

Self-Empowerment

Autumn 2004

The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

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A LOVEABLE WORLD

*How can the divine Oneness be seen?
In beautiful forms, breathtaking wonders,
awe-inspiring miracles?
The Tao is not obliged to present itself in this way.
If you are willing to be lived by it, you will
see it everywhere, even in the most ordinary things.*

Lao Tzu

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*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new  
landscapes, but in having new eyes.*

Marcel Proust

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We do not see things as they are but as we are.

Jewish proverb

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How is it that I am not seeing things as they “really” are? Freud established the understanding of a psychological process called projection. According to Freud, when someone is threatened by or afraid of their own impulses, they attribute these impulses to someone else. As in the expression “the pot calling the kettle black,” we are prone to notice and judge in other people the traits we try to avoid claiming as our own. Many times we project negative traits that we are not willing to see in ourselves, but we also project positive qualities that we cannot yet believe are part of who and what we are.

It can seem funny or tragic that we can easily see other people’s projections, and miss our own. Like me, do you spot the speck in other people’s eyes, unaware of the beam sticking out of your own? It is easy to catch others in the act of the very thing they complain about in other people. Can we see it in ourselves?

Much of our quest for physical, psychological and spiritual health comes back to the filters through which we “see” and interpret the world around us. What are you seeing when you look around at the world? Can you believe that you are projecting the world you see? Can you possibly see a loveable world? If not, what would make the world more loveable?

### Reclaiming and releasing projections

The work of seeing and experiencing a loveable world rests upon our willingness to reclaim our projections and offer them up to our Creator so that we

can be free of the prison of negative projection. This is a two-step process that ultimately is also known as *forgiveness*.

Step 1 – “What I perceive in my brother is in me.” This step of reclaiming a projection joins us with someone who we have judged. By doing a fearless internal search, we can indeed find some mirrored aspect within that we are seeing out there. It might be a variation or a more subtle form, but the kernel of what we are seeing must be within us, or we wouldn’t notice it, or be triggered by it, in the first place. “If you spot it, you got it.”

Step 2 – Ask God (Spirit/Creator) to help you release the self-judgment that you have tried to deny and have projected outward onto others.

Example of process: Pete asked me a question and didn’t even listen to my answer. My judgments include (but are not limited to): He is rude, not fully present, and does not care about me or my feelings. Ouch! I am not at peace when I judge a brother to be bad and wrong. If I am willing to reclaim and release my projection, first I enter step one, looking within to find that aspect of myself that I feel guilty about and would prefer to project than to admit. Sure enough, I can find examples of my being rude, not being fully present, and not really caring about someone or their feelings. Wow and double-ouch! I prefer to think of myself as a really nice and caring person, so it makes sense that I have made excuses for my own less than exemplary behavior. Therefore, in a common psychological ploy to get rid of my guilt, I attempt to hide my sin and repress it to avoid the punishment I unconsciously fear. I find people who are “guiltier than I could ever be,” or so I would like to believe. Unconsciously I am saying, “Punish them, God, not me. They are the guilty ones. They are the hugely uncaring who need to be punished. My infractions are much smaller and not worthy of your attention.” Many of us can be very clever in finding easy targets for condemnation, thinking that we are getting away with our petty “crimes.”

So when I get honest with myself, I move to step two and ask God to help me forgive myself and release me from the guilt that frightened me into trying to deflect the guilty verdict onto someone else. I want peace for myself *and* my brother. Miraculously... it works!

(continued)

*I searched for God and all I found was myself.  
I searched for myself and all I found was God.*  
Sufi proverb

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Come out of the circle of time and into the circle of love.
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Jalaludin Rumi

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As you forgive those you believe have trespassed against you, may you see a loveable world as a reflection of the wholeness of your being.

Blessings, Love and Hugs!

Your fellow traveler, *Rev Jill*

Chimneying by Dan Joseph

I recently began rock climbing. So far, I love it. Not only is the climbing fun, it's opening some new metaphors for the spiritual journey. This month, I'd like to explore a climbing-inspired technique called "chimneying." There are times, when rock climbing, that you find yourself wedged between two parallel rock walls – sort of like Santa Claus stuck in a chimney.

To climb up, you use a technique called "chimneying" – you put a leg on one wall, and the other leg on the opposite wall. You inch up your right leg, then your left, right, left, right, left, slowly moving up between the walls. In this technique, you need both walls – and you need to use both legs. It takes both sides to climb.

The Spiritual Climb

Let me now share how this ties into the spiritual journey. When I began my spiritual practice, I thought that the inner work was all that mattered. For thousands of years, people had been sitting around in caves, meditating their way into enlightenment. No problem, I thought. I figured that spirituality was like training for a sport: you did your inner work, and you achieved your goal. The more personal effort you put in, the more successful you were.

