

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

PSI SYMPOSIUM

ANNUAL JOURNAL

FALL 1992

Richard M. Fewkes

Editor

Library of Congress Number
ISSN 0145 7896

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PREFACE

This year's issue of the Psi Symposium Annual Journal features two articles on dreams: the first by your editor, Richard Fewkes, which was given as a lecture to the Unitarian Society For Psychical Studies at the British Unitarian General Assembly in Bristol, England on April 11, 1992; and the second, a sermon by John Nichols, minister of the Unitarian Society of Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts and dated February 4, 1990. Both articles will make for good bedtime reading.

Arthur Myers, author of *The Ghostly Register* and the forthcoming *The Ghosthunters Guide*, reports on his recent visit to the Monroe Institute in Virginia. The Institute, which was founded by Robert Monroe, focuses on out-of-body journeys and other psychic explorations. Arthur is not successful in leaving his body, but he does interview a number of participants who had meaningful journeys.

The article about reincarnation by Irving Gale and dated August 1982 explores the value and significance of information derived from past life study both personal and historical. Thanks to former Psi Symposium Board Member, Rhoda Zagorsky, for submitting this article a couple of years ago. I am glad to be able to share it with our readers in this issue of the Journal.

The next article is by Charles S. Slap, former Psi Symposium Board member, and minister of the Unitarian Church in Syracuse, N.Y., who is seriously ill with AIDS. It was given as a sermon September 29, 1991 when Charles was a pulpit guest in his former church in Springfield, Mass.

The concluding article, *Vast Connections Beyond Ordinary Knowing*, by William Houff, former interim minister to the Unitarian Church in Vancouver, was given as an address at the Psi Symposium General Assembly program in Calgary, Alberta, Canada on June 27, 1992.

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PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DREAMS

, Richard M. Fewkes. Minister

The date was Oct. 27, 312 A.D. The place was Saxa Ruba, a little to the north of Rome, near the Mulvian bridge across the Tiber. Constantine was engaged in a decisive battle with Maxentius for control of the Roman Empire and the West.

Constantine, it so happened, was tolerant of and even kindly disposed toward the Christian heresy which had been growing in strength throughout the empire.

Maxentius was not so kindly disposed and his forces seemed to have the advantage in terms of numbers and strength, but Constantine had been a hearty foe.

That night as Constantine slept he had a vivid dream which strengthened his confidence and perhaps decisively shaped the course of Western history. In his dream Constantine saw the initial letters of the name of Christ with the words, "By this sign will you conquer." Taking this as an omen, he had the monogram (an X with a P in the center) painted on his helmet and on the shields of his soldiers.

Constantine's forces proved to be victorious. The soon to be sole ruler of the Roman world believed that it was the Christian God who had given him the victory.

He became a convert and set about to make Christianity the new unifying religion of the empire. In so doing he helped to lay down the strictures of Christian trinitarian orthodoxy at Nicea which were to be imposed throughout Christendom, an imposition that never really succeeded.

We may bewail the imposition of a rigid orthodoxy, but it is certainly doubtful that Christianity, Unitarian or Trinitarian, would have survived had Constantine not been victorious at Saxa Ruba and converted to the Christian faith. And it all started with a dream! Aristotle's ancient advice "that one should pay diligent attention to dreams" seems particularly pertinent.

Most of us, I would guess, do not remember, nor pay much attention to our dreams. Had Constantine not remembered his dream that night the course of Western history might have been vastly different. We might well be gathered here for the General Assembly of Free Mithrian Churches and Societies, with Christianity but a dimly remembered mystery religion that died in the 3rd or 4th century C.E., except that history would be measured from the beginnings of the worship of the god Mithrias, (who was a hearty competitor of the Christian god), rather than from the time of the birth of Jesus.

The ancient Hebrews, like all Eastern peoples of the time, had a very high regard for the religious significance of dreams and sought counsel of those who professed to explain them. We see the antiquity of this custom among the Egyptians in the account of the dreams of Pharaoh (you remember the seven fat cows followed by seven lean cows) which Joseph, who had gained a reputation even in prison as a wise interpreter of dreams, read as a prophetic forecast of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of drought. A similar, though much later account, and no doubt legendary, is the role played by Daniel to the Babylonian conqueror and ruler of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar, only Daniel's feat was purported to have been even more spectacular than Joseph's. Daniel had to interpret a dream which the king himself had forgotten--no mean feat, at that.

"If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream." (Numbers 12:6)

And so, Yahweh, the god of the ancient Hebrews, is reported to have made himself known in dreams and visions to Jacob (Jacob's Ladder was a dream vision) and Gideon and Ezekiel and Amos and Isaiah and Solomon, to name a few.

But the Hebrews were also warned to be wary of false dreamers who would lead the people astray. Jeremiah declared, "Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully...Behold, I am against those who prophecy lying dreams, says the Lord."

In spite of Jeremiah's admonition against false dreamers the early Christians continued to regard prophetic dreams and visions as messages from God. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams..." (Acts 2:17) The New Testament virtually begins and ends with dreams and visions. We find first in the Nativity story in Matthew four different dreams surrounding the birth of Jesus--three to his father Joseph and one to the Wise Men warning them of threatening events from the hand of King Herod.

Then there is the troubling dream of Pilate's wife concerning Jesus. She is said to have warned her procurator

husband, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream" (Mathew 27:19). Her plea for his release was to no avail. The resurrection stories which follow have much the character of dreams and visions. They have an ethereal quality to them. Jesus appears and disappears, walks through walls, floats up into the air, much like we have done at one time or another in our dream bodies.

The New Testament ends with John's nightmare vision of blood and thunder, earthquake and judgment, recorded in the Book of Revelation. John, perhaps, could have benefitted from a stay at one of the ancient Greek Asclepian incubation sleep temples which sought to induce dreams for purposes of healing both psyche and soma. The priests would encourage their fellow devotees of Asclepius, the god of sleep, to paint their dreams on the walls of the temple, much like Jung encouraged his patients to paint the images of their dreams to foster wholeness and healing. It is evident that John had one hell of a nightmare out there on the Isle of Patmos.

Someone has suggested he may have ingested some bad mushrooms. His dream book almost didn't make it into the New Testament canon because its authorship was suspect and its theology so utterly gloomy and violent. It was an excursion, we might say, into the dark side of the soul.

It was the ancient Greek Philosopher Plato and not Freud who first made the observation that "in all of us, even in good men, there is a lawless wild-beast nature, which peers out in sleep." Plato's observation needs to be balanced, however, by what Eric Fromm has noted. "We are not only less reasonable and less decent in our dreams, but we are also more intelligent, wiser, and capable of better judgment when we are asleep than when we are awake." Or as Hindu poet, Rabindranath Tagore, wrote, "Only a portion of my gift is in this world, the rest of it is in my dreams. You, who ever elude my touch, come there in secret silence, hiding your lamp." There is a higher self as well as a lower self. Both are revealed in our dreams.

Did you know that Islam is literally a religion that was founded on dreams? The first part of the Koran, the Bible of Islam, was said to have been revealed to Mohammed in a dream, as was the promise of the future possession of the holy city of Mecca. Mohammed attached great significance to dreams in general. It is reported that "each morning he would ask his disciples what they had dreamed during the night, interpret the dreams he thought of value, and tell them his own dreams."¹

Had Mohammed not been such a dreamer the history of the Middle East and of the world in general might have been far different. Pay attention to your dreams. You might start a new religion and change the course of history!

The Talmud says, "Dreams which are not interpreted are like letters which have not been opened." And we might also add that prophetic dreams which are not heeded are ignored at peril of life itself. This is true not only of our personal lives but of our social and political lives as well.

To cite a few examples, Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, was said by Plutarch to have dreamed of his assassination the night before he was stabbed to death. Abraham Lincoln, a few days before his assassination, told his wife of a dream he had, in which he was wandering through the White House and came upon a coffin guarded by soldiers, and a throng of weeping people. "Who is dead?" he asked in the dream. A guard answered, "The President, killed by an assassin."

Even more recently, "Bishop Joseph Lanyi, tutor to the Archduke Ferdinand, dreamed of the archduke's assassination at Sarajevo in June, 1914. He was so impressed by the dream that he wrote it down, drew a sketch of the incident and tried to warn the archduke. When he failed, at an early hour the next morning, he celebrated a mass for him." Had he reached him, the history of the First World War might have been different. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, pioneer in death and dying workshops, was once warned in a dream not to take a planned flight to Chicago. She heeded its warning and was spared the loss of her life in a terrible and tragic plane crash.

Dreams are important to us for other reasons than premonitions of death and disaster. I would mention three reasons--for self knowledge, creative inspiration, and meditation and religious aspiration. Emerson has written, "A skillful man reads his dreams for his self-knowledge; yet not the details but the quality...dreams retain the infirmities of our character." And they also point to the higher potentialities of our nature if we are sensitive to their source of creative inspiration. Emerson also noted that "in dreams we are true poets; we create the persons of the drama; we give them appropriate figures, faces, costume...I doubt if the best poet has yet written any five-act play that can compare in thoroughness of invention with this unwritten play of fifty acts, composed by the dullest snorer on the floor of the watch-house."

As a matter of fact, a number of writers and artists have utilized their dreams as sources for their creative productions. Voltaire is said to have dreamed a whole canto of his piece *La Henriade*, while the composer Offenbach based his opera "Tales of Hoffman" on three dreams he had. Robert Louis Stevenson, the writer and poet, turned inward to find the source of self-fulfillment and adventure he could not find in the outer world because of his chronic ill health.

¹Norman MacKenzie, *Dreams and Dreaming*, p.40.

Stevenson tells how he would dream complete stories and would dream in sequence, taking up the fantasy life envisaged in his dreams at the point where he left off the night before. Thus would Stevenson's sleeping self write whole stories in serial form. He never knew himself how they were going to turn out!

In the scientific field, German chemist, F.A. Kekule reports that he received the insight for representing the molecular structure of trimethyl benzene through a dream. He writes of his dream: "Again the atoms were juggling before my eyes...my mind's eye, sharpened by repeated sights of a similar kind, could now distinguish larger structures of different forms and in long chains, many of them close together; everything was moving in a snake-like and twisting manner. Suddenly, what was this? One of the snakes got hold of its own tail and the whole structure was mockingly twisting in front of my eyes. As if struck by lightning, I awoke."

