

November 10, 2000

Someone (I think it might have been Myron Dyal) once observed that where there are no gods there are ghosts. There is something innate in the human psyche that demands the supraphysical, either to believe in as a general concept or to have nearby and handy as a particular to reach out to and grasp in times of turmoil and confusion.

I did not know what I believed nor could I have articulated in what I wanted to believe or needed to believe. There were some things I knew, however, one of which was that, although I don't believe in ghosts as separate spectral entities, they certainly exist in the human consciousness, for I was continually haunted by them, and not by the smiling, friendly, Casper-type floating sheet. My ghosts were not playmates but creatures I was always trying to calm, to placate, in short, attempting to appease their wrath and deflect their anger before it arose, precisely as those of old did with their nationalistic deities.

That was what was on my mind that morning when I arose early and made for Stony Point, hoping for something different to occur. I encouraged this feeling when I arrived at my usual point of disembarking, suddenly deciding to push on a little further than normal. I pointed the front grill up an old dirt pathway and drove with care in the general direction of what I'd thought was a foresty glen arrangement, winding up instead in an old wash, a run-off for the rainwater that can fall rapidly, collect swiftly, and flow with unsuspected force in the mountains to the northwest of Los Angeles. This morning the wash was pretty well full, the surface of the water showing forth an inviting blue lucent tint. I was instantly attracted to it.

I stopped the car, got out, and scouted the terrain, locating a way down to the edge of the embankment near the water. Alchemically, water is referred to by the Latin *aqua vitae*, literally, "water of life" or "living water." The water of life plays a significant role in healing, a concept that will be familiar to Christians and Jews from such ideas as the healing waters of Bethesda and Siloam.

Feeling markedly unwell that day, I was seeking healing and was well aware that water is an excellent conductor of psychic energy. I was in one of those periods where nothing seemed to be going properly. Although not entirely certain of the cause, I strongly suspected an egotistical source, the human predilection to attempt to manipulate God.

Francis Bacon postulated the necessity of progressing along one's personal path by the setting up of axioms based upon prior experience, then testing the practicality and veracity of those axioms through experimentation, i.e., putting one's proverbial money where their mouth is by actually putting their theories into effect. One of my axioms states that the flow of energy through me must be allowed to move smoothly and make me one with its will and activity, rather than my impeding the flow and trying to bend it in other directions. Here lies the fundamental difference between the mystic and the occultist, the former seeking union with a higher will and direction

thereby while the latter is occupied with control of the energy itself to bring about changes in the world. Of course, both paths are equally viable and the choice is based upon personal consciousness and the exigencies of a particular life. My own consciousness is most definitely that of the mystic and, I like to think, that of the true mystic, not a Quietest puppet being blown hither and yon by every wind and wave and ascribing it to “God’s will” but one who takes an active part in their own evolution and taking that which is received metaphysically and bringing forth from it very tangible fruit.

As I stood at the wash, gazing down into the aquamarine stream flowing before me, I recalled a quote from the Bhagavad-Gita, which speaks of us as being “helplessly driven to action by the forces of nature.” This certainly defined how I was feeling. What I needed most at that time was to get into the river of life spoken of in *Siddhartha*, to immerse myself in the current of universal energy and go with it rather than swim against the tide and wind up foundering.

I sat, quieted my thoughts and emotions, and tried to meditate, showing myself receptive and available, but nothing happened. The water was flowing, the breeze was cool and refreshing, the surroundings tranquil and quiet. I opened my eyes and found another kind of meditation, complete absorption in the bustling little activity of a ground squirrel about his business on the other side of the stream. I entered into and shared the Zen moment of the small creature who was intently focused on gathering food for the coming winter.

When I withdrew from the attunement and was aware of a separation of consciousness between us, I pondered how wonderful it would be to have as my own possessions that total clarity of purpose and focus on what needed to be done. Of course, the problem for a human is that this cannot be a matter of instinct as with an animal; we have to deal with emotion and intellect, which we far too often permit to be hindrances rather than the tools for evolutionary growth they were intended to be.