So I started doing the work. I learned to meditate, eventually working up to a point where I could meditate for hours a day. I read *A Course in Miracles* and other spiritual texts – reading so much that I was able to quote sections of the Course from memory. I combined spiritual and psychological techniques into new exercises, and ran through those exercises over and over.

This was all very good. In fact, it produced some positive results. But the results were maddeningly temporary. I'd do my inner work, and find some peace

– but then, within an hour or so, it would be gone. I'd slip back into a state of misery.

I'd work at opening my heart, and feel some love flowing – but then I'd slide back into anger and conflict. I couldn't seem to hold any of the results. What was I doing wrong? For years, I was baffled.

Then, one day, I saw part of the problem. I was only using half of the chimney. The inner work that I was doing was important – even essential. But it was only half of the process. The other half involved relationships. As I see it now, releasing blocks is great. Studying spiritual texts is helpful. That type of inner work is empowering. But that work is just a prep for the next step. Having done some inner work, we're immediately able to enter into deeper, more loving relationships with each other – and *that's* what keeps the momentum going.

Relationships were the half of the chimney that

In the chimneying process, you release some inner blocks – some unloving thoughts toward yourself or others. Then you use that opening to immediately join more deeply with the people around you.

I was missing. I didn't realize that other people had anything to do with my spiritual work. It seemed to be an entirely personal process. But I was missing an important point. The only way to really transcend the ego – the limited, separate sense of self – is to join

deeply with each other.

Stay Out of the Cave

Let me share an often-quoted spiritual story that sheds some light on this process: In this story, there's a spiritual seeker who meditates in a cave for a long time. Finally, after many years, he attains a transcendent level of peace. He walks out of the cave in a state of great joy.

The man wanders down into the town. As he walks into town, through a crowd of people, someone accidentally bumps into him – and suddenly, the man's joy is replaced with a flash of anger. He immediately realizes how flimsy his "enlightenment" was. So he takes a deep breath, and walks back into the cave to start meditating again.

No, Mr. Seeker! I want to say. That's a trap. Don't walk back into the cave – instead, turn to that person who bumped into you, and strike up a conversation. Connect with him or her. That person who bumped you is the gateway to real enlightenment. You've done some good inner work; now connect with that person and take the journey together.

That was the message I was missing. *A Course in Miracles* frequently encourages us to form "holy relationships" – relationships based on mutual forgiveness and support. But for a long time, I misunderstood that teaching. I thought that I first had to

do my inner work, and *then* I could have good relationships.

Now I see that we do these in parallel. We can use every bit of inner work as an opportunity to improve our interpersonal connections. As we release our inner blocks, we're able to extend greater amounts of kindness and love. That, in turn, inspires us to release more blocks, which frees more love to flow. The momentum continues.

The Two-Step

The spiritual chimneying technique builds on this idea. You could say that it's a two-step spiritual dance. You inch up the chimney: releasing a few blocks, extending some loving thoughts. You release more blocks, extend more love, release, extend, release, extend. This works both sides of the chimney, and keeps you rising up.

Again, my tendency was to do my inner work by myself, and then go do some more inner work by myself. I'd work and work in isolation, and wonder why I felt so lonely and separate. I didn't realize what was going on. I didn't understand that I was missing the real goal – the experience of spiritual connection. To make this practical, let me share a simple way that you can try the chimneying process.

Let's say that you're in a restaurant, and your waiter or waitress comes over to you. You suddenly have an opportunity to chimney up to some spiritual heights.

You can begin by noting any unloving thoughts that are present in your mind. Thoughts like, "The prices are so high here," or, "This waiter probably doesn't like me," or, "I have to watch what I eat so I don't gain weight."

Try to release those types of thoughts, even if just for a moment. Try to allow a greater sense of peace to flow into your mind. Then, having done that inner work, immediately extend some kindness to the waiter. Use the inner opening to outflow some love. You may simply smile at the waiter, or ask him how his day is going, or let him know that there's no rush to take your order.

It's quite likely that he'll appreciate your kindness – but even if he doesn't, you've just strengthened your spiritual climb. You'll feel the warmth of your own kind thoughts. You'll feel the strength of your increased interpersonal connection.

You can then drop another set of unloving thoughts, and extend some more warmth and kindness to the waiter. That will strengthen your ability to drop more blocks, and share more love. By doing this, you clear the way for a powerful "holy encounter" – an

experience of deep interpersonal connection.

When I've tried this while dining out, I've ended up leaving the restaurant feeling quite uplifted. I imagine that the waiter or waitress felt uplifted, as well. By combining our inner work with interpersonal joining, we chimney – together – on up to higher ground.