Reporting this to scientific convention in 1890, Kekule concluded: "Let us learn to dream, gentlemen, and then we may perhaps find the truth." Dimitri Mendeleev, creator of the Table of Atomic Elements, which every young person learns about in elementary chemistry, apparently took Kekule's advice to heart. Mendeleev's Table of Atomic Elements first came to him in a flash in the midst of a dream. Elias Howe, inventor of the sewing machine, got the insight from a dream to put the hole in the point of the needle rather than at the end of the needle. Once he did that his dream machine worked like a charm.

In terms of meditation and religious aspiration I can report that my decision to enter the Unitarian Universalist ministry instead of the more orthodox United Church of Christ was confirmed by a dream during my last year in seminary. I dreamed that I was in some kind of religious museum with traditional Christian symbols and artifacts on the main floor. The director of the museum sends me upstairs to a secret room with a display of ancient Buddha statues and Eastern religious artifacts. The room is bathed in a mysterious and subdued greenish light. The images of the Buddha are all in gold and bronze. A voice from above begins to speak from out of the surrounding dimness. An invisible but irresistible force impels me to my knees. I know that I am in a holy place.

For me the only place where I could find the freedom to seek and accept the spiritual truths contained in religious traditions and sources outside the narrow confines of Christian orthodoxy was within the liberal religious framework of Unitarian Universalism. My dream helped me to make the move and decision I might otherwise not have made. Ever since I have sought to follow Aristotle's ancient advice to pay diligent attention to my dreams.

I would give the same advice to all of you. Pay attention to your dreams. Not only may they change the course of history, but they may also open the door to greater self-knowledge, to creative inspiration, and to meditation and religious aspiration.

I would now like to move on to a brief discussion of the process of sleep and dreams in our lives and some tools for understanding and interpretation.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." (Shakespeare) One third of our lives is spent in what we call sleep. By age 70, if we live that long, we will have slept over 20 years, Rip Van Winkles in the flesh. What is sleep and what are dreams? We still don't know what they are, but we know a great deal more today about what happens to us physically and mentally when we do sleep, than Freud or Jung ever dreamed was possible. The mystery of sleep and dreams has moved from the psychoanalytic couch into the laboratory where its cycles and rhythms have been charted and deciphered; the chemical changes in the body measured and analyzed along with the variations in temperature, heart beat and pulse rate; and the door to the workings of the brain and mind opened a bit more as we have discovered that everyone dreams every night whether they remember their dreams or not. We have discovered that dreaming is a natural process, a biological as well as a psychological necessity, and there are no exceptions.

Even those who do not remember their dreams do tend to remember them when awakened in a sleep/dream laboratory at the right moment. And when is that moment? It comes near the completion of what researchers call the alpha brain wave rhythm (7 to 14 cycles per second on the electroencephalograph) which coincides with retinal eye movements (REMs) while asleep. We dream on the average of four to five times a night every ninety minutes or so, the longest segment frequently coming just before we awaken in the morning. In between dream cycles we are in a state of dreamless sleep, though not necessarily devoid of thought, the delta rhythm, 1 to 4 cps on the e.e.g. machine, or theta, 4 to 7 cps. To maintain both physical and mental harmony of being we need to fly at all levels of sleep--delta, theta and alpha. When deprived of our need for sleep our physical and mental functioning becomes impaired. Those severely deprived of alpha dreaming will begin to hallucinate. We don't know why, but sleep we must and dream we must, if our waking consciousness is to function with clarity and effectiveness.

Biologically we need to dream whether we remember them or not. Psychologically, we need to understand our dreams if we are to achieve psychological and spiritual wholeness. Jeremy Taylor, Unitarian minister and author of a book on *Dream Work: Techniques for Discovering the Creative Power in Dreams*, says that all dreams, even nightmares, are in the service of health and wholeness or salvation. Dreams have many levels of meaning--physical, psychological, sexual, spiritual--even seemingly inconsequential dreams or mere fragments of dreams.

It was Freud who declared that the understanding of dreams was "the royal road to the unconscious." Dreams he said, were the expression of wish fulfillment and linked to the sexual and aggressive desires of the libido. Dreams were often triggered by the day residue, a recent event or experience, but were expressive of deeper unconscious conflicts. Dreams used symbols to disguise or distort the underlying meaning, the latent versus the manifest dream content. The work of dream interpretation is to bring the underlying psychological conflict to light and to make the unconscious conscious.

Freud's method of dream interpretation tended to be reductive and regressive, reducing the meaning of dream symbols to the primitive drives of sex and aggression in relation to parental figures from childhood and their later surrogate representatives. Dr. Carl Jung broke with Freud over this issue among others. Jung believed that dreams were compensatory to the psychological needs of the individual. They seek to re-establish balance within the psyche.

Jung's method of dream interpretation was the method of amplification, bringing forth the many complex levels of meaning contained within the dream symbols. Dreams also related to current and future problems and goals of adult growth and development and were not merely the residues of childhood conflicts. Dreams reveal not only where we have been, the unresolved issues of childhood, but where we are going, the needs and aspirations of the growing adult. Dream symbols, rather than disguising or distorting the true meaning, are themselves revelatory of objective facts about the nature of the psyche. They give a true picture of the subjective state of consciousness of the dreamer. Dreams speak a language of picture and metaphor. Jung observed that many dreams express universal mythic themes or archetypes—the hero's journey, encounter with the shadow and one's sexual opposite within the psyche, meeting the Wise Old Man or Woman within one's soul. Religious myths are like collective dreams and dreams are like individual myths.

Jung and Freud differed markedly when it came to an understanding of the role of religion in a person's life. For Freud religion was an illusion from the childhood of the race based on the need for security and protection in a bewildering universe. To become an adult is to give up the illusion and live by reason. For Jung, a mature religion was expressive of the need for wholeness and meaning in one's life. The need is no illusion and needs to be accepted and integrated into one's self and life understanding. The religious symbols which may appear in one's dreams from time to time need to be understood and interpreted in this larger context.

Dr. Montague Ullman, a psychiatrist, and one of the former Psi Symposium speakers at one of our UUA General Assemblies, is a pioneer in the exploration of dream telepathy and the development of dream groups. He discovered in his therapeutic practice that a number of his patients would bring dreams that were telepathic in terms of their revelation of personal information about him, the psychiatrist, that they could not possibly have known by any conscious means. He went on to direct a major study on dream telepathy based on experiments with sleeping subjects and waking senders. The senders would concentrate on pictures or paintings chosen at random which would appear in the dreams of the sleeping receivers who would be awakened at the close of the alpha/rem cycle. He proved to his own satisfaction that telepathy in dreams was a true phenomenon and that sometimes our dreams may reveal as much or more about someone else than they do about ourselves.

Dr. Ullman has also pioneered in the development of dream groups. It used to be thought that only the experts could understand and interpret dreams. Dr. Ullman has shown that there is great wisdom within the average person and that the wisdom is multiplied when a group of people gather for the purpose of helping one another understand and interpret their dreams. The only rules he has for dream groups to operate are confidentiality among the members and that each person in the group treat another person's dream as if it was his or her own. Which means that you preface any response or interpretation with the phrase, "In my dream..." or, "If this was my dream..." The person who shares a dream is free to accept or reject any interpretation that may be offered and can choose not to continue with the group dream work anytime he or she may wish.

The truth of the matter is that anyone's dream becomes your dream as soon as you project a meaning upon it out of your own life and experience. But since all human beings are more alike than different in their life experiences one person's interpretation and understanding of a dream can readily resonate with another's.

Jeremy Taylor says that the only measure of the truth of an interpretation is the subjective "Aha!" experience of the dreamer. I have followed these guidelines in dream workshop time and time again and have always been surprised by the depth of insight and wisdom that comes out of people who commit to the process of sharing their dreams and seeking for greater self-understanding. The beauty of the process is that we learn a great deal about ourselves from engaging the dreams of others. That's because we are all human and we all dream and we are all engaged upon a journey seeking wholeness and meaning in our lives.

So in conclusion I would add a proviso to Aristotle's ancient admonition to pay attention to our dreams. And that is, if you join a dream group, pay attention to other people's dreams as well. You may learn something about yourself.

DREAMS: OUR FORGOTTEN LANGUAGE

by John H. Nichols

Sleeping in church is an age old habit about which much has been said, most of it humorously. The fact of the matter is, however, that sleeping on religious ground is an ancient and honorable custom, and there was a time when religious people were known to go out of their way to protect the sleeper. The Book of Acts tells us that once, the apostle Paul pulled into a Greek city that was on his circuit and received such an enthusiastic welcome from the Christians there that he got carried away. As the narrative put it, "He prolonged his speech until midnight." The passage goes on to explain that they were meeting on the third floor of a building, in an overcrowded room that was hot and stuffy. As a result a young man who was sitting on the window sill attempting to take all of this in fell asleep, lost his balance and plunged three stories to the ground.

If the Bible were the sullen morality play that many people assume it is the story would end here. If you fall asleep listening to a preacher preaching the Word of God, you die. But the story continues that the people were very concerned and all, including Paul, rushed down three flights of stairs to see what had happened to the young man. At first they thought he was dead, but Paul knelt down, embraced him, and as it turned out the man was alive. And the account says that all were much relieved. The account also tells us that Paul, then, continued preaching until daybreak.

A somewhat similar incident is recorded in the annals of British history. It seems that in 1689 Dr. Robert South was preaching to a congregation of British notables including the Prime Minister and the King. At some point in the middle of his sermon he discovered that he had put the entire congregation to sleep. Undeterred by this phenomenon he continued preaching until it became clear that the snoring of one lord was threatening to wake the rest of the royal court. Only at this point did he interrupt his sermon to say, "My Lord Lauderdale, rouse yourself. You snore so loud you will wake the king!"

In the Puritan communities, I am told, the sextans prowled the aisles during their three hour long services with a long pole. This was intended to nudge the sleepers awake. But in ancient times, among Romans and Greeks, it was considered something of an honor to fall asleep within the pillars of the temple. Those who did so were thought to have received dreams and visions from the spirit world. My policy, in case you are now wondering, is that if I can't convince you to stay awake you will probably be happier asleep. So rest comfortably.

The Jewish scriptures are curiously ambivalent about sleep. The Psalms are pastoral. "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for Thou alone, O Lord, makest me dwell in safety." "It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep." Proverbs, on the other hand, is more practical. "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond, and want like an armed man." "Love not sleep lest you come to poverty."

