
THE CREATION OF DIVINE VOICE



ART BY CAREN BELLE LOEBEL-FRIED

Inner voices – are they pathological?

Mystical? False? Real? Maybe they're

a means by which the mind

takes hold of chaos and

shapes it creatively.

A few years ago, I sat by the bedside of a professor friend. Hearing that she was close to death, I had rushed to her hospital room, knowing I would not have another chance to see her. When I asked her how she felt, she responded, "I'm all right; I still have my dreams." I was surprised to learn that the voices and visions the sleeping mind creates can provide a hidden pleasure in the face of death.

More recently, I was shocked when a dear old friend sat cross-legged in my backyard telling me that she could communicate with angels. She explained how, nine months after her mother's death and a subsequent daily regime of meditation, curious things started happening to her.

She first saw spontaneous visions of fountains of lights that she could turn on and off at will. She then began to notice her head nodding involuntarily in response to thoughts she would have. When she began to focus her attention on the nods, they developed into a simplified alphabet conveying messages to her from unseen forces. Her fearful reaction led her to seek out explanations for these bizarre intrusions into her waking life. Various psychic advisers identified the uninvited forces, helped her to send them away, and coached her on how to shape a new source of communications — the angels.

Coincidentally, I was taking a creative writing course at the time. The teacher who had originally been scheduled was replaced at the last moment by a writer named Elizabeth Mikal. In her heart-wrenching book, *Until Darkness Holds No Fear*, Elizabeth details her recovered memories of physical and sexual abuse as a child. Through therapy and dream revelations, she had become conscious of her multiple personality disorder and become acquainted with her "alter" personalities. These alters had helped her cope with her childhood trauma and deal with difficult adult situations. When I told Elizabeth about my friend's experience with angels, she had no difficulty understanding it.

Since integrating her alter personalities, angelic beings, whom she has always regarded as separate from her hierarchy of alters, have continued to counsel her.

I then consulted my sister, Janice Brooks, who is writing a book on lucid dreaming. The dream state is analogous to mystical, hypnotic, and meditative states; hence it has a lot to tell us about how the unconscious mind operates. From her own research and experience, Janice suggested that the "angels" were dissociated beings my friends were creating.

In her own dream practices, Janice can replicate the magical attributes of spirits, phantoms, and channeled entities: she can transform herself into a galloping horse, enter the consciousness of another dream character, split in two and converse with her double, fly, walk through walls, stretch her own body parts or tie up another character in knots. Most tellingly, she can conjure up dream figures who recur like soap opera characters. Once created and sustained for a period of time, these characters become semiautonomous. At first they were even affronted when she suggested to them that they were only figments of her imagination.

Janice's explanation seemed most plausible: angels were like alter personalities and both were like recurrent dream characters, accessed in trance, meditative, or hypnotic states to guide their charges. But I had had my own quasi-mystical experiences in the past. I believed a coterie of invisible elves miraculously cured me with tiny injections when I was a sick child. As an adult, I have been informed by instantaneous psychic knowledge about important events in my life. I have had epiphanies — blissful states of calm, total love, oneness with the universe. I have experienced feelings of merging and bliss that transcended ordinary states of consciousness. Psychologists would call this depersonalization, boundary loss, infantile regression — I call it indescribably divine.

Curiosity about my friends' angels, as well as my own leaps of awareness, propelled me on an odyssey to understand what was happening. Where were the voices coming

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from? Was it worthwhile listening to their messages? I was not satisfied with the psychological community's rigid view that voices are necessarily pathological. From time immemorial, voices have delivered commands, initiating world religions or historic events. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Socrates, Jesus, Muhammad, Joan of Arc heard and obeyed. Were they all psychotics or multiples who somehow managed to transform their worlds?

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I even had a breakthrough voice of my own. After an emotional evening reading a text on multiple personality disorder, I went fitfully to sleep. I dreamt I saw a mental patient lying on a psychiatrist's couch. Hypnotized, eyes rolling scarily in his head, the patient bellowed his instruction to me in a guttural voice: "Freud only got it half right. Read the two Hyperion poems." I woke up, my heart palpitating in fright.

Later that day, I was able to attribute the poems to the English Romantic poet John Keats. I had never read them before, although three years earlier I had read about them in Camille Paglia's *Sexual Personae* and in a work by Jungian analyst Marion Woodman. But neither author's interpretation resembled my own reading of the texts.

Keats's astonishing poems revolve around the voices of the gods and goddesses, borne by the winds and the waves, or whispered into the ears of their chosen ones. Suffering, resonant attraction, or a call to service brings them forth. They console, instruct, and illuminate their protégés on the meaning of life and their role in it. My "mad" dream character pointed out a way to find the origin of the voices: non-Freudian psychology and Romantic poetry. Countless times in my ensuing research I would learn how similar breakthrough dreams, visions, and voices answered questions, solved mysteries, and provided creative solutions or even whole texts.

Although I didn't think of it at the time, the obverse of Freud is, of course, Jung. Many months later, a friend identified Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, as the source containing the account of his inner di-

alogues. I was stunned to find that Jung's critique of Freud eerily replicated my dream message. Freud had overemphasized the sexual libido in his theory and excluded the equally important mystical dimension of the unconscious. He was, as Jung put it, "considering only half of the whole." He had only got it half right.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, multiplicity and mysticism go hand in hand. As a child, Jung possessed a second personality, simply named "No. 2." This personality was clearly different from him: a timeless, autonomous spirit, it had superior intelligence and created dreams. Jung's interest in the invisible realm led him to participate in séances and write his doctoral dissertation on psychology and the occult. As an adult, he was struck by a full-scale "assault of the unconscious," manifesting itself in voices and powerful visions which helped him to understand his own deepest truths.

Throughout his adult life, Jung also conversed with an inner figure called Philemon. First met in a dream, Philemon became a kind of "ghostly guru" who taught him profound insights. Furthermore, what was later to become Jung's theory of individuation was transmitted to him in veiled mystical, poetic language from a "chorus of spirits" whom he sensed crowding his house until he began to write his *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* ("Seven Sermons to the Dead") in 1916.

Other helpful suggestions from friends and relatives led me to fascinating works about the paranormal transmission of messages: Julian Jaynes's *Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*; Arthur Koestler's *Act of Creation*; and Michael Talbot's *Holographic Universe*. My burgeoning research also led me to Robert Ornstein's *Psychology of Consciousness and The Right Mind: Making Sense of the Hemispheres*; Robert Baker's *Hidden Memories*; and Kay Redfield Jamison's *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*. Scientific books and articles on the origins of consciousness provided additional keys and signposts.

In fairness to my friends, who were indeed convinced they were talking to angels, I interspersed my scientific, rationalistic readings with the more mystically-inclined literature, including Larry Dossey's *Recovering the Soul*; Brian Weiss's *Many Lives, Many Masters*; Michael Murphy's *Future of the Body*; Richard Maurice Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*; Robert Monroe's *Far Journeys*; Stanislov Grof's *Holotropic Mind*; Gretchen Sliker's *Multiple Mind*; and Roger Woolger's *Other Lives, Other Selves*. Almost all the medical or psychological practitioners among these authors have encountered discarnate beings in their clients. Some have become believers; others admit that science cannot prove