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Dan Joseph is the author of *Inner Healing* and *Inspired by Miracles*, two books inspired by *A Course in Miracles*. Dan invites you to sign up for his free monthly newsletter at www.DanJoseph.com.

***Disappearance of the Universe* author Gary Renard, is coming to Philadelphia October 9, 2004 – Register today!**

An exciting new book is on the scene, getting a lot of attention. *The Disappearance of the Universe* presents conversations between Gary and two ascended masters who appeared to him 17 times over a nine-year period to teach him the healing power of forgiveness. Whether you believe in the possibility that ascended masters could drop by and personally give such instruction, or whether you believe that *A Course in Miracles* (their recommendation) is the book you would use as your path to awakening, the ideas presented in this book are mind provoking and powerful. The book will shake up your world. The Philadelphia workshop will tickle your funny bone and teach you advanced forgiveness. See page 5 for registration information.

Here is a portion of an interview with Gary:

Did the events you relate in this book really happen? Did two reincarnated saints really appear to you in person from out of nowhere and have these discussions with you?

GARY: Yes, absolutely. My experience was that they were just as real as anybody else. They taught me many aspects of the truth over a period of nine years and 17 discussions, all of which eventually led me to the experience of what I can only describe as the most healing truth I've ever known. There were spiritual reasons to explain their appearances that they gave me during their later visits, because they knew I'd be in a better position to understand it by then. Metaphysical technicalities notwithstanding, they seemed very human when they appeared.

You know, some people will think you're crazy, and others will think you made this whole thing up no matter

what you say. You've already been called everything from "someone whose words ring true" to a con man. What do you say to the skeptics?

GARY: Not too much, because my teachers told me that people will think what they want to think. First of all, I can't prove that I'm not crazy, other than to show evidence that I've never been treated for any type of mental illness, never been institutionalized and never been placed on any kind of medication. As for making the whole thing up — if anyone who reads the whole book actually thinks I could write it by myself without inspiration from these masters, then that would be an even bigger compliment to me than the fact that the masters appeared to me. Humility aside for a minute, I've seen a lot of spiritual books, but I've never seen one like this, with this much information and useful insights. People can save an incredible amount of time by using the ideas in this book. And I know from experience that students of *A Course in Miracles* will be able to gain a new understanding of the Course after reading the conversations I experienced; the book throws a new light on the teaching. If somebody thinks I could be responsible for all that on my own, they're giving me way too much credit.

Still, I understand that it will be impossible for some people to accept that my teachers really appeared to me. But even they said that it doesn't matter whether people believe it or not. I repeat that in the book's introduction, and so does my publisher in his foreword. None of us are telling readers that they have to believe in ascended masters! You know, throughout history people have found great wisdom in the Bible, but I don't think anyone alive today can vouch for all its sources — or any of them, for that matter. The same is true of many spiritual teachings. Their validity is proved by their wisdom and usefulness, not by finding the proof of who came up with the teachings. All I ask is that people read my book and see if it helps them, regardless of whether they believe that my teachers appeared.

For the complete interview visit
www.fearlessbooks.com/DisappearanceFAQs.htm

The Disappearance of the Universe published by Fearless Books is available through Amazon.com, local bookstores, and at the upcoming Philadelphia workshop. (Hay House will be the new publisher of the English edition, November 2004)

**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.
Romans 12:2**

What readers and reviewers are saying about *The Disappearance of the Universe* —

“Throughout 17 chapters, [ascended masters] Arten and Pursah invite you to embark on an enthralling voyage of the mind. With them you revisit the Gospels, Shakespeare, a student of Freud's, the beginning of the universe, the origin of Christian Science, and even have a peek into the future. While these pass in review, you learn the reason behind all cycles and patterns, sickness, death, the impermanence of all we experience.... Did I mention that humor is an intrinsic part of this book? You will chuckle at some of the repartees between the author and his visitors. In his prologue, Renard writes that he did not alter his sometimes flippant and not-so-dignified remarks. His guests give him a taste of his own medicine, all in good cheer, and with the vision and benevolence that Masters can demonstrate.... You feel totally included in the trio's company, and find it difficult to tear yourself away from this book once you delve into its powerful message.”

Celia Maris in *Venture Inward*, published by the Association for Research and Enlightenment

“*The Disappearance of the Universe* is state-of-the-art spirituality. It's the future happening now. It uncannily serves as both an introduction to the uninitiated as well as an advanced explanation of ACIM to experienced practitioners. It does this by explanations of spiritual principles that are as clear and sharp as a laser beam. It has humor that works just right to lighten the more serious topics that are discussed...”

Cheryl Lamonte

“Fascinating account of ‘remarkable encounters between an ordinary man and his extraordinary visitors’ . . . *The Disappearance of the Universe* is quite simply the most unusual and most well done spirituality/self-improvement title around.”