The ancients prized sleep because sleeping gave birth to dreams, and they took dreams to be communications of a sacred and perhaps prophetic nature. With the ascendancy of the Roman church, however, all of this emphasis on dreams and visions became very threatening to the church. The Church did not want its people being taught by their dreams, particularly in as much as it knew some dreams can be erotic. Therefore, it taught that people have to be wary of their dream thoughts which, it said, might be subtle temptations from the Devil. Far better, they believed, to spend the night awake in prayer than to give way to such erotic thoughts.

In time, of course, these beliefs were discarded as superstitious but until fairly recently most people have assumed that useful thinking is what goes on while we are awake and working at it. Sleep is simply the rest that prepares us for another day of fresh thought. Now, it seems possible that we do our best work when we are asleep. At such times we visit the realm of the unconscious, four or five times a night according to some scientists. We may remember only one such visit each night, and that one only sketchily, but those visits that we do remember remind us of the hidden reality that also supports our living.

If we think of an iceberg floating in the ocean we can see that the iceberg has a visible top and a much greater bulk that exists beneath the surface of the water. The top of the iceberg is our conscious selves, that part of us that makes schedules and lists, keeps appointments, reads the newspaper and is concerned with whether or not to pass an override to Proposition Two and a half.

If we were to take an elevator down through the iceberg, below the surface of the water we would enter the personal unconscious, that part of us which stores information we're no longer using, experiences that were formative in our lives, and feelings that are either too unpleasant or too pleasant to contemplate for long. It is another part of ourselves that is largely silent particularly when we try frantically to retrieve it, a part of ourselves which is given a

hearing usually only in sleep.

According to one theory if we go down even further we reach the collective unconscious, feelings, images and symbols that we share with everyone in one form or another. We can only speculate at what rises out of the collective unconscious: the notes of symphonies, the images of great poetry, the basic constituents of human personalities, the thought of God.

The unconscious works when the conscious mind goes off duty. For instance, you meet someone at Roache Brothers but cannot remember his name. Your memory goes into overdrive but cannot connect. You make the best of a vague conversation and then walk away still wondering. Fifteen minutes later when you are not trying to think about anything very important, the name comes to you. Why? The name had been stored in the personal unconscious. Your frantic efforts at retrieval had driven it away, but given a relaxation in your thoughts, it came back.

But, most often the unconscious works through dreams. Through dreams we encounter a shadow side of ourselves, a person who thinks and feels and says the things we would like, sometimes, not to be aware of. Often, when we encounter this shadow person in a dream we wake up with a start and would like not to remember the encounter.

For instance, I have an occasional dream which also comes to every minister I have ever known. It is Sunday morning. I am standing in the pulpit. You are in the pews. And I do not have any manuscript or notes or even the foggiest idea of what I had intended on doing up here on that particular Sunday. Your expressions change from shock and incomprehension, to irritation to anger.

When I first started having this dream, I would wake up with a start and then dismiss it as a nightmare. Over time I recognized that all ministers have these dreams, and by sharing this experience with others I recognized that shadow side of myself, of most ministers, that part of us that feels very vulnerable up here. The threat in the dream is not losing my manuscript but not having anything to say. It is the fear of not being able to perform one's central task.

When I recognized this fear as something that will probably always be a part of me, I denied it the ability to haunt me. In other words, if I hadn't come to grips with the dream, it would have continued to repeat itself with greater and greater urgency.

Many years ago, in another parish, someone reported to me a dream that had haunted him for several weeks. He was in the bedroom that had been his room in the house where he had grown up. His teenage daughter was sleeping in the bed, but there was no other furniture in the room. Walking about the house he discovered that it, too, was vacant. The heat had been turned off. There was nothing in the house to eat, no warmth, and he found the front door wide open to the winter winds. It was as if his parents had moved away and left his daughter alone, unprotected. He was aware of a powerful protective feeling toward his daughter but also profound sadness.

Indeed, his parents had moved away. Both were dead. The man had just been through a bitter divorce and child custody struggle. As sometimes happens, his relationships with his daughter were strained even though he could feel the pain she was in and his own pain. Nevertheless, he had struggled to go about his work with an optimism he did not entirely feel. After awhile he realized the dream was telling him that he heeded to pay more attention to his grieving and perhaps retrieve some of the relationships he still had that were strained but not yet lost.

John Sanford, who is a Jungian analyst as well as minister, recalls when he was younger he went through a classical Freudian analysis in which he would be encouraged to remember his dreams and admit them. He remembers that at first his dreams all seemed to focus on a particular problem, but as he came to grips with that the dreams moved on to other issues in his life. He said, "it was like sitting at the foot of a brilliant teacher who, when I learned one lesson, moved on to the next one. Eventually my dreams succeeded in bringing to the surface all the skeletons in my closet that I had not faced. Past guilt feelings and traumatic experiences appeared until they were sufficiently understood and integrated by my conscious mind, thus losing their emotional power over me. There was no predictable order in the sequence of the dreams. The selection of dream material was beyond my conscious control, and I learned that my conscious mind, in following a series of dreams, must be prepared to accept the lead of the unconscious."

There is, in other words, something in our unconscious world that wants us to be whole, at peace, in harmony, and settled. It speaks to us of issues that have to be dealt with, fears that need to be surfaced, temptations that need to be faced. If we assume that conscious rational life is the only path to wisdom then we will ignore the language of dreams which speaks to us in images, symbols and feelings. Learning the language of dreams is a little like learning a foreign language that is similar to our own. Some of the phrases are familiar and others are not. We need to fight the temptation to give up when the going gets difficult or we miss the intrinsic beauty of a new language.

There is one thing I don't believe, and I want to interrupt myself and say it now, lest I unintentionally inflict anxiety upon anyone. I don't believe that dreams predict the future. Nearly everyone has recurring dreams about something terrible happening to someone they love. We should know by now that this dream _ or it may even be a waking intuition _ happens frequently without any consequent tragedy. In the rarest incident when something like the

dream does eventually happen the dreamer feels guilty for not having prevented it. I don't believe this. I believe these awful nightmares are really reflections of the love we feel for others and of our fears of being hurt.

Instead our dreams seem to be pushing us toward wholeness, toward reconciliation with what is unvoiced, ignored, perhaps repressed in our lives. In light of this, it is interesting to take another look at the significance which dreams are given in the Jewish scriptures.

Jacob, for instance, dreamt that he wrestled with an angel. He was in a very difficult place in his life when the dream occurred. He had cheated his brother and abandoned his family. He then fell in love with a beautiful girl, and got double crossed by his father in law and was forced to marry her sister. But eventually he took both women into his household, stole the family wealth and cattle and escaped back toward the protection of Esau, whom he had also cheated.

Reaching the stream that marked the beginning of his brother's land he sent his wives and children along ahead of him, hoping, no doubt, that they would soften his brother's anger. Jacob lay down to a troubled night's sleep. In fact the account explicitly states that he used several stones for a pillow. It was not going to be a comfortable night's rest nor did he believe he deserved one.

According to the story he wrestled all night with a stranger. Apparently, they wrestled to a draw and by day break neither would let go. Finally the stranger said "What is your name?" and the other replied "Jacob." And the stranger said, "From now on your name will be Israel," which means "wrestles with God." Jacob was alarmed and he said, "Please tell me what is your name?" But the stranger replied "Why do you (need to) ask my name?" and he left.

This is perhaps the clearest expression of the dream symbolism in the Jewish scriptures and perhaps of dream symbolism in general. Jacob wrestled with that side of him which knew he had been greedy, deceitful and unfaithful to his best self. And because he would not let that side of him get away he became a changed man, ready to reconcile with his brother Esau, ready to lead a new life.

Did he wrestle with God? He wrestled with that which would not let go until Jacob had accepted his fears and his failings and his need for love. The story teller called it God. Whether or not we agree with the story teller, we must recognize that there is a powerful force coming out of the subconscious pulling us toward reconciling and integrating what is conflicted within us. In the final analysis it matters little what we call it. What matters is that we pay attention to what comes to us from that region of dreams which speaks to us in images and symbols and invites us to be whole. This is a life that makes all things new.

A TRIP TO HEMI-SYNC

by Arthur Myers

Have you ever wanted to take a look at something different, without going through the usual inconvenient method of getting out of this dimension? Have you ever wanted to meet your higher self? Contact your guides? Ascend into the astral plane, and maybe higher spheres? Heal somebody - maybe yourself?

A large proportion of the readers of this publication have probably heard - at least vaguely - of The Monroe Institute. It's about 20 years old, and nestles in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. In any case, it's a group of very pleasant buildings, dedicated to out-of-body journeys and other far out explorations.

For a lot of people, what they do there seems to work.

This enterprise is the brainchild of Robert Monroe, a triple-threat individual who is an acoustics expert, a successful businessman, and an astral traveler.

It is true that millions of people go on astral trips without any help, usually by accident, occasionally by design. But they don't do much about it. Most of them rarely talk about it. Monroe, who was vice president of the Mutual Broadcasting Company at a very young age, and who went on to pile up a tidy fortune as a cable entrepreneur, has done something about it.

One night when he was 42, he found himself floating near the ceiling of his bedroom. In the bed below lay his wife and a man, who on closer inspection turned out to be himself. Before long, he was floating astrally around his prosperous suburban neighborhood, occasionally pinching housewives, leaving behind telltale black and blue marks.

Even today at 76, he is an antic sort. When I attended his Institute recently, he began a talk to 24 of us seekers with the greeting, "Hello, junkies."

Eventually, Monroe got into neighborhoods other than our physical one. He also got out of the cable business and devoted himself to research on how to induce unusual states of awareness. He drew about him a corps of high-powered scientists and technicians. They do many arcane things in those hills. The most prominent of these is Hemi-Sync.

Hemi-Sync is what the main building at the Institute is devoted to, and the reason several thousand curious people have come there over the years.

Hemi-Sync is short for hemispheric synchronization. What Hemi-Sync purports to do is synchronize the left and right hemispheres of the brain. At the Institute, they tell us that by feeding a sound of one vibration into one ear via headphone, and a sound of a slightly different vibration into the other ear, a whole-brain state of consciousness is produced. This, it is said, can provide a "window" into states of reality that are not ordinarily apparent to us.

Dave Wallis, a sound engineer at the Institute, said to me, in explaining how the various tapes are developed:

"What we do is measure a person and analyze what it looks like when, for example, he has an out-of-body experience. We do the same with healers, when they go into a change of consciousness, a healing mode. We'll study what it looks like when someone turns on remote viewing, or telekinesis. Patterns begin to emerge. Once we know how they look, we can put together unique Hemi-Sync sound patterns that will enable you to get into the same states of consciousness."

