another dimension, crossing over into this dimension. But there's no longer any attempt to attribute it to a divine source or an angelic source, because the devil is a fallen angel.

JM: This was the big concern, of course, in the 16th century.

CE: Yes, because there's this continual fear that anyone whose body levitates or whose body can be in two places at the same time is definitely either in league with God or the devil. So actually, when you think about it, in the 16th and 17th century, there was kind of a moral dimension to these phenomena, because for Catholics, really holy people, people who had given their will over to God completely could levitate. But so could people with really bad wills who had given themselves over to the devil. With Protestants, it was only people who had given themselves over to the devil. There was no gray area, there was no middle ground. You were either good or bad. Which is why when Saint Teresa started to levitate when she was in her 40s, and she was the superior in a convent full of nuns, she ordered them, "Next time you see me going up, try to hold me down. And if I go up, please pull me down. I want these things to stop."

We have these very, very funny accounts. They are hilarious if you look at them from a certain perspective, you know, six or seven nuns trying to pull down their superior. We have the same kind of accounts from Puritans in Boston, trying to pull down a demonically possessed teenage girl and being unable to do so. But the reason Saint Teresa asked her nuns to hold her down and also kept praying to God, please stop doing this to me, is that she didn't want to attract attention as a levitator because she knew that was nothing but trouble. She claims that her levitations stopped, that God granted her wishes, heard her prayers, and the levitation stopped. But as it turns out, in a letter she wrote later in life, she was admitting to someone,



“My levitations have returned.” But by then she had been cleared almost completely by the Inquisition.

JM: They were very concerned, I think, from your book, that she wasn't involved in an egotistical way with these, that she wasn't trying to present herself as a miracle worker of any kind or even a saintly person.

CE: That's right. Humility was the highest of all virtues for medieval sainthood, and it continued to be the primary virtue in the early modern period. Still to this day, beginning since the 18th century, in the process of canonizing someone as a saint, the Catholic Church values heroic virtue more than healing miracles or levitation or bilocation or any of these other physical phenomena of mystical ecstasy. Among those virtues humility is still top of the list.

JM: You use the term “mystical ecstasy.” I think it's crucial, particularly in the case of Saint Teresa, because it's not just that she levitated, it's that the levitations were accompanied by a series of altered states of consciousness that could be referred to as different forms of ecstasy.

CE: Yes. As a matter of fact, not in every case, but in most cases, it's more correct to say that the levitations are a byproduct of a mystical ecstasy. In her case and in many others, including the greatest levitator of all, Joseph of Cupertino, this is how things happened, and how it was witnessed by others who were in the room when it happened.

The person, let's say Saint Teresa, let's stick with her, goes into a cataleptic seizure, which means her body freezes in whatever position she was in. Standing, kneeling, sitting, whatever, the



body just stiffens up, and the body loses all sensation. In many cases, those around them come and test them, pricking the person with needles, putting candles up to their eyes to see if they blink. There's no response. They're just totally frozen. Then comes the levitation. In some cases, again, you can laugh if you read it from a certain perspective, but it's nothing to laugh at if you're the person to whom it's happening. Because when the body is levitating, sometimes those who are witnessing it start playing with the body, like blowing on it, because it's kind of nearly weightless. We have descriptions of these levitating saints being blown on and the body drifting to the other end of the room. So if they're not trying to pull you down, they're blowing on you. You're experiencing a cataleptic seizure, it's a medical term, during which you lose all sensation and you're having a mystical experience that is a very close encounter with God, with the divinity.

In the case of some of these levitators, it's very interesting. It's not just their bodies that stiffen up, their clothing stiffens up too and the wrinkles don't move. Even if the levitator is moving from, let's say, place A to place B, there's no flowing of the garments. It's like the levitator is encased in a kind of dimensional bubble. I got an email from a scientist in Wales who has read my book. He was very excited by this fact. He says, “I love this fact because here's my theory about levitation.” He said that lev-





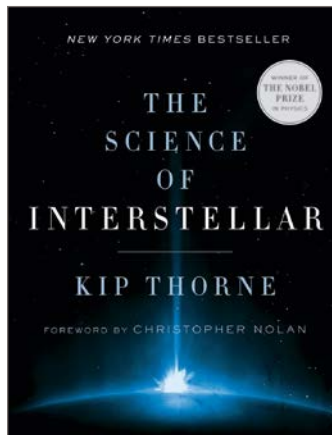
itation is outside of time-space. So, yes, gravitation doesn't apply to this person or what they're wearing because they are literally outside of time-space. For them, while they're levitating, time does not pass. I immediately thought of the movie *Interstellar*. I don't know if you've seen it?

JM: I'm aware of the movie.

CE: In the movie they put Einstein's theory of relativity to work in the storyline. These people who are on another planet are not aging, but every few minutes is like a year on Earth. That's what this scientist said is happening to these levitators.

JM: Which would explain why the clothing wouldn't move at all. It's as if they're frozen in a moment of time.

CE: That's right. And many of them, when they come back from their ecstasy, which sometimes lasts hours, they pick up exactly where they left off, especially Joseph of Cupertino. If he was saying Mass, sometimes he levitated for hours. As soon as he came back down, literally down, he would pick up in the Mass reading whatever it was he was reading with the next word,



which is also true of other levitators I read about. They seem to have no sense that time has elapsed.

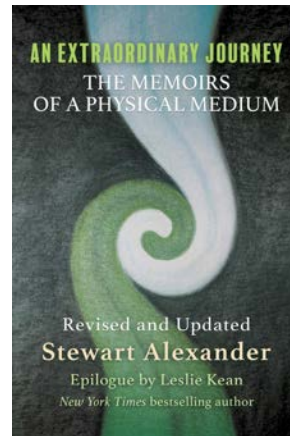
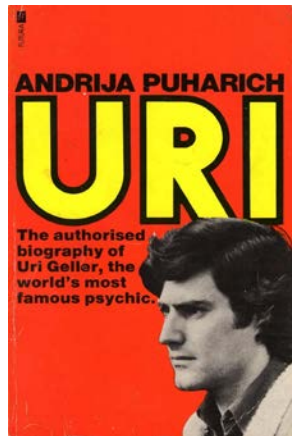
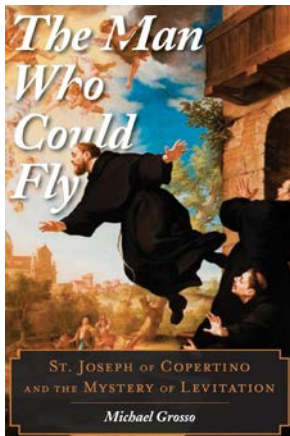
JM: Joseph is a very interesting case. I've done a separate interview just on that case with Michael Grosso, who's written a book about him. He pointed out that the church was very reluctant to grant sainthood to this man because his austerities were so severe that he smelled awful.

