

CREATION

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . .

*from the Bible;
John 1:1.*

Last time we talked about God. This time we will continue, albeit in a way you would probably not expect. Sit back and enjoy! We'll start with a story.

It seems an English reporter in the early part of the twentieth century was sent to India on assignment by his paper to dig up anything he could on the occult. For years the British in India had been alternately horrified and fascinated by what seemed to be amazing psychic feats displayed by various of the indigent gurus and fakirs of India. Our young man was to ferret out the truth of the matter and report back to his paper.

According to the story, while wandering through a bazaar in Madras, our reporter was approached by an old man who hippered up to him and said, "I know why you are here, and if you will give me ten pounds I will show you what you want to see."

The journalist, being a seasoned traveler, bargained the man down to a few shillings, then said OK. The old fellow hurried off and came back within minutes carrying a large, red gas can. Opening the can he bade the reporter to smell the contents. The Englishman took one whiff only to gag on the unmistakable aroma of gasoline. Satisfied with the paroxysmal coughing of his prey, the old fakir proceeded to douse himself from head to foot with the contents of the can, then politely requested a match. Our reporter hesitated at first, then figured the old fellow wasn't crazy and wouldn't do anything stupid. Pulling out a box of matches, he offered the old guy his pick.

The fakir took one match, stepped back, struck the match, and with a horrifying whoosh went up in flames. The reporter was so dumb-struck by this turn of events that he

just stood there, watching what he knew would soon be the charred remains of the old fellow, blazing away right before his eyes.

It was just at that point that a very large mosquito, one of those bombers India seems to specialize in, landed with a thud on the reporter's neck. Though it certainly wasn't the main focus of his attention at the time, the reporter acted out of reflex and smacked the monster, giving himself a fairly good wack upside the head in the bargain.

The impact so jarred him that the illusion before him vanished. The flames around the fakir instantly disappeared, and there before our reporter stood a very sheepish conjurer, soaked from head to foot in . . . water!

The reporter was able to garner the following information from the fakir as they talked after the fact: It seems that from the time he was four years old, the fakir's father had made him practice various yogic disciplines designed specifically to train and focus the mind. Using that training, the fakir had developed the ability to project such a completely focused, realistic series of mental impressions that those he directed them toward "saw" the illusions he'd created with his mind. The smelling of the gasoline in the can; the sight, sound, feel, and smell of the fire consuming the fakir's body, they were all mental illusions. The Englishman had stood dumbfounded in their grip until the mosquito landed and, with the slap of the hand, the overall illusion had been broken.

That was the Englishman's first introduction to the possibility that *thought* could be projected forcefully and coherently, and that *thought* had a kind of energy associated with it that could physically affect something like his own mind.

The Englishman didn't believe the fakir. Being skeptical, he believed that the fakir had somehow hypnotized him in the few moments between their first words and the first illusion. That suspicion was torpedoed just a few weeks later when the reporter happened upon another fakir doing the famous *Indian rope trick* in an open-air square.

In that illusion, a rope is seen to uncoil like a snake from a basket and rise upward twenty or thirty feet into the air by itself. A boy then climbs the rope and disappears out of sight at the top, only to be followed by the fakir. At the end, both come back down the rope and that is that.

The reporter arrived on the scene halfway through the illusion—the boy was already partially up the rope. There were several hundred people watching including British soldiers. At the back of the crowd were a number of civilian Englishmen, two of whom were

preparing to take a picture of the proceedings. After the boy had climbed up the rope and the fakir was in the process of following, they took their shot.

Interested in the outcome, our reporter introduced himself and said he would like to see the final picture. The photographers were glad to oblige. Upon completion of the developing, he was invited to examine it. What he found was an excellent picture of the market area, the back of several hundred heads (the camera was at the rear of the area), the fakir *not* climbing the rope but rather standing on the ground next to *the boy* who had supposedly already up the rope, and the basket out of which the rope seemed to have come. In addition, he *didn't* see the rope extending thirty feet into the air . . . in fact, the rope was laying on the ground next to the basket.

As far as the reporter could tell, the whole scene in the square had been nothing more than a giant mental illusion that the fakir had projected at the crowd. It was as though the conjurer's thought had permeated the market place as light permeates a darkened corner. Having walked into the affair by accident, the reporter distinctly saw the rope in place and the fakir climbing up (no time for hypnosis—he just walked around a corner and there was the sight), but the photograph did not lie. What he saw was *not* what was really there. Just as had been the case with the earlier fakir, the whole thing had been a mentally projected illusion.

What is to be made of all this?

Aside from the fact that we are talking about things scientists would find absolutely aberrant (i.e., the possibility that there may be abilities dormant within humans that science knows nothing about), the tendency of most people when reading a story like the one above is to assume that someone is pushing a hoax.¹

Did it actually happen?

The only honest answer anyone could possibly give to a question like that is, "Who knows?"