It is also said that higher efficiency in the more ordinary aspects of human life - such as study, work performance, and so on - can be induced. Hemi-Sync tapes are being used for these more mundane purposes in a number of school systems, corporations, military organizations, and mental institutions. And also by individuals.

"What's happening here is not far out," Wallis says. "These are normal human attributes. We've just never been taught how to work with them. Bob says there is no reason to say what little the human race does now is normal. Why not do more?"

Many seminars are given at the Institute. My group was in the Gateway program, a six-day session, given a dozen times a year. In the business world, they'd call it entry level. In the Marines, it's Boot Camp. It's where you get started.

Almost all of our group were professionals- teachers, physicians, psychotherapists, writers, an anthropologist, a retired general manager of a furniture factory, a restaurateur, a former professional basketball player. The basketball player stood out. He was 6 foot, nine inches.

We had two staff leaders, both about 40, friendly and impressive people. One, Karin Malik, is a therapist in Mill Valley, CA. The other, Dr. Joe Gallenberger, is a clinical psychologist in Hendersonville, NC. Like other staffers, they leave their regular employment periodically to conduct seminars at the Institute.

In my preliminary interview with Karin, she advised me to practice "passive volition."

"Just let it happen," she said, "Don't try too hard."

She had me pegged right.

Since this is something of a personal account, perhaps I should outline where I'm coming from. I have been fascinated by the psychic and spiritual for about 22 years, since I met a psychic who might be considered world class. I didn't know how good she was, since she was the first mystic I had knowingly met. I began to read book after book on the subject. One of them was Bob Monroe's *Journeys Out of the Body*. The obligatory way of referring to this book nowadays seems to be "a cult classic."

Somewhere along the line, it dawned on me that everyone is to some extent psychic, and possibly can enlarge that extent. A newspaper, magazine, and book writer, I turned to writing books on parapsychology, particularly on ghosts and hauntings, and have published six of them.

In recent years, I have grown restive at interviewing hundreds of people who profess mystical experiences - usually involving ghosts. I wanted experiences, not merely second-hand information. I have undergone channeling workshops, mediumship workshops, Shamanism, out-of-body workshops and probably several others I have forgotten. I am constantly told I am psychic, but as far as direct experience is concerned I seemed fastened into this physical dimension by some cosmic version of Elmer's Glue. In different ways, my gurus have told me I am trying too hard, I am doing it too intellectually, I am leaning too heavily on left brain 2 + 2 = 4 type thinking.

I decided to give Hemi-Sync a shot. Maybe it would give me a polite introduction to the right side of my head. What could I lose? \$1,295.

So we explorers gathered that July week to check out what the universe might have to offer. The basic drill was this:

We would gather in the assembly room in the main building several times a day. The trainers would tell us what came next on the tapes program. We would repair to our rooms. Our bunks were equipped with an electronic console and earphones. We would listen to the tapes, played from a control room by our trainers. We would go back to the assembly hall and discuss what had happened - or not happened.

In my case, it was usually not happened. The others were reporting meeting their deceased relatives, their guides, taking out-of-body trips, and various other esoterica. After a couple of days, I began to grow edgy. I was planning to write an article about my experiences. So far, I hadn't had any. One young man, Bruce Frankel, a restaurant owner from Cambridge, Massachusetts, became increasingly friendly to me. It turned out he was empathizing with me. Later, he told me why.

"I was trying real hard and nothing was happening," he said. "I could really relate to what you were saying in the debriefing sessions. It was hard to hear what was happening to some other people. I felt like I was a slow learner, that I ought to go back to third grade, that this was high school."

Bruce felt, however, that he got something from the experience.

"It gave me insights into what I had to do to accomplish what I want. It didn't do for me what the brochure said, what were my best expectations, but it provided me with a direction. Hemi-Sync wasn't doing the trick, but I have a Biofeedback program on my computer and I'm working with it."

By the third day, I was panicky. An article about my own experiences would be very, very short indeed. So I shifted gears and began interviewing people in the group. I discovered something I hadn't expected - about 80% of the participants had had psychic experiences before they ever got there.

But even the "non-psychic" people seemed to be having a satisfying time of it. A physician from Louisiana told me:

"I won't leave here disappointed. I don't feel a psychic experience is necessary. Listening to the tapes has deepened my ability to get into a meditative state. Of course, if I have an out-of-body experience, I'll take that too."

An Illinois school administrator said practically the same thing. "With the Hemi-Sync," she said, "I find I can get into a meditative state in a matter of minutes." She also said the process had diminished aches in her back and shoulder.

A psychotherapist from Santa Monica, CA, told me that she, like me, had never had a psychic experience and still hadn't had one. But when I phoned her a couple of weeks later, she was quite upbeat, saying:

"I think what I got are some tools I can start using in my life. Now when I meditate I go to a very deep level. My dreams are very deep, and I recall them well. Things happen that are challenges-- my car has a flat tire, my baggage gets lost -- and I handle these things very nonchalantly, very relaxed."

Dorcas Flowers is an elderly woman from Colorado who told me she had never had a psychic experience in the past. But she was very excited now. She said that during a tape session that afternoon she had seen her deceased husband. She also saw figures in a field. She told me her son, who had also not been psychic, had been in an earlier

group and had met his guides.

The more psychic types told me that Hemi-Sync seemed to focus their natural abilities, provide a more conscious awareness of what they were doing.

Bill Kinchen, the basketball player - he's now an airline ticket agent in Albuquerque - has been very psychic since early childhood. OOBs were nothing new to him. He tried to cheer me up by telling me of a friend who had come to the Institute and thought he had had no experiences.

"Two or three months later," Bill said, "he was sitting in a chair and got up and walked across the room. He looked back and saw his body back there. He was having an OOB."

So possibly in some cases it takes time. I'm playing my tapes and hoping for action.

I once knew a school headmaster who in his youth had taught at a university in Japan, and by accident became a football coach. Commenting on life in Japan, he told me, "All the things we do and pretend we don't do - like professionalism in college athletics, or getting drunk at the office party - they not only do it openly, they have it organized."

This reminds me of Monroe and his Institute. The psychic life, which many people live but don't talk about, he's getting it organized. And for a lot of people who go there, or who just use his tapes at home, it seems to work.

(Arthur Myers is author of such books as "The Ghostly Register," "The Ghostly Gazetteer," and the forthcoming "The Ghosthunter's Guide." He lives in Wellesley, MA. The Monroe Institute can be reached by calling 804 361-1252, or writing to Route 1, Box 175, Faber, VA 22938.)

MEETING YOUR INNER SELF

by Dr. Charles S. Slap

There are those who argue that we who are gathered in churches across the land this morning are indulging in a collective wish projection. We affirm that the ground on which we stand is somehow holy ground. We refuse to believe, as Kierkegaard put it, that we have been thrown into existence by an indifferent, blind universe. We cannot accept that we are cosmic orphans, that our concerns are not part of the concerns of the whole, that our story is not part of the larger story.

So, the skeptics charge, we come to churches to fantasize about some sort of loving God, traditionally a parental figure, God the Father, and increasingly, God the Mother. If we manage to convince ourselves that such a God exists, that will be wonderful; we will no longer be orphans, aliens.

So, the skeptics continue, millions of Americans come to church every Sunday to hear the minister expound his or her version of "Tinker Bell" theology. What is Tinker Bell theology? Do you remember how, in the stage version of *Peter Pan* Tinker Bell for some reason fades away and can be resuscitated only by everyone in the theatre closing their eyes and believing very hard in fairies?

Do you believe in fairies, boys and girls? Say you do, pleads Peter Pan. *Believe in fairies, and they will be true.* Traditional religion prescribes the same formula, believe in God the mother or God the father, and God will be real for you. Belief is important. For Gods who have lost their credibility will, like Tinker Bell, fade away.

My mission this morning is not to expedite this process. Although I disagree with much about Judaism and Christianity, particularly its authoritarianism, I respect its quest, which is to explore the relationship between humankind and ultimate reality. Many of its teachings are incredibly insightful, and to dismiss the entire tradition is to do so at our loss.

This morning we pick up the concept of encountering God as a metaphor for meeting our inner self. Indeed, one of the values of a God-concept is that it provides a way by which we can talk to ourselves, talk to ourselves in depth.

As we will be using the word God, let us be clear what we mean when we use the term. God, of course, is simply a word like other words. The question is to what does it refer. The answer will be different depending on whether you are a Christian, a Buddhist, or a Unitarian. What holds the various meanings of God together, what cuts through the various creeds and gives the word coherence is this. In each faith, although using different symbol systems, by god is meant "Ultimate Reality." Our understanding of the Ultimate Reality in the universe may differ, but whatever we conceive it to be, that is our God. The Ultimate Reality may be for us a supernatural being, or nature spiritualized. For me it is the enormous energy pulsating through the universe, manifesting itself in being. For me, God is the soul of the universe.

Not only do we each affirm an Ultimate Reality, we seek to conform our lives to that reality. That is why no one can avoid being religious. If for us, money is our ultimate reality and highest value, then money is our God, although a false God, an idol.

If the real God is the soul of the universe, and if Jung and Emerson and Slap are correct, the divine current runs in the depths of the human psyche. Authentic religious life is a quest to meet God, the Over-Soul, in ourselves. How do we pursue this quest? And if an encounter actually takes place between ourself and these deep currents, what is our response?

Be forewarned, it is generally much more pleasant to seek God in ourself than to find it. Seeking the ultimate reality can be very pleasant. We sign up for seminars and book groups. Seeking this reality can be as restful as showing up in church on Sundays, with no great expectations of real encounter, and with the minister to blame for lack of results.

But if we have ever encountered the over-soul, perhaps through a sunset or an intensive care unit, or witnessing a great act of compassion, that is something else. We are not relaxed at all. We are awed or scared or enthralled, or all three. "If seeking God can go on endlessly _ a lifetime with little trouble if we plan it right, finding God or our true self can change our life immediately and drastically." We find claims being made on us in response to the universal love we have encountered. We find ourselves volunteering in the soup kitchen, becoming a buddy to an AIDS patient, or forming a group to visit nursing homes. Being called to service is a pain. The old Testament prophets resisted the call as long as they could.

The promise and the danger of encountering our inner self, our over-soul, can evoke different responses, as they have throughout history. There are in fact, three prototypical responses to encounters with God. These are Flight,

Fight, and Trust.

Flight, Fight, and Trust. These three responses run both through the Bible and modern depth psychology. One response does not preclude the others. Indeed, each may well be a stepping stone to another level of response.