CE: Well, I didn't read any descriptions of his smell by anyone, but many of these saints performed great feats of self-denial that we might call self-abuse. There's no getting around that. But the case of Joseph—it didn't take all that long, relatively speaking, for him to be canonized—but there was resistance, there was drag on the case because he was too much. He was just simply too much. As I'm sure Michael Grosso pointed out to you, because he does in his book, the church authorities kept sending him to ever more remote locations. The last 10 years of his life he ended up living basically like a prisoner. He could only come out once a week from his cell in his monastery, only once a week. The rest of the time he had to be by himself because he was too much of a distraction for everybody else.

JM: Crowds of people would come to see him.

CE: Oh yeah. That's why the last place they sent him to was so remote that it was very hard for crowds to come. In one place the crowds actually made holes in the roof and holes in the walls of the monastery chapel just so they could see him. A little tent city was





Uri Geller who was said to have teleported from Manhattan into the home of Andrija Puharich in Ossining, New York, around 30 miles away.

created outside the monastery. This is why I take it seriously. These things don't happen, you don't get these testimonies if there isn't something going on. I know that Michael Grosso is a firm believer in the reality of Joseph's levitations. He also spends time in his book talking about this kind of trans-dimensional bubble that encases Joseph and other levitators.

For me as a historian, it's the abundance of testimonies and testimonies of levitations that would have been impossible to fake, because there were plenty of fakers. We have illusionists in Las Vegas and other places who are on stage and they're levitating, right? They've got wires and ropes and pulleys and stuff. For dozens of people to say, "Yes, this man just suddenly went up into a tree and stayed up there. He finally came out of his ecstasy and we had to get a ladder to bring him down." Unless everyone is lying, that is something that most probably did happen. You kind of have to assume a lot to say everyone is lying. Hundreds of people are lying. Or in some cases, thousands of people are lying. That also takes a leap of faith to believe that everyone could lie so successfully.

JM: In addition to flying or levitation, there are several related phenomena. You write about bilocation. I would also use the term teleportation. I think you have a different term for it in your book. But there was a famous recent case with the psychic

CE: I didn't know about this. I read an article very recently about Uri Geller who had moved back to Israel. He's one who has baffled audiences with public performances of his ability to bend spoons and forks and stuff on Johnny Carson.

JM: Sure. Many people think he's an obvious fake. I was involved, actually, Carlos, in producing his first major public appearance in the United States back in the 1970s at Zellerbach Auditorium in Berkeley, on the campus. So I've been following his career closely. The example of the teleportation was not a stage trick. It happened spontaneously and was attested to by other individuals whom I know and trust.

CE: Again, I get asked all the time, now that this book is out, why is it that we don't have these events happening in our day and age? My response is we probably don't hear about them. They remain within a close circle of people but they don't make it to the evening news. A case in point of how the news doesn't always report what is happening. After I finished writing the book I found out about an event that took place in the 1970s in Cairo, Egypt, of all places. For two years, every day, thousands and thousands of people saw an apparition of the Virgin Mary on the roof of a church in a suburb of Cairo.



JM: Zeitoun, if I recall.

CE: Yes, Zeitoun. I was alive in the 1970s. I didn't read a word or hear a word about this, and it went on for two years. Over a million people, supposedly, total.

JM: We've covered that on the *New Thinking Allowed* channel on YouTube. I think I've had discussions of Uri Geller's teleportation. And I have an interview with Stewart Alexander, a physical medium in the north of England, who has reported levitating during his seances. To my knowledge, these things still do occur, but they are rare. They are certainly not as common as apparently was the case in the 16th and 17th century, where you report numerous examples.

CE: Yeah. Actually, I say this all the time, and I don't mean it in a joking fashion, but the 16th and 17th century were the peak period for flying humans, at least in Western history. Because you've got saints levitating in the Catholic world, and you've got witches levitating and flying everywhere, just about. It doesn't matter if it's Catholic or Protestant territory. Then the numbers start to diminish. Here at the present time, things are different.

Someone else I found out about towards the end of my research, and she's only mentioned briefly in my book, is this French nun, Yvonne-Aimée de Malestroit, born 1901, died in 1951. Hundreds of bilocations, well documented, including bilocations to prisoners during the Nazi occupation of France. She ended up getting five of the highest medals any French person can get. Two of those

medals were pinned on her by Charles de Gaulle. Because in addition to the bilocations, she rescued resistance fighters and downed allied pilots [and] dressed them as nuns to get them out of France. So there are these two sides to her story. There is the supernatural side and then there's the very earthly side. Within my lifetime, because I was born in 1950, it's plausible that if my parents had taken me to France as a baby, I could have been in the same room with this woman. Or maybe she could have bilocated to Havana where I grew up.

JM: You point out in your book that bilocation is more difficult to establish than flying or levitation because you need witnesses at both ends. It's not enough to trust the testimony of one person.

CE: That's right. In courtroom lingo, it's a "he said, she said" kind of situation. A person in place A claims this person never left. A person in place B says, oh, all of a sudden this person showed up. And it takes time for the coordination to convince people. However, I did find one case. I don't mention it in the book, but there's one case of somebody who supposedly bilocated within like a two or three block distance. People ran back and forth,



Apparition of Our Lady of Zeitoun in the evening of April 2, 1968

Lady in Blue Sculpture in San Angelo, Texas,
sculpted by Vic Payne of Cody, Wyoming



back and forth, and actually saw them in place A and place B, which is unique. But I couldn't trust the testimony, so I didn't include it in the book.

JM: You do write about a case of a woman who apparently bilocated thousands of miles away from Europe into North America or Central America and was preaching to the natives.

CE: Yes, that's Sor María de Ágreda, who incidentally has not been canonized. She lived at the same time as Joseph of Cupertino in the 17th century. While in ecstasy in her convent in Spain and while levitating in ecstasy, she also appeared in present day Texas and New Mexico, reportedly over 500 times to try to Christianize the natives in that area. You're in Albuquerque, right?

JM: I am.

CE: The Lady in Blue is a huge folklore legend in the southwest. I think the area where she went to do mission work with the Jumano people is now in west Texas rather than New Mexico. But I don't know the geography there that well. But a student of mine happened to be traveling through San Angelo, Texas, last year and sent me this remarkable photo. They've erected a very large statue of Sor María de Ágreda, the Lady in Blue, in San Angelo, Texas. Go figure. It took 400 some years, but she got a statue.