After an hour of sitting on the ground, my legs ached, my back was stiff and complaining, I was still unable to concentrate and I had not connected with the energy of the water streaming by me. My mind was just racing too frantically. Finally I stood up and hiked along the stream, wanting to locate its source. As I walked, stones and clumps of sand rolled down the bank and plopped into the water, sending forth clusters of concentric rings riding on small lapping ripples. Their effect on me was the beginning of release to the subtle whisperings of the unconscious and I was adjusting myself to this when I caught sight of someone along the bank, standing next to a tree. More caught up in what was transpiring within than without, I invested very little attention in whomever it might have been.

I noted the brush was getting thicker, impeding me to the point I had to alter my route slightly inward to bypass the areas of sturdier growth. Even so, I continued to be smacked in the face by the resilient branches that seemed to snap back at me with greater force than I used to shove them out of my way. Quite a bit of effort, inasmuch as I hadn’t the slightest idea what I expected to find or to happen when I reached the source of this miniature river, nor did I really care. As I trudged along, I heard a voice, a sort of rumbling sound positioned to my rear. I turned around. No further than twenty feet from me was the man I had spotted earlier.

I was a little nervous, all alone in that kind of setting with a stranger. I was of three minds, trying to decide whether to approach him, walk away, or simply wait for him to make the first move. Fortunately he took the initiative, calling me by name.

Startled, I asked if he knew me.

“Why certainly I know you,” he replied.

Certainly? I had never seen this person, had no idea who or what he was.

“Good morning,” I said, keeping it neutral. “Is there something I can do for you?”

“No,” came the immediate answer, “but there is something I can do for you.”

“What is that?”

“Back there at the mouth of the stream, you had an opportunity that you let get by; you shouldn’t have.”

“Pardon me?” I asked. “I did what?” I hadn’t been aware of any opportunities.

“Yes, you heard me. You had an opportunity there and you let the distractions of the world keep you from connecting to your energy, so I am here to tell you that you missed an opportunity that you should not have passed by.”

I asked him to explain the nature of this missed opportunity.

“You took the abundant energy that is all around you, that is a free gift and you ignored it. Further, you focused on the trivial and mundane, you walked away from the vortex of power, a power that was right there, waiting for you.”

Well, I didn’t want to hear any more of that. I turned aside to walk away, then hesitated and turned back around. He was gone. I considered backtracking to try to ascertain if he had been correct. Perhaps I could return to the place and the moment and connect with the vortex of which he spoke and accomplish what I had been drawn to the mountain to do.

I headed back downstream, following the shoreline as closely as was possible, treading over the rocks when necessary, enjoying the sparkling of the sun against the blue-green water. I was mulling over the admonishment concerning missing the opportunity to attune with the energy vortex when I felt myself losing my footing. I stumbled and plunged right down into the stream, soaking my pants and shoes.

I reached out to steady myself on a mossy rock. My hand slipped and my arm was buried in water. I pulled myself up and got out of the stream, throwing myself down on the ground and hoping I was steamed up enough to dry out the natural way.

I was mad. I'd expected something unusual from the day and it was turning out to be another series of experiences where Myron's Law held sway – anything that could go wrong did with the addition of people only I could see and hear and, in general, more colorful and definitely weirder than anything old Murphy had ever had to put up with.

I decided to get out of there and leave the mountain and the vortex and everything else behind me. While playing with that thought, I saw the man again, laughing this time, which I did not appreciate. Then I was swept by a wave of depression. I didn't say anything to the man, not wanting to confront him or, really, to interact with anyone, preferring to be left alone to wallow in the deliciousness of self-pity and unnecessary grief. All I wanted was to get back to the car, head for a restaurant, and feed my stomach as I was feeding my need for self-flagellation.

The man turned directly to me, fastening upon me the gaze of two eyes that glowed with unmistakable power. The face surrounding the eyes was of chiseled features, seemingly hewn out of rock, strong and forceful yet with a gentle quality that offered assurance.

“You know,” he said, keenly aware of my deepening depression, “if you can't laugh at yourself, you are never going to be free of these demons.”

“What do you mean, free of these demons? I laugh at myself all the time.”

Even as I spoke the words, I rebuked myself for the lie. I never laughed at myself at all. In fact, I took myself so seriously that I had come to the mountain to make the blatant attempt to manipulate energy for the express purpose of having a spiritual experience.

