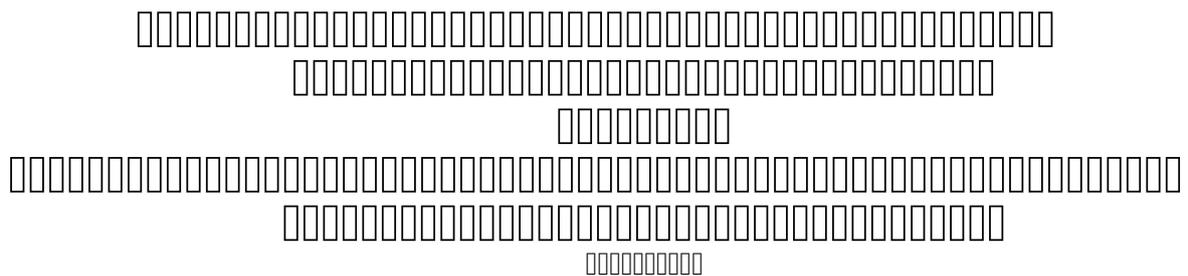


I have been taught
by
dreams and fantasies,,



A few pages ago I suggested that you should re-read the earlier part of my writing in which I described the events leading up to the moment in which I began to 'hear voices' and experience other phenomena. Recollect that I had not sought any spiritual contact, nor had I been seeking 'divination' or converse with the dead. I had simply followed what at the time seemed to be a logical progression from the reality of dowsing using bent metal rods, to a point where I had perfectly rational conversations in which I engaged silently within my mind and I received responses - *reasoned* and logical responses - via a pendulum and alphabet chart. Thus, 'characters' had emerged, one of whom was alleged to be a former, and now deceased, Buddhist priest. In 'conversations' with him I became aware of a separate phenomenon, namely that of 'ambience'. At those times, I was imbued with and surrounded by an inexplicable and indescribable feeling of the sanctity and spiritual demeanour of someone of deep personal spirituality.

By itself, this type of encounter did not totally prepare me for the experience of having my entire person intruded into. As I have described earlier, I sat in my quiet room, as had been suggested in conversations via the pendulum, and began to compose myself for a simple meditative stillness. Totally unexpectedly, and without drama, "...a presence moved from the space in front of me *into* me". From that time onward, I have never been free from intrusive physical presences - not manifest all the time, but frequently, and with potentially significant effect upon my demeanour and reaction. My older brother is an Anglican priest. Completely independently, and not discussed or even mentioned until I had my own experiences and described them to him, my brother has had experience of spiritual 'movement' within himself since his late teens. He has had a full and active prayer life since those days, and he related to me how, when composing himself for prayer, or during the Eucharist, he sometimes senses bodily activity. He simply says within his mind - "If you are from God, you are welcome: if not, please go".

Not, myself, having my brother's spiritual acceptance, and he not having had the trauma of my experiences of spiritual malevolence, our reactions are markedly different. I do not *want* this type of activity within myself, from any source, unless I will it. Consequently, I view *any* intrusion with hostility and deep resentment. Over the years I have identified and recorded a number of 'ploys' used by intrusive spirits, and try in my accounts to describe the indescribable - often by analogy, as in the following:

It is all too easy to dwell upon the presence of the voice intrusions. Far more insidious, and possibly ever present, is the mute *physical* 'overlap'. Try to imagine a not quite exact 'fit', so that in every movement or reaction there is just the little bit of anticipation or lag; of speeding up when it is inappropriate; of not being quite in phase on a turn; of causing

forward movement when there are obstacles to be negotiated - whether by deliberate intent or lack of 'skill' it is impossible to say. When the presence is continuous, or frequently in and out, it can become positively loathsome and one longs to be rid of it. If you have a copy, read in the *Thousand and One Nights* the story of the *Old Man of the Sea*. Sinbad, shipwrecked and alone as usual, stumbles across an old man who asks for his help to cross a stream. Sinbad, in his kindness, takes the old man on his back, and then, when the stream is crossed, finds himself in a stranglehold; beaten about the head, made to go this way and that, by day and night, at the old man's whim; be-skittered and be-pissed all down his back and generally befouled. It is only ultimately by making some wine from wild grapes and getting the man drunk that Sinbad is finally freed, and one can sense the ultimate release as he crushes the man's skull with a boulder. *Many times have I wished for that boulder!* It is possible from one's own reactions to these presences to understand how it is that individuals will harm themselves in an effort to get at or get rid of this gross intrusion that is only reachable within their own body.

Next, a very simple but effective ploy - (in all of the ploys that I shall describe, '*they*' refers to the intrusion or intrusions - it is impossible to know at any time whether there is one or more involved in the current activity):

They can intrude physically and mentally into one's every moment, delighting in creating emotions or exploiting potentially emotional situations, until one realises that attempts are made to create laughter or tears where one is not in the least stirred up in either direction sufficiently to laugh or cry. Similarly, if the situation arose, *they* could create a feeling of anger and supply the words to go with it in a ready flow. *They* intrude into one's every thought and action, including the most intimate.

One just longs for an empty space in one's mind where one can think one's own thoughts, enjoy one's own emotions and reminiscences without these intrusions. One develops the most intense hatred of *them*. One result of this barrage is that one resents *any* intrusion or contact, thus rendering suspect those that might originate from a desirable spiritual source - *they* simulate these as well, so as to create animosity in one's mind to potential or existing spiritual helpers.

Another, and somewhat different, example of a mute but explicit physical intrusion occurred as follows:

On one occasion, a female friend who was visiting asked me to help her to accomplish something personal and intimate that she could not achieve because of the difficulties of simultaneously looking and reaching. Having been married more than once, and having brought up a daughter and stepdaughter, I have no problem or embarrassment with female anatomy or exposure, but while I was delicately preoccupied, I felt an

intrusion, or more specifically, a subtle *insinuation* into myself. Almost immediately, I was suffused by *someone else's* embarrassment, and *female* embarrassment at that. 'Who' had been persuaded to intrude and by 'whom', and under what pretext, I have obviously no way of knowing.

Physical intrusions can and do occur at any time and the differing intensities and variety are so great that is difficult to be specific. One example can occur when I am woodcarving.

At these times there can appear within me a 'heavy' intruding presence with a 'working' mouth of concentration and with laboured breathing - the conclusion being that someone 'in spirit' is trying to experience what they did not achieve in life. There is also the implication at other times that someone formerly skilled in life wants to impart that skill. This can present one with a difficult choice. There are or have been many musicians, composers, artists, writers and others who have freely acknowledged that they cannot produce their finest work unless their 'Muse' is present within them, and many and great are the works that have been produced. (See *The Unknown Guest* by Brian Inglis; also listen to the accounts given by concert pianist John Lill of his own experiences of spiritual presences that have occurred during his own public performances.) By contrast, I do not want to be 'taken over' - I want to work out my own problems and then want the sheer pleasure of, first of all, visualising, and then, creating my own art or craft. I do not want to be the vehicle through which 'someone' operates vicariously and, in doing so, takes away the pleasures of my own originality and craft skills.