JM: The idea being that these Native Americans were being converted to Christianity by what one

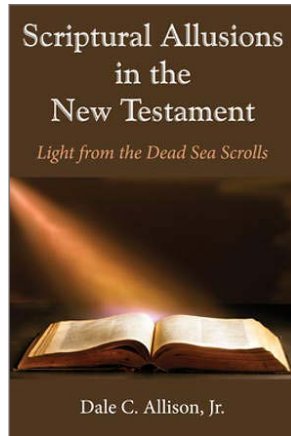
might think of as an apparition of a nun in Europe somewhere.

CE: Right. She didn't know, when she was asked by the Inquisition, how this happened. She said, "I don't know. I just know I was there." So they asked her very common sense questions like, "Could you feel the rain if it was raining? Could you feel the temperature?" And she would say, "Yes, I did. But

I'm telling you, I don't know how this happens. All I know is that I go there." So then the other common sense question is, "Well, how did you speak to these people? You don't know their language. They don't know our language." She said, "I don't know. All I know is we talked to each other." And supposedly—I haven't seen it with my own eyes, but I've seen photographs—back in her convent in Spain they have pieces of cloth that she embroidered depicting the animals and the plants that she saw in New Mexico. I'm no expert on the flora and fauna of New Mexico, so I don't know, but they're very interesting looking.

JM: I gather there are still communities of people pushing for her to be canonized as a saint.

CE: Definitely, because she also took notes when the Virgin Mary appeared to her. The Virgin Mary dictated her life to Sor María and she wrote it all down. People might think my book is long, but her life of the Virgin Mary is a million words long. So that's another reason that her canonization process has gotten mired down, because that's a huge claim to make. That created problems for her and for her canonization.



JM: I would think that the people who are in charge of preserving the Catholic doctrine in its present form are very suspicious of anything that might involve changes to the doctrine.

CE: That's right. Well, I'll back up one step. The Catholic Church is so old and has had to deal with so many different phenomena that there's actually—this is a teaching of the Catholic Church—there is such a thing as a “private revelation,” which Catholics are not obligated to believe. It has question marks hanging over it. “Well, it's possible, but you don't have to believe it.” That's how her book is viewed. But yeah, they have to be careful, because there are things in her book that don't appear in the Bible, and there are things that don't appear in any other early Christian documents. So if you view it from the perspective of authorship, only that, she is placing herself right alongside the authors of the Gospels, of the New Testament. That's a huge claim. That's a very huge claim.

JM: Let's talk for a moment about your situation as a professor of history at one of America's great universities. I have to assume that modernist culture, meaning materialism, dominates most history departments. For you to even write about this subject as if there might be something to it places you in an awkward position. Am I wrong about that?

CE: No, you're not wrong, but there are other like-minded individuals in my profession, historians. It's not a wavelength, we just agree that although many of these phenomena cannot be proven to have taken place, especially in the distant past, one should not discount the possibility that such things happened, primarily because of the testimonies it should not be discounted. The most simple and sort of functionalist approach to these miracles is, yeah, these people believed it. But there are some of us who go beyond that and say more than, okay, fine, people thought it was a fact, but maybe there's more. Maybe it is a fact. Maybe this is all true.

There are a number of individuals, scholars, well-respected scholars, too. Dale Allison, who's a New Testament scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary, has published a book recently that is mostly first-person accounts of individuals in the 20th and 21st century who have had spiritual otherworldly experiences. He's brave enough to do that, including some of his own experiences. But there is a pushback now against what many of the like-minded people I know call dogmatic materialism, which is the assumption that all there is is the material world, there's nothing else. We can't say anything about anything that is not part of the material world in the sense that it follows the laws of nature as we understand them now. But for heaven's sake, I can say that I have a son who levitated for two years because he spent two years in Japan and rode the electromagnetic levitating train frequently.

JM: That's a fact and it's an interesting argument, but then it suggests that there must be a material cause, electromagnetism or something, to explain these levitations.





NOVA article about the findings of theoretical physicists Zohar Ringel and Dmitry Kovrizhin from the University of Oxford and the Hebrew University in Israel

CE: You're absolutely right. What I can add to that is just the fact that there is some kind of material law of nature involved. That's not to say that there isn't another dimension, because many scholars, not so much historians, but scholars of religion and non-scholars, including scientists, argue that there are other dimensions. There are serious astrophysicists, as you well know, who say that we live in a multiverse and that there are all these other dimensions that sometimes interact with each other. I was very, very happy to see, I think it was last year or the year before, a team of scientists at Caltech and Cambridge in England, two separate teams doing an experiment to see if we live in a simulation. Their finding was, no, we don't live in a simulation. But they're taking the possibility seriously. Maybe we're all like the film *The Matrix*.

JM: I wasn't even aware of the possibility of testing that hypothesis.

CE: Well, I don't know what they did to prove or disprove, but they announced their findings.

JM: It's heartening what you're suggesting, that the pushback against hardcore materialism is finding some inroads in academia.

CE: It is, and I have been amazed, honestly. Now, maybe the other shoe has not dropped yet, because my book has only been out for a couple of months, and the other shoe will inevitably drop. I'll get the pushback. I'll get ridiculed, for sure. But all I'm saying is, OK, modern science is based on skepticism about anything otherworldly. Francis Bacon, one of the early scientists in Western history, said if you begin with certainties you will end with doubts.



But if you begin with doubts, you will end with certainty. That was his description of the scientific process. All I'm saying is [that] I can't prove these things happen. And I'm not necessarily saying that they did happen exactly as described. All I'm saying is, be skeptical about dogmatic materialism because there are many things we still don't understand. If you go to the subatomic level and the cosmic level, the deeper you go in either direction, the less we know and the more puzzling that reality seems to everyone, to the scientists. Explain that to me. Explain what happens when you go into a black hole. We don't know.

JM: I would think as a historian you're particularly aware that every age has its biases. We can look back historically and laugh at the foolishness of the way people acted and thought in different periods. The funny thing is, we imagine that we're beyond all that ourselves.

CE: That's right. That's precisely part of my argument about being skeptical about dogmatic materialism. We're all time and place bound. We're culture bound. All of us live with what social scientist Ernst Troeltsch called "social facts." A social fact is something that is believed to be a fact by your own culture and it governs your behavior because it's an assumption that can't be challenged. An example of a social fact that is still problematic to us





here in the United States: All men are created equal. Try to question that. Any way you question it, you get into trouble. But in many other societies, I think it's the majority of the world right now, that social fact does not exist. Not at all. Or the principles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Those are supposed to be social facts, but they're not in most of the world.

JM: You pointed out earlier using the metaphor of the rope and all of the different threads in the rope. At any historical period there are many different threads of different lengths so that ancient ideas are still present today, medieval ideas are present, and modern ideas are present. It's very hard to think of an era, a cultural epoch, such as the present epoch, as a single thing.