First, Flight! We flee from our inner self, from the divine current flowing in our depths. This in one option. Run away from the encounter as if our sanity depended on it. Indeed, what passes for sanity in this world might well be threatened.

Adam and Eve were the first to try flight. A modern form of psychic flight is to anaesthetize oneself with television or the stereo. I live on Balltown Road near the Route 7 Crosstown. Even with my windows closed, I sometimes hear the raucous music from auto stereo systems. Imagine what it sounds like in the car? These young people, and I assume they are young, are armorplating themselves against the possibility of silence, in flight against a possible encounter with themselves, with God. Others in full flight are workaholics, alcoholics, those who are obsessed with the goods of this world. A list of those who have fled an in depth encounter with themselves would run through the history of humankind.

Yet, we should not be quick to judge those who initially take the option of flight. Paul Tillich tells us a person "who had never tried to flee God has never experienced the God who is really God." We don't flee our self-made Gods. Indeed, self-created deities are a comfort. Who is not comfortable with the deities we create, to hear our prayers and run our errands? We don't flee from such deities, for they exalt us and we them in mutual admiration. We don't flee from our idols, in church or out. As Tillich puts it, "a god whom we can easily bear, a god from whom we do not have to hide, a god whom we do not hate in moments, a god whose destruction we never desire, is not God at all and has no reality."

We have seen that individuals attempt to flee an encounter with God through noise rather than silence, through living obsessively rather than deeply. Ironically, one of the most effective forms of flight is the manipulation of religion itself. As one commentator put it, "Religion becomes a thin veneer of respectability and so a barrier between the individual and God."

Let us turn to a second option, in an encounter with the inner self. If not flight, then fight. The Bible is saturated with fights between humans and God. Moses argued with God about the Exodus. When asked to lead the Jews, Moses replied thanks but no thanks. But God pulled rank, and Moses got stuck with the Exodus anyhow. In the middle of the Exodus, God tries to kill him, but Moses is saved by his wife, Zipporah, in one of the weirdest stories in the Bible. Job, of course, is another example of an individual who squares off at God.

The great and literal example of fighting with the God in our self was set out in the ancient testimony, Jacob wrestling with God at Peniel. There are several clues, such as the wrestling match taking place all night, indicating that the incident took place in a dream.

Jacob was not what you would call a nice guy. You would not want him to be treasurer of your company. He swindled his father Isaac, his brother Esau, and his father-in-law Laban. Jacob was on the run when the incident at Peniel took place. In the dream he meets his repressed self, which in his case, is his higher self, or metaphorically speaking, God. God both calls him to account and shows him compassion, two qualities of the God encounter that go together. Peniel was a time of reckoning. The encounter changed his destiny and his name. It was only after the fight that his name was changed to Israel and he receives the promise of becoming a new people and nation.

Who has not fought with God? I don't mean just the God of our parents, the old God who never was able to answer the question that destroyed him, "how can you be so good and allow so much evil?" That is an easy God to fight and best. Many atheists came to the creed out of such a fight.

The God within is something else, where to lose the fight ironically is to win. At sunrise, Jacob was changed. Where does it happen for us _ in a hospital room? At a grave side? In the ashes of a relationship? Out of brokenness comes wholeness. We lose the fight with God, but we win.

The final response to an encounter with the Ultimate Reality or the God within is trust. This is the third option. How convenient if we could start here and stay here. But to arrive at trust you can count on, there is always first the running and the fighting. If you have not run and fought with yourself, you probably have yet to begin your life journey.

I use the word "trust" rather than "faith" for the third option to minimize the pietistic connotations. "Trust is no mere resignation in fatigue, no pious giving up when we are pinned down." Trust is not blind belief, not creedal confession. What then is religious trust?

Trust is confidence. Confidence that the Ultimate Reality is good and good will finally be triumphant. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."

Trust is conviction. Conviction that the Ultimate Reality is calling the creation to universal love. The conviction of Teilhard de Chardin, "If as you claim a universal love is impossible, how can we account for that irresistible instinct in our hearts which leads us toward unity whenever and in whatever direction our deepest emotions are stirred. A universal love is not only psychologically possible, it is the only complete and final way in which we are able to love."

Trust is openness. It is openness to those who have need of us and our willingness to respond.

Trust in sum is a stance toward life, not an intellectual belief system. It is awareness of love calling us and our response in love.

"Look now, look closely at Jacob's walking away from his experience. Set against the rising sun on the horizon, you can clearly see him limp _ his scar from the struggle, the brokenness that allows him to be whole." If we make the journey, the flight, the fight, and finally trust, we discover we walk with a limp, but suddenly we realize that we have never walked with more assurance.

SO YOU'VE LIVED BEFORE. SO WHAT!

by Irving H. Gale

"Many thousands of years ago, on the Planet Melinda _ which is far removed from this Galaxy _ I petitioned the Council of Masters for permission to enter a human body for the first time. My request was granted _ and I have lived to regret it ever since."

This is usually my opening statement to the various groups that invite me to discuss reincarnation and to share my personal experiences. After the above statement, I pause and look around the room. It is then fairly easy to identify the die-hard skeptics and the avid believers.

Invariably, at the end of the talk, one of the questions will be: "Granted that we have lived before. I have all I can do to understand and survive this one. So I've lived before. So what!"

This is a very legitimate question and one that most of us who discuss reincarnation come across constantly. Why indeed should we delve into the past when we are so concerned with living in the present?

My answer, at that point, usually runs like this: "You have a valid point. I am sure that you would agree that all the experiences and wisdom you have gained in this lifetime certainly have helped you to cope with your present problems and will help with those you will face in the future. What if you had the wisdom and experience of a dozen previous lives upon which to draw? Wouldn't that give you an even greater chance for happiness in the coming years?"

"Do you realize that even now, in this present life, you have been using, on a subconscious level, a great deal of the knowledge gained in previous lifetimes? Every time you have taken an important step or made a decision that might affect your life, you were unwittingly drawing upon a source of knowledge deep within your psyche. Some people call it intuition; some, a "gut feeling;" others, a hunch; and still others claim they are following their instincts. It is important to recognize that all these various terms refer to the wisdom we derive from the highest source of intelligence available to us as human beings _ our Souls _ within whose energy there remains a permanent record of every thought, deed, and feeling we have ever experienced."

"If we are using this source of knowledge subconsciously, as most of us do, imagine how much happier and fulfilling our lives could be if we were to consciously tap this great fountain of wisdom. It can be done and is being done by many people every day."

This answer usually suffices for the moment, but deserves an in-depth explanation.

Just a peripheral understanding and acceptance of the rebirth process by itself provides people with a broader acceptance of their fellow human beings and themselves. Once we realize that we have lived and loved many times before, our attitudes towards life, death, interpersonal relationships, marital problems, racism, religious intolerance, homosexuality, etc. take on a different perspective and generally brings a sense of balance and inner peace. And when we delve in depth into our own previous lives, we usually can find all the wisdom we need to make proper decisions, choose correct careers, use our talents to their fullest extent, handle problems and disputes that arise between family and friends, and discover, in many cases, why we are constantly making the same mistakes. The Bible teaches: "Know Thyself." May I take the liberty of amending that to: "Know Thyselfes."

A personal experience brought this point into very sharp focus.

I grew up as the youngest child and only boy in my family. One of my sisters constantly doted on me, and I tired of hearing my mother tell all her friends "how much Doris loves me." When I met a girl I intended to marry and brought her home, there was instant hostility shown on my sister's part towards my wife-to-be, and a very obvious cooling in her attitude towards me. Since there were no apparent incidents to evoke this type of response, I was unable to understand it. Upon questioning my sister, she vehemently denied any hostility or dislike _ but her attitude remained the same. After my marriage, the relationship became so intolerable it was necessary to break off all communication.

Several years ago I relived an experience during a lifetime in England. At that time I was involved with two women, both of whom were in love with me. I married the woman who is my present wife. The woman scorned was my sister Doris. It then became clear that, when I had brought my wife home, recognition and memories had been awakened in my sister on a subconscious level. Thus the anger that was so apparent to us. This was an important discovery for me. It released the resentment and bitterness built up over the years. Although I could not alter the relationship, I could understand and accept it.

It was William Shakespeare who said that life was a stage and we were all actors upon it. Actually, we are similar to a repertory group where the actors and actresses put on various plays lifetime after lifetime, very often

interchanging roles. During the experience I relived as an Englishman, I had seen a young boy sitting on the edge of my bed who was my younger brother at that time. I recognized him as my father in my present incarnation.

Those professionals whose life work is the study of past lives through various forms of regression would confirm that people tend to reincarnate in groups; that men have been women and women, men. The role changes, generally, are for our learning process. Lovers meet again and again, sometimes leading to embarrassing problems.

Whenever I hear about two young people who meet and instantly fall in love _ the old "love at first sight" syndrome _ I want to shout out to them that it was not "first sight." It could very well have been second, third or even tenth sight, depending upon how many lifetimes they had lived and loved together. Their meeting was simply an awakening, at the Soul level, of the love they had felt for each other in previous times. The usual explanation given for two people falling in love is that the "chemistry is fantastic between us." For lack of knowledge of their previous existences, "chemistry" is as good a word as any. Physically, it is an interchange of the energy containing the memories of their prior love. And when two lovers claim they "tingle" when they touch each other, they are unwittingly revealing that the electrical energy in their Souls is so charged up, they really do feel a tingling sensation.

Unfortunately, not all lovers who meet and marry "live happily ever after." Sometimes there are other circumstances in their previous relationships that are in disharmony with their love, and eventually surface during their marriage.

An investigation into the previous lives of two people contemplating marriage could be of great benefit. An understanding of their true relationship might save a great deal of future pain and suffering. An awareness of the negative influences from previous lives could even lead to a dissipation of these forces and create a more harmonious relationship for the balance of their married lives.

It has been learned from thousands of regression sessions that many cases of adultery committed by two seemingly happily married people can be traced to the fact that they had been lovers in previous lives and had met again in this one. The recognition and response is instantaneous and undeniably strong. In these cases, an understanding of the reasons for the attraction could possibly help them handle the situation _ difficult as it is.

Recently, I read of an interesting situation involving two people, well-respected and admired in their communities, who found themselves hopelessly in love, even though each was happily married at the time to another spouse. During regression, they discovered that, thousands of years earlier, the man had been a tribal chieftain who, during a raid on a neighboring village, had stolen the woman from her husband and had brought her back to his own camp to be his wife. The woman, although furious at having been kidnapped, eventually grew to love her captor very much. When they met in this lifetime, recognition at the Soul level had been overpowering.

