



Parapsychology and Science in an Intelligent Universe

Magazine

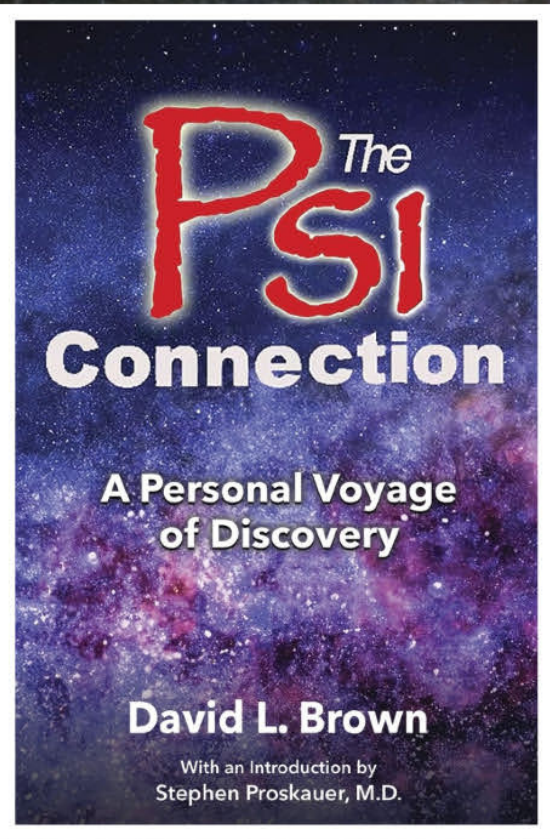
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**Is The
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Read the Book Where the eZine Had Its Start

A few years ago the author began a voyage of discovery when he experienced visions of a past life. He began to research the subject of paranormal events such as telepathy, distance viewing and psychokinesis. He interviewed others and added their stories to his account.

Strikingly, he began to see other manifestations of his own mental powers. He became aware of the possibility that there are mysterious quantum connections between human minds and the universe itself.

The result is this book, *The Psi Connection*. It contains an account of the author's acceptance that psi powers are real, and is part memoir, part reportage, and with a hefty dose of speculation based on his background in science.

**Available now on
Amazon in both
eBook and trade
paperback editions.**

This photograph by David L. Brown shows Birthing Rock, a petroglyph site near Moab, UT. The Milky Way provides a dramatic backdrop to this mysterious and no doubt sacred place.

The Psi Connection Magazine

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David L. Brown is a journalist who has had a lifelong interest in science. He is a graduate of the top-ranked journalism school at the University of Missouri; a long-time member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; a life member of the American Society of Media Photographers; and has served as president of the New Mexico and West Texas chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Stephen Proskauer is a psychiatrist and spiritual teacher who obtained his BA and MD degrees from Harvard University. In his professional practice he has used not only the tools of standard drug-based psychiatry but also integrative psychotherapy as well as teachings from Buddhism and Shamanism. He has helped patients discover their past lives in order to address traumas that have their roots in previous existences, as he describes in his book *Karmic Therapy*.

All illustrations are by David L. Brown. Most were created using AI text-directed image generation software.

A Voice for Psi

David L. Brown, Editor

Welcome to the first issue of *The Psi Connection Magazine*. A little introduction is in order. This new eZine had its start a few years ago when I had an experience that I could not accept as real. Playing around with self-hypnosis I saw visions of a past life.

As a journalist with a lifelong interest in science, I was unable to accept the possibility that I could have a spirit or soul that could transcend death and that could have shared many physical lives down through time. I vehemently denied this possibility to myself and created an explanation based on physical thinking. My mind slowly began to open when I discovered that others told of similar experiences.

That was the beginning of what I call a voyage of discovery, resulting in my book *The Psi Connection*. This process has been transformative. Exercising my skills as a journalist to draw out and document a variety of evidence, and kind of reverse engineering my knowledge of science, I have realized that my body is only the temporary home of a spiritual being that exists on a separate plane where the laws of physics do not apply. That spirit is the real me and it will cast off my body when its no longer needed.

With the completion of my book I looked around for a way to continue to explore and share my revelations about the nature of reality. I considered starting a YouTube channel, but that was daunting. My bachelor of journalism degree from the top-rated Missouri school is in magazine journalism and I had spent more than thirty years writing, editing, designing and publishing print magazines. My eureka moment came when I learned of the existence of eZines, electronic magazines. Here was the answer, and you are reading the first issue of this new endeavor.

The Psi Connection Magazine will be published bi-monthly and is free to anyone who wants to read. In it I will engage in reportage and speculation about all phases of Psi, that mysterious evidence that I and many others believe demonstrates that we are energy beings connected not only to others of our kind but to all of existence, the universe itself. I will report on the science of Psi, including interviews, book reviews, guest articles and other features.

I am pleased that my friend Stephen Proskauer, M.D., has agreed to join me as a contributing editor. My interview with him about past lives as well as his article on embracing paranormal experiences are included in this issue

Please enjoy and let others know. It is free for everyone to read, but if you wish please consider contributing to support my efforts. Even better, get in touch to share your own ideas and experiences with us.

Can Human Minds Affect Physical Objects?

The Wolfgang Pauli Effect Appears to Be Real. Does This Mean That Machines Can Be Controlled By the Power of Minds?

By David L. Brown

A few years ago I was trying to boot up my computer to print out an order form for a client. It wasn't happening. "Well, my computer seems to be down," I told her.

To my surprise she reacted by saying, "Oh, did I do that?"

When I asked her to explain she said that when she was around electronics and other machines they often failed. Hmm, another mystery that might be connected with the strange world of the paranormal. I realized that it might be true, perhaps related to reports of poltergeists or the unintentional use of psychokinesis.