CE: That's right. It's always mixed. Even within a single individual you've got all kinds of mixtures. Many of us, and I speak of "us" saying "we." Anyone who's alive on Earth today at this time, anyone can have beliefs that they're not 100% certain about, and customs that they feel they're being strangled by but they can't break free from because they're from long ago. [There are] ideas that cause people to erupt into violence against each other because of the disagreement, one being the old idea and the other being the new idea. So, we all live with a great degree of uncertainty about ultimate truths.

JM: I'd like to go back to the story that we began our interview with, the double levitation of Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa together, and the profound impact it had on you just learning about that story while you were in the room where it is said to have happened. The intriguing thing about it, of course, is that it happened to two people simultaneously who were both, one has to assume, they brought each other into a state of ecstasy with their conversation.

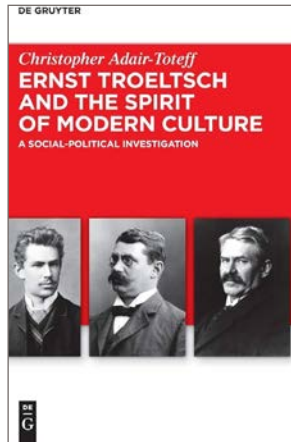
CE: Yes, and it was the conversation that did it. That's the way the story has been told since it was first reported. They met right there at that spot on a feast, Trinity Sunday. It's once a year in the Catholic Church [in] early summer. They were discussing the Trinity and all of a sudden, boom, they're up in the air. According to the reports, John of the Cross was sitting on a chair. And again, that freezing, the chair went up with him. He was suspended in mid-air sitting on a chair. He was not holding it. He was just sitting on it. This happened sometime between 1572 and 1574. That's the closest we can come to dating the event. But they had this impact on each other. I have found very, very few instances of two people bilocating at the same time or two people levitating at the same time.

JM: It suggests the possibility that through conversation people can bring each other into these exalted states of consciousness where miraculous things of this sort can happen.

CE: It certainly does suggest that, I think. I have never seen anyone levitate. I have never seen anyone bilocate either. But I can see the possibility of two people simultaneously going into a kind of



mystical ecstasy that involves levitation. I can't prove that the incident related to me back in 1983 happened. But I can say this, it happened to me. It had an effect on me.



JM: You're today the author of this book as a result of having heard that story 40 years ago.

CE: That's right. And being there on the spot, that was very important to me. That was part of my cognitive enlightenment that I was in that spot, in that room, which is not very large.

JM: I gather they were in separate rooms, really. They had a little grid and a hole in the wall that they could communicate through.

CE: Yeah, because the nuns were not supposed to go into the outside world. The way I've described it in the past few weeks to audiences, it's like a prison visit. The nuns have basically imprisoned themselves. Their visitors have to see them through a little opening, a window with bars on it. That's the really cruel part of it, is that there's a bar. There are bars separating the nuns from the outside world. The place is still there and looks pretty much the same.

JM: I would imagine if I were Saint John of the Cross or Saint Teresa at that moment, it would have felt like there was no separation between the two of them.

CE: Well, that's the important thing. I used the

word cruel before. There's cruelty involved in that metal grill. But those women there at that time had all chosen this. They wanted to live like that because the world was too scary a place, too frightening a place.

JM: I gather that's where we get the idea of penitence. The penitentiary is from these monastic traditions.

CE: Yes. Actually I know someone, a former student of mine, who is now writing a book on the history of solitary confinement. He traces it to the monastic tradition.

JM: I had the same thought in my days as a graduate student of criminology. As a matter of fact, that was a project I contemplated undertaking myself, the study of solitary confinement.

CE: Joseph of Cupertino, the last ten years of his life were solitary confinement, except for one day a week during Mass. I think it wasn't the entire day, he didn't have all Sunday. He just could go to Mass with his brothers. That was it.

JM: In that situation I gather that the rules of monasticism are that you have to obey your superiors, which is part of the humility that's required. So I assume he gladly went along with these restrictions.

CE: Oh yeah. The accounts are that he not only went along with these restrictions, but that as he kept being moved from place to place, every time he was moved was a total surprise. Someone just showed up and said, okay, time to go. In one case he left his eyeglasses and his shoes behind, because

they moved him out so quickly. He never cared to retrieve his glasses or his shoes.

JM: It's an amazing story, Saint Teresa and Saint Joseph. In your book you list dozens of other saints who have been reported to levitate or fly.

CE: Yes, I do. I also have a whole section of the book on frauds who were unmasked, because I think that's a very important part of the story that makes the ones that were deemed to be genuine levitators, it makes their case more believable because the frauds who were discovered show that there was a process in place for ferreting out the fakers.

JM: I'm under the impression that the high church officials who had to end up approving the eventual canonization of these individuals were very reluctant to allow themselves to be put into a position of endorsing a fraud.

CE: That's right. That was a constant concern. It is during this time period that the Catholic Church creates the office of the so-called Devil's Advocate, the official in the canonization process whose job it is to raise doubts, to cast doubts, to investigate, to bring in as many skeptics as possible to make sure that there's no fakery going on.

JM: I know in Michael Grosso's book about the case of Saint Joseph of Cupertino, he talks about the rules that had been set out for investigation by the, I guess there was a cardinal in charge of it all. He says even by today's modern standards in parapsychology and physical research, their investigation procedures were very thorough and competent.

CE: They were. The frauds who were uncovered are the proof. In a scientific experiment you've got a control. They're the control. They let you see that this process was actually very, very carefully thought out and usually very conscientiously carried out. Some people made it through. There are many who didn't. There are some who we have reports about but have never been investigated. There's at least a half a dozen Mexican nuns who also claimed to bilocate to faraway places, and they have not received any attention. So we don't know if they would have ever been deemed genuine or not. Now it's too late because too much time has elapsed.

JM: I think the lesson is for people, if they hear of contemporary reports, to at least be open-minded that they might be worthy of serious investigation.

CE: Yeah, I would say so. I agree. I'm always ready to be surprised.

JM: Well, Carlos Eire, it's been a joy to have this conversation with you. I have to commend you on a wonderful, very thoroughly written book, and I highly recommend it to our viewers.

CE: Thank you. Thanks for having me on the show.

JM: It's been a real pleasure. And for those of you watching or listening, thank you for being with us. You are the reason that we are here.

