



**The Unknown
Connection:**
**SPIRITUALITY, THE PARANORMAL
AND YOU**

by **Phyllis E. Sloan, Ph.D.**

The Unknown Connection: Spirituality, the paranormal and you

by

Phyllis E. Sloan, Ph.D.

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“God has placed a torch in your hearts that glows with knowledge and beauty; it is a sin to extinguish that torch and bury it in the ashes.”

— Kahlil Gibran

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Preface

This book is about “psi” phenomena. Psi events or experiences are those that we call paranormal, psychic or supernatural. Psi events include, but are not limited to: precognitions or prophecies, sightings of unexplained events, visions, psychokinesis (movement of objects for no apparent reason), intuition, clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, dreams, spirit communications, out-of-body experiences, sightings of apparitions, levitation, and psychic readings. A more recent “psi” category is that of the “missing time” phenomenon which people who claim to have been abducted by extraterrestrials experience.

It is a common belief among researchers in this field, who are called psychical researchers or parapsychologists, that all of the aforementioned terms refer to the same general process which is called ESP (extrasensory perception) manifesting itself in different ways. The terms psi, paranormal and supernatural will be used interchangeably in this book when referring to various phenomena.

This book consists of three main sections: (1) the psi experiences of extraordinary spiritual leaders or shamans, (2) the psi experiences of ordinary people and (3) a survey of the paranormal experiences of ordinary people.

I interviewed six shamans, and retold the story of one, Brother Andre, long deceased, but whose healings are widely known and documented. Most modern dictionaries of the English language define a “shaman” as: 1) a medicine man; or 2) one, acting as both priest or holy man and doctor, who works with the supernatural. The persons whom I call shamans all fit this definition. I have included two female shamans because they fit the definition of shaman, except for gender. Each of the shamans has a special spiritual gift or several gifts which they use to heal or help others. Five of the shamans are presented here using their actual names. Two of them, however, Reverend Clarence and Reverend Chloe, chose to tell their stories but remain anonymous because of the general non-acceptance of their

spiritual gifts and shamanism by the Western World and because they have dual occupations.

This book is a revision of my doctoral dissertation, which, originally, related the experiences of three shamans and fewer ordinary people. The Interviews with the shamans spanned the years 1993 through 2003.

What led me to write this book? I have been turned off by the dicta and dogma of most orthodox religions for a very long time. I was raised as a Baptist in Gary, Indiana. Most of what I learned in church and Sunday school would have stood the test of time had I not been a curious soul. I wondered about other religions and about what they believed and why we all seemed to believe something different, all over the globe. Everyone is taught that their religion is superior to all others and people who believe differently are going to burn in hell or suffer some alternatively horrible fate.

Another religious issue that bothered me was the belief that God has so-called "chosen" people. Aren't we all "chosen", since God created us all? Do we really believe that God plays favorite child? I don't think so. God even loves her wayward children, unconditionally. Then, there's that other thing about acknowledging the founders of some of the more well known religions and going through them or be damned to eternal Hell. Suppose you never heard of Jesus or Buddha or Mohammed or Zoroaster or anyone who founded a religion. Suppose you lived in a remote area in the jungles of Wherever and no missionary dared set foot upon your land. Would you be damned to Hell by God just because of where you lived or would God accept you into Heaven even if you never heard of some of these prophets and founders of religions? Also, what about pre-history? Man existed before churches were established. What about all those millions of souls? Most of the founders of our major religions had not yet been born? Did God make them wait for the advent of those men? Would God's word have been revealed if they had not been born?

Neither religions nor science had all of the answers for me. Religions put locks upon my mind because they dictate beliefs that you should not question, lest you burn in Hell. But, I did have questions and I didn't think that God gave me a brain just to let someone else pour their

beliefs into it and have me "eat the whole thing raw". I embarked upon a lifelong quest for knowledge about God, life and its purpose, and more personally, who I am and what I am supposed to be doing here.