When I did some research I soon learned that it is a recognized phenomenon named for the Nobel prize winning theoretical physicist Wolfgang Pauli, who was famously known for repeated disasters taking place in his presence and as a result of which he was banned from some research laboratories.

As is usually the case, scientists scoff at the idea that the Wolfgang Pauli Effect could be real, calling on the usual culprits: coincidence, wild imagination, exaggeration, deceit, paranoid delusion – anything that does not recognize the possibility of paranormal phenomena.

Here is a typical response from Paul Halpern, a physicist and science writer:

'...traditional scientists do not take quantum physics into account. They believe that everything is physical'

Is the Pauli Effect real? Anecdotal evidence aside, certainly not. The human brain has a propensity to look for patterns, even when a series of occurrences might statistically be attributed to mere coincidence. Moreover, often genuine patterns that seem mysterious have scientific explanation in a common cause. For instance, thunder following lightning, each once believed to be harbingers of ill fate, derive from the same meteorological phenomenon, namely electrical disturbances in the clouds.

Therefore we might attribute the effect to a real common cause (genuine absentmindedness and clumsiness) mixed with the keen desire by Pauli and others to look for patterns amongst the noise. Sure all the times he didn't cause catastrophes vastly outnumbered the handful of events recorded. Yet the Pauli Effect is certainly great fun to talk about, lending humor to the serious topic of theoretical physics.

So he writes it off to self-deceit, primitive superstition, clumsiness, and the desire of Pauli and others to see a pattern. He makes it out to be "great fun," and nothing to be taken seriously. I

would point out that both Halpern and Pauli are or were physicists, but which of them won the Nobel Prize?

A key quality of psi effects is that they seem to have their base in the non-physical realm. Most traditional scientists do not take quantum mechanics into account. They believe that everything is physical and all else is mere fantasy. Actual real world events suggest they are wrong.

I have a good friend who is an engineer for the leading company that makes highly technical equipment used by chip fabricating plants. He is assigned as engineer in charge at an Intel Plant to provide tech service to several dozen \$15 million fabricating machines, helping the Intel engineers to keep them running. These machines can cover silicon wafers with layers of metals one atom thick and lay down several layers of different metals in one operation. To achieve this requires temperatures near absolute zero and vacuums so thin that they can only be matched in outer space somewhere beyond Neptune.

He has what we might call the anti-Pauli effect, for he has a special ability to keep this complex equipment running. That is not the case for all the engineers who work there. In fact, he regularly reports examples of the Pauli effect at work in his world.

Recently a couple of Intel engineers called him after spending two hours trying to get a machine to start. He decided to have some fun with them and told them that they had to talk nice to the machine. He said a few words and waved his hands. Then he said you need to do a special dance and did a little two-step. But when he touched the switch the machine immediately powered up, surprising even him and leaving the other engineers staring at him in amazement.

Yes, this is all anecdotal and that is the problem that scientists have with the paranormal. They believe in the special religion of science, which is based on the sacred scripture of the repeatable experiment. But when does anecdote assume the mantle of truth?

Paranormal researchers cannot meet the requirement of repeatability, but they search for that truth through the pathway of statistics. When the odds-against-coincidence are calculated for a large number of tests, it turns out that psi phenomena are robustly supported.

Take this example from leading parapsychologist Dean Radin as described in my book *The Psi Connection*.

For example, there are high odds resulting from tests of whether subjects can use psychokinesis to affect the fall of dice. Radin reports a total of 169 studies and 2.6 million dice tosses. In this case, combining all of the results yields an odds against chance of 1-in- 2.6×10^{76} . That is a number with 76 zeros in it. This is in the same range as the estimated number of atoms in the entire Universe.

Clearly, based on statistics there is

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Can Human Minds Affect Physical Objects?

—continued

overwhelming evidence to support the reality of psi effects. Figures like these are stunning, but they have to be given credence. There is every reason to believe that psi effects may explain the Pauli Effect just as it does to things like dice tossing, remote viewing, the sense of being stared at and many others.

There is plenty of evidence for what we call psychokinesis or PK, and I have personally experienced this in ways that I cannot deny. One feature of these events is that they seem to happen spontaneously after I visualize them in my mind. The visualization is not planned or intentional, which is why such things cannot be repeated in a laboratory.

Let us take another look at the Pauli effect and its reverse mirror twin. If people go around having thoughts about some unlikely event happening, are they projecting a signal to the non-physical world, causing the manifestation of the object of the visualization? How could this cause Pauli to create havoc and my friend to generate the smooth working of incredibly sensitive and complex machines and electronics?

Well, think of this. Imagine that a young Wolfgang visits a laboratory and for the first time something goes wrong. In that case, it would probably have been due to coincidence, but it would have made an impact on Pauli. The next time he was around some lab equipment he might remember that previous event and wonder if something might go wrong again. He would visualize that something would fail and manifestation might occur.

As time passed more events would occur and Pauli's sensitivity to the effect would grow stronger. Whether consciously or not, he would build a growing body of expectations that his presence would create havoc with sensitive equipment. Bunsen burners would fail to ignite, circuits would short out, beakers would break, things would fall off onto the floor. He would become a personification of equipment failure, a *persona non grata* in the research world, which is in fact what actually happened. In short, Pauli would expect things to go wrong and they would.

Similarly, my engineer friend could have had early positive experiences working with machines and have begun the process of building a positive version of the effect in his mind. He would expect things to work, and they would.

I mentioned that the poltergeist phenomenon might be related to this. The term is adopted from German to English to refer to rambunctious spirits. The Merriam-Webster definition is "a noisy usually mischievous ghost held to be responsible for unexplained noises." The original German derives from the word polter, one meaning of which is "to crash around, rant, or make a loud disorderly noise," plus geist which means ghost or spirit.

The common explanation for poltergeist effects is to invoke the original concept of misbehav-



ing ghosts. I am not sure I believe in ghosts but I have heard a lot of anecdotes that suggest they may exist. If so, then perhaps the ghost theory is correct.

