

**A HIGHER GOOD
INTRODUCTION
CAIN'S QUESTION**

I was fifteen when I died. It was long before anyone used the phrase "Near Death Experience" or talked publicly about "Out Of Body Experiences." I don't know how other NDEs or OBEs feel about these terms, but I consider them euphemisms of a society scared to death of death.

I died. That's a fact. Then I came back, and I've spent four decades thinking about it.

My death experience was so profound, and so at odds with Western religions, that about 20 years passed before I even spoke of it. At first I was confused and thought that if I let enough time pass the experience would fade like a dream. Such knowledge was a burden, especially for a cloistered Catholic so young. A Catholic education back in the 1950's was nothing short of dogmatic brainwashing, complete with the certainty that anyone who did not strictly adhere to every aspect of the "one, holy, apostolic" church doctrine was headed straight to Hell. So I tried to forget it, to deny it.

Nevertheless, even after four decades, my death experience remains the most vivid memory of my existence. With the wisdom of hindsight, I now realize I had to experience the lies of life before I could accept and understand the truths of my death. I'm writing it down now because I obviously went further into this mysterious realm than those who have come forward.

I strongly suspect that other souls throughout history, and many today, experienced the same thing, returned to this life, and remained mute. At the very least, I suspect that many of the outspoken NDEs of the common era aren't really telling it all.

It says in the Tao Te Ching: "Those who know do not talk. Those who talk do not know."

However, I believe it more appropriate to say: Those who know don't know how to express it, or they refuse to do so from fear of religious labeling or even persecution. After all, even Lao Tzu disappeared into the wilderness, never to be seen or heard again, right after he handed over the Tao Te Ching, a little book of just 81 verses that spawned one of the major religions of the world.

At any rate, NDEs are very difficult to talk about, especially at first. During the past decade, I've only shared my experience occasionally, and then only when compassion has moved me to do so. Each time I have struggled for words and similes to describe conditions and attitudes for which there are no close comparisons on Earth.

I'm not sure of all the reason I'm baring my soul, so the speak, here and now. The logical reasons are numerous. None of them, however, carry enough weight to motivate this task. And I don't expect to profit from it. In fact, I don't even plan to have it published until I again leave this realm. I began this work in my mid-fifties and plan to tweak it until my last breath, trying to get the words right. Besides, to be honest, I'd rather not deal with the attention it might bring, so I leave it behind for your discernment.

I write this because I must. It will be read when the world is ready. It will be read during an age in which enough people are ready to burst through the confines of preconceived notions and think for themselves. It will be read when enough people are sick and tired of the social sickness they see in the world. It will be read when enough people are ready to stray from the frightened flocks that have continued to blindly follow the same paths to fearful isolation and violent mayhem.

That time, I believe, is near. It is no coincidence that today we have many thousands of living souls who have had experiences as profound as did Saint Paul on the road to Damascus. You can attribute this phenomenon to the proficiency of modern medicine, but it is all part of a spiritual evolution that is leading mankind through a transitional period.

You won't find these thousands standing on busy street corners attracting attention with signs warning of the end of the world. They're not starting any new religions. They wouldn't even think of intimidating you with threats of eternal damnation, and they don't ask for donations to spread the "word." When talking of spiritual matters, they never raise their voices. Their's is a still, small voice. They are the meek, but they have no desire to "inherit the Earth." They've seen something infinitely better. They just seem to be quietly waiting for the rest of the world to

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catch up.

There is, however, another reason for general silence among those enlightened by death. Wrapped up in the concrete understanding of answers that have puzzled philosophers and theologians throughout time is the realization that everyone must find their own way.

Knowing this, I realize what I say may have little effect on some. Even I had to make my own mistakes, suffer my own pain, and learn my own lessons; for without the mistakes, the pain, and the profound lessons—everything is little more than intellectual supposition. People can believe just about anything, but most of them only know for sure what they have experienced.

In many ways, my life has been richer and more purposeful because of the death experience. My existence this time around has been full and diverse and gratifying. I wouldn't trade with anyone, though I do wish I could be more like Jesus, Gandhi, Lao Tzu, Buddha and a few other of my long-gone heroes.

Like most everyone who reaches a certain age, I realize I have been blessed in many ways, but I also have experienced the depths of despair and what seems like more than an average share of pain. These painful realities of life, nevertheless, find graceful balance in the deep joys and interests. I have had a passion for life, and it has been very interesting. The worst part of it, however, has been continually witnessing the needless anguish, suffering, and violence that my fellow men inflict upon themselves and each other. In that respect, it seems a self-perpetuating curse in which I'm trapped—like a subject in one of Rod Sterling's "Twilight Zone" episodes.

I am completely human and carnally burdened by the same instincts for survival and egotistical satisfaction that distorts spirituality and happiness in every human being. I retain the common fears of being hurt and of disease, but I have no fear of death. "Such a second death hath no power."

I know my life must follow some natural course, so I walk along looking for people to help, trying to make sense of the chaos in the world and in myself. I have known God well for nearly all of my life, but have struggled a lifetime trying to figure out people. I am left perpetually home-sick on this planet, no matter where I reside.

I think all old souls have this longing to be elsewhere, whether they've had a death experience or not. For most of them, the afterlife and past lives are like that name that's just on the tip of the tongue. They know it, but they just can't seem to think of it or grasp it. I believe this causes some people to think they must have been adopted, or that they are the offspring of some alien abduction, or some other weird fantasy.