I once had a very good sculpture and carving teacher who gave advice on concepts and techniques, but did not attempt to influence one's individual expression; nor did he touch the work unless asked to demonstrate, but was always there with advice if asked. Above all, he inspired immense confidence, and could rescue one from the most depressing artistic disasters.

This, by extension, is what one would hope for from desirable spiritual associates. Having done much to my house by way of development, and not having had craft training or much DIY experience, I have, nevertheless, been given much help by inspiration, in ways and on occasions that are too numerous to detail. It, however, helps me to make the point that there is much support and knowledge available, but it is received at a much, much deeper level than the other phenomena about which I am writing - virtually subliminally.

There can be a very great danger in accepting a 'Muse' into one's person. It can often be represented or inferred that this is the spirit of someone who, for example, was formerly a well known artist or musician. The belief that one has been chosen by this 'famous person' can be very flattering, but if it became continuous, one could gradually lose one's own identity and capacity for originality.

Once, while working on my private water supply, which is isolated and completely hidden from view, I was caused to fall by a 'wrestle'*. This effectively demonstrated, and was confirmed by implication, that I could be made to fall and be injured anywhere, with no chance of summoning help (or to fall in a dangerous location e.g. in front of a train or vehicle). It was then impressed upon me that I should always plan where I was going and what I was going to do, and that if I was going to be alone in an isolated location, I should ensure that someone was aware of where I could be found. It was further impressed on me that I would get immense help and protection if there was forethought in all my actions - that if I wanted to draw from the spiritual help which is always available, I should prepare beforehand for such activities as studying or giving healing. Although the purpose of this incident was benevolent and aimed at informing me for my own protection, I have included it here because it illustrates more than one aspect of what I am trying to convey. Earlier in my writing, I related how my body was manipulated physically with great skill. I am recalling it now to reinforce what I am trying to convey, namely the physical powers and skills of the 'intruders', whether they be benevolent or malevolent. Secondly, during this and the earlier happenings, there was no mental 'voice' communication. Entirely and fully, all that flowed did so at the deep subliminal level of 'concepts'.

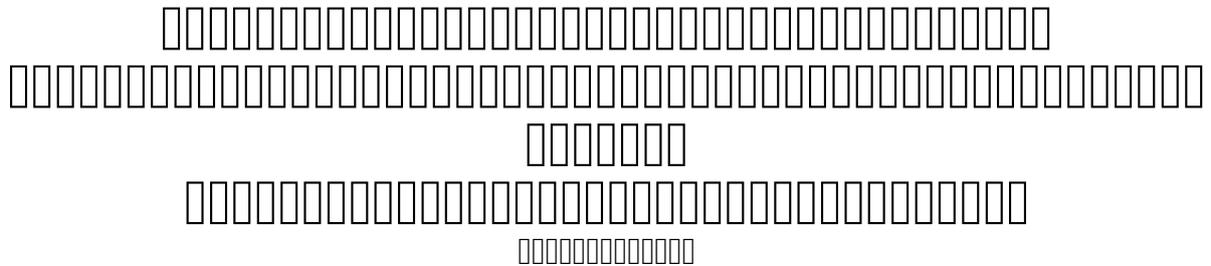
On another occasion, when I was walking between my house and workshop, I was physically 'gutted'*, for want of a better word. This was completely spontaneous and without explanation - none was needed, for the meaning was obvious. It was as if a hand had reached in and torn out my solar plexus. Physical recovery came quite quickly, but the mental shock and implication stayed with me for much longer.

On yet another occasion, when playing a game of rounders or cricket in my field with some nephews and nieces, I was running vigorously for the ball, when, suddenly, my legs were 'kicked'* from under me and I fell heavily. It was equivalent to the most blatant foul I had ever experienced when playing rugby at school or in the Navy.

From time to time, I re-read what I have written, and I am always conscious of the number of times when I have been forced to place inverted commas around a word or phrase that I have used in trying to describe the indescribable - as in the three instances at *above. On no occasion was there a visible agent through whom the effects had been engineered, although, on the third occasion, my fall was very public and the result of what I can only describe as a vicious attack.

The experiences that I have drawn on so far, or that I shall go on to describe, have occurred over more than twenty years, and continue to happen in one form or another. Throughout that time, I have kept notes of events as they took place, and have them with me now. I hope that in my writing I have shown myself to be capable of lucid

communication. People with whom I come into contact treat me as an intelligent, 'normal' person who has a wide-ranging intellect; someone to whom a number come for advice on a range of topics; someone who is regarded as a good communicator. Yet, in spite of these personal qualifications, I am having the greatest difficulty in describing my experiences in such a manner that I will succeed in convincing anyone - particularly the sceptical, the determined 'unbelievers' - of their truth.



I find that I can continue to write most effectively by the use of analogy and by drawing upon my own personal experiences, although, in this instance, they are experiences gained in everyday life and several years before the beginning of the 'voice intrusions'.

Some time after the collapse of my first marriage, I took the plunge again and married a widow who had two teenage children. By nature, I am an optimistic person, looking for the positive in a relationship, and, probably naïvely, not looking ahead to the possibility of incompatibility or of serious dissent. Thus the prospect of sharing my newly acquired home and its four acres of land with someone who had similar interests in horses and the development of a smallholding, seemed to have a lot going for it. With my guard totally down, I made my newly acquired family completely free of the establishment and facilities in an endeavour to let them integrate totally, and feel wanted. Without going into detail, in a short time I found myself overwhelmed. With their own lines of communication well established, I found that preferences were being decided and acted upon in a manner which excluded me from the process, with the result that gradually I began to feel submerged and almost an alien in my own home. Worst of all was to have one's every action observed and analysed, and possibly commented upon or reported back. Remarks such as "I wouldn't do it that way" began to intrude: "The person who taught *me* to drive..." or similar comments were delivered in a manner that always presumed the superiority, or personal 'omniscience' of the lady.

The result was that very soon I found myself, at almost all times, living in anticipation of some remark or action that reflected or rebounded upon what I may have said or done. I had the constant inward feeling akin to 'looking over my shoulder', in expectation of some sort of intervention. In extreme instances, it was possible to find oneself unable

to think a plan through or to make a rational decision, and even, as a result, to come to a total and dithering stop. These and similar reactions (or lack of actions) might occur even when the antagonising influence was not actually present, but in the offing or about to return. I sought isolation and longed for the 'space' and independence for my own thoughts and actions, free from observation and comment; free from the intruding voice and presence.