¹ Try as I might, I've not been able to find the book from which I read this tale, so I can't quote chapter and verse, thereby giving skeptics the chance of finding the source and manufacturing ten thousand reasons why the account couldn't have been true. There are accounts of similarly unusual happenings mentioned in Henry Olcott's Old Diary Leaves and Ernest Wood's Seven Schools of Yoga, not to mention numerous other books written by travelers in India as late as the 1930's. I would imagine all such authors are considered questionable sources by skeptics, but for the life of me I can't tell if the stories are suspect because of the authors or the authors are suspect because of the stories. In any case, try as the skeptics will to discredit anything along these lines, there is a considerable body of personal recollection that tends to support at least the chance that such things are possible.

What is important is that the East fervently believes that such things are possible—that *thought* has energy (i.e., the ability to do work), that it can affect matter, and that thinking produces substantive thought-forms that do not cease to exist once formed. In short, *thought* is believed to have a reality of its own.

If the East is correct, some interesting prospects arise from this line of reasoning. Assuming conditions are correct, Western science has found that it is possible to create matter in a vacuum by simply irradiating the void with the right amount of energy. In other words, energy and matter are two forms of the same thing (Einstein called matter *frozen energy*).

The East goes even further. It maintains that a focused, trained mind can form the mental matrix of the understructure of a physical object so completely that the energy residing in that thought can effectively clothe the matrix in material substance. In other words, it believes that human thought has within it the possibility of materializing physical form.²

You need to realize that this is considerably different from what western science believes is possible with the manipulation of energy. To begin with, the creation of matter in a physics lab is on the *subatomic level*. What's more, *two* particles come into existence with mass creation—a particle and its anti-particle. That is wholly different from creating a macroscopic object a la the East. Nevertheless, who is to say where the bounds of man's knowledge ends and his ignorance begins. Maybe there are aspects of the mass/energy relationship about which we do not yet know.

As far as the East is concerned, such things are possible.

Are there instances in history where evidence for such a possibility might exist?

Clearly the best-known historical example of the supposed creation of *something* from apparently *nothing*, at least within the Western world, is Christ's creation of the fishes

² Minor point: A common misconception amongst Westerners and Easterners alike is the belief that if someone has the ability to do phenomenal things, the individual must be terribly spiritual. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are said to be Dhuggpas—members of one of the many orders within the red-hat Tibetan Buddhist tradition—who are very powerful along these lines but who are very dark in their actions. Their powers come from years of severe mental disciplines; their goal is to have and exercise power over others.

The really responsible Teachers in the East do not steer their followers toward the accumulation of powers. Powers are *not* a sign of spirituality.

and loaves mentioned in the *Bible*. It is a touchy example to cite because there are Christians who derive their spiritual security from the belief that Christ was the *only* Son of God—a belief they support by pointing to His ability to do miracles. Not surprisingly, individuals in those sects of Christianity are not generally appreciative of any suggestion that Christ's miracles were anything to the contrary.

What they unfortunately ignore is the fact that history is full of stories about remarkable individuals who were able to do things deemed miraculous. Appolonius of Tyana, for instance, is reputed to have vanished into thin air before several hundred witnesses at the conclusion of an audience with the Roman Emperor Domitian around 90 AD. His prominence was so great that it drove early Christians to suggest that he had been sent by the devil solely to confuse and shake the faith of later Christians, even though the quality of his demeanor and works suggests he was a very benevolent man.³

It is quite possible that miracles seem miraculous because we don't understand the phenomena being animated. That doesn't mean such phenomena are beyond the natural laws that govern the physical world; it may mean we simply don't know all there is to know, or for that matter, understand fully the little of which we think we are familiar.⁴

Skeptics nevertheless object to the idea that man's thought has the ability to affect things, much less actually materialize objects. "If it's possible," they demand, "Why can't *I* do it?"

It is a good question. It can be best answered with the help of the following exercise. Take a few minutes to read the following, then try it.

- a.) Close your eyes (don't cover them) and visualize blackness.
- b.) Once you have a completely steady darkness, create a point of light at the top of your mental field. Hold it steady for approximately half a minute.
- c.) After successfully completing step "b," use the lighted dot to slowly draw the three sides of an equilateral triangle.
- d.) Hold the lighted triangle steadily in place for five minutes.
- e.) Do this once a day for a month.

³ See G.R.S. Mead's book Appolonius of Tyana, or Manly Hall's The Phoenix.

⁴ This sentiment is not solely Eastern. St. Augustine said, "Miracles do not happen in contradiction to nature, but in contradiction to that which is known to us in nature."

It is amazing the number of people who aren't able to complete this exercise. Either they can't visualize the black backdrop, or they can get the backdrop but can't make the dot sit still. If they can get the dot to cooperate, they can't get it to form the equilateral triangle. If they can get the triangle, they can't stop the blasted thing from dancing, bending, and swaying. And if they *can* accomplish all they are supposed to do in the first sitting, the chances are excellent they will not be able to settle their mind enough in subsequent days to successfully reconstruct the visualization.⁵

Why? Because most of us simply don't have that kind of control over our minds.

