

## FOREWORD

BY

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There is a beautiful passage by an anonymous writer of another age that is sometimes read at the end of a funeral service: “For life is eternal and love is immortal and death is only an horizon, and an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.”

The passionate longing of the human heart has always been to press beyond the boundaries of the known, to break through the limitations of our understanding. This is perhaps our most fundamental and essential freedom. Now, more than ever, we need to honor that longing and welcome those pioneers who can unveil new horizons, new possibilities of understanding our nature, our potential and our destiny.

This moving, courageous book, written with great sensitivity and intelligence and forged in the fiery crucible of personal experience, bears witness to the fact that there is only Life beyond death, that there is nothing *but* Life. Its powerful and compelling story, rich in insight, wisdom and astonishing revelation, offers us a new understanding of ourselves and our unacknowledged needs that can carry us beyond the present limit of our sight.

The inevitability of death has weighed like a stone on the human heart. So much fear, grief, anger and emotional pain have been associated with it. The greatest sorrow, the greatest fear we can experience in our lives is the loss of a beloved parent, child or companion, believing that he or she is lost to us forever. *The Miracle of Death* is a story that can reach into our hearts and undo the spell of that sorrow, that fear, that loss; its healing power can loosen the grip of our fear of death. It can awaken us to awareness of something that was once *instinctively* known and has long been forgotten—that we participate in and are contained by the creative consciousness and loving intelligence of the universe. Whatever name we give this consciousness—whether God, or Universal Mind, or Energy, or Spirit—does not really matter. What matters is that we recognize the

existence of a dimension of reality beyond the one we know and enter into a relationship with it. This book offers us a template of how to increase our awareness of our connection to that dimension.

It is extraordinary that, with all the vast amount of information we have available to us, we still know so little about the two most numinous experiences of our lives—our birth and our death. From what other level of reality do we come at our birth? And to what other level do we go when we die? Even more extraordinary is the fact that science, until very recently, has not taken seriously the huge amount of material gathered over the past hundred or so years by institutions devoted to recording communications to the living from the “dead.” Nor has it accepted as worthy of scientific attention the experience of visionaries and mystics of all cultures and times that has testified to the existence of that other dimension of reality and the possibility of a direct relationship with it.

Astonishing discoveries have been made about the nature of consciousness by such outstanding individuals as C.G. Jung and Stanislav Grof; many individuals have communicated their out-of-the-body and near-death experiences; but the implications of all this material have not been given serious consideration. Christopher Bache comments on this in his book *Dark Night, Early Dawn*: “Western thought has committed itself to a vision of reality that is based almost entirely on the daylight world of ordinary states of consciousness while systematically ignoring the knowledge that can be gained from the nighttime sky of nonordinary states.... Trapped within the horizon of the near-at-hand, our culture creates myths about the unreliability and irrelevance of nonordinary states. Meanwhile, our social fragmentation continues to deepen, reflecting in part our inability to answer the most basic existential questions.”<sup>1</sup>

The neglect of a vitally significant field of human experience has meant that the experience and discoveries related to this field are considered to be irrelevant or worse, symptoms of deluded minds. However, the growing pressure of current experiential evidence, most importantly in the field of transpersonal psychology and psychedelic research but also in the work of scientists at the cutting edge of physics and cosmology,

suggests that we are poised at the threshold of a breakthrough—a revelation in our understanding of the nature of reality.

William James’s carefully chosen words, written a hundred years ago, seem more relevant than ever today: “Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded.”<sup>2</sup>

We no longer have access to other levels or modes of consciousness because our “rational” mind has, over the last four centuries, increasingly ridiculed, disparaged and repressed what it has been unable, so far, to accept, prove or comprehend. It has therefore cut us off from those deeper aspects of our nature that have the power to connect us with other dimensions of reality. Our understanding of life and the interconnectedness of all aspects of it is tragically deficient. As Betty Kovács says, “Our major cultural myth has been one of disconnection, loss, purposelessness, and insignificance. Is there any wonder that we hurt ourselves, each other, our children, and our planet? All life is in danger when we hold a worldview that is not *inclusive*. We know this, yet we fear change and transformation. We fear losing the only reality we know when, truly, only the limitation of that reality is threatened.”

This denial has left an aching void in many people’s lives that neither religious belief nor scientific progress nor improving the material circumstances of our lives can fill although they are presented as offering all that is necessary to alleviate the suffering of the human condition. What is missing is a sense of our intimate and joyous interaction with an invisible dimension, knowledge of how the relationship with this dimension can be cultivated and how fear can ultimately be replaced by trust. There have been many great teachers, astronauts of the soul, who have pointed the way to a direct experience of reality but their message and their teaching have, for the most part, been misinterpreted or

ignored. Belief and its dark companion, fanaticism, have become a substitute for that mysterious relationship.

The story told in this book is so instructive and inspirational because it shows how difficult it is for the academically trained mind to accept the idea of life beyond death and how it repeatedly denies us access to those deeper-dwelling faculties in us that have been repressed and neglected for centuries and have therefore atrophied for want of use. From the denial and repression of these intuitive, creative and imaginative aspects of ourselves have come our materialist belief system and the culture of escalating violence which now threaten us with the disintegration of civilization and, ultimately, with the possible extinction of our species.

As we have become increasingly cut off from these faculties, so, in our relationships with others, we have become increasingly gripped by fear and the need for control, responding to difficult situations with a paranoid defense against our “enemies,” ascribing all “good” to ourselves and all “evil” to them. Setting out to eliminate evil by force, we create violence and invite violence in retaliation, creating unbearable suffering and despair for millions. Yet the root of all this lies in our own fragmented psyche and our abysmal ignorance of the oneness and sacredness of life.

What Betty Kovács tells us in clear, vivid imagery is how the deep ground of spirit speaks; how it attracts us to itself and tries to gain our attention; the language and imagery and methods of communication it uses. She shows the importance of paying close attention to dreams, visions, synchronicities and to those often subliminal images that appear fleetingly on the screen of consciousness. She tells how, out of a sustained meditative attention, there was born in her not only a deeper capacity for insight but the opening of her awareness to “a dimension so vast that I was stunned to realize how excruciatingly small a space I had been trained to live in and call reality.” What she experienced as her awareness of this dimension expanded was the shattering of the myth of materialism which condemns so many to a meaningless life of “mediocrity, addiction, violence, indifference and fanaticism.”

“In our amnesia,” she writes, we have “‘forgotten’ ourselves into a ‘terrible dream’ where neither mother nor child is nurtured. How had we fallen into this amnesia?”

How had we lost our self-esteem? How had we lost the understanding that our ego was to be the mirror of our inner uniqueness flowing out of universal Mind? How had we turned this ego ‘wrong-side out’ so that it had to go snatching and grabbing from the outer world anything that would make us feel good about ourselves? And how had we been able to forget the creative power in every thought and feeling and longing?”

Her message is one of hope and trust that, working together, we will be able to open ourselves to the experience of the mysteries of the universe and weave these mysteries into our daily lives, so healing the fragmentation in our nature. On the last page of her book she writes, “As we reconnect, full circle, to the roots of our existence in the Mind of the universe,... we experience the deep unity of birth and death, and we experience the radical creativity of both. We understand that ‘Death is as Divine as Life,’ because it *is* Life—because ‘There is nothing *but* Life.’”

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Bache, *Dark Night, Early Dawn*, p. 5. Suny Press, Albany, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 388. Longmans Green & Co., New York, 1929.