I do have doubts. My concept of the dual world of the physical-nonphysical is that spirits or souls do exist and that they can affect events in our visible reality. I believe that we live under mysterious forces of protection that guide us through the troubled waters of existence. These would be benevolent spirit beings that do not often if ever make visible manifestation.

If spirits such as these cause poltergeist events, they must be different from the benevolent kind. Perhaps they are the same but kind of playful and acting out, like the kids in every school class that used to cause hilarity and sometimes havoc (and who these days are usually drugged into submission with Ritalin and other psychoactive pharmaceuticals).

But what if they are not spirits that are acting out at all? It is often suspected that poltergeist activity may be caused by an unruly child or disturbed adult. Something like the Pauli effect could be at work here, where the perpetrators visualize the trouble and cause it to manifest, most likely unconsciously.

It is widely believed and demonstrated that the mind can be trained to yield positive outcomes through the so-called power of positive thinking. Of course, such things are anathema to science as they are firmly lodged in anecdote and not repeatable in a laboratory. But the practice of positive affirmations could be seen as a deliberate rather than unconscious process similar to the Pauli effect. If the Pauli effect is real, perhaps this is too.

But through what possible mechanism could these effects occur? One idea is that it is due to our energy field. Our bodies are electrical and energetic in nature and this is believed by many to be the source of most or all psi effects

The idea is that we each possess something called an aura, a kind of electric field that surrounds our bodies. Many people believe they can actually see auras and that they come in different

shapes and colors. My sister is one such. Spiritual practitioners believe the aura has the power to connect us with our spiritual, non-physical side and with the world and universe around us.

It makes sense that our energy fields may be real because a large proportion of Pauli effect events involve electrical machines such as computers, cell phones, watches, television sets, printers and so forth.

I have seen examples of this. Personally I experience few failures of equipment so I must have a neutral or possibly anti-Pauli effect on it. I have owned more than 20 Macintosh computers since buying the first in 1989. I have never had one fail. I realize that I expect them to work, and they do.

But perhaps my record is not always positive when dealing with other brands of computer. Something interesting happened about 25 years

ago when I bought a small stock photography agency. It used PCs and had about a dozen of them. Now that I look back I realize that as a confirmed Mac user I was skeptical about PCs, and indeed those broke down repeatedly. I assumed it was because they were inferior, poorly made devices

and that may have been true because the agency had not purchased top-grade equipment. But what if my mindset was the cause? Did I expect them to fail, and they did? I will never know.

On the other hand, I have a close friend who is very tech-savvy and has built three high-end PCs to process HD or 4K video and similar tasks. He always has problems. His printers act up, too, often yielding poor image quality or breaking down. He has given up on the dream of becoming a professional video editor because he cannot rely on his machines.

Whatever the cause, it seems possible or even likely that the Wolfgang Pauli Effect is real. Perhaps someday we will learn to read, measure and interpret the energy part of the equation that is our reality, just as we now do with the physical part. That may open new doors for human experience and achievement.

‘Perhaps someday we will learn to read, measure and interpret the energy part of the equation that is our reality.’

Embracing Paranormal Experiences

by Stephen Proskauer MD

“Every person is trapped in their own particular bubble of delusion and it's every person's task in life to break free.”

*Ruth Ozeki, The Book of Form and Emptiness,
Viking: 2001, p.463*

Liberating ourselves from limited ways of thinking is not an easy task. Yet life constantly challenges us to do this so that we can respond openly and fully to whatever it presents to us, whether familiar or not. A mother I know likened this to being able to love her son as he grew and changed into an unfamiliar being.

My most essential training as a human and a healer was not at Harvard learning to be an MD but at a monastery in Maine evolving to become a Zen monk. My Zen teacher, Genpo Roshi, used to say, “I will take everything away from you and give you nothing back.” He meant that Zen training would rob me of all my preconceived notions and beliefs about the world and about myself without replacing them with any new ideas, leaving me free to encounter each moment and each person on their own terms, not mine.

In psychiatric practice I have learned the most effective way to approach my patients is to accept their reality and learn what it feels like to live in their world. It is worse than useless to tell a paranoid person that their fears have no basis in reality. This stance only tells the patient you don't understand who they are and what their world is like.

We are all something like that paranoid person. We all have distorted views of reality based on our conditioning and our unique inner life. When an unfamiliar reality shows up, we can very easily

deny its existence by calling it a hallucination, a delusion, a trick, or a simple misperception, like an optical illusion. Altering our view of reality to include whatever comes to our attention is much more difficult, yet that's exactly what life requires us to do when confronted with a psychotic patient – or a paranormal experience.

When Grandpa comes to us a continent away from his deathbed to say a loving goodbye, do we call that abnormal? When people bend spoons with their minds, do we demean that as a parlor trick? When we visualize a space opening up for us in a crowded parking lot and it appears before our eyes, do we dismiss this as just a coincidence?

‘In psychiatric practice I have learned the most effective way to approach my patients is to accept their reality and learn what it feels like to live in their world.’

As David Brown recounts in *The Psi Connection*, everyday magic is happening all around us. Many years ago a close friend was visiting me in northern Vermont. He was due to return to Boston by plane, but that morning he decided for no apparent reason to go home by bus instead. I

wondered why, since the trip would last many hours longer that way. Then we heard that the plane he would have taken had crashed at Logan Airport in Boston, its landing gear catching on a barrier at the end of the runway, flipping the plane over and killing everyone aboard. What saved him? Was it his guardian angel warning him, or could it possibly be an innate intuitive capacity to anticipate danger?