An interesting side note brought out during the session was that the man from whom the woman had been stolen was, in fact, her present husband.

One of the most important reasons for understanding our previous experiences lies in the area of bigotry and intolerance. No one would deny that a great deal of the pain and suffering we experience is due to the hatreds and jealousies caused by the color of a person's skin, his or her religious beliefs, and even nationalities. Investigation into previous times proves again and again that we have been black, white, yellow and red. We have been Americans, Europeans, Asiatic and African at some time in the past. During regression sessions it has been revealed that many of us have been Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and members of many religious sects that came before our current religious beliefs. Man has been on Earth for millions of years. We all must have belonged, at one time or another, to literally dozens of various sects unknown to us today. Once a person has experienced a lifetime as a member of a race or religion that is anathema to him, it should be difficult to retain the bias and intolerance previously held. What a hilarious program the authors of the television program "All In The Family" could have created had they written an episode in which Archie Bunker, through regression, discovers a previous life as an African native. Of course, the trick would have been to get him to delve into his past in the first place. But what a better world we would have if the Archie Bunkers were to personally experience some of the previous lives they have led.

Discovery of other lives might bring a new approach to the dilemma in which homosexuals find themselves. The popular theories held by many psychologists for homosexuality is the overbearing mother-weak father syndrome. Sociologists claim that environment during childhood is a major contributing factor. These theories are now being questioned and new approaches discussed. Recently, I read the theory of a doctor who advanced the possibility, however feebly, that perhaps there was something in our genes that contributed to homosexuality and lesbianism.

Is it possible that it is a case of a Soul finding itself in a male body after a long continuous series of lives in a female body? Similarly for the Soul that finds itself in a female body after a series of lives as a male. The spirit could be completely disoriented and gravitate towards its more comfortable sex. Christine Jorgenson of the famed first sex-change operation always claimed that he had felt "trapped" in the body of a man.

The psychologists and sociologists might be recognizing merely the "trigger" that catapults borderline cases one way or the other. If the parents and environment are very negative, the child could easily be pushed "over the edge." On the other hand, a positive parent relationship could be the deciding factor in keeping a child in the same sex to which he or she were born.

For those of us who believe and understand the rebirth cycle, it seems to make sense that a Soul can become inadvertently trapped. At least we have come a long way from the time when homosexuality was considered a crime punishable by death.

We have all been both male and female in previous lives. Once enough people realize this, the entire male-female struggle for equality and superiority would tumble of its own weight. It would become clear that men and women are complete equals at the Soul level. There would be no need for the Women's Lib Movement, and the phrase "Male Chauvinism" would become archaic.

The knowledge that we live over and over again creates a new attitude towards the subject of death, particularly for those who have personally experienced previous existences and those who have been declared clinically "dead" only to return to life. The death experience has been described by those who have "returned" as one of the most beautiful moments they can recall, and most would have preferred not to return to life. Death no longer holds any terror when we realize that it is merely a passing from one dimension into another without the loss of awareness.

This knowledge can be a great source of comfort, not only for those men and women along in years who have only a short time left, but particularly for those grieving parents who have lost a young child through accident or disease.

When a young boy or girl is suddenly taken away, the loss is so traumatic that, even for very religious people, there is a questioning of their own belief in God. On these occasions, the priest, minister, or rabbi is faced with the eternal question, "Why?" "If God is good and loves us all how could He take my innocent child away at so young an age?" The answer usually given by the religious leader is: "It is not for us to question. It is God's Will," an answer that, in most cases, is not very satisfactory to the grief-stricken parents.

An understanding of the rebirth process certainly does not remove the pain of the loss. But there is comfort in the knowledge that the personality and character of that child has not been lost forever; that he or she, although seemingly robbed of their chance in this lifetime, will re-emerge in another body at a future time. If we might dare to presume to look through God's eyes, through His perspective, we might realize that His Love is still there; that one lifetime in a long series of lifetimes is similar, time wise, to a day in our present life _ and we all have bad days.

Once we understand the life, death, and rebirth cycle, we may still feel great sorrow at our loss, but the bitterness and questioning will, hopefully, be eased.

The field of psychiatry could be the most important area for the study of problems incurred in previous lives. Unfortunately, most doctors, because of their "scientific" training, refuse to even consider the possibility of reincarnation. Even if they did privately believe, fear of ridicule from their colleagues would prevent them from using this valuable tool. I remember my discussion with a doctor who used regression to childhood in his attempt to discover the reasons for current psychoses. It was at the time that I was in my first throes of exhilaration at discovering reincarnation. I asked him if he would regress me, not only back to childhood, but back to the womb and then further back to my life previous to this one. He answered, with a smirk; "Everyone knows that the neurological system in an infant is not developed enough to go back before age four or five. To the womb? To a previous life, if there is such a thing? Ridiculous!"

I was taken aback and simply left the room. My own recall and experience of previous events was too fresh in my memory to attempt an argument at that time. What most doctors fail to realize or understand is that we are born with two memory banks _ the mind, which starts recording from the moment of our birth, and the Soul, which started to record at its inception, thousands or possibly millions of years ago.

Fortunately, there are a few psychiatrists who recently have dared to come out in the open and put their patients' health ahead of their fear of criticism. Drs. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and Helen Wambach are two who have published books on their experiences and discoveries. They both found that certain problems they were attempting to treat could not be helped by a study of events in the patient's current life. It was only when they regressed the patient to a previous life were they able to discover the cause of the problem, and then cure it.

One case involved a man who could not hold a job because he could never make a decision. As a result, he constantly drifted from job to job. A study of his present life offered no clues as the reason for this disfunction. Until he was regressed to previous lives and it was discovered that in three lives he had been killed when, frozen with fear, he had remained immobilized when pursued by his enemies. Once the man relived these experiences, he was able to lead a normal life.

We all know people with talents that cannot be traced to any formal training in this lifetime. "He has a natural

talent for using his hands" or, He was born with a gift" are phrases often heard. Unfortunately, that is usually where the description ends for no one ever takes the next step of relating these talents and gifts as coming from previous lives. Most people simply accept the fact that they were born with natural abilities. Those of us who are deeply involved in past life exploration know how often people end up in the same type of career now as they had done in previous times. The sad part about it is that so many people are not using the talents and skills they had before but are struggling along in some job that they hate.

Career counseling based upon previous life experience would be an extremely useful tool for all of us. A great deal of unhappiness and ill health can be traced to the fact that so many people are in the wrong position. It is not necessary to take all the multitude of tests devised by psychologists to discover a person's true talents. We should go to the root of them _ to our other lives.

I have often thought how marvelous it would be if we could ever reach the point of enlightenment in this world where one of the courses required in all high schools was the discovery of our natural talents and abilities through regression.

For those who are intrigued enough by this answer to "So What?" to continue further on their own, let me offer two caveats. Personally, I do not believe completely in any life reading given by psychics or mediums. Perhaps they are correct, perhaps not. Their reading might give a clue to certain areas that should be probed. But the only experiences I accept as valid are those that come to me through dreams, meditation, or regression. When I can see the pictures and experience the emotions, I know they are my own.

The other caveat is that knowledge of previous experiences should never be used as a "crutch" or an excuse for blaming others for our own mistakes. We all have free will and an acceptance on our part for our own mistakes is a major step in rectifying them. The knowledge we gain is a learning process to be used for our future growth. Hopefully, this will lead to happier and more fulfilling lifetimes for us all.

The value and the amount of information to be derived from past life study is almost endless. We could discover the truth of historical events. We could untangle the mysteries and inaccuracies in the Bible. The whole subject is absolutely mind-boggling. However, I am not so naive as to think that we will ever advance that far in our enlightenment. If we do, I pray that I may reincarnate at that time and take part in it.

VAST CONNECTIONS
BEYOND ORDINARY KNOWING
by Dr. William Harper Houff Ph.D. A.I.M

Many years ago, a Unitarian Universalist minister named Waldemar Argow wrote something that, during this era of self-searching and institutional appraisal, regularly comes to my mind. I'd like to begin with a modest adaption of his words....

"We convene here as pilgrims on a mission _ as climbers on the mountain of truth and meaning. Only a few of us, however, persevere to the top. Carefully and courageously, even eagerly and joyfully, we walk the uncommon trails of human understanding and commitment.

"Almost all of us reach timberline, and some even venture onto the ice fields of the upper slopes. But there we stop short of the summit. With all of our free-spirited independence, we Unitarian Universalists often do not climb high enough in religion.

"Religion is ethics, yes, sociology and psychology and social action. It is reason and rationality and scientific search for truth. It is philosophy, certainly, and perpetual questions and tentative conclusions. It is unending concern for freedom and justice and human welfare.

"But religion is far, far more than these alone. It is a hunger for beauty and love and glory. It is wonder and awe, mystery and majesty, passion and ecstasy. It is emotion as well as mind, feeling as well as knowing, the subjective as well as the objective.

"It is the heart soaring to heights the head alone will never know; the apprehension of meanings science alone will never find; the awareness of values ethics alone will never reveal. It is the human spirit yearning for, and finding, something infinitely greater than itself which humans across the ages have called by many names.

"This much is required of every good and worthy person: that she or he climb at least to timberline. But what a pity if the climb goes no further! To know the high mountain grandeur of religion in all its sweep and glory, a person must dare to reach the summit and let the great winds beat upon them until there is felt the presence of something which is from everlasting to everlasting, world without end."

It is this "presence of something which is from everlasting to everlasting" that I would focus upon this evening...

Scarcely a week passes that some printed endorsement or elucidation of the Seventh Principle does not cross my desk at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver. "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

Since I esteem that principle above all the others _ this repeated emphasis pleases me. It promotes wholeness _ the very wholeness that the roots of the word religion are grounded in _ the same wholeness that mysticism, in its best sense, points to.

As the Seventh Principle is important, it also matters a great deal to me that the First Source of our living tradition is listed as, "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life."

This is compelling language, as useful as it is lyrical. And I am eager that we should begin to harness its possibilities...and expand them. For I intend no exaggeration when I say that, within our awareness of "that transcending mystery and wonder" lies the hope and future of our religious association _ and, in fact, of the entire human enterprise.

Now, in case this is beginning to sound like some argument for conventional theism, let me hasten to warn you that it is not. It is more than that! In our traditional images of God, we have over and over settled for too little, and that is why the idea of God has such a bad reputation among us.

As a scientist and as a mystic who tries to remain faithful to both disciplines, let me begin with my own experience _ experience not isolated from the experience of others, but experience, nonetheless, with which I can personally identify....