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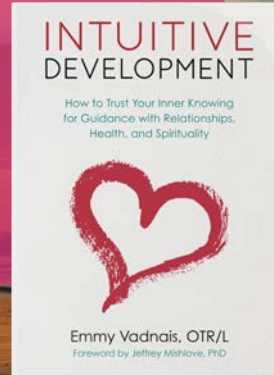


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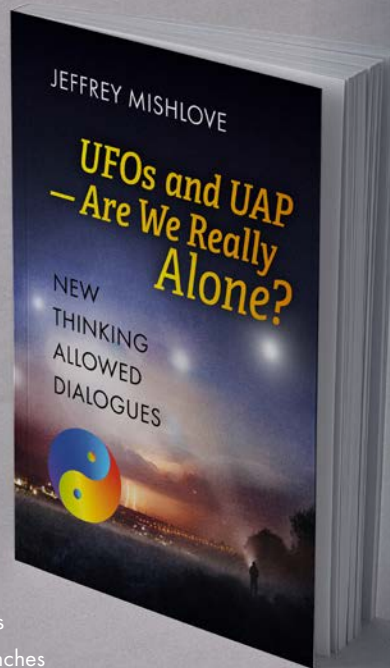
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In this anthology titled *UFOs and UAP: Are we Really Alone?* Jeffrey Mishlove explores the increasingly compelling subject of Unidentified Flying Objects, or as it's now termed by NASA, "Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena." The book features scientists, historians, and researchers in the genre both past and present, such as Jacques Vallée, Nick Cook, Ralph Blumenthal, John E. Mack, Charles Upton, Whitley Strieber, Daz Smith, Jeffrey Kripal, Greg Bishop, Daniel Sheehan, and a Preface by Bob Davis, Ph.D.





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Emmy Vadnais

Emmy Vadnais, OTR/L, CoHost of *New Thinking Allowed*, has been a Licensed Occupational Therapist for nearly 30 years and is an Intuitive Healer and Health Coach. Her career focuses on holistic and integrative health, addressing the whole person—mind, body, and spirit.

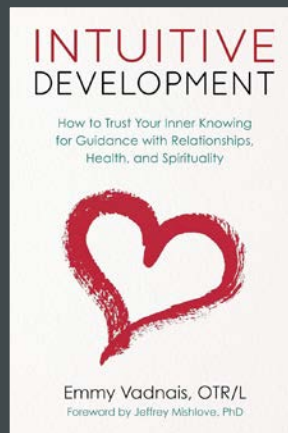
At the Three Rivers Crossing Center for Qigong School in St. Paul, MN, Emmy trained in medical qigong energy healing. She learned to cultivate and move qi (energy or life force) within her body, provide qi emission (non-touch energy healing), and guide others in harnessing and managing their own energy for health and wellness. Meditation and intuition were her primary tools, strengthened by years of guidance from an intuitive spiritual teacher.

From 2003–2005, Emmy provided care as an Integrative Medicine Practitioner at Abbott Northwestern Hospital and the Penny George Institute for Health and Healing in Minneapolis. There, she was trained in guided imagery, a form of mind-body medicine. Emmy led patients in guided imagery and meditation across all units and at the outpatient center. She also provided massage therapy, reflexology and

qigong energy healing, which patients reported significantly reduced their pain, stress, anxiety, and recovered more quickly with less medication.

Emmy has created several meditations for *New Thinking Allowed*. Jeffrey Mishlove, Host and Producer of *New Thinking Allowed*, invited her to develop a tonglen meditation as a beginning of the Intention Project, aimed at alleviating violence and suffering. In the Tibetan language, tonglen means “to give and receive.” Emmy and Jeff discuss the **Tonglen – Giving and Receiving Meditation** (youtu.be/QoBpjoGFISQ) in the **Introduction to Tonglen Meditation** (youtu.be/WP8t_qROxjY), designed to connect individuals to compassion and transform suffering into love and connection.

Emmy offers holistic and integrative healthcare, intuitive development coaching, healing sessions, classes, consulting to individuals and organizations, as well continuing education to healthcare practitioners. She is author of *Intuitive Development: How to Trust Your Inner Knowing for Guidance with Relationships, Health, and Spirituality*. Emmy is the founder and director of the Holistic OT Community at HolisticOT.org supporting occupational therapists in integrative health, wellness, and prevention.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

Published to YouTube on Jan 16, 2024

INTRODUCTION TO TONGLLEN MEDITATION

JM: Hello, and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today I'm going to be with my CoHost, Emmy Vadnais, and we're going to introduce the meditation that is also being released today, the Tonglen Meditation. Emmy, as many of you may know, lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, and now I'm going to switch over to the internet video. Welcome, Emmy. What a pleasure to be with you.

EV: It's a joy always to be with you, Jeff. Thanks for having me.

JM: We'll be talking about the Tonglen Meditation that you created, and I suppose I'll give credit where credit is due to begin with. I believe it's a Buddhist meditation and it was recommended to me by a *New Thinking Allowed* viewer named Jim Roach, who I met at the Near-Death Association meeting last summer in Washington, DC.

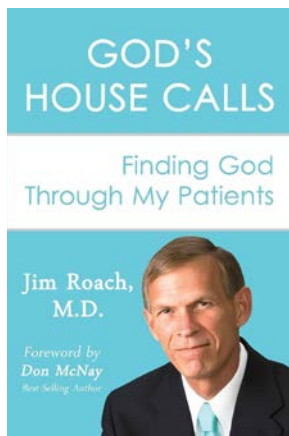
EV: Yes, and this was a dovetail with a project that we are exploring as well.

JM: It is, because when I met Jim Roach on that occasion I was talking about an idea that I have expressed previously to the viewers on this channel that we could begin to work with our viewing audience to develop a focused attention. At the time

my focus was reducing gun violence. It's probably useful to say right off the bat that the meditation never even mentions gun violence, which I think for our present purposes is just fine. I view this Tonglen Meditation as a basic introduction before people get into even more specific approaches. I understand you were already familiar with this style of meditation.

EV: I am familiar with it. *Tonglen* means sending and receiving, or giving and receiving, in the Tibetan language. It's a way for us to help others reduce their suffering. At the same time, true to its name, when you practice this, not only are you helping others reduce their suffering, you're doing the same within yourself. Initially you're cultivating a sense of loving kindness and compassion, care, attention, and really acceptance of another individual or group. The way that I designed this

particular meditation is that you do that with yourself first so that you can get some practice because most people, in my experience—and I have definitely been in this camp and it's improved tremendously in the last few years—but most people have a very difficult time being present with themselves without judging themselves or being harsh or critical. We need some of that because we want to strive to be better people in most



cases. But a lot of times people are feeling shame or guilt from maybe some past unresolved trauma or grief or a way they view themselves. So I began this, where people can first turn toward themselves with a compassionate heart and then get a feel for that to then, in turn, do that with others.

JM: That's so important. I know for a long time, going back to the early *In Presence* monologues, I have been encouraging people to practice the art of loving themselves unconditionally, which means no matter what anybody else ever said or did or felt or thought with regard to you and no matter how you say, speak, feel, think or act with regard to yourself.