Many individuals, either by choice, or unwittingly, place themselves in situations in which 'voices and presences' intrude into their minds and bodies – indeed, some actively *seek* the voices and presences. Reflect that, unsuspectingly, without guile, but gullibly, and without anticipating any adverse consequences, through the use of my pendulum and alphabet chart, I was completely taken over, and my mind and life were totally dominated - until eventually I was able to break free. What, initially, had appeared to be a desirable development in my life, soon became a dominating influence. I had not been seeking spiritual enlightenment, or any esoteric practices, whereas many individuals do have such goals.

The 'seeker' may, for example, join a workshop with the aim of becoming a 'channeller' of enlightenment and truth from 'ascended masters', and be delighted at the arrival within of an inner voice and presence. Another might enrol for instruction in Reiki, and receive 'empowerment' or 'atunemet' from some (presumed) spiritual source. Others may follow the directions given in the writings of the Simontons or similar authors and endeavour to find their 'inner guides'. Some might go through a process of 'past life regression' under hypnosis and emerge convinced that they have their former persona 'who' speaks through them. Yet others might seek the inner 'atunements' to be reached through deep meditation practices – indeed they might work diligently at the practices with the objective of achieving, or contacting *sidhis* (depending upon the meaning each might give to the word).

Some seekers are well integrated mentally and spiritually, and are introduced to their chosen practice with care and control. Others may be 'opened' spiritually in a rash or incompetent manner, and may become the victims of undesirable intrusions into their bodies and minds. (Once again quoting Dr. Elmer Greene when he writes of the perils of a hasty descent into the deeper realms of the mind: 'The persistent explorer in these realms...brings himself to the attention of indigenous beings...').

The arrival of the voice in the mind and the presence within the body, may be instant and very obvious, as they were in my case, or they may appear as if by subtle and gentle infusion over time, in such a way that the 'host' may never be sure *when* they actually arrived, or, indeed, whether they had always been present. With the awareness that there is, seemingly, a powerful spiritual or 'different' influence in ones life, it is possible that one feels flattered at being chosen, particularly as a feeling of 'warm solicitousness' may be being created simultaneously. As

within the analogous situation of my second marriage, it is difficult to be certain subsequently *when* things began to change – when the presence and association once welcome and sought, became so *unwelcome*, aggravating and dominating.

Analogies can be taken too far, and then cease to be useful, yet, nevertheless, the changes that I have used my former marriage to illustrate, do occur, sometimes over a period of time – sometimes within the span of a day, as in the following example that I have recorded.

The moment of waking, or the time of gradually emerging awareness after sleep, is most crucial, for one is then at one's most vulnerable. One's first thoughts at these times are 'answered'; indeed, it might seem that one is already in a conversation. It is exceedingly difficult to avoid responding, and a dialogue can ensue from which it is hard to break free. There can be a feeling created on waking, a sense of being with very gentle spiritual people, warm, welcoming and caring. It is so easy to slip into this ambience, particularly if the rest of one's life is bleak or fraught.

But, as one is starting to feel 'cosy' and cared for, *they* start to imply that there are one or two, oh-so-teeny, defects that need correcting before one can be *truly* accepted and enjoy this ambience and ultimately be accepted into it after death. Gradually the emphasis shifts becoming more needling and ultimately threatening. One's defects become grossly magnified, one's sense of unworthiness exaggerated, and all the earlier warmth totally disappears.

Sometimes an intrusion can be of such a cold, inhuman presence that one can feel oneself to be totally devoid of humanity, of love, of caring. *One could become either very ill or very evil.*

It is virtually impossible for anyone in this state to convey to another the sense of threat or terror that can be experienced at these times. This inability to communicate can so increase a person's sense of loneliness, of total isolation, that they can easily try to seek oblivion in drink or drugs or suicide - indeed, it is quite possible that in their mind they will be actively encouraged down some desperate or diabolical route.

It is some time since I experienced this particular type of ploy, although the memory never fades. While my own experiences were long ago and intermittent, I was once briefly acquainted with a woman for whom similar and worse ones were a daily occurrence. Married with two young children of school age, her days began inside the warm 'cocoon' of the mind and the ambience of a benevolent spiritual presence. With the husband at work and the children at school, the warmth and gentleness of the voices and presences changed significantly, and she was accused of being an incompetent and wicked mother whose children were in danger of being corrupted by evil. She was told that she should kill the children and then herself in order to escape from the evil that surrounded them, and to ensure that they all would be secure spiritually. Each day saw her cowering in a corner with the curtains drawn, subjected to constant abuse

and torments, until about mid-afternoon, when the agony gradually ceased, the curtains were drawn back, and the children welcomed home. All would be peace – until the next morning, when the omissions of the previous day would be piled onto the long and growing list of her incompetences and inadequacies.

The person was an active, practicing Christian, the minister of whose church lived less than fifty yards away, unable, seemingly, to help. I talked to him on one occasion when I visited a friend who lived nearby, and tried to interest him in my experiences, and their relevance to the situation of his parishioner. I might just as well have saved my breath, for like so many in the Christian ministry today, he had come under the spell of modern psychiatry and psychology, and believed all that was said about voice hearing, schizophrenia, and the efficacy of modern drugs in controlling the condition. Instead of asking, exploring, trying to learn more, this man was more interested in trying to analyse *me*, and in putting me in a 'category' that would explain *my* alleged experiences.

I can only comment from the standpoint of someone who has been a lifelong Christian, and can only speculate that people of other faiths might have their religious beliefs and observances used and turned against them as they strive for the perfections that their religion advocates. One fruitful hunting ground for intruding spirits is the highly charged, emotional setting of a religious gathering, where the charismatic appeal of the speaker can cause individuals to drop their inhibitions or controls and open themselves wide to a hoped-for spiritual manifestation, or 'conversion'. The huge appeal of the moment; the wonderful feeling of being 'born-again'; the dramatic reaction to being 'slain by the spirit', can all conspire to make the sensitive, susceptible ones believe that they have been 'chosen'. They can feel numinous presences within or around them, and rejoice at the inner voice that tells them that they are one of an elect band and that they will 'purified', and, when pure, will be allowed close and personal contact with the 'ultimate' – that, if pure, they may even be chosen to 'channel' wisdom and truths. In the joy of having been accepted into this inner circle, it is so easy for the susceptible to lose all sense of discernment and to immerse themselves completely within this newly revealed inner world.

Undoubtedly there are many spiritual locations and gatherings from which people return uplifted, inspired and renewed – locations and gatherings where, often by long association, there is spiritual guardianship and protection. There are, however, undoubtedly others, where the speaker and venue are used to draw the vulnerable, susceptible, and where their weaknesses can be seen and exploited spiritually. I am fully aware that many have great difficulty even in accepting the reality of a spiritual state and of the existence of individually acting spirits. I am equally aware of the much greater difficulty that the concept of the reality of spiritual evil and of *intelligent*, individually acting spirits presents. I have long ago given up any attempts to convince anyone who is determined *not* to accept any of this; but even these readers, if they truly

have the welfare of suffering individuals at heart, should consider what I am writing, and, if nothing else, use my experiences and observations as 'patterns' to be held against these individuals to see if any fit.