Every autumn at our permanent home in the woods north of Spokane, Washington, I pause in my goings and comings to appreciate the birds. This is the season when the swallows and starlings and blue birds are preparing to migrate. And they gather in great flocks that fly rapidly from one place to another, rather like a large school bus scurrying this way and that and gathering up a load of children.

What fascinates me about these huge congregations of birds is how they move as one bird. And how, in flight,

they likewise suddenly change direction all at the same time. I have studied them very closely and never once have I been able to figure out which bird initiates a massed flight or change in direction. I have never discerned a flight commander or signal-caller. The birds do what they do together _ in complete unison, as though they moved under the direction of a single mind. And, indeed, I have concluded that is exactly what they do.

This calls to mind those studies of social insects _ of creatures like termites, wherein thousands of single organisms cooperate in their separate tasks to promote the life of the colony. The people who investigate such beings tell us that each termite appears to know exactly what to do to construct a mound or tunnel, or to respond to an invader, or to take advantage of a newly discovered food source. Yes, I know about the evidence that odoriferous chemicals are important in these synchronized responses. But that in no way takes away from the mystery and wonder of the whole process. In fact, having been a chemist and knowing something about the complexity of these chemicals, I marvel all the more that they should have been evolved by something as seemingly rudimentary as a termite and that they found the function that they have.

Just as Albert Einstein used to see evidence of some cosmic intelligence within the order, simplicity and elegance of the micro-world of subatomic space and the macro-world of intergalactic space, so I glimpse similar connections within the world of living creatures. Indeed, the greatest wonder is not that this esoteric interdependence exists but that we seem so slightly aware of it. And yet, the evidence abounds on all sides....

When my good friend Sam Wright and his wife, Billie, lived in an isolated, one-room, log cabin in the trackless Brooks Range of Alaska, they knew when the caribou migration was coming their way. No, they didn't read it in the newspaper, nor get word from their short-wave radio, nor hear it from a wandering traveler. They knew! And their knowing was confirmed when they looked from their cabin down to the frozen surface of Big Lake and saw the beginning of a long line of caribou slowly snaking their way across the ice.

Before they went to Alaska in 1968, Sam and Billie had heard that the Inland Eskimos, who depended upon the caribou for survival, could sense in some mysterious way that the animals were coming. But they didn't put too much faith in such reports, until they had been there for a year or so and discovered that they, too, were developing the same powers of perception. More significantly, they also got so they could tell when a grizzly bear was prowling through their neighborhood. And that knowing was especially important, because the grizzly is king/queen of the realm and is accustomed to going where he/she wishes and taking what he/she wants.

Who among you has not had a similar experience? Who has not been sitting in a crowd, studying someone seated or standing some distance away, only to have that person turn their head very directly and look you in the eye? Who has not had a premonition to look in a certain direction, done so, and stared directly into the gaze of a stranger?

It occurs all the time. We do it, we have it happen to us, yet we dismiss it as merely one of life's coincidences.

Well, I am here this evening to tell you that coincidence is not a sufficient explanation. As a scientist, as a student of human nature, as one who knows too much to ignore what I know, I am here to assure you that we live in a cosmos of vast connections beyond ordinary knowing. And I think this is more than an unusual phenomenon which we should notice and then file away as a passing curiosity, because it points to and elaborates upon the most real fact of existence _ what we Unitarian Universalists now call, "the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

If we really believe our Seventh Principle, and if we really mean it about our First Source, then we need to consider the ramifications. It matters what pictures of the cosmos we carry in our heads, because those pictures not only affect how we see ourselves and treat one another, they also determine how we live.

As Marilyn Ferguson wrote in her now-classical *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, "We live what we know. If we believe the universe and ourselves to be mechanical, we will live mechanically. On the other hand, if we know that we are part of an open universe, and that our minds are a matrix of reality, we will live more creatively and powerfully. [But] If we imagine that we are isolated beings, so many inner tubes afloat on an ocean of indifference, we will lead different lives than if we know a universe of unbroken wholeness."

Most of us, when we think of the interdependent web of all existence, have in mind the ecological and evolutionary interrelatedness of planetary life...or the atomic and subatomic connections that the physicist tells us characterize all matter...or, perhaps, the lines of affection and understanding _ the believed community of memory and hope _ that we feel as binding all human beings together. And these, indeed, are essential aspects of the interdependent web, and we are right to respect and honor them.

But I am thinking of something more! I am thinking of lines of connectedness that are not ordinarily included within the so-called web of life, nor within the dynamic harmony that the physicists and chemists describe, nor within the bonds of affection and empathy. I refer to nothing less than that First Source of our living tradition: "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life." That is why I have titled this address: "Vast Connections

Beyond Ordinary Knowing."

I have in mind those realms of existence and experience that philosopher William Erwin Thompson meant when he said: "We are like flies crawling across the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. We cannot see what angels and gods lie underneath the threshold of our perceptions. We do not live in reality; we live in our paradigms, our habituated perceptions, our illusions; the illusions we share through culture we call reality, but the true...reality of our condition is invisible to us."

Invisible...most of the time? Yes! But not all of the time by any means! Let me hold up some examples for your inspection...and ask a few questions _ questions that most of you, as members and friends of the UU Psi Symposium have asked many times...

How does a test subject in a carefully designed and controlled experiment manage to "guess" correctly the symbol on a hidden playing card scores of times more often than the laws of chance would allow?

How shall we explain a man's dream wherein he "sees" his sea-faring father and hears him say, "I'm sorry" at the same time the father's ship is sinking four thousand miles away?

How did Edgar Cayce, who was not a physician, accurately diagnose illnesses and prescribe treatments by mail _ for thousands of patients whom he had never met?

By what mechanism does a psychic reader achieve a far-beyond-chance accuracy in telling the client before her of the details _ some profound, some trivial _ of that client's life?

How did test subjects at Stanford Research Institute manage to see and describe or draw sealed and coded pictures kept in another room of the laboratory?

Impossible, some say! Fraud! Simple coincidence! Let's move on to an entirely different class of experiences _ those that are or were more verifiable. For they, too, point to vast connections beyond ordinary knowing.

What was going on when University of California professor and cardiologist Randolph Byrd found in a computer-assisted, double-blind study of 393 coronary patients that those who were "prayed" for were five times less likely to require antibiotics, were three times less likely to develop pneumonia, and, by a zero to twelve margin, did not require tracheotomies and mechanical ventilators to avoid suffocation?

How shall we explain the so-called Spindrift experiments conducted under carefully controlled, double-blind conditions wherein some mung bean sprouts _ that's what I said: mung bean sprouts were "prayed over" and others were not and the "prayed over" sprouts grew faster and resisted environmental stress significantly better than the control sprouts?

Consider the Oak School experiment wherein Harvard psychologist Robert Rosenthal told the school's eighteen teachers which of 650 students had placed in the highest twenty percent on an IQ test and, at the end of the academic year, found by testing the students again that they had achieved the greatest increase in IQ. What the teachers did not know was that Rosenthal had set them up; the original twenty percent of "superior" students had been selected randomly; they represented a cross-section of the student body, yet they performed as if they were superior.

The obvious "explanation" in the Oak School experiment is "teacher bias" _ in one way or another, the teachers fairly or unfairly favored the allegedly gifted students. But what are we to say about another series of Rosenthal experiments wherein the students were rats? Or an entirely different study in which the test subjects were primitive earthworms called planaria? In both studies the animals did far better at their assigned tasks if the researchers believed that they were superior beings.

The common element in these studies is that the intentions of the healers or teachers or researchers appeared to play an extraordinary role in the recovery or growth or learning rates of the subjects, even though the subjects were unaware that they had been assigned a special or superior rating.

The common element in this disparate assortment of events is that there appear to be extraordinary connections or communications between separated living beings. Somehow, they have a significant effect upon one another that our everyday Newtonian-Cartesian understanding of the world would seem to forbid. Vast connections beyond ordinary knowing....

Now, let's move to the world of nature where ordinary or natural laws should especially apply....

Consider those marvelous hanging nests wrought by the Baltimore oriole. Where does the one-year-old oriole, who has never seen it done, learn how to construct such an intricate home?

Rupert Sheldrake, a British plant physiologist, has dared to suggest that the one-year-old oriole gets the information it needs by tapping into a field of information already out there in the cosmos _ a field of information put there by all the other Baltimore orioles who have built such nests. Sheldrake calls such a notion morphogenetic theory, and what he means by it is that we all swim in a great ocean of information or consciousness, which is available to us

in ways that we seldom suspect.

Let's consider some other pieces of evidence... In one episode among the hundreds reported, how did Bobbie, a female collie, traveling by car with her human family from Ohio to Oregon but lost in Indiana, nonetheless find her way to the new home in three months? Bobbie's case is noteworthy because a man named Charles Alexander decided to trace her route from Indiana to Oregon by placing ads in newspapers and got responses from a number of people who had cared for a stray collie of the same description. When Bobbie's course was plotted from these responses, it was found that she had picked "a very reasonable route."

Now, let's think about McDougall's rats... William McDougall was a Harvard psychologist in the 1920's. He was interested in whether white rats could inherit learned skills acquired by their parents _ something that is generally regarded as impossible. McDougall trained the first generation of rats in a special water maze finding that an average of 160 tries were required by the animals to learn the maze. Then, he tested their offspring, and they did better. The next generation did even better. By the time he got to the thirteenth generation, only 20 tries were needed on the average.

So controversial were McDougall's findings that other investigators carried out similar experiments using white rats, unrelated but of the same breed. The astonishing result was that these new subjects were much better at negotiating the same kind of maze right from the beginning. Somehow, the word seemed to have gotten around to the new rats on a totally different continent!

Now, I realize that, in a less sympathetic audience, this recitation of episodes and questions would tend to create a consensus to the effect that Bill Houff had finally slipped his moorings and gone off the deep end.

Such suspicions might more readily arise were it not for the fact that, before I became a UU minister, I spent ten years as a research chemist _ advanced degrees, published papers, patents, the whole nine yards. And what I have learned in more than a quarter of a century as a liberal minister is that Unitarian Universalists are far more likely to believe incredible assertions if they are cloaked in the authority of science than if they are presented in less linear ways.

That has always amused me as much as it has pleased me, because I know that much of what passes as science is at least as incredible as are other kinds of information. Somehow, a fantastic scientific theory can get the most solemn acceptance, while a parallel theological or mythological explanation is hooted down.