I'm going to detail my death experience in the first two sections of this book, but the goal of this work is to define the underlying causes of the chaos in this world and offer some spiritual suggestions that will relieve it. My task is to render logical that which without objective reflection seems illogical. To do this I will question the most basic presumptions that have hampered and plagued mankind for thousands of years.

The underlying foundation of all our problems are buried in what we loosely dismiss as "human nature." It has little to do with gods or devils, but with the denial of the very nature we readily dismiss without serious examination. Instead we create all manner of gods and devils to project the focus into the supernatural, and we war with each other over these egotistical definitions.

Our ideas of God, or a supreme system of balance, is the foundation of every social structure and justice system. It doesn't matter whether one believes in God or not—all the rules and attitudes of a society are founded upon thoughts and philosophies that transcend the animal instincts of this realm of existence. From these thoughts we derive our ideas of moral behavior and social order.

Unfortunately, we most often twist these noble ideas of supreme rule to justify continuing cycles of violence. We use them to rationalize cruel and/or domineering behavior and retribution on a personal and national level. And we continually deny any personal responsibility for the unabated evil of the world with a logic that is always pointing the finger at some higher transgressions of our fellow man.

Based upon actual experience, I intend to stand this human logic on its head by debunking the standard metaphysical supposition that lies at the foundation of societal structures. I'm going to explain a love and goodness that transcends our primitive ideas of justice. I'm going to tell you of a Higher Good.

My hope is that what I say may open your mind enough to rediscover the peace and love and hope that the collective ego-driven world has buried. Accept or reject whatever you wish. It's all up to you. In the end, you are the only one responsible for finding the Way.

Religious organizations and philosophical persuasions all have their tightly cloistered camps. Each of us gleans from

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that religion or philosophy our own attitudes which constitute a personal spiritual philosophy. Whether it comes from the East or from the West, we alone are responsible for that personal spiritual philosophy. Because of free will—no one can be lead—even when we choose to follow. We're all responsible for our own path.

On this path each of our spiritual attitudes supersede the influence of Plato, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, Freud, mom and dad, or whomever. We must all seek truth individually and responsibly—without a person, people, politics, or religion as the ultimate authority or scapegoat.

As a result of my death experience, I have developed a spiritual attitude that is neither eastern or western. It recognizes the good in each and strives for a Golden Mean. This book provides a different way of looking at God and his people (regardless your religious affiliations) so that His unconditional love can fill you with understanding. This Golden Mean Philosophy can lead to a true and lasting peace on Earth, something that is impossible under the present conditions of modern religious dogma, which gains its authority from the negative concepts of control through fear mongering and power through separatism. As long as we continue to label ourselves as Christians or Muslims or Jews or whatever we continue a tradition of tribalism that is as old and as barbaric as man himself.

As a species, we have learned little from the continuing separatism of our history. We have never grasped the profound implications of the first question asked by a man in the Bible: "Am I my brother's keeper?" This question, of course, was posed as an evasion from God's question of: "Where is Able thy brother?"

Cain's evasive question assumes that the answer is no, and as long as we continue to assume that the answer is no, we are condemned to repeat the past as an unavoidable aspect of our human nature. Until we give the underlying assumptions of Cain's question our most serious attention, we will never change man's murderous nature. It lurks in the hidden recesses of man's most minor egotistical tendencies and surfaces in the nature of his political and religious justifications.

It is time for man to address the profound question of these underlying assumptions, because what the first murderer may have done with a rock, we now do with weapons that threaten our biological clock.

Much of what I'm about to reveal will offend small-minded egos and be condemned by organized religions.

Religions, the way they organized and promoted, are not the paths to love and peace—they are the insidious force behind societal differences and societal problems. They are dictatorships of totalitarian rule. Religions are the most powerful and dangerous forces on Earth, and they become most self-righteous and aggressive whenever their financial structure and political power face criticism. It is built into their doctrine: to question them is to question God, and to question God is a sacrilege. "God will get you" is the implication. But I pay no heed to that threat, because God already got me.

What I'm about to tell you will not change you. It will make you think. It may even make you think differently. But it will not enlighten you or effect any peaceful change. Only you can do that, and toward that end I have devised the Three Phases of Spiritual Enlightenment to help you find your own Way. It is possible to climb God's mountain from various sides, but all paths merge at the top. All paths lead back to the source of life. But you may have to stray a bit from the frightened flocks to find a more direct route. You may have to think for yourself, using the simple reason of your soul instead of the convoluted reasoning of political and religious dogma.

Today most of us still accept the confining fences of preconceived views, prejudices, and attitudes which influence everything we see, read, or hear. As long as we remain enslaved by those prepossessions, we remain destined to repeat the violent sessions of the past. Nothing has changed, because the general and basic human attitude toward self has not changed. We are still sheep being lead by wolves.

I have a message that can change that; a message that can help you realize the awesome power that resides within you. Why I was chosen to deliver it is beyond me. During the course of my life, I have broken, to some degree, every commandment—especially as they are defined in the Sermon On The Mount. I certainly am no saint. I'm just an ordinary man with an extraordinary experience.

My words are not meant to convey ultimatums or condemnations—but to eliminate them. They are meant to speak past the fears of your ego to the compassion of your soul. My formidable task is to formulate logical hypothesis for revolutionary statements of faith.

I am not pompous or insane enough to claim that I speak for God, but I do speak of God with the authority of actual experience.

May he help me here.