Science, on the other hand, believes it can find the answer to most questions, which life poses. The scientific method has its place and is well suited for researching and finding out truths about the material world, but ill-suited when it comes to explaining spiritual phenomena. So, what does science do when it comes to matters of the soul, mind-body phenomena, God and the unseen? I think many scientists are angry because they cannot explain spiritual matters. These matters fall outside the safe, narrow confines of the scientific method and they, therefore, debunk any notion of the supernatural as being "unscientific" as if being "scientific" is the requisite template for *all* knowledge.

My search for truth led me in many directions. I attended various churches, studied various philosophies and religions. I even studied how to give and receive spiritual messages in a spiritual science church. One of the chapters on ordinary people describes a one-day workshop, which I held on learning how to receive and give spiritual messages or *channel*, as it is called.

More compelling evidence that God exists and that life is everlasting was given to me through an experience many years ago which most people would call eerie or just plain scary. At the time that it happened to me, I really did not know what to make of it, so I told no one at the time because I did not know how it would be received.

I was twenty-something at the time and I was living in Chicago. It was very cold and snowy on this particular day. The thermometer read seventeen degrees below zero. I had just moved into my apartment over the weekend and this was my first day of work at a new job. I had very little furniture and utensils. To be exact, I had a sewing machine table, a sewing machine, a radio, a few dishes, a couple of glasses, two sets of eating utensils, a skillet and one medium sized pot. That was all. I had my clothes and some bath needs, sheets and toiletries. Where did I sleep? Even though it was a one-bedroom apartment, I slept in the living room because there was an old-fashioned bed-in-the-wall that came with the apartment. At night, I opened the closet

doors and let down the bed for the night. The bed also served as a seat for eating meals because I used to pull the sewing machine table over to the bed and eat off it. If I had a guest for dinner, he or she would sit on the sewing machine case on the other side of the table.

On this cold and snowy day, I was exhausted after coming home from work. I pulled the bed down from the wall and decided to take a nap before I went out to dinner with a friend. The apartment was very cold because the heat had been turned down all day. I decided to heat up the apartment quickly, so I turned on all of the jets on the stove and I lit the oven and let it stay in the open position to maximize the heat distribution. I got into bed and closed my eyes. I don't really know how much time had elapsed before I heard my telephone ringing and I decided to answer it even though I didn't feel like talking. I opened my eyes and I was not in my bed. I was floating in a perfectly blue, cloudless sky! I was outside of my body! I could still hear my telephone ringing and I began to panic. Suddenly, I felt myself going back into my body at a point between the back of my head and the top of my neck! It felt like water flowing back into a vessel. Several times I tried to move my body, but I could not; I panicked even more. I must have tried to move several times, but my body felt too heavy to move. I couldn't budge it. My body felt like a herd of elephants was standing on it; that's how heavy it felt in comparison to the lightness of being outside my physical body. I must have fully connected with my body several moments after I tried to move it because suddenly I was able to move it. I rolled off the bed onto the floor. I smelled gas! I crawled over to the window and threw it open. The phone was still ringing, so I answered it. It was my boyfriend. He sounded very upset. He said, "What's wrong? I let the phone ring about forty times. Are you alright?" I really did not know how to tell him what had just happened, so I just said, that I was fine and that I had been asleep. I didn't want him to worry about me. I knew that I had not been asleep. That was no dream. I felt everything and saw everything with a clear mind, both inside and outside my body.

People were not talking about out-of-body experiences then; but I came to realize, years later, that was what I had experienced. I know that God took me out of my body

for a reason. Yes, I almost died, but I am convinced that God was showing me that there is more to life than our material world and that God let me return to Earth to complete my karmic goals. It was both a lesson and a warning. There were things, which I needed to change in my life.