To return to ones who have been 'entered' and inspired, and who now believe that they are to be purified and 'used' – by whom? Do they question? I did not – I was gullibility personified – *because I had no reason to doubt what I was being told, through the pendulum, or in my mind!* Remember, I was alone, with no one with whom to share my experiences or from whom I might have received counsel and caution. Indeed, one ploy that might be used is one in which *they* gradually encourage isolation, advising that friends and associates are not 'worthy' to share in the new experiences, and that all inner voice contact would be better served by the hearer withdrawing into a more solitary life. Within the new world of increasing solitude and isolation, the victim, without realising it, is more vulnerable and open to suggestion. Thus, it might be proposed that a prayer regime should be established, which gradually might become more severe as an indication of inner piety – possibly involving waking and praying through the night. Different forms of asceticism, such as diet restriction, may be suggested strongly.

[Let me remind you of my earlier description of the arguments and propositions that were put to me, and let me also recall that at the time I felt no strain or overt pressure – all appeared logical and desirable, and it was all achieved *as the result of discourse in my mind*. This is what I wrote:

"... nevertheless, there was strong argument that I should become morally impeccable, but that I should not choose a philosophy or religious affiliation because it allowed a degree of moral latitude. It was put to me that as, at an earlier time, I had elected to be a Catholic, I should 'return to the fold', or, if not, then my rejection should be for sound reasons of belief, and not because I was looking for a path with less exacting moral standards.

I was encouraged to adopt a sincere prayer life and spent long periods in prayer each night..."]

With each acceptance of a new devotion or stringency, the victim is creating levers that may be used to torment him. If he should default on any of his commitments, *they* will seize upon and try to exploit even the most minor peccadillo, or even a supposed one, and make it become an obsession beyond all reason, while at the same time creating a physical ambience of censoriousness. *They* might even propose a more severe asceticism as a form of penance to restore his spiritual standing. The feeling created, of unworthiness and censure, can overshadow the brightest company or activity, almost as if there was a sentence hanging over one – reminiscent of when, in my past serious depression, there existed a feeling of 'gut hollowness' that totally prevented one's enjoyment and development, much as I imagine the presence of a cancer within one's body might do. Within the major religions, many do spend time in isolation, or engage in stringent ascetic practices, but they do so

within a 'control group', having checks and balances and spiritual advisors, together with a long tradition upon which to draw, and an understanding of the potential dangers of such activities. (Recollect the 'Rules for the discernment of spirits' given by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, to which I referred earlier in my writing).

Within the context of self-purification, the hearer is encouraged to dredge his mind and to bring to the surface any – usually long past – events or thoughts of an embarrassing, shameful or similar nature, especially if others are involved. *They* will encourage recollection of incidents in which others – family, friends, – showed up badly, especially reminiscences about known or imagined (and usually, sexual) peccadilloes. *They* might next pretend that the persons themselves are present in spirit and are aware of the thoughts, and that one will be confronted with the consequences of these unnecessary revelations that should have been allowed to pass into history, when one dies oneself. In this context, *they* will insert into one's mind a name that is calculated to produce reminiscences from the past – often the name of someone with whom one has been close or intimate – always trawling the mind, encouraging recollections, particularly of a sexual nature.

Yet again, a 'heavy' presence, purporting to be a senior spiritual figure, may introduce the concept that someone (deceased) does, or will wish to apologise for lifetime's hurts. This is calculated to cause one to go over in one's mind the circumstances that led to the hurt, with the possibility that an old wound may be opened and that one could renew resentment against the 'person' who is alleged to be present, and aware of one's thoughts. All thoughts of apology to be given or received can rapidly disappear. One might also be encouraged to consider the apologies that one would feel it necessary to make oneself. This is another ploy aimed at inducing a further mind trawl, calculated to reveal incidents or thoughts that are derogatory of others or oneself.

Intent upon self-purification and spiritual development, the hearer may find himself being drawn closer and closer into contact with, and reliance upon, the voices in his mind and the ambient presences that are subtly intruded. Apparently proceeding in a manner that gives satisfaction to his 'mentors', he might find himself being rewarded with the presence around him of supposedly senior and powerful beings, and being told in his mind that he has been accepted, but at a junior level. Henceforth, he will be part of a 'team', but as a receiver of instruction and a neophyte. Yet another step has been taken along a road that may deprive him of his own reasoning and decision making abilities, and lead him into a state of dependence from which he may never break free, unless he receives skilled and understanding assistance.

He will become a 'listener' – listening within to his 'controls'; not focussing on the people and world around, but always within. You have perhaps been in a cocktail party or other gathering where there is fervent conversation going on in the groups all around, and you are trying to converse with someone who is directly in front of you, someone whose

face is turned attentively towards you, but whose eyes are seemingly vacant, and certainly not focused on you. The conversation in the adjoining group, the little bit of gossip half heard, is so much more interesting, riveting, than your conversation. These are the same eyes and the demeanour of someone who is locked into the inner mind and communication; someone who is listening to current conversation within, or who is listening to the silence – waiting for the next contact, which has become more real than the people around. Still in this context, I am reminded of a woman who briefly passed through my group of friends, who, in a similar way, exemplifies what I am trying to convey. While, say, gardening and carrying on herself with what she was doing, she would say "Listen, Roy...." while she thought of something to say and hold the centre of attention, and, until I learned to ignore the call, I would stand in suspense, waiting for the next remark.

We still have within ourselves all of the instinctive, behavioural actions and reactions of our mammalian evolution. The automatic and autonomic functions are too frequently dismissed as 'flight, fight, adrenalin'. There are very many more reactions and interactions prompted by social and instinctive triggers. I have a book that provides instruction for budding cartoonists, and which shows a hundred stylised cartoon faces that are designed to illustrate an equal number of emotions and reactions. Each of the expressions, when on the actual face of a person, would be accompanied by a range of corresponding internal changes, involving sphincters, eye focus, blood distribution, muscle tensions and breathing, that are, mostly, too subtle to be observed or actually felt. A wild creature that hears a sound that might suggest a threat, adopts a 'listening' state. In this state, and simplistically, ears are cocked, breathing is almost suspended to enable the hearing to become more acute, genitals are tensed and anal and bladder sphincters are tightened, while the creature adopts a 'shoulder hunched' posture, possibly to create a low profile. In the animal, the changes last as long as the stimulus exists, and a quiescent state returns, or the creature reacts to the next and different set of stimuli.