What is surprising is that this exercise is child's play in comparison to some of the meditations that exist within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The Tibetans have extremely intricate, symbol laden religious paintings called *mandalas*. In the old days, it was not unusual for a Tibetan monk to meditate for long periods of time on these mandalas (in fact, they still do today though no longer in the seclusion of Himalayan monasteries). Each was expected to train his mind to the point where he could begin blacked out, then proceed to mentally create bit by bit an entire mandala in his head. Once created, the finished product was to be held absolutely steady while the monk meditated upon the significance of the various parts of the design. (The photo shown is of a *thangka*, or painted mandalas on silk, that I bought while I was in Nepal in the 1980's—they don't come framed, I did that out of ignorance as its original form had nothing more than a piece of silk to cover it, and it probably should have stayed that way. In any case . . .)

The purpose of the training was to help each monk in his attempts to better understand himself and the universe. And although it had the potential to bring powers, it was (and still is) considered an inferior use of the mind to use it for the *projection* of phenomenal powers. Their tradition nevertheless serves to give Westerners an inkling of what it means when the East talks of a focused, steady mind. It additionally answers our skeptical friends' questions about why they can't play too, along with providing an explanation as to why everyday people aren't mentally swamping one another with palpable thought-forms (not to mention materialize physical



⁵ I realize this seems contrary; we will talk more about meditation and mental disciplines later.

objects at every turn).

Relatively ancient disciplines within the East do exist that help an individual train his or her mind, but the disciplines are extremely difficult and not emphasized by truly responsible spiritual teachers. People, it is said, have bigger and better things to worry about, cosmically speaking, than developing powers they probably wouldn't be able to handle, ego-wise, if they had.

And as for those who say, "I could do so much good with that kind of power," the suggestion that comes out of the East is "Think again." You and I could do "so much good" with the powers of reason and kindness that we already have at our disposal, but how often do we exercise those qualities purely for the benefit of others without strings attached?

There is an excellent chance that there is more to living than meets the eye. There is an even better chance that if mental powers do exist, humanity doesn't yet command them for a very good reason.

One last thing: It's time to talk about God.

"In the beginning was the Word (the *utterance* from the Aramaic *miltha*⁶), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," says the *Bible* (John 1:1). And what is an utterance? It is the manifestation of *thought*.

The ancient Greeks during their Golden Age suggested a similar possibility. Anaxagoras was a Greek philosopher of the time who was known to be an initiate of the Eleusinian Mystery Schools.⁷ In his writings he alluded to God as *Nous*—the Greek word for *MIND*.

And in the very ancient Vedic tradition out of India, it is said that the *Divine Mind*—a single, all powerful, all inclusive Being—*thought the worlds into existence*.

⁶ New Testament books were written in Greek with other early translations in Syriac, Coptic and Latin. Some scholars recognize the shadows of Aramaic idioms in Greek as is the case here.

⁷ The Mystery Schools seem to have been deeply secretive philosophic and spiritual centers of learning within the ancient world. Although there is not a lot known about them for sure (and there is controversy about what we *do* know), many of the renowned figures of antiquity were evidently members. Mystery schools were known to flourish in Greece, Persia, Egypt, and Britain, and some believe they also existed in India and the Americas. We will talk more about them later.

The idea is not without merit, as you will soon see. "But thought?" you say. "What are the odds that something as ephemeral and wispy as *thought* could be the substance that upholds our universe?"

Have you ever had a dream that was so clear and vivid and totally involving that while you were in the experience it *was* your reality? If so, what you were so totally immersed in was a thought (or a series of them). The idea of *thought* creating apparently substantive worlds isn't as bizarre as it sounds.

So what is the East suggesting? It is believed that the thoughtful meditation of the Divine Mind (God) not only: 1.) generated the *blueprint* for the mechanisms from which creation and evolution were to come, complete with the *astounding precision* Davies wondered about in the last chapter, but also 2.) provided through the very quality of Its thought the *energy* that was to become with-a-bang the *stuff* of the physical universe.

How does this relate to you and me?

When it said, "God made mankind *in Its image*," it is probably that the *Bible* didn't mean that there is some giant guy flying around out there, happily creating universes, who just happens to look like you and me. If the East is correct, the God-like quality that is imaged in humankind is wrapped up in our ability to *think creatively* (that *is* what sets humans apart from the other animals). According to the East, what Beings at the human level are learning to deal with on this planet is how to exercise the creative forces of *thought*—the very same forces (obviously, to an infinitely lesser degree) that God animated when it *thought the worlds into existence*.

Put another way: This belief maintains that you and I are constantly creating whole universes as we think. They don't manifest in ways that are noticeable, thank God, because we are so mentally scattered that they can't. But they are there and they are ours. Furthermore, we are *responsible* for our creations. Why? Because only through taking responsibility will we come to learn to deal with *freedom of will*—that other characteristic that must be available to any Being that would be truly creative.

Bottom line: If this view is on target, humans are learning to deal with *the freedom to create in a cosmic sense through their ability to think*. And if that be the case, it shouldn't be surprising to find instances where individuals have foreshadowed the powers of creation through thought that lie dormant in humans, even if it is only in the form of a little old man apparently going up in flames in an attempt to amuse an Englishman.