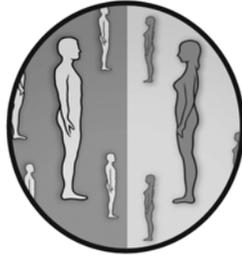


# 'The Universe Next Door'

## Extract from Chapter Two



### CHAPTER TWO

#### *Merkunistic Complication*

**S**ince the dawn of time, there have been people who ‘speak with the spirits’. They claim to be able to hear or see discarnate beings of one sort or another, and they pass on messages from those ‘spirits’ to the rest of us. For the purposes of this chapter, I propose to accept their claims at face value. However, I hope that, later on, you will have the opportunity to make up your own mind on the subject.

These rather special people are sometimes treated with respect and reverence, but are sometimes burnt at the stake, depending on the type of culture they find themselves in. They are the prophets, shamans, medicine men, ‘wise women’, psychics and mediums of their own societies.

In tribal cultures, the Spirit Medium is a guiding light. He or she can provide religious revelations, moral teaching and practical advice, because they have a personal channel of communication with the Ancestors (or with the ‘Tiger Spirit’ or the ‘Spirit of the Yams’, or who-or-whatever is revered by that society). Second only in rank to the Headman, the Medicine man is the conscience of the tribe.

In more elaborately structured societies, a strained relationship begins to develop between the Spirit Medium (often called a ‘prophet’ or ‘seer’) and the secular authorities. Kings and rulers might consult the Spirit Medium, and act on his advice, but they often want to prevent their subjects from hearing the Prophet’s more radical revelations. If the Gods denounced the ruler as a fool or a despot, as they frequently did, it would never do to have the Prophet preaching about it in the market place. That is the way revolutions start: –

*(“Perhaps it would be better if His Holiness moved in here  
to the palace where we can keep an eye on him...”)*

Most of the great religions of the world have begun as a result of revelations received by Spirit Medium prophets. But before too long, however, the leadership and control of these religions generally passes from the original ‘speakers with the spirits’ to priestly castes of one sort or

another, and just like the kings and councillors, these High Priests, Bishops and Mullahs, have the same problem with prophets as the Secular Authorities do. They have an uneasy relationship with people who seem to be able to get messages from a Higher Power: –

*(“We can’t have the Established Church turned upside-down by this woman. She claims the Angels have told her that we’re all corrupt. Well, they’re obviously not Angels she’s talking to, but Demons from the Pit. Burn the witch! Burn the witch!...” )*

This ambivalence of the authorities, both religious and secular, towards soothsayers and clairvoyants has persisted until modern times. Consulted by princes and cabinet ministers one week, and prosecuted in the Magistrates Court the next, Spirit Mediums find, to their surprise, that practising the gift of Communication with the other world is in fact a deeply subversive act which threatens the Established Order.

Clairvoyants bring our world and the Next World together in a way that can make them seem uncomfortably close to each other. The Medium shows that the two worlds are not safely separated, but are, in fact, one.

The Authorities like a closed system, and the Spirit Medium breaks into this closed system with messages from the *outside*. The Medium has access to a source of wisdom and information which may be unpredictable and erratic, but which seems to be superior to ‘official sources’, and this is very worrying to both religious and secular authorities: –

*(“It unsettles the populous, and is generally prejudicial to good order and respect for authority. Let’s ban it.” )*

There are a surprising number of countries today where it is highly illegal to pass on communications from the spirit world. In the West, however, official unease about the activity usually shows itself in the form of ridicule and derision, which is a more subtle, but equally effective form of suppression. For this reason, many modern Spirit Mediums are wisely shy of courting too much publicity, and most people who consult them are probably quite careful who they talk to about it. ‘Rationalists’ and ‘Materialists’ find the idea ridiculous, and between their mockery and the anathemas of every established religion, the communicator with the spirit world is attacked from all sides. Psychologists call Mediumship ‘idionecrophany’ and classify it as a delusion.

Although some Spirit Mediums believe that they are communicating with entities like angels, elemental spirits, fairies, demons, tribal gods or even The Almighty himself, most Spirit Mediums say that they talk to Dead People. This is their stock-in-trade, and this is why people consult them; to get messages from friends and relations who have died. If there *is* Life After Death, the most obvious way of getting some evidence of it is to talk to some Dead People, preferably people we knew when they were alive, and ask them about it. If a Dead Person can convince us that they are still really there, and really talking to us, we will have obtained real evidence.

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