Consider how readily we accept the notion of a Big Bang _ the explosive emergence of the whole universe out of a singularity _ a point without dimension in time or space ...and yet, we find the Biblical account of creation superstitious and useless! Until recently, of course, the Big Bang was appearing to be more and more a badly flawed theory. But that was before George Smoot and his colleagues at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory came up with new evidence that not only confirms the Big Bang but prompted Smoot himself to enthuse, "...it's like looking at God."

Let's consider something else. Let's think about Bell's theorem. In our ordinary conception of a world made up of matter and energy, we tend to assume that matter comes in pieces which are separate and separable and that nothing _ particle or wave _ can travel faster than the speed of light. Yet, according to Bell's theorem, which has been proven experimentally, two subatomic particles dependent upon on another for certain properties but widely separated in space instantly communicate to one another when the properties of one particle shift.

Ever since Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* hit the best-seller lists fifteen years ago, the general public has increasingly known what the most erudite theoretical physicists have known for a half a century. The imminent British biologist J.B.S. Haldane put it very succinctly and correctly when he asserted that reality is not only stranger than we conceive but stranger than we can conceive. Using the pioneering discoveries of Einstein, De Broglie, Planck, Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrodinger and others, Capra drew a picture of a universe of intricate and dynamic connections _ a cosmos more nearly composed of events than of things. And he cited wonder upon wonder which, at least in their language, sounded more like the world of the ancient mystics than of Newton and Descartes.

Since Capra's book, students of such matters have gradually learned of an extensive and largely unknown literature containing the mystical writings of everyone of those pioneering physicists just cited. The astonishing aspect of many of these writings is that they not only describe a totally interdependent universe, but one in which the primary stuff is not matter at all, but something else. And that something else sounds like what Ralph Waldo Emerson called Divine Mind or the Oversoul.

Astronomer Sir James Jeans pronounced that the universe is more like a great thought than a great machine. His fellow scientist Arthur Eddington said, "The stuff of the universe is mind-stuff." Noble laureate physicist Eugene Wigner stated flatly, "We goofed. We will never understand the universe until we include consciousness."

And when we look back into the great mystical traditions, we see very similar sorts of understandings. Three ideas predominate _ one being the concept of a wholistic cosmos in which our everyday notions of separateness are

illusory, the second being that the basic stuff of the universe is better described by the terms consciousness or spirit than it is by the word matter, and three being that there is an intimate connection between the cosmic consciousness or great spirit and the consciousness of living creatures, especially perhaps humans.

In one of many substantiating citations, the Hindu Katha Upanishad says: "What is here is also there; what is there, also here. Who sees multiplicity but not the indivisible Self in all wanders on and on from death to death."

Taoist sage Chuang Tzu insisted, "I and all things in the universe are one." Meister Eckhart said, "Relation is the essence of everything" and "The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me." Hildegard of Bingen wrote, "God has arranged everything in the universe in consideration of everything else." Even in Hebrew Hasadism there is a saying: "All souls are one. Each is a spark of the original soul, and this soul is inherent in all souls." And our own Ralph Waldo Emerson was fond of saying, "I am part and parcel of God."

The mystical utterances go on and on. And hard-headed linear thinkers attempt to dismiss them as illogical or whimsical or lacking in scientific proof. But what are we to do with quantum mechanics pioneer Erwin Schrodinger: "I should say: the overall number of minds [in the universe] is just one." Or mathematician Kurt Godel, when asked if he believed that there is a single mind behind all the various appearances and activities of the world and which exists everywhere: "Of course. This is the basic mystic teaching." Or physicist Freeman Dyson: "I do not make any clear distinction between mind and God....God may be considered to be either a world-soul or a collection of world-souls. We [humans] are the chief inlets of God on this planet at the present stage of development." (I would add parenthetically that, if Dyson is correct, then we humans need to give a better accounting of ourselves. Perhaps we will as we discover who we really are....)

How exciting all of this is! While the physicists are looking for the so-called unified field theory that will include the four fundamental forces of the universe, the theologians and philosophers appear to be getting closer to postulating a theory of a unified consciousness that unites the cosmos into a single interdependent whole _ one that can be sensed by perhaps all forms of life.

Isn't that what existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger meant when he stated that: "A person is neither a thing nor a process, but an opening or clearing through which the Absolute can manifest [itself]." Or even novelist John Steinbeck in *Grapes of Wrath*: "Maybe a fella ain't got a soul of his own, but on'y a piece of a big soul _ the one big soul that belongs to ever'body." Last but not least, there is Alice Walker's Shug talking about God: "It ain't something you can look at apart from anything else, including yourself. I believe God is everything....Everything that ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found it."

So what am I getting at? I hope it's becoming clear by now. I'm suggesting that, from a great many sources and disciplines, modern and ancient, the conclusion is inescapable...What we call the mind or consciousness does not originate inside the head anymore than a television picture originates inside the TV set. Rather, the individual mind or consciousness is an expression of a universal mind or cosmic consciousness, and this, in turn, is the source of all that we call existence and which, more than anything else, is that ineffable spirit which shines through all living beings.

Considering the fondness with which Emerson is held in the esteem of millions of persons, isn't it amazing that some of his most evocative utterances have been all but ignored? How could we Unitarian Universalists have overlooked the implications of his patent assertions: "There is one mind common to all individual men" and "Mind is the only reality, of which men and all other natures are better or worse reflectors."

In a new book, *Recovering The Soul*, Larry Dossey, a physician who does a tour de force exploration of what he calls the "nonlocal mind" cites many of the examples I have just named and argues persuasively that such an idea brings clarity where there has been confusion and suspicion.

In a fascinating book, *The Miracle of Existence*, physicist Henry Margenau uses the term Universal Mind, and it becomes very clear that he is referring to what humans have called God, Tao, Brahman, Eternal Thou, Supreme Reality, Cosmic Consciousness and dozens of similar terms over the eons. Ever careful with his language, Margenau writes, "If my conclusions are correct, each individual is a part of God or part of the Universal Mind....Perhaps a better way to put the matter is to say that each of us is the Universal Mind but inflicted with limitations that obscure all but a tiny fraction of its aspects and properties."

Along with Emerson and an army of others, Henry Margenau believes what especially the Eastern religions have long taught _ that while our own divine nature is obscured by the physical limitations of our bodies and our lack of spiritual development, nonetheless we are conduits for that which is ultimate and infinite. And as the great spiritual traditions have shown, some of us _ called avatars _ are able to achieve great heights of insight, creative power and nobility of being. Among these avatars are Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Mohammed and a great multitude of others less widely published.

The upshot of such possibilities of understanding is truly mind-blowing. Besides helping us past our isolating

and dualistic ways of seeing ourselves in the world, radically new ways of comprehending creativity and spirituality and so-called paranormal experience are offered to us. We can, if we will, move with some integrity beyond the super-rational understandings that have left us mute and helpless before life's mysteries and esoteric happenings.

In another area, Aldous Huxley and other philosophers have often pointed out that throughout history those people most likely to engage in wars, inquisitions, crusades, and exploitation of the earth and its creatures are those who have separated themselves from the Divine Principle and then struggled to establish egotistical regimes of one stripe or another. Thus, one easily imagines that the injustice, exploitation and environmental assault that we see as an increasing peril to our tenure on this planet might become much less troublesome as we recognize and honor "the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part" and get in touch with "that transcending mystery and wonder, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life."

Perhaps at last we are ready to hear and heed the poetic wisdom attributed to Chief Seattle. Yes, I know that the Chief's actual words are lost to us, but the mythic and compelling nature of his alleged words still says something about our need to hear and heed: "This we know: the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth. This we know: all things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. We did not weave the web of life. We are a merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves."

What wide-awake person can doubt that in every respect humankind stands at a crossroads of sobering significance? As Joseph Campbell has said, "The old gods are dead or dying and people everywhere are searching, asking: What is the new mythology to be, the mythology of this unified earth as one harmonious being?"

I hear Campbell's question as a very special challenge to us Unitarian Universalists. Over and over, I find myself wondering whether we recognize the opportunity and the duty before us. What is the new mythology that we offer _ beginning with to ourselves? With our traditional emphasis upon openness to new truth, our devotion to justice and liberty, our newfound awareness of spirituality, and our affirmation of the interdependent web, we are in a position to spell out a metaphysics or cosmology which avoids the limitations of much traditional religion while synthesizing the best of ancient spiritual wisdom and the most liberating of modern thought into an inspiring and empowering vision.

At the beginning of this lecture I cited the Rev. Waldemar Argow's powerful challenge: "With all our free-spirited independence, we Unitarian Universalists often do not climb high enough in religion." One reason this is so is that we have come to believe that the head is a more trustworthy source of religious truth and practice than is the heart. In our fear of oppressive or incredible creeds, we have avoided giving answers to the great questions that religion at its best invariably asks and answers. Despite our vaunted trust in science, we have refused to do what authentic science must do _ venture into the unknown...and listen...and dare to speculate about what lies within that mystery. We need to remind ourselves that a science which posited no theories would not only become immobilized but would soon lose its credibility. The same is true of a religion similarly reticent.

And so I return to my point _ a point that Joseph Campbell made, too: "The whole living world is informed by consciousness." Everything alive has access to Rupert Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields, and perhaps, more remarkably, is adding its own experience to them. In that sense, we are all hundredth monkeys _ all co-creators of the cosmos.

As I hope the foregoing discussion has set forth with some authority, the leading edges of science and religion are increasingly agreeing on a holistic cosmos in which the basic stuff is more accurately described as consciousness than as matter. This is not only an intellectually credible notion, it also has enormous emotional and moral appeal.

We numerically few Unitarian Universalists have long fancied ourselves to be both saving remnants and creative catalysts. We might, therefore, especially appreciate the closing lines in Larry Dossey's book, *Recovering The Soul*: "If minds are nonlocal _ if individual minds communicate, if they are fundamentally part of a larger Mind that is boundless in space and time _ then there is hope that a few awakening minds can make a difference in the larger Mind of humanity."

Paradoxically and for too long, humans have shivered before the cruel fates of existence while discounting the consequences of their own decisions. Late in his career, in a lyrical utterance suggesting that we humans are co-creators of the universe, astrophysicist Arthur Eddington wrote: "Not once in the dim past, but continuously by conscious mind is the miracle of Creation wrought....All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness....We have found a strange foot-print on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the foot-print. And Lo! It is our own."

In conclusion, I leave you with those haunting and, dare I say, prophetic, words of T.S. Eliot from his poem, "Little Gidding,"

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

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