For the perpetually listening human, there is no release, as the internal reactions become the norm. To the blank, listening gaze of the listener will be added the hunched shoulders and shallow breathing. Invisible, and probably un-remarked, because it has become the norm, is the tight anal sphincter, which, in turn, is accompanied by a constriction at the base of the throat. The latter constriction is part of an internal mechanism that, in the threatened mammal, diverts blood supply from the digestive organs and brain into the muscles of response, preparing the latter for immediate action if the potential threat becomes real. In the human, the long-term diminution of blood supply to the brain must have many consequences that I am not competent to analyse. However, in the analysis of the brains of schizophrenics, note is often taken of local changes in brain structure, which are then considered to be among the *causes* of the schizophrenic state. To me, it is reasonable to question

whether the changes within the brain are the *result* of a curtailment of the blood supply, and are themselves, in turn, a consequence of the perpetual listening.

I am reminded of these phenomena as I sit at my computer in intense concentration and suddenly realise that *my* shoulders are hunched, *my* breathing is very shallow, while my thought processes are turning into treacle and a series of aches and tensions are created in various places. I am 'listening' intently into my mind and memory as I try to convert my notes and experiences into a coherent narrative. Until I learned various methods of preventing the results of my absorption from having these effects, I used to be concerned at the persistent shallowness of my breathing. At that time, my efforts aimed at restoring regular, deep breathing, produced only limited results. In an effort to induce natural breathing at all times, I went to visit someone whom I know who is a properly trained hypnotherapist, having the idea that it should be possible, under hypnosis, for her to programme me to breathe regularly and fully, even when in deep and persistent thought.

Having heard me through, my friend said firmly that her training would not allow her to do what I asked: she would need, over a number of sessions, to find out *why* my breathing was shallow, and *then* try to change the pattern. Disappointed, as we live some distance apart, I nevertheless accepted her offer of simple hypnosis aimed at inducing deep relaxation. In all, I am acquainted with five qualified hypnotherapists, three of whom are also G.P.s, and had then already experienced hypnosis induced by two of them. Among other motives, I was interested in comparing my friend's technique with that of the other two.

While I still remember that her approach was different from those that I had experienced previously, it is sufficiently long ago for me to have only a vague recollection of the actual details. What I *do* remember is going through a series of stages of 'induction' and becoming mentally detached, and on the verge of losing awareness. At this point, and yet still capable of thought, I experienced a strong physical, spiritual intrusion into myself, while my rational mind helped me to hold onto consciousness. Within my state of residual awareness, I had been able to realise that *had* I allowed myself to continue into deep hypnosis, there was a strong possibility that I would have been taken over and spoken through, as is a trance medium. This is not only my assertion. I formerly had many discussions with one of my G.P. friends, who, with the patients' permission, used to let me observe his technique at work. On one occasion that I remember, my friend had recently returned from a conference of medical hypnotherapists, and related how one of the speakers had cautioned members about the very things of which I am writing.

In increasing flow, Eastern religious, philosophical and esoteric practices have made their way westward – concepts of reincarnation, past lives, karma - almost, one might say, in a 'pick and mix' combination with aspects of Buddhism, yoga, martial arts, Qi gong and many more. I am

not drawn into this world of belief myself, although I have many friends who have a greater or lesser interest, and some who are ardent practitioners, and I read much of what is accessible to the non-participant. There is a common thread that seems to link many, and that is a belief in past lives, reincarnation and the possibility of regression into a past life while under hypnosis. I do not intend to get drawn into a discussion about other peoples' sincerely held beliefs and practices; however, my own experience while being hypnotised makes me question most strongly the merits and reality of alleged past life regression. I see it as being fraught with danger for the vulnerable – and even for the apparently stable.

Several years ago, someone who stayed at my home for about two years, used to like to be taken to local group meetings of a national healing organisation. I did not stay for the actual proceedings, but returned for the social chat and refreshments with which the meetings ended. Almost the entire group of very delightful people believed that each had a persona derived from a past life. What struck me forcibly was that some appeared to be acting out a version of the personality that they believed that they once had. Of itself, this activity is for the individual and not me to choose. In the context in which I am writing I *am* concerned, for within this belief and practice there is the mechanism by means of which a person can be taken over and controlled. There is the distinct possibility that, under hypnosis, intrusion may have occurred, and that the perceived change in attitude and function may be interpreted as being a reflection of the character of the supposed previous incarnation. Often, the earlier status is presented as having been important or desirable for some reason, and the person is flattered and consciously or unconsciously adopts a new role and personality. In time, the 'real' person, i.e. the one in *this* life, may become dominated completely by the inner, and unable to function normally.

The ability to hypnotise is easily achieved, but is not necessarily accompanied by the responsibility or awareness that should pervade the practice. The Web lists numerous courses, many controlled by responsible bodies whose aim is to produce competent medical hypnotherapists. However, the Web also lists others of dubious probity and responsibility, offering 'training and qualification' by distant learning, as indicated by the following extract from one advertisement:

HYPNOTHERAPY IS THE CAREER OF THE FUTURE
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

"It has really taken off in the last few years. Now is the time to get in, before it becomes strictly regulated. You too can discover the joy of taking control of your life, your future. If you are interested in enhanced income, life enjoyment, success, financial independence then this is the career for you! A qualified hypnotherapist can earn between \$75-\$150.00 an hour! Many practitioners working part time with 4 or 5 clients at their

convenience, can earn an extra \$350-\$500.00 a week. Full time professionals are earning \$75,000+ a year. With some reporting much higher earnings. You too can discover the joy of taking control of your life while promoting your own health and wealth. Jump-start your Career for the Millennium! We offer a no nonsense approach to education.

There is no previous educational experience required at this time to take these courses. Anyone with a desire to succeed and excel can enrol in our courses. We are only interested in your knowledge and ability in this field. You must however possess a positive attitude and a willingness to succeed, a test score of 75% or higher and a taped session to become *Certified*."

Reading the complete advertisement reveals that there is no personal contact between school and client – all is 'achieved' using books and tapes. And the 'examination' is similarly conducted – a written test paper and a video or audio tape of a 'session' being the only requirements necessary to gain the coveted certificate, and a series of convincing letters to place after the name! Such is the type of 'training' of some who offer, among other benefits, 'regression therapy' and N.L.P. (neuro-linguistic programming). The threat to the minds of vulnerable people is immense, and is added to in significant measure by the antics of the 'stage hypnotist'. A further advertisement on the Web offered 'the fastest training for stage hypnotists'. The public distortion of peoples' minds and behaviour for the sake of entertainment has, in my belief, the possibility of causing harm to the participants that may result in permanent damage to their personality.

In 2001, one member of the public featured in a lawsuit against a well-known stage hypnotist. The former had willingly and actively participated in a performance, only to find that, shortly afterwards, he began to 'hear voices', and subsequently experienced a complete change of personality. In court, he had a number of prominent psychiatrists and psychologists arrayed against him, who declared that he had undoubtedly been a latent schizophrenic, and that the actual manifestation of the condition had nothing to do with the stage participation. Naturally, the man lost his case. 'Naturally', because there was not the remotest possibility that anyone would even *suggest* that he had been the subject of spiritual intrusion. My experience tells me a different story; it leaves me in no doubt that hypnosis should be used only with caution – certainly not for entertainment – and with the constant awareness that, under its influence, vulnerable individuals may become the victims of intrusion.