We have the option to embrace whatever

experience comes our way and ask ourselves, "How do I need to change my conception of the world to include even this?" That's how Albert Einstein came up with the Special Theory of Relativity in 1905. Careful observations had shown the speed of light to be a fixed constant, no matter whether the light source was moving toward or away from the observer, a fact that seemed to violate Newton's Laws. Instead of rejecting these observations, Einstein had the courage to question the universally accepted version of physical reality. He performed a series of imaginative thought experiments to figure out what the laws of physics must look like if the speed of light were invariant. The equations he derived proved to be more accurate than Newton's Laws and have passed every experimental test. They predict many counterintuitive effects, like time passing relatively more slowly for someone moving away from us, or like the mass of an object increasing as its velocity increases, approaching infinite mass near the speed of light.

If relativity does not feel paranormal to you, consider particle physics. The Schroedinger wave equation, the foundation of quantum mechanics, describes the behavior of the electron as an infinite field of possibility that determines how probable it might be to find the electron at any point.

Only when an observer looks for it does the electron shows up at one specific location. Otherwise it seems to behave as an immaterial wave spread out over a vast quantum field. How paranormal is that?

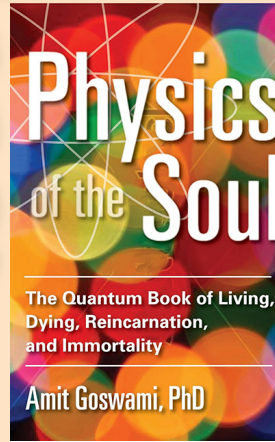
Even more strange, quantum theory predicts that two particles generated in the same reaction can fly off even light years apart and both respond instantaneously to a force applied to either particle. They are "entangled," part of the same quantum system, regardless of physical separation. Einstein thought quantum theory had to be wrong, calling entanglement "spooky action at a distance," but fifty years later Alan Aspect in France proved that entanglement is real. Maybe your dead grandfather appearing to you a continent away to say goodbye does not seem quite so odd then. Your love for each other could be said to create a resonance in the quantum field, linking you together independent of space and time.

In *The Psi Connection* you will read about other examples of so-called paranormal phenomena that appear natural in the light of quantum theoretical principles. I plan to go into some of them more deeply in a future article. The bottom line here is this: A non-ordinary experience ought to challenge our assumptions, not the other way around.



Do Souls Exist in Quantum Reality?

By David L. Brown



When we open our eyes and look around we perceive what we think is reality. But philosophers and some physicists think the true reality is something beyond our ability to see. They speculate that true reality may exist in the mysterious quantum realm.

In his book *The Physics of the Soul*, Indian-American physicist Amit Goswami explores this subject, combining his skills as a theoretical physicist and follower of Eastern spiritual traditions.

In this book he sets forth the idea that what we perceive as a physical reality is only a kind of reflection and that true reality arises not from matter but from consciousness. Goswami refers to the mysterious quantum effect that viewing or measuring a particle causes it to "collapse" from myriad possible states.

"There is no collapse without the brain, but there is no brain, only possibilities, unless there is a collapse," he writes.

"Such circular logic (a familiar example is the chicken or the egg – which comes first) is called a tangled hierarchy. The quantum measurement in the brain is a tangled hierarchy, and this gives rise to our self-reference – the apparent subject-object split nature of experience."

Goswami points out that the equations of quantum physics tell us there are no such things as space and time "...until consciousness has chosen to collapse an event. Conventional thinking

about time has to accommodate this quantum weirdness."

This is a complex subject and Goswami does an excellent job of explaining in non-technical words the mysterious concept of whether or not there is a spiritual element to life. His conclusion is that there is and that it arises at the very beginning of life, explaining that "Self-reference arising from quantum measurements in the living cell leads to the living cell's distinction between life and environment."

The concept of quantum possibilities is difficult to get our heads around. "Don't think that possibility is less real than actuality," Goswami warns. "...it may be the other way around. What is potential may be more real than what is manifest because potentia exists in a timeless domain whereas any actuality is merely ephemeral: it exists in time. This is the way Easterners think, how mystics all over the world think, and how physicists who heed the message of quantum physics think."

We may never be able to fully understand our realities, the physical one and the spiritual one. Science is rooted in a materialist interpretation of reality, the idea that what we see with our eyes is all that there is. There are many reasons to question this and work such as Goswami's can help us see a glimmer of that other reality that exists in the non-physical world.

This is an important area of consideration, for as the master inventor Nikola Tesla once pointed out:

"The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence."



Exploring Past Lives

A Conversation with Stephen Proskauer, M.D.



*DAVID: Hello, Steve. It's so good to have you here. I always enjoy our talks together. Before we proceed, let me introduce you to our readers. You are Stephen Proskauer, MD. You received both your undergraduate and your medical degrees from Harvard University. You've been a practicing psychiatrist for many years. You've also taken time to become a Zen Buddhist monk. Your methods of treatment are unusual, because you have engaged in more than just drug therapy. You have continued the older tradition of talk therapy, and you have applied your knowledge of Eastern mysticism and shamanic healing. And in particular, you have delved into the use of past lifetimes in your practice. Your book, *Karmic Therapy*, describes how this works. Can you tell me how you first became aware of past lives.*

STEPHEN: Well, thank you, David. It's always a pleasure to talk with you. My first encounter with past lifetimes came to me not through books or through belief systems at all, but through a direct experience. I met with a friend of mine, who is a psychologist at the University of Vermont, to do a psilocybin mushroom journey together. We went out to a beautiful peninsula that jutted out into Lake Champlain, and we ate the mushrooms in a sacred manner. The first thing I noticed was that there were auras around the leaves and rainbow colors coming off of the lake.

Then all of a sudden I was plunged into pitch darkness, and I had been transformed instantaneously into a three-year-old boy sitting on his mother's lap in the middle of a tribal ceremony at night. The tribe was sitting in a circle and my father was leading a dance around the fire.