“Just find a way not to take yourself so seriously.”

Then he asked if I had ever heard of the trickster.

I replied in the affirmative. It was an old myth, a fixture in the folklore of just about every society.

“That's not what I'm talking about,” he retorted. You have been tricking yourself your whole life. You have not accepted responsibility for who you are, what you are. You haven't lived up to your potential and generally you have been a fuck-up.”

I was taken aback by his blunt language. Although I was still uncertain as to the actual nature of this episode, I was fairly confident the one speaking to me was part of a visionary experience and such unusually plain talk was not a typical feature of my visions. But maybe it was needed to get through to me.

He laughed. I knew I had problems and I was very aware of my ineptitude without his beating it into the concrete. His laughter played itself out and he once again assumed an attitude of seriousness.

“Let’s go back to that vortex,” he said.

I wrung out my pants legs as best as I could and stalked back the way I had come. It took a few minutes to arrive at the spot. Although he was nowhere to be seen, I intuitively knew it was the place he had been referring to. I sat down, across the stream from where my black Thunderbird was parked.

I waited for over an hour, until 2:00 PM. He hadn’t returned, the water was flowing, everything else looked to be in order but nothing out of the ordinary was happening nor appeared likely to. I turned around to leave, immediately noticing my car was gone. Someone had stolen my beloved T-Bird!

I scrambled to the top of the ridge, looked around frantically in the hope the car had merely slipped the emergency brake and rolled out of my view. But the car was gone. I continued to look around when the stream vanished. Fright welled up in my throat, my head began to spin, my eyes blurred, the world was turning itself inside out right in front of me.

I was unable to recall how the world was supposed to look, and its forms were transforming even as I looked at them. I was nauseous, terrified. All semblance of reality had escaped me. I tried to block out this new world of madness by shielding my eyes with my hand, but my hand was invisible, transparent.

An anxiety attack set in and I began to hyperventilate and felt myself blacking out. Then calm imposed itself, order returned to the world, a cool wind began to blow, calming me and I knew without explanation that this was emanating from the vortex my vanished companion had spoken about.

It was as a breath of peace itself, winding itself about me then assuming a form of its own, a nebula, a galaxy. I was now in state of connection with the vortex’s energy, and could see it’s colorless, two-dimensional manifestation all around me. I was transported into a condition of absolute peace and calm, one with all things and they with me.

All I felt was unity, harmony without differentiation, complete wholeness that beckoned me stay forever. I did not have to be coaxed; I had no desire to part with this extraordinary state of consciousness. I wanted to retain forever this feeling of purity and perfection. Some distance from me I witnessed the approach of a person, a being, coming my way.

I could just barely discern its features, tall and wearing a black cloak, borne upon the wind and altering its shape apparently at will. It headed straight for me, made contact, then seemed to merge with me, making me one with it.

This entity took me with it to a flat plain, perhaps one hundred fifty miles in size, with mountains on the horizon. The sandy floor was hot and I felt the hardness of rocks as I began to walk, the

stones feeling as though they were puncturing my shoes. I was also tripping over the rocks, the pain and feeling of the impacts making me realize I was now barefoot. I continued walking, suddenly seeing a line of beings stretched across the field of my vision, changing from a stationary position to one of whirling like dervishes, looking from that distance like a dust storm.

They were moving in my general direction but there was still a great deal of real estate separating us. They were still specks against the landscape when they swirled their way up into the sky. I barely had time to feel the first pangs of fear when the vortex disappeared, restoring everything to the way it had been.

My car had returned, as had the stream, a small eddy of dust spinning around on the bank. I carried the feeling of fear back into the real world with me, but this time it had a vague generality about it, not specifically connected to my vision or anything else. Another point of connection was the fact that, somehow, my shoes had been removed, undoubtedly by myself.

My watch read 4:00 PM. Two hours had slipped away. Not surprisingly I was not feeling well. I returned to my car, slipping back down the hill a few times in the attempt. The familiar solidity of the car was very reassuring that I was, indeed, back in the world of actualities.

Still slightly disoriented, I got into the car, made a u-turn, and returned home for yet another session of searching for answers and jotting down the conclusions in my journal.