Just as sharks know where food is most likely to be found, and just as they have highly sensitive detection equipment to inform them when something suitable has arrived: just as prey animals know of the waterholes where victim species are likely to be present and off their guard: just as vultures have the keenness of perception to detect from afar the potential meal – in like manner are the spiritual intruders

equipped. It is not my intention to catalogue all of the circumstances and venues that lend themselves to spiritual intrusion, only to use a small number as illustrations.

One that readily comes to mind is the so-called 'clubbing' culture in which many simply want to get 'stoned' on drink, drugs, or both, and to end up with a quick 'shag'. No doubt there are many who remain in control, but there are undoubtedly many others who do not, and who risk damage to their lives and minds, and put themselves into situations in which intrusion is possible. The desire to use the latest 'recreational' drug or combination of substances to achieve a much-vaunted experience may induce individuals to pursue practices that, if they were to be examined rationally, amount to little short of self-degradation.

Many will have read the series of books by Carlos Castaneda, who sought 'knowledge and enlightenment' via mescaline and the 'spirit' of his own peyote plant, which 'revealed' itself to him in the desert. I read the first book on the recommendation of friends who were raving about it. All that I saw was someone who was prepared to degrade himself in the pursuit of some supposed goal of inner enlightenment and power. To crawl around on all fours in the guise of a dog, and to vomit uncontrollably in the desert night, does not suggest itself as an ideal preliminary to spiritual development. While reading the book, I was reminded of the story of one young woman, a committed cocaine addict, who went into a public lavatory in order to give herself a much-needed 'fix'. Her trembling hands dropped the powder on the toilet floor, and she came to her senses to find herself on all fours about to lick it up, so desperate was she for the drug. The shock of seeing herself in such a state of degradation was sufficient to drive her away from drugs.

Others are not so fortunate, and having, in their mentally weakened state, become the victim of an intrusion, have their desires and degradation turned on and off at the whim of the intruder. There are many other potential sources of personal degradation than drugs that I do not intend to catalogue, but, rather, will leave it to you to compile your own list. One unfortunate consequence of a degraded lifestyle is imprisonment. Once in prison and 'banged up' for possibly twenty-three hours a day, the mind of the prisoner can become a happy hunting ground for intruding spirits. With endless time at their disposal, *they* gradually enter the thoughts of the incarcerated and can produce untold torment that may ultimately lead to self-harm, suicide or mind destruction. Many who have been convicted of the most degraded or despicable crimes are advised to accept solitary confinement to keep themselves away from other prisoners who might attack them. Within the solitude, the captive mind can be toyed with and 'bounced' between a seemingly endless variety of voices, or 'harried' by a duality of voices in the manner of greyhounds coursing a hare.

A person can find himself or herself persuaded into wrongdoing by warm, 'companionate' voices, that may have become part of their normal thoughts, and accepted almost as an 'inner counsellor'. This can become the lot of an intelligent, imaginative and, possibly, isolated person. Such a one can become used to the inner discourses that may be a part of the normal process of mentally teasing away at a problem or argument. A separate inner voice may be truly indistinguishable from one's own thoughts, and yet become a source of deliberately, yet subliminally, intruded thoughts. Such a voice can become companionable to the solitary person and apparently share memories and reminiscence. Such a voice can pour the balm of solicitude on the hurts and injustices of life; can become a permanent, trusted friend, and yet, withal, keep the resentments stoked, and suggest ways of getting one's own back. Such a voice can, almost as a joke or game, propose an action such as shoplifting. 'The coast is clear, go on, I'll keep watch'. With the first attempt a success, the joint venture is set to become a constant game and, between them, the person and the inner voice devise new and ingenious strategies, until, possibly at the urgent prompting of the voice, the person believes that he can accomplish something daredevil – and is exposed.

I sometimes wonder whether this was the fate of a well-known person – a regular broadcaster, magistrate and author – who was detected shoplifting, sentenced, and, in her shame, committed suicide. It was revealed that she had devised an ingenious topcoat, with numerous inner pockets designed to receive the booty. Personally, having experienced the persuasive ways of the voices, although not in this particular context, I find it easy to believe that this person had been tricked as I suggest, and when exposed, had been hounded to suicide by her 'friend and companion', the inner voice, which had now turned against her, and mocked her in her humiliation.

Does this seem far-fetched? Does the concept of friendly encouragement, support, and reliable and close companionship that turns into, or exists as a cover for, deceit and malevolence, seem far-fetched? It can happen at the human level. Do the names Burgess, MacLean, Blunt and Philby resonate with you? Perhaps you are too young to have known. Three were highly placed in British Intelligence, having access to much secret and extremely sensitive information, while the fourth was greatly regarded within the world of fine art, and occupied the position of surveyor of the Queen's pictures – he having also served in Intelligence during World War II. All lived lives that were apparently impeccable, and fully integrated into the society and government of their day – and all were traitors of the vilest kind, working in the closest possible way with the then Cold War enemy, the Soviet Union, and being, amongst other things, betrayers of many British agents, sending them to torture and death.

Of many ploys adopted by the intelligent intruding spirits, one is to become the inner voice of someone who lives a life of utmost probity, who is highly regarded, and who develops a reputation as, for example, a

'channeller', a giver of 'readings', a 'trance medium', a clairvoyant. Providing accurate, and perhaps comforting information, and, seemingly, giving excellent advice, the inner voice can, nevertheless, operate in one of the classical ways of espionage. This particular ploy succeeds when, within the confident and believable delivery, a 'weasel' word or piece of advice is slipped into what may otherwise be genuine and sound. Can I recall to you the events that I related earlier, when, following the recommendation of a then associate, I went to see a woman who, it was said, was deeply spiritual and full of insight? I had no particular need of any sort of so-called 'reading', but, as with many things that I do, I went mostly out of curiosity.

As I have written previously, she was a most delightful person – open and welcoming. For almost two hours, with a break for lunch, I listened as I was fed words of presumed wisdom – words that I began to realise were of no significance, and meant nothing to me. However, within the inconsequential discourse, certain ideas were planted, which took me several years to discard. 'I give you X and Y', said she, mentioning two names. 'You will write a book in collaboration with someone who is already established in your field and, consequently, your writing will get a much needed boost'. Whenever, subsequently, an X or a Y came into my orbit, in spite of myself, I wondered 'Is this the X, or the Y whom she meant?' Likewise, when I became acquainted with someone new who appeared to have suitable writing talents, inevitably I would speculate about whether this was to be my collaborator.