Other experiences ensued after that out-of-body episode which involved a dream, which led to financial gains, a heightening of my intuitive sense, various unusual visual abilities among other phenomena. I started a day care center once and I had a dream, which led me to a place where I could get free equipment and supplies. I followed through on the information that God had given me through a dream and sure enough, I received about four thousand dollars worth of free equipment: desks, lockers, chairs and tables. The only supplies and equipment that I had to buy were the sleeping cots and a commercial stove. It was a tremendous help and the money that I saved helped me to keep the center afloat for the first several months.

Since then, I have had several spiritual experiences, some of which fall into the category of premonitions. I have had friends and relatives tell me about their experiences which I describe as 'psi' experiences. They include smelling scents which were not actually present, having dreams come true, and other types of paranormal experiences.

In many cultures it is not unusual to see someone who has died, to receive a communication from the other side via dreams or actual episodes of altered reality states or to just have strong feelings or hunches about people or impending events. But, in the Western World, we tend to look askance at those who have these feelings or experiences. Fear of ridicule or worse leads us to suppress our reporting of these very common experiences. The third section of this book, which includes a survey of paranormal experiences among ordinary people shows that many people have these experiences. They are just told to ignore them, doubt their veracity or just chalk it up to a "hallucination".

I hope that the testimonies of the shamans, the ordinary people and the survey results will help to dispel the shroud of mystery and taboo which surrounds psi phenomena. We all have an intuitive intellect which a part of our hard-wired equipment at birth. Using it would help us to understand a great deal more about our universe and our-

selves than we could ever know through either science or religion, alone.

Chapter 1

Introduction



Knowledge in the Western world is defined and limited by what you can see, feel, touch, hear or smell and is only considered real or verifiable if someone else can have an identical experience and report the same results. Modern science defines and limits human knowledge to the physical outer world of measurable events. Rationality, observability, measurability, repeatability, and concurrence are the criteria which the scientific community requires. Physical evidence is all that science will accept as reality.

This book posits that the scientific method of inquiry sets limits on knowledge and that there are degrees of perception and other ways of knowing which cannot be investigated within the narrow confines of the scientific method. Science has helped thus far, but, it is a double-edged sword that can and has cut in the opposite direction. The scientific method can limit our knowledge, when we subject the study of all matter and behaviors to it. We apply this method of inquiry to almost everything in our universe that is observable and objective; a second method is needed for looking at reported subjective events. There is a need for an alternative method of research-

ing or investigating when the subject matter does not fall within the physical dimension. Can we really afford to reject reports of subjective information and experiences simply because they do not meet the narrow confines of the scientific method? Many scientists, psychiatrists, psychologists and other practitioners are too intimidated by the professional consensus against the reporting of past lives, out-of-body experiences, clairvoyance and other psi phenomena to even look at the evidence. Professional consensus is very often rooted in religious beliefs which cause therapists and others to deny what they find. Perhaps many centuries of church dogma and scientific tradition are blinding us to other realities.

There is a spiritual vacuum of modern Western society brought about by this age of rationality and scientific inquiry. "What you see is what you get." is the creed which many live by. If you cannot see, feel, touch, smell or hear a thing, then it doesn't exist for them. Knowing for these people is certainly one dimensional; it is tied only to the physical dimension and therein lies the problem.

This book seeks to expand upon the scientific method of inquiry by exploring other ways of investigating non-physical evidence. It also explores psi phenomena of various kinds and it examines some types of mental illness in light of the theory of spiritual emergency put forth by Stanislav and Christina Grof and their colleagues (1989). Spiritual emergency is also explained in the DSM IV, the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual. This book also examines the differences and similarities between people in cultures which include the supernatural in their religious ceremonies and consider it a "natural" phenomenon vs. people in cultures which hospitalize or institutionalize those who have similar "supernatural" experiences.

Dialogues with six extraordinary religious leaders, some of whom teach experiential spirituality, are presented, as well as the story of one deceased shaman whose teachings were grounded in orthodox Christianity. Also, included are the paranormal experiences of ordinary people and a survey of paranormal experiences among the general population of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area.