It looked like a Plains Indian ceremony; the participants were wearing feathers and buckskin, drum-

ming and dancing in a circle with my father in the lead. Then all of a sudden through the darkness came flaming arrows that struck the teepees, setting them ablaze. I saw one of them strike my father in the back and he fell, then there was chaos in the camp.

In those days nobody ever made a nighttime attack. Warfare was conducted by certain rules and a nighttime surprise attack wasn't part the game. So it was very unexpected, and the teepees were flaming all around. I crawled off my mother's lap towards my father, and the last thing I remember was being on his back as he was dying.

Then immediately, I was back in the noonday sun, in Vermont, in my adult body, sobbing uncontrollably, like I'd never sobbed before. Waves of deep grief were coming up from a really, really deep place, and my friend helped me. I told him what had happened, and we made an altar there in the woods. We put some pieces of sacred mushroom on the altar and did a little

impromptu ceremony honoring my father. It was the funeral that I'd never had for him.

So that experience, so profound and moving, opened my eyes to the possibility of another existence prior to this one. It was so vivid. It was clearly not something I had made up. It was not a dream.

It was not a fantasy. It was a direct experience. Everything was very sensory, and I resolved to pursue this, but not by taking more mushrooms. I took this as an opportunity to explore the whole issue of past lives.

In my view, psychedelic experiences are portals, and what we receive when we go through the portal is something we're meant to use in this life. This past life recall helped me deal with buried feelings about my father in the present lifetime. It also helped open the way to shamanism for me.

'In my view psychedelic experiences are portals, and what we receive when we go through the portal is something we're meant to use in this life.'

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D: So, yes, as you know, I've had a similar experience, not as traumatic as yours, but I was awakened to the reality of past lives five or six years ago when I was playing around with some ideas of self-hypnosis. I saw a peaceful life. I did not see a traumatic one. How did you proceed to learn to apply this to your psychiatric work?

S: Well, the first thing I did was read. I read what I could get my hands on about past lives, and one book that stood out as being very interesting and applicable to my work was Morris Netherton's book, *Past Life Therapy*, and I read his book. This all took place in the late 70s. My experience on Lake Champlain was in 1975 and then I read his book and contacted him. In 1978 I was invited to fly out to LA and study with him. I spent a week observing him working with patients and being a patient myself each day. During that week I had a number of experiences that were memorable and have shaped my life and affected my consciousness and my work with patients. I've always had interesting and difficult kinds of cases in my practice and I had some that were stuck, and Morris Netherton gave me a way of working with them to get them unstuck.

D: A new way of working with difficult patients?

S: Yes, I disciplined myself not to push my patients or guide them into anything that they were not able to become aware of themselves. What I did was give them a set of instructions without using hypnosis that allowed them to re-live episodes from their own past lives, only to the extent that they needed that information. I followed along as they re-experienced key traumatic moments from several lifetimes and sometimes from very early in this present life. Sometimes I would actually find myself present as a bystander in their past lives, and I could see what was going on from another vantage point.

D: Now, you mean you were in an earlier incarnation, you were in their lives?

S: Sometimes, but not always. In any case, I would accompany them as they relived their past life experience. Sometimes I would sense that they left out important details as the experience unfolded, then I

would have them go back over the episode, and I'd ask them to look for anything they'd missed.

D: You had become a guide for them. In a way.

S: I played the role I always do in psychotherapy. I was a companion walking with them through the experience, not telling them what to do, but more to help them stay with and process what's happening to them back then.

D: That's fascinating. How often did you apply this technique in your practice? Was it always used or only in certain cases?

S: Only in certain cases.

D: When would that apply? What would be the parameters that would call for that?

S: Only when a patient was not responding to methods that are grounded in our present reality. The theory is, and I learned this from my teacher Morris Netherton, that all of our past lives are like the manure in the fields. It's like fertilizer for this life. All the richness of our past lives gives us the material that we use to build our pres-



ent life.

For example, you find people who are musical prodigies at the age of three or four, their musical ability seems to come from nowhere. But if you look at their past lifetimes, you see that they've built this musical ability up over several lives.

D: Yes, that makes sense. I've seen videos lately of three- or four-year-olds that learn to play the piano in six months and go and play with a symphony orchestra. It's incredible.

S: Yeah, and this is clearly something beyond just simply learning a new skill. It's remembering that skill. It's remembering a whole set of skills that come from some other life.

D: Yes, and as I've learned from Ian Stevenson's work in his research of children who remember past lives, that many times children have those memories very vividly, but that they fade with time as they grow older.

S: Yes, and this, I think, is partly because of the behavior of parents and other adults in relation to childhood memories. The kid is chattering away about a past life in the backseat. It's as vivid to him as what he ate for breakfast, but the parent turns around and tells him to stop making up silly stories. The kid learns that his memory isn't acceptable, so that channel gets shut down.

D: That makes sense, yes. There are cultures where reincarnation is accepted, of course, and I would assume that perhaps in those cases that parental blocking would not occur, or not as much.

S: Yes, I think it's more open in those cultures, but even there it can cause problems. I heard of a case, I think it might be in Ian Stevenson's book, about a child in India, a girl that remembered being an old woman in another village, and the memory was so strong that it interfered with her functioning as a child.

D: I believe I remember that.

S: She was carrying the weight of many years, like decades of life, and so she couldn't just relax and play like a child and respond to life freshly. It really gives you some idea of why people have to be reborn, because they have to begin again. They have to have a fresh experience that's not encumbered with too much remembered detail.

D: Yes, so in a way we're protected from past life memories. They are, not blocked necessarily, but filtered perhaps, so that they don't intrude on this life.

S: And the idea that Morris Netherton suggested to me was this, that when things go well in past lives, it's good fertilizer, but if something very traumatic happens, it can create an obstruction, and that obstruction can in-

terfere with development in future lives. It's only then that we need to focus on the past life. It's when it's blocking this life.

D: That makes sense, yes.