Rather more serious and insidious was the statement: "You will have teaching dreams". As well as intruding into the mind and body while a person is awake, it is evident that intrusions from spiritual sources occur during sleep. I do not intend to become involved in a study of the many instances when individuals through history have claimed to have been warned or given prescience during dreams. To do so would divert me from my main task. I do not doubt that it is possible for an individual to be influenced in this way. Had I, myself, been so gullible as to accept this proposition, and believed that I would be fed esoteric knowledge during my sleep, and then had been naïve enough to incorporate the knowledge into my thinking and everyday practice – what then? With my experience of spiritual intrusion, I was able to see the ploy for what it was, and essentially, thereafter, have tried to apply all my growing alertness and discernment to an understanding of the sometimes weird world of my dreams. Someone *without* my experience might have been flattered to think that they were to have communication from – perhaps an 'Ascended Master', to use the current glib jargon, or 'The Source', to use another frequently used name – but who can say what the source might be, or how they have been influenced subsequently?

On a much bigger stage, a well-known American woman journalist developed a talent for automatic writing. She was fed such informed and corroborative detail relating to her personal life, that she doubted not that the sources of her writing were 'all-seeing' and infinitely

knowledgeable. The latter identified themselves with ideograms for 'Donkey' and 'Lily' – claiming that if they disclosed who they had *really* been when alive, the author herself would be overwhelmed at being chosen to channel from such eminent people. Over the course of her first book, *A Search for the Truth*, the author, Ruth Montgomery, passed on the 'wisdom and insights' from – *whom?* How can anyone possibly know? She interlaced her chapters – first one from the 'sources', then another, into which appeared apparently corroborative words from major American political or other well-known figures. Then back to the sources, and so on through the book – a book that, to some minds, gave the author credibility as a vehicle for 'channelled' wisdom.

A second book followed, inspired again by the 'sources'; a book called *Strangers Among Us*. Without giving a lengthy description of the contents, I shall summarise two key ideas through which the book could be calculated to influence the vulnerable or gullible. The first is the concept of 'walk-ins'. This applied to individuals who may have become so desperate at the distressfulness of their earthly situation, that they would, by spiritual means, be offered the chance to exchange with 'someone', now in spirit, who had so learned to match them that a 'seamless' change could be made. The body would continue with its new 'occupant', and the 'dispirited' one would proceed, spiritually, to another plane of existence. The gullible, deceived by this seemingly desirable strategy, would, after a time, and still in the same body, believe that they actually were the 'walk-in'. So believing, an individual would thus continue in life, but in a state of being controlled totally by – *whom?* This ploy may seem even more far-fetched than some others that I am describing. Having, effectively, been 'shadowed' spiritually, and, at one time, been aware of the presence of an invisible *doppelgänger* paralleling my being, I have no doubt about its reality and feasibility.

Many people have scant scientific knowledge, and know very little about the planet upon which they dwell. This state of ignorance can easily be exploited, as exemplified in the second strategy that I have taken from the book. 'There will be a nuclear holocaust within a specified number of years'. 'The earth will wobble on its axis, or even flip right over, causing huge sea waves which will swamp coastal areas, allowing only those inland and on high ground to survive'. Such were some of the predictions of the 'sources' – predictions that many would accept unquestioningly because of the apparent authority that the author had built up through the merits of her first book. Well, the specified number of years have long come and gone without, as far as I am aware, there having been a nuclear holocaust, and the earth has not wobbled nor flipped! (Although it *does* have precessing movements involving its orbit and axis, movements that are well know, but are capable of being misrepresented to influence the uninformed). Both of the quoted predictions were aimed at people who were gullible, and who, in their gullibility, were somehow made to feel that they could be among the survivors who would

be required to repopulate and restore the earth. Strong in their beliefs, many formed small communities in isolated areas and learned basic survival crafts, ultimately losing touch with reality, and becoming disillusioned when the earth was not devastated and did not flip. This is a very limited summary, but one that, I hope, will serve to illustrate the ways in which an author, full of self belief, can be used unwittingly to influence and unsettle many individuals.

Before leaving the topic, I must recall an earlier period in my story when I was myself living in a state of total conviction that the 'Other' who were in my mind, and fully in my life, were real and had a *right* to question and pressurise. Looking back, I *know* that they were *real* and were neither hallucinations nor delusions, but *how* they came to have such authority and dominance, or how I *allowed* them to, I shall never be able to recall. All I know now is that they did, and that I allowed them. How else would I even *consider* the proposition that they made? This is what I wrote earlier:

"More and more the theme of the 'Second Coming' of Jesus was developed, and then, quite bluntly, it was put to me that He would return in a more mature person than was generally expected, and that I was a suitable candidate within whom He could manifest Himself. I cannot remember exactly how I declined such an offer that, it must be thought, no one could refuse. I do remember that I declared that I was too much of a coward to be able to accept such a high profile role."

Someone well known in the world of football who, in accepting the proposition, achieved fame or notoriety depending on how one views the events, was David Icke. Convinced by a series of seemingly inexplicable coincidences, and accepting what he was told via the direct 'channelling' of a well-known medium, David went public and proclaimed himself a 'Son of God'. He subsequently published books whose contents also arrived through 'channels'. '...I have communicated almost daily with Rakorski, the one known as Lord of all Civilization, who is directly responsible for the changes the earth will undergo...' '...I was led to many psychics in Britain and other countries, and through them the Godhead and other beings of vast evolution have unveiled to me the mysteries of life. All have told of the same events to come in this decade, the great geological upheavals that will bring an end to the pain and suffering, anger and conflict that have taken this planet to the brink of non-existence...'

As was the case with the prophecies given by Ruth Montgomery in her book, David Icke's decade also has passed and the geological upheavals that he foretold have not happened either. His books are read by some as if they contain genuine prophecy, by others as the outpouring of a mind whose balance is questioned. Innocuous as they may seem, to me they provide the openings through which the minds of susceptible individuals may be entered and eventually dominated.

'...I hope that by the time you have read this book you will appreciate that communication with such beings on other levels of Creation is the most natural thing in the world.... Every time we think we create energy, a *thought-form* as it is called...A thought-form sent out by an Italian will be decoded by an Englishman into English, by a Frenchman into French. In this way thought-forms sent to us by the Spirit of the Earth or a being from another part of the universe can be decoded into spoken words by someone with psychic gifts which, indeed, all of us possess. This is called *channelling*...This decoding can manifest in many ways, not only through the spoken word. The thought-forms can be turned into written words, and this is known as *automatic writing*...It is also possible to hear the thought-forms as a soft gentle voice inside your head. I call this method 'getting it direct'. On a more limited level it is possible to communicate through *dowsing*.'