EV: As you know, we tend to judge others to the level that we can judge ourselves. So if we're not being kind and loving toward ourselves, we're not going to be kind and loving to others, hence the world we live in. Which is why you want to embark on this project of decreasing violence toward ourselves and violence toward others. When we can be more kind to ourselves, we can be more kind to others. Of course, if those listening have done something that you maybe have felt shame about or guilt, if there's something that you need to forgive yourself about or make amends or right a situation in some ways, absolutely listen to that. It doesn't necessarily mean that you always accept everything you did per se, although that can come in time, but to accept your feelings and emotions about yourself in the context of those situations. Then over time you can be gentler with yourself. I think that's how we've gotten into this place with negativity, being unkind and all the way to violence because people can feel very separate and alone. I do think that love and compassion may be the most unifying



aspect of our consciousness. As we practice this, I think most people will discover that they can feel a greater sense of that connection.

JM: Then the meditation goes on—after one has established a peaceful inner center, a loving compassionate sense of oneself—it goes on to incorporate mentally the pain of the world or the pain of another person. I know for some people they may not feel ready to do that. For some people this may be a step too far. I think I would encourage any viewer who feels that way, if you're not ready, even in a meditative practice, to try to heal the pain that's outside of yourself, then don't. Listen to your intuition and wait until another day.

EV: Right. The meditation is initially cultivating that sense of loving kindness, then directing it toward yourself. Then selecting, if you wish, someone else, a person, a group, a community, or maybe all beings everywhere, select whomever you'd like to focus on, and you can send healing energy toward them or you can bring their suffering into you. That's why it's good to have done those other phases initially so that you feel that you are in a state to really transmute that suffering, to allow it to dissipate so that you're not really bringing it into yourself and that you will stay there. You are being a catalyst for it to transform, moving from suffering to compassion, really.



JM: That's the key. It seems to me when enough people begin to engage in such a practice, the world can change.

EV: Absolutely. It's interesting because when I first started learning energy healing, we were taught to keep your aura separate from other people's auras or energy fields and to be really careful that you didn't take in any of their "negativity." However, and I think that you know this, Jeff, better or just as much as other people who have been in this field as you have for so many years, that we're all really feeling each other all the time but we may not fully recognize it. That's an interesting question of what is mine and what is somebody else's really because we all are interconnected. By assisting others we are helping others, but we're also helping ourselves in the same process.

JM: That's the essence, I think, of the meditation practice.

EV: So, Jeff, you have listened to it with me today. How was it for you listening to that meditation?

JM: Well, frankly, it was wonderful. You did a fabulous job creating the meditation, but the experience of it for me was exactly what I was aiming for in being able to offer it to our viewers. My feeling is that I would like our viewers, those who are in-

terested, to practice it on a regular basis. I consider it a foundational exercise. I'm pretty sure that the more that people practice this Tonglen Meditation the more they will be able to experience compassion for themselves, unconditional love for themselves, and the more they'll be able to function as a healer of the world.

EV: I love that. Well, I believe you're a healer of the world, Jeff. I know, having listened to your *In Presence* monologues and the various presentations you've given over time, that you have been practicing this on your own. I believe you've even mentioned that when you can't sleep at night, sometimes you will naturally slip into this form of meditation.

JM: I didn't know about Tonglen meditation myself until several months ago when Jim Roach suggested it as a possibility for something we would do on the *New Thinking Allowed* channel. But I've always felt that anybody who is seriously on a spiritual path will discover that natural healing ability is part of the path. If you're on a mystical, spiritual journey, healing will sooner or later become part of it. So, I've often done that. As you say, if I'm awake in the middle of the night, I'll think: "Well, who can I send healing to now?"

But the Tonglen meditation is a little different than just sending healing. It's incorporating the pain of a person or the pain of the universe, their suffering, into you and healing and transmuting it essentially within yourself and then sending it back out. I do think it does require that the person engaging in that practice needs to feel a strong sense of compassion for themselves to begin with. You're not going to be able to send compassion to others until you've understood how you can feel

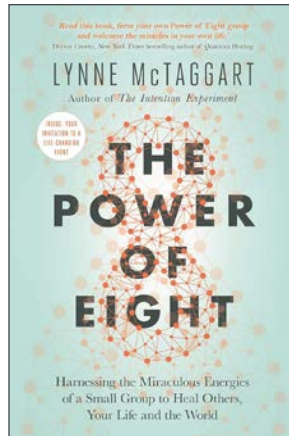


compassion for all the painful places within yourself.

EV: Right, because we tend to judge not only ourselves, but others. Compassion is really the antithesis of that. Unconditional love and unconditional acceptance is the antithesis of judgment. Of course, we need discernment. It doesn't mean that just anything goes on how people behave or treat themselves or others. But it's being able to move into that place of more understanding of ourselves and understanding of others, that people are behaving in ways, or having experiences, based on many factors and to recognize that most people or maybe everybody is really doing the best they can. Also, as you know, there are many consciousness studies and experiments that show that we can impact each other, what we perceive as the material or physical world through our thoughts, our consciousness, and our intentions.

JM: In fact, it was just a few weeks ago, as I recall, that we released your interview with Lynne McTaggart in which she described a series of many experiments, I think as many as 40, showing that individual and group intention has a measurable impact in the world at large.

EV: Right. She found that even if it was thousands of people or a small group, whether it was in real time of some type of target they were trying to impact, or if it was asynchronous, or if it was local or non-local, the effects were still consistent with how that impacted what the focus was with that intention experiment. I think it's very beautiful, Jeff, that you are embarking on creating more of this content for *New Thinking Allowed* and for



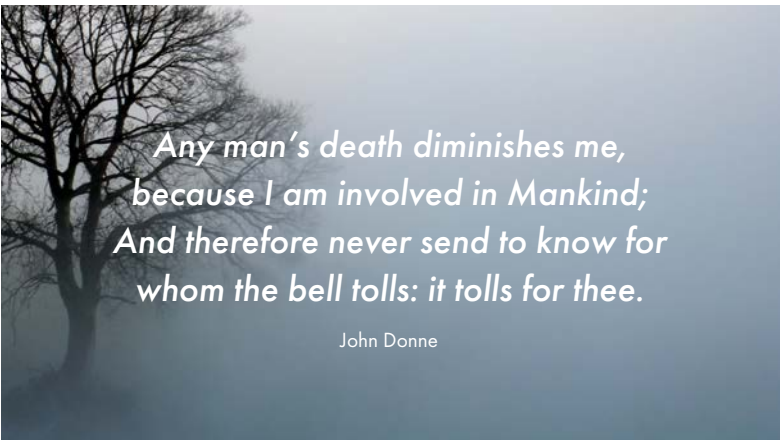
people in general, because I think a lot of people feel frustrated and sad with the direction the world is going in from our environment to the political realms, to just your own home environment or community. People want to make a difference. Sometimes people just get apathetic or frustrated or even can get more sad or depressed or start having their own anxiety of feeling like: "What's the use? How can I even make a difference?" What we're embarking on here, I think, is giving people tools and opportunities to make a difference in a positive way, not only for others' lives but your own life as well, and that you will likely feel better by embracing this.