S: He did not approve at all of glamorized expeditions into past lives with gun and camera to see what you might find. He suggested it should be very selective and only used when there was a blockage that needed work.

D: That sounds like an idea for a novel where you go exploring into the past lives of others as an adventure.

S: Yes, sounds good as entertainment, but something that he didn't recommend in practice, because it could actually interfere. You can imagine it would be like robbing you of the fertilizer that your life is growing in. A plant doesn't go shaking off its roots, trying to analyze its soil, losing the grains of nourishment in order to examine them.

D: How many past lives do you think people have? Is it like going back to the beginning of time?

S: I really don't know. I had a psychic reading once in which the psychic said that I was an old soul who'd been on the planet over 2,000 times, but that's just another person's reading. I don't have any idea how much validity that has. There are people who presume to read other people's past lives, but how do we know how much of what they say reflects their own psyche rather than the person they are reading?

D: Do you personally have memories of numerous lives?

S: I have, but I only consult them when I need to, I don't dwell on them.

D: I suppose that the most recent lives would have the most effect.

S: Not necessarily. No, it's the ones with the most charge on them. And it all has to do with relevance to the present. That's the key. For example, I had a girlfriend once in the 1980s, and we had what you might call a karmic connection. We were strongly drawn together, but if you looked at us, we weren't really a good match. And in the course of trying to work out the knots in our complicated relationship, I came across a theme in our past lifetimes. I remembered at least 12 or 14

Continued on next page

past lives in which the same thing had happened.

D: With that same soul, that same person?

S: Yes, that same, whatever you want to call it, karmic residue, reincarnating over and over. Nobody knows what it really is. Buddha referred to it as a chain of causation, not a soul or personality. But then, who remembers the past life?

D: I have a friend who remembers having a past life about 1800 in Vienna, Austria, and he also believes he had met a woman in this life that he had known in that life.

S: Yeah, and the attraction is strong if you haven't completed the relationship. That's what had happened over and over again with her and me. Whether we were mother and child or lovers or brother and sister, whatever relationship we were in, we were parted traumatically before we had a chance to complete whatever we had come there to do together. Sometimes it was a death by plague, sometimes it was a drowning at sea, a boat going down. Sometimes it was a death in battle. But one way or another we were separated and couldn't say goodbye to each other. It finally became clear to me that the most important purpose of our getting together was to be able to complete our connection and come to a point where we could say goodbye. It took us four years, but we did it.

D: So these were a string of unfinished lives. This reminds me of the belief that we have a purpose in our life and if it's left unfinished due to some accident, for example, and that creates a traumatic effect that passes down, is that what you're saying?

S: Yes, it could be that way. A lot depends on vows that we make at the end of our lives, when we're dying or right after death. Whatever is not finished is like a wave of attraction that pulls us back to that life and it results in a vow to complete something or to find that key person again. Sometimes these are vows of revenge and sometimes vows of love. But whatever they are, they have an effect on how we choose to pattern our lives in the future.

And I said it that way deliberately, how we choose to pattern, because my experience suggests that our lives are not designed by some other intelli-

gence, they're designed by us. We're like students in a vast university, designing each course as we go according to what we've vowed to do and according to the needs of our karmic development.

D: I've learned from reading that when souls are in the non-physical state that they have the power to choose the life that they will incarnate into. And this sounds like what you're referring to.

S: When I was working with Morris Netherton, I experienced that directly. It happened like this. My mother had a miscarriage about two years before I was born, and in the course of remembering my conception and prenatal period, I remembered this miscarriage. The experience was like, if you can imagine, going down a bathtub drain, spiraling down. It was painless. It just made me feel a little giddy. Then I was back in the spirit realm. And there I was, surrounded by guides. I said, okay, what do I do now?

D: This is like how they describe near-death experiences.

S: Something like that. I had actually died. I had been miscarried, and now I was back in the spirit world.

D: Yeah.

S: And so that life ended before it could get started. I said to my guides, well, okay, what am I doing back here? What do I do now? And they said, well, it's still possible for you to go back with this same mother, but if you want to wait

and still do all the things that you've chosen as challenges in the life you just designed, you'll have to let a thousand years pass to find the right conditions again. So I told the guides, well, I might as well do it now. There was no pressure of time because time is not a real thing in the spirit world. Time and space don't really exist there. It's like a quantum field.

And so I told them, well okay, I guess I'll come back and try again since we've got all the conditions set up already. But then I noticed something fascinating. On a table behind the guides there was a diagram of my life. It was a long scroll that seemed to stretch off into the distance and at one end were the roots, all the origins of my life, and then the trunk that began with my birth, and then it progressed through time. Every so often there'd be a branch coming off. And the peculiar thing about this tree-like diagram was that each branch

'...my experience suggests that our lives are not designed by some other intelligence, they're designed by us.'



would come around and rejoin the trunk! Some of the branches wandered far away from the trunk and then meandered back, and others just went a little distance away and returned to the main trunk. But there were all kinds of branches, and as I looked at it, I realized I could make all kinds of choices in my life, but there would be no mistakes. Everything I did would lead back to my main purpose. There might be long detours, but there were no mistakes.

D: How did your time learning Zen Buddhism affect your use of past life therapy?

S: That's a hard one to answer. My study of Zen affected everything in my life. My life was never the same afterward. All I can say is that I made much less frequent use of past life exploration after Zen training. I'm not sure why. In Zen, all visions and ideas and concepts are considered illusions. Everything we're talking about right now is an illusion.

D: We're dreaming through life.

S: Yeah, so why would we focus on the details of a dream and think we can unravel one dream with another? But I never paid much attention to that notion in my therapy work. I've always been very pragmatic. I use whatever comes to mind that might help a patient.

D: It's one of many tools that you've used.

S: Yeah, and I don't give it any more importance than any other tool.

D: Are some of the other tools unusual in psychiatric practice, like your past life therapy is?