Geoff Rotunno, TheBooxReview.com

A Course in Miracles study group

Open your mind and heart to the consciousness and experience of miracles. Share in the peace and joy that results from changing your perceptions.

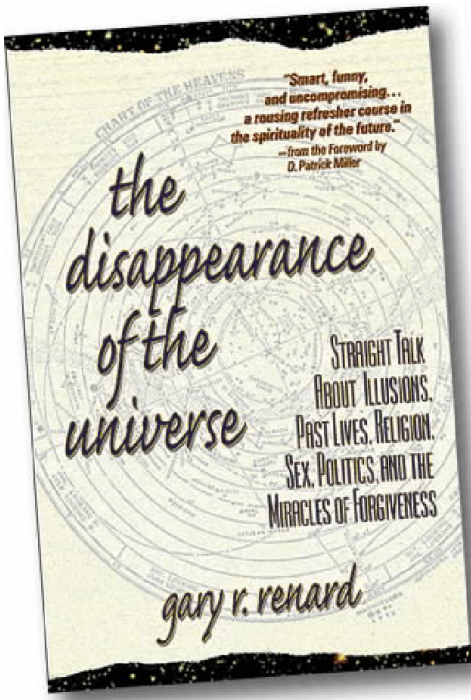
When: 1st & 3rd Sundays, 7:30 - 9:00 PM

Where: 1100 Friendship Street

Corner of Friendship Street & Algon Avenue,
4 streets south of Cottman Avenue (Route 73)

Cost: No fee

For info call Rev. Jill Sabin Carel 215-742-0552.



"THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE UNIVERSE" WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 9, 2004 • 10am - 4pm

Spend a fascinating day with Gary as he relates his true experiences of being visited in person by two ascended masters (Arten and Pursah, also known as Saint Thomas and Saint Thaddaeus) over a period of nine years. The secrets of the universe, the miraculous powers of advanced forgiveness and the teachings of *A Course in Miracles*® will be discussed in an immediate, practical, and life transforming way. Join us for a delightful and deepening experience:

- ◆ Advanced Forgiveness lessons and exercises
- ◆ Opportunity for sharing
- ◆ Experiential and meditative exercises
- ◆ Question & Answer session
- ◆ Book signing

About the book:

WHAT WOULD YOU DO if you were sitting quietly in your living room when two mysterious strangers appeared from out of nowhere — and then told you they were “ascended masters” who had come to reveal some shocking secrets of existence and teach you the miraculous powers of advanced forgiveness?

When two such teachers appeared before Gary Renard in 1992, he chose to listen to them (and ask a lot of impertinent questions). The result is this startling book: an extraordinary record of 17 mind-bending conversations that took place over nearly a decade, giving the world an uncompromising perspective on *A Course in Miracles*® — a spiritual teaching destined to change human history. Straight talk about illusions, past lives, religion, sex, politics and the Miracles of Forgiveness.



Gary R. Renard - PHILADELPHIA APPEARANCE

Sponsored by Philadelphia Course in Miracles Study Groups

When: Saturday, October 9, 2004 10am – 4pm (Light lunch included)

Where: First Unitarian Church, 2125 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA

Cost: \$75.00 **PRE-REGISTRATION RECOMMENDED**

Questions: Jack Roddy 215-923-6770 jproddy@aol.com



Mail registration form with check payable to J P Roddy Consultants, 258 S. Third St., Phila., PA 19106

Tickets will be mailed upon receipt of check. _____ @ \$75 = _____

of tickets

Total enclosed

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (Optional) _____

A limited quantity of Gary's book will be available for purchase at the workshop.

Self-addressed stamped envelope not required, but helpful for our working volunteers to send your tickets to you. Thank you.

We look forward to seeing you!

Daily Word

I am a whole and holy being.

People climbing mountains may never tire of the joy and exhilaration they feel each time they reach a summit.

Whether or not I ever climb a mountain, I can have my own mountaintop experiences. I do each time I make a conscious connection with God. These are spiritually aware and focused moments in which I have a clear vision, a spiritual clarity, of the presence and power of God and my own holiness and wholeness as a child of God.

So aware of God, I take the reassurance of this holy presence with me when I come back to my everyday activities. This sacred revelation adds purpose to everything I think, say, and do. Realizing with clarity who I am, I live my life as a whole and holy being.

The Daily Word, Unity Village, MO 64065. One year subscription \$10.95. Customer Svc: 1-800-669-0282.

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The mission of Agape Interfaith Ministries is to encourage, support and inspire a deepening conscious relationship with Divinity for the greater experience of wholeness, abundance, love and peace. We serve to elevate consciousness through individual and group educational activities, and community service.