JM: One of the things I learned long ago, back when I was a criminology student, is that people who are behaving badly in the world are actually suffering themselves. By helping to alleviate the suffering of people we might normally in our day-to-day lives not feel much affection for, we're actually helping to make a better world.

EV: Right. Again, we don't have to necessarily agree with all of their actions. Somebody might be listening and thinking: "You mean I'm supposed to feel compassion for a murderer? I'm supposed to feel compassion for a rapist?" You, yourself, who have worked with individuals who have engaged in those behaviors, you have said that they're humans just like the rest of us. Well, you can speak for what your thoughts are on that.

JM: Well, first of all, we're all interconnected. That's what quantum entanglement suggests, that every particle that was once interacting with another





*Any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in Mankind;
And therefore never send to know for
whom the bell tolls: it tolls for thee.*

John Donne

particle remains interconnected with it. Every particle was interconnected at the time of the Big Bang. So we're all interconnected with everything. That means the idea of separation is something of an illusion, a very powerful illusion, but it's been known for a long time by mystics. For example, John Donne, the Renaissance poet, famously wrote, when you hear the bell tolling, don't ask for whom it tolls. It tolls for you.

EV: Meaning that?

JM: Well, when the bell tolls for a funeral. Every time another person suffers at some deep, deep level of our own psyche, it's also suffering as a result. It's a funny thing for me to say because I think of myself as just about the happiest person I know. But nevertheless, we are all subject to the pain of the world.

EV: Right, and the more that we can heal that suffering, the pain, and support each other, the more that we may have less of those dark places in our own, I suppose you could say, collective consciousness.

JM: The reason, ultimately, that we're releasing the Tonglen Meditation video and that we're talking about it now is because I hope that from our large viewing audience of over 155,000 subscribers at

this point, we will develop a core of people who are ready, willing, and able to engage in this practice with the intention of helping on many, many levels, but eventually we'll be looking at gun violence specifically to heal the world.

EV: Beautiful. I am so grateful to embark on this journey with you, Jeff, and everybody who will be partaking with these beautiful efforts.

JM: Emmy, thank you so much for working with me to create the video and for all the many, many things you do for the *New Thinking Allowed* channel. You are an indispensable part of what we do.

EV: My pleasure, Jeff, and I am so grateful to be aligned with you and thank you for bringing out the best in me as well.

JM: For those of you who are listening or viewing this conversation, thank you for being with us because you are the reason that we are here.

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Supporting Conversations on the Leading Edge of Knowledge and Discovery with Psychologist Jeffrey Mishlove





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.org

Published to YouTube on Jan 16, 2024



TONGLEN—GIVING AND RECEIVING MEDITATION

Tonglen meditation helps you give and receive compassion to transform suffering and increase love and connection for yourself and with others. Begin by getting into a comfortable position, either seated or lying down, in an area relatively free of distractions. If you are seated, you can be in a straight-back chair, on the floor with cushions, or reclining. If you are lying down, you can rest your arms at your sides. If you are seated, you can rest your hands on your lap.

Notice how you are feeling and bring your awareness to your breath. When breathing in, allow your abdomen to expand out and your lungs to fill. When breathing out, let your abdomen come back toward your body. Breathing in, the abdomen expands, and the lungs fill. Breathing out, it comes back toward your body.

Take a few slow, gentle, deep breaths in and out. When breathing out, allow any tension or stress you may be holding in your mind or your body to simply let go. Let it melt into the earth below you. If your mind wanders, just have an “Oh, well” attitude and bring your attention back to what you are focusing on, my voice, and where your consciousness is during this meditation. Let go of trying or striving to make anything happen. Just do your best as we continue.



Continue to breathe at your own pace that is comfortable for you. Cultivate a sense of loving kindness. You can focus on your heart and the part of you that is loving, kind, and compassionate. Or you can focus on your third eye, the rhythm of your breath, or simply feel the vitality of being alive, grounded, and centered within yourself. Allow that to be cultivated and expanded.

You are also welcome to connect with any spiritual support or imagine being surrounded by the beautiful nature of the earth. Imagine yourself being supported by your own energy field within and around you—your aura—and noticing your body sensations, thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

Generate a feeling of loving kindness toward yourself. Notice the qualities about yourself you appreciate. Notice the qualities about yourself you wish to improve. Simply observe all of these parts of yourself with loving awareness. How you may be with a loved one: a child, an animal, or a pet. Bring compassion to yourself from a place of non-judgment as best you can. Imagine yourself happy, healthy, and free from suffering. Feel the warmth and love emanating from your heart.

Now imagine others in your life: friends, family, or colleagues, and notice how they have moments of feeling and being love and kindness. Notice how they have moments of suffering just like you do. You may wish to focus on a specific person, people, group or community. If there is a specific person in mind who may be going through some suffering or a difficult time, you can visualize them during this practice.

Imagine wishing them peace, joy, love, and contentment. Or send them any messages, kind feelings, or positive vibrations you wish. You may imagine these as words, feelings, or images of something soothing, nurturing, and supportive, such as seeing them receive your positive intentions in the form of a gift of light, color, flowers, a sound, or anything else you wish.



If you feel ready to do this, imagine taking in the suffering of others in an unconditionally loving state of consciousness, feeling centered and compassionate as you inhale. Your suffering will not increase by doing this. It may help you to feel the connection and understanding that others suffer as you do. It will allow your heart to open more with greater compassion and understanding. It will allow you and others to feel a connection in a place of shared love and compassion. You can imagine comforting them with a soft and nurturing hand on their shoulder, holding their hand, or giving them a hug in a warm embrace.

Inhale their suffering. Allow it to transform with your intention of love and kindness. Then exhale compassion toward them, being a witness to yourself and the other with unconditional acceptance for your and their experience.

As you practice this, your and their suffering dissolves. You can experience an ocean of connection. You may picture their pain or suffering as discordant energy, as a form of darkness or shadow, thick smoke, or a cloud. Again, breathe in the suffering, allowing it to enter your kind, caring, and compassionate heart and self. See and feel your heart and your being as a ray of light or warm, burning fire of any color you wish that can transform and transmute the pain or suffering of others and yourself.

Or you can visualize holding the suffering as you would with tender, loving care for a new child. Continue to transform the suffering. As you exhale, imagine transforming the suffering into pure white light, or any color or feeling you wish. Picture this light filling your heart with compassion and love. See and feel it, radiating warmth and healing energy.