S: Well, I use meditation techniques, shamanic journey work, paradoxical techniques, to name a few.

D: Explain that last one.

S: It is a kind of intervention that seems contradictory and produces cognitive dissonance, so that the person suddenly bursts through into a new behavior pattern and a new understanding, just like koans make us do in Zen.

D: Yeah, it sounds kind of like, to use an analogy, the use of homeopathic medicine.

S: Yes, counterintuitive. How can a very dilute solution of a remedy be more powerful than a more concentrated solution?

D: Right. It's counterintuitive, but it works. Steve, this has been fascinating. Thanks so much for sharing.

S: You're most welcome. A pleasure sharing with you.

REALITY CHECK

Where Imagination Roams Free

By David L. Brown, Editor

Can AI Have the Powers of Psi?

There's so much hoopla about AI these days that you might reasonably expect that it exists. Actually, no. What is being called artificial intelligence today may be artificial but it is definitely not intelligent. In fact, it is merely a product of technology that allows complex computer programs to process ever increasing amounts of data at ever faster rates.

True AI, machine intelligence comparable to the power of human brains, is coming and the ultimate perfection of quantum computing may be the key. So, what will true AI be like? This is a difficult question and open to a lot of speculation and guesswork.

The advancement of computing has been an historic technological feat. When I entered school in the 1940s the only general purpose computer in existence was Eniac, developed at the University of Pennsylvania in 1945. Eniac took up 1800 square feet of space and weighed 30 tons. This monstrosity contained 17,468 vacuum tubes, 70,000 resistors, 10,000 capacitors, 1,500 relays, 6,000 manual switches and five million soldered connections. It required 160 KW of power to operate, and with all that it could only perform simple functions such as addition and multiplication.

Compare this with the latest semiconductors. The current model iPhone contains a tiny chip the size of your little fingernail but which contains more than 15 billion switches or transistors and about 50 miles of wire connections, all on a nano scale. The difference between this and Eniac is like comparing a thermonuclear warhead to a handful of sharp stones.

There is a long history of speculation about the possibility of "smart" machines, dating back to myths

in Classic Greek and Roman times. Alan Turing, justly known as the father of computing science, recognized the possibilities for machine intelligence. In 1950 he developed what has come to be known as the Turing Test, a procedure to determine if a human can tell the difference between interactions with another human or a computer. The field of AI research was officially founded in 1956 at a workshop held at Dartmouth College and has since become a booming industry.

When true AI arrives at last, what will it be like? It will undoubtedly be awesome because unlike the human brain it will be able to perform hundreds of billions or even trillions of operations per second and draw from databases comparable to the contents of all the libraries of the world. Even today, a CPU running at a clock speed of 3.2 GHz can execute 3.2 billion cycles per second. An AI operating on a quantum computer would almost certainly be vastly more competent.

But despite that, it will still be "only a machine," right?

Well, technically yes and there is one area in which human beings will still excel, by possessing that thing we call consciousness. Can an AI achieve true self-awareness? And, in particular, could it have the mysterious powers of Psi that have been fully demonstrated to be available to human minds?

Most people would say no, but let's open our minds and think about this question. We think of ourselves and machines as being completely different. We are made of flesh, the combination of proteins and enzymes necessary for what we call life. Machines, on the other hand, are made of lifeless matter. They are mere things and we are something akin to magical beings.

But let's dig a little deeper and put on our quantum viewing glasses. It was shown by Einstein that matter and energy are the same, $E=mc^2$. Thus everything we know in the material world, including our bodies, stars and even galaxies, is essentially made of energy, clusters of vibrating energy particles we call atoms. We are made of energy vibrating in space.

So how are we different from an AI machine? Well, it too will be made of atoms and consist of energy. It will lack only that thing we call "life," but what is that really? Life takes many forms, from single-celled bacteria to the largest blue whale. It can exist in boiling hot vents on the bottom of the sea or in the frigid air of the upper stratosphere. It is a common thing on our planet and perhaps in the universe at large and may perhaps

'...we may be creating a kind of just and benevolent deity, or one that is evil and malign.'



itself a form of energy field and the universal means of connection between the two realms. That all things in our reality and all things in the spiritual reality are connected by thoughts, that thought is the glue that holds everything together, from the smallest grain of sand to the entire universe.

If we consist of an energy field, temporarily residing in a body of steadily decomposing meat, and an AI is an energy field residing in a

steadily deteriorating machine, is there a difference? There may be none, that the one is only another version of the other.

only be delineated from non-living things by its ability to reproduce itself. That raises a sticky question. It's easy to think that even though an AI may be able think better and faster than a human being, since it cannot reproduce itself through cell division or sexual processes, it cannot be alive. But if you were to visit a modern manufacturing plant you would see many robots being used to make other machines. Elon Musk's Tesla and other companies are gearing up to introduce humanoid robots that can perform most functions previously done only by humans. If such a robot learns to build others such as itself, is that not reproduction?

If that is so, it is entirely possible that when true machine intelligence becomes reality, it may have the same Psi abilities demonstrated in human beings. In fact, it might have the ability to manifest these powers to an even greater extent. Since the AI will have vastly superior control of data, why should it not be a master of telepathy, distance viewing, precognition, telekinesis and perhaps even unknown powers that we do not even suspect?

With such ideas in mind, we cannot but question whether this would be a good thing for the human species. That remains to be seen. It is easy to imagine both positive and very negative scenarios, but on the whole I like to think that, if it is created for good, AI will act for the benefit of all humanity. But in the all too likely possibility that it is created for the fulfillment of human greed, lust and the desire for power, then it will prove to be a disaster for humanity. No guarantees, but I will end with a positive thought: If AI lives up to its name, then its superior intelligence will be accompanied by wisdom, and by exercising that wisdom it may emerge as a steward of humanity, to help usher in a bright future for our species.