In my mind I yell with horror that such ideas are so gullibly spread to other potentially gullible people. The whole purpose of my writing is to *warn* the sensitive, the susceptible person of the dangers inherent in all these practices. If such people actually accept as genuine what they read, and if then they are persuaded by the books and their contents to try to communicate '...with the one we know as Jesus, the Spirit of the Earth, and many others...' they are in great danger of having their minds entered and taken over as was mine before I realised what was happening. I have written before of the need for discernment by the readers of such books and proclamations. Many individuals are prevented from exercising any form of discernment by their very ignorance of anything remotely scientific, and by an amazing lack of curiosity about themselves, how they function, and about the planet upon which they live. Within this ignorance, many can be persuaded to believe the most outlandish propositions that are represented as coming from the 'Ascended Masters' or similar. '...the body has changed and adapted itself as it has risen up and fallen down the frequencies. Since Atlantis it has changed from taking in energy externally to digesting energy from food internally. The light levels have had to step in to help here and there, but...'

There are many such allegedly channelled books and other literature in the catalogues, offering the 'truths' from the 'Ascended Masters', who channel under a variety of names ranging from Aldebran to Zed. Some are a collection, or collage, or heterogeneous mixture of existing philosophical or religious concepts. Others pretend a science such as the one from which I drew my illustrations. All hold the potential of influencing vulnerable minds. Some books have an inexpressible ambience that may be sensed even before they have been opened, almost as if they come with an attachment for good or evil. I have just talked on the phone to a friend who agrees entirely with what I am trying to convey. My friend has a daughter who trades in second-hand books, and many

pass through the house, or come in from the library, for she is herself an avid reader. Only recently, my friend told me of two books that she had borrowed from our local library and which she could not wait to return. It was not that intrinsically the two purveyed evil; rather that, comprehensively, they seemed to embody it within their total and indefinable ambience. On the other hand, certain books on her shelf seemingly draw the eye, and in themselves are inspirational.

Undoubtedly there are books that have been inspired from evil spiritual sources, although I cannot imagine that their authors would claim that this was the case. Evil itself works by being surreptitious and underhand – even by parading itself in the guise of good. On the other hand, there can not be many books more blatant than those of such authors as Aleister Crowley; books which, by their very challenge to orthodoxy, draw a readership – some sceptical and intent on debunking, others perhaps curious but open to the evil associations of the books and authors. And so, possibly touching just a few who are most vulnerable and clouding their minds to reality, the books and the original sources achieve their aim. Certain books about vampires and the cult that they inspire had a most profound effect upon a young man who this week has begun a life in prison. Influenced to the level of derangement, he murdered an elderly widow, cut out her heart, and drank her blood. I find it hard to believe that there are those who will not accept that the youth was evil and had been inspired by evil. But evil succeeds by pretending that it does not exist, and by persuading the 'sophisticated' that such concepts are mediaeval and not 'politically correct'.

Those who should speak out are often silent because, perhaps, they fear derision. It is possible that they also – they who, by virtue of their position within their culture or faith, should warn of what has been proclaimed in every region and at every time since the earliest – that they have been persuaded that 'evil' is something arcane and passé. Someone of eminence within the Catholic Church, who had, by omission, adopted such a position, was Cardinal Suenens. He admits such when he writes...

"I confess that...I have not sufficiently stressed the reality of the Powers of Evil at work in our contemporary world, and the necessity of the spiritual combat we must wage. It is difficult to row against the tide and not succumb to the spirit of the times...This, too, must be said, even at the risk of offending those who obstinately place their trust in the natural goodness of man and the myth of 'Progress'."

I am currently reading a book that was published very recently, and which takes the reader as far back in the history of religion as it is possible to go, there to find the first recorded statement of the belief in the existence of the conflicting spiritual powers of 'good' and 'evil'. The book, *A Search for Zarathustra* by Paul Kriwaczek, traces the author's quest to find the continuing influence on all subsequent religions,

of the faith proclaimed by the prophet Zoroaster/Zarathustra. The point that I am making now, have made before, and will continue to make is this: whether one believes in one religion; whether one acknowledges the validity of a number of them; whether one rejects totally *all* religions and religious thought – how can anyone completely reject and ignore the one theme that runs through every faith – namely the existence of spiritual good and evil and their influence upon individual people?

In my efforts to bring the argument in to the present time, I have quoted the late surgeon and Psychiatrist, Dr. Kenneth McAll, and from his book, *Healing the Family Tree*; I have drawn from Clinical Psychologist, Wilson Van Dusen, and from his widely quoted chapter "*The Presence of Spirits in Madness*". Thus, from the earliest times to the present, there has run a consistent thread that just cannot be ignored. If you deny its existence and refuse even to think about the implications, just ask yourself whether you are one of those who are completely out of step, and whether you are denying those in your care the potential root of understanding and the relief of their suffering.

In writing from so strong a personal conviction, I must ensure that I do not fall into the trap that Cardinal Suenens so ably revealed in his book of the nineteen-eighties, *Renewal and the Powers of Darkness*. Written at the peak of the then highly popular and influential 'Charismatic Movement', in which individual Christians felt the upsurge of a revitalized recognition of the 'charisms' or gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the author cautioned against some of the excesses that were becoming manifest. One of these was a growing belief the *all* mental illness was the result of malevolent spiritual influence, a belief that created a consequent growth in individual attempts at exorcism – sometimes bringing harm to the participants – something that should be borne in mind by those who are engaging in the increasing practice of so-called 'Spirit Release'.

The fact that this path is difficult to find and to follow should not, nevertheless, deter anyone from attempting to follow it, bearing in mind that it is not a path that one should wander down alone, nor without thought and preparation. Before I move on myself, I shall describe the real experiences of someone whom I know, which might add further illumination.

'Ruth' used to work in a music shop that I visit from time to time. As I became better acquainted with her, I learned that she is epileptic – a condition that is obviously well controlled by drugs and an appropriate lifestyle. In time, Ruth told me that earlier she had had two types of fit. The first type is the one that she has had since her teens, and is controlled by the drugs. In the second, she experienced great distress as she was assailed by a 'vile hag', who would try to drag her away or snatch the child from her womb. A reading in Church one day reminded Ruth of the account of Jesus curing an epileptic by driving out an 'evil spirit'. Prompted by this reminder, Ruth was prayed for within her Church community, and, during the same day, she experienced an

immense relief within herself, and has since had complete freedom from the hag.

Sometime afterwards, someone in the Church decided that there must be many who have experienced what might be called 'mini-miracles', and invited such people to contribute to an intended publication. Ruth wrote her story, but, even before the accounts were published, her family home was invaded by a poltergeist. Among its varied activities, the latter would stamp around in first-floor rooms with such vigour that the light fittings in the ceilings below would shake. The noise of the stamping could be heard by neighbours at times when the family were not at home. It also startled one of Ruth's students when the latter was in a ground floor room during a piano lesson. Once, when the family had been on holiday, they found on their return that a collection of ornamental bottles, normally kept in the bathroom, had been thrown and smashed into the bath. The torment finally ended when a service of exorcism was held in the house, and, speaking on the phone to Ruth a moment ago, she assured me that, one year on, the creature has not returned.