Continue to extend your compassion. On each inhalation, continue to take in the suffering of others, or the person or being you are focusing on. On each exhalation, send out healing, compassion, and relief. Picture the light expanding beyond yourself, reaching those who are suffering, who may be feeling isolated or alone, who may feel that others do not care for them, and who feel separate from love, safety, and connection.

If you wish, you can broaden your focus to include all beings who are experiencing pain or suffering. Inhale their suffering and transform it with your care, attention, and love. Exhale compassion and envision the light spreading to them as far and wide as possible, perhaps everywhere.



TONGLEN—GIVING AND RECEIVING MEDITATION

Continue this practice for as long as it is comfortable for you. Gradually release any tension or discomfort you may be holding onto. Let any discomfort dissolve and recycle into something else that can assist you and all beings. Allow this process to be natural and effortless for you. You may even feel someone else doing this for you. We are all one in love.

You can conclude your meditation by dedicating the merit of your practice to the joy, peace, health, and well-being of mind, body, and spirit for all beings everywhere. Allow your intention, gentleness, love, and compassion to help others so they may find relief from their pain and suffering.

When you are ready, open your eyes if they were closed. Notice how you are feeling. Bring this sense of love and compassion with you through your day and your night.

Thank you for being with me. You are the reason that we are here.



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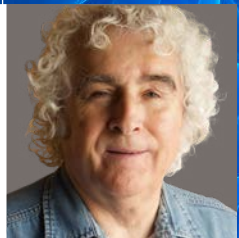
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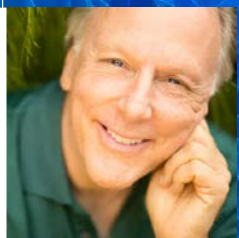
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It is amazing when you consider that all these products, made available to you at little or no cost, results from the activity of dedicated people who are largely volunteers. So, it is our intention to include features about these good souls who are generously helping to bring wisdom and knowledge into the world. We are here to serve and to learn along with you.



Elizabeth Lord

✉ friends@newthinkingallowed.com

Elizabeth Lord is on a quest for the answers about life after death and has been since childhood. In 2016, she walked into some answers to her long-held questions at the Rhine Research Center in Durham, North Carolina. A desire to write a thriller about psychometry led Elizabeth there and to the

Elizabeth Lord

discovery of just how mind-bending and amazing the study of parapsychology is, and how rich its history. During a meeting with Sally Rhine-Feather, daughter of well-known Parapsych researchers J.B. and Louisa Rhine, she suggested Elizabeth consider a book geared toward young psychics as so little has been written done in the genre about the subject. Consequently, Calliope O'Callahan, a teenage telepath, was born! Elizabeth Lord's recently released book about the adventures of Calliope with her Psy Syndicate are an educational treat for young readers and all, say critics. Currently, Elizabeth edits and writes for the Rhine Research Center (*Journal of Parapsychology*) and volunteers for the *New Thinking Allowed* Foundation as copy editor and livestream moderator over the last several years. Since 2023, Elizabeth has served as a member of the Rhine Center Board of Directors and Outreach Committee. Elizabeth is available for public speaking about parapsychology.

ISSUE #7 PREVIEW

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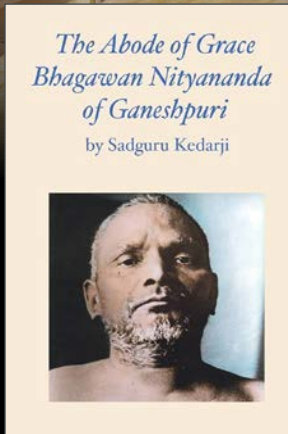
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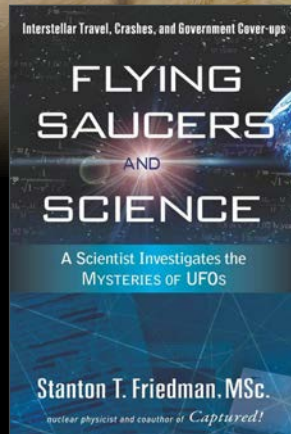
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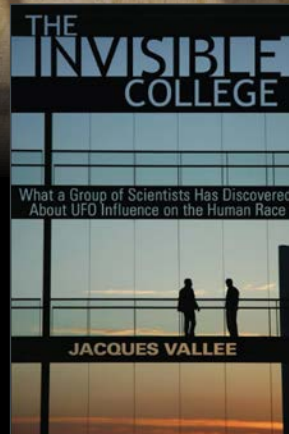
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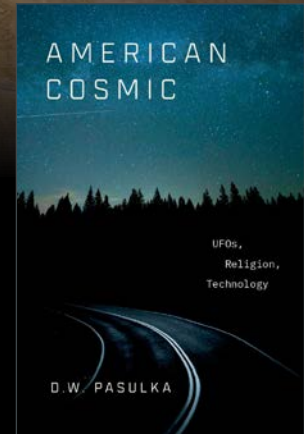
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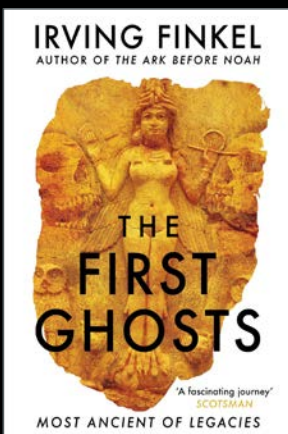
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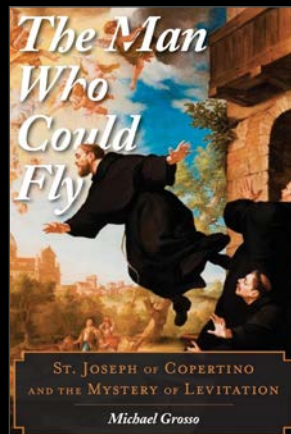
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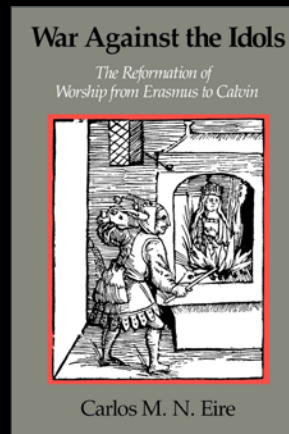
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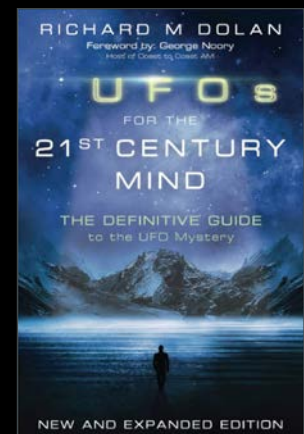
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