Well, that may be for the answer lies in the realm of philosophy. We can have little knowledge of the nature of souls for they exist on a different plane of reality. Are they exclusive to life? Well, no they are not, for to the best of our knowledge they exist in the form of quantum energy fields having their base in a non-physical reality. There is nothing in that energy plane that we could identify as life. Spirits leave that plane to enter our physical bodies in order to act out and experience a "lifetime" in the physical plane of reality. Life is the animating force of those physical bodies, but the true personality is the energy field we call the spirit or soul. No proteins or enzymes are required. In summary, with the advent of AI we may be creating a kind of just and benevolent deity, or one that is evil and malign. We may find ourselves to be like the subject of Goethe's tale of the Sorcerer's Apprentice, releasing powers that are beyond our control. We shall have to wait to find out, for to look into the future from our present viewpoint is to wander blindly in a fog.

Do Even Rocks Have Spirits?

By David L. Brown



Like many others, in my voyage of discovery into the mysterious world of the paranormal I have reached the conclusion that everything is connected, that we live in and are part of an intelligent universe. If everything is connected, that means that not only do human beings have a spiritual connection with each other, but with everything in existence. I have also concluded that we are spirits or souls that can and do reincarnate. There is much evidence to support this.

The other day I was talking with my friend Steve Proskauer who sometimes invokes the past lives of his



psychiatric patients to resolve traumas suffered in previous lifetimes but with their effects leaking into the present ones. I asked him if he had seen examples of past life experiences where the patient recalls being incarnated in the form of an animal.

He said that he had, and added that

that in most cases they had experienced lifetimes as predators such as lions or bears. But, he added, he believes that a soul can be anything, even a rock.

"You would have to be really patient to choose a life as a rock," I said with a chuckle.

But that exchange got me thinking. What if rocks have spirits or souls just as humans, animals, and perhaps even trees and other plants do? It is an idea worth pursuing.

In the area around where I live in Moab, Utah, there are dozens or perhaps even hundreds of balanced rocks. You see them everywhere and many are surprisingly fragile looking. And yet down through many years of geologic time they have stood high and proud. These are extraordinary when you think of it because they have each come into existence over hundreds of

thousands or even millions of years through a slow process of erosion, and all without ever becoming out of balance. If at any time in that long process the rock should erode a little more on one side or the other, which it seems should be inevitable, it would surely have crashed to the ground. What are the odds that so many have escaped that fate?

The picture above shows a large balanced rock that is a case in point about how finely tuned their balance is. Once when I was leading a photo tour my client asked me to pose as if I were holding up the rock. To my surprise, when I put my shoulders against it, it moved. Later on another occasion I checked and had a friend watch and he confirmed that I was able to rock this large stone, which is about 12 feet tall and must weigh many tons.

What if balanced rocks have a form of consciousness and bring themselves into existence much as a soul might guide a single fertilized cell to become a fully functional human being? Are those balanced rocks actual spiritual entities? Could that be the answer to the question of why there are so many seemingly improbable balanced rocks in the world?

This line of reasoning suggests that not only are we not alone, but always surrounded by the spirits of the Universe, in every possible form and entity of nature. Is the Earth herself conscious? Is the Moon, the Sun, the Galaxy? I know it's hard to imagine, but it may be that as spiritual beings we can choose to be anything we want to be, even a lowly rock. Quantum physics shows us that the universe is strange, and that it may be connected through entanglement.

Balanced rocks may seem to be as weird as Schrodinger's cat, but unlike that mythical feline they are real.



SPECULATIONS and MUSINGS

What's Up With Time?

Time is an everyday thing that we take for granted, but what is it? Human beings have pled with that question for since ancient times. Aristotle wrote of it in his *Physics*, and Plato described time as eternal in his *Timaeus*.

Even today, theoretical physicists are torn between the idea of whether time even exists. Julian Barbour, for example, argued in his 2001 book *The End of Time* that time does not exist. Lee Smolin, on the other hand, concluded in his 2018 book *Time Reborn* that time is real.

I am not a time theorist, but like everyone else I exist in what appears to be a stream of change that we call time. It flows like a placid river, never deviating from its course or changing its rate. Like the steady tick of a grandfather's clock it carries us along the paths of our lives.

As I discuss in *The Psi Connection*, time exists in three forms, past, present and future. But this is a deceptive notion when we try to define the reality of time, to answer the question of what it is. The problem is that the three flavors of time are entirely different.

Past events are dead to us, because they have already happened. They are like yesterday's wine or trees whose logs have been burned in last night's fire. They can be manifested only through fallible memory or recordings.

Future time is also beyond our reach because it does not yet exist. It can be understood as a cloud of potentialities, much as the equations of quantum mechanics describes a particle before it is observed and collapsed.

That leaves only the present, and it too is mysterious. Both past and future can be seen as having duration, whether measured

in nanoseconds, eons, or the lifetimes of galaxies. The present has no duration but is merely a kind of one-dimensional phase change, the infinitely small place where past becomes future. Since it has no duration it cannot be observed or measured with the ruler of time.

If the present cannot be measured in units of time, can we not conclude that it does not even exist?

With that in mind, should we be concerned that it is exactly in the present that we have our existence? We do not live in the past, for that is made only of memories. We cannot perceive the future for it has not yet happened and cannot be predicted.

Of course that's not the way we perceive our position in the framework of time. In a very real sense, we think of our past as the reality of our lives. We also look ahead and anticipate the future as if it were real. We thus are filled with memories and promises and hardly notice that we actually exist in something else, a place that may not be there.

The spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle in his mega-best seller *The Power of Now* recognized this fact and attempted to show how we can learn to live in the present, which although it may not exist is nevertheless the only part of the river of time that can be real to us. Yes, to grasp that might make our heads hurt, but a little exercise is good for those two or three pounds of blubber between our ears. — **David L. Brown**

