

SPIRITUAL BANDWIDTH

Channelers find a new outlet on the Net.

by Trudy W. Schuett

A lot has changed since my first exposure to channeling at a storefront church in suburban Detroit nearly 20 years ago. The mediums, as they were then called, would enter a trance-like state, allowing spirit guides from another plane to speak through them to an assembled group. The people at this spiritualist church (the term *New Age* wasn't much in use yet) would take turns giving messages from their guides, often speaking in strange voices or accents that differed from their normal speech. To experience channeling in those days, you needed to live near a medium or group. Books by and about well-known mediums were readily available, but direct contact was more difficult to come by.

Nearly everything about contacting discarnate entities is different today. Mediums are now called channelers and — in addition to contacting the spirits of people who have gone on to another plane — they may communicate with extraterrestrials, Ascended Masters, and even the "higher self." Many channelers are teaching classes and giving more generalized readings intended for humanity as a whole rather than just consulting clients.

Perhaps most significantly, location is no longer important. With access to the Internet, all you need is a computer with a modem and a telephone line to communicate with channelers, teachers, and (some say) discarnate entities anywhere. Many channelers have their own Websites and email, and chat rooms allow group meditations to be conducted with participants all over the world.

While researching this article, I sent questionnaires to three email discussion groups, reaching about 1,500 people. I had responses from 20 people within 24 hours. Next, I used the search facility at GeoCities, an online service that provides free Websites to more than a million members, and found 205 pages related to channeling. At that point, I decided to stick with the people from my discussion groups. Otherwise, I'd be surfing still!

Without the Internet, I would have had only one person's opinion for this article — the only other channeler I know personally had gone to Canada for the summer.

A Web of Diversity

The differences among channelers online and the way they work are remarkable. Not all who responded to my email questionnaire expect to make money by channeling, nor do all do personal readings.

Some have a Website simply to get their message out to as many people as possible. Some of these Websites feature transcripts of sessions with predictions for the future, alternative views of history (such as descriptions of Atlantis and Lemuria), and whole books on spiritual growth, or even how to channel on your own. Other channelers accept requests for readings through their Website, or participate in group channeling sessions through online chat rooms.

Majahnae — otherwise known as Heather Odden of Duluth, Minnesota — posts what she calls "Spirit Editorials" on her Website. In the past 11 years, Majahnae has completed hundreds of these short essays that give spiritual guidance on issues of daily living. She is currently assembling them into a book.

Majahnae's Website is one of only a few to include a picture of the channeler. It also includes some channeled information on child care — which springs from her work as the owner of a daycare center.

Majahnae works mostly through automatic writing. "I'm wide awake and just speak or write what comes to me," she says. She does not do individual readings, but sometimes receives information meant for a specific individual.

"If one has weight issues, abuse from father issues, or relationship challenges, and Spirit offers insight, the insight is useful to many," she says. "Yet the manner in which it is presented, when offered to others may help them to bring up issues, trigger feelings, et cetera."

Lee, another channeler who does not do individual readings, developed her own method of channeling in 1989. "[I do] no readings for [other] people because I think everyone should be empowered to be able to do this," she explains. "I'll teach the method only, but each has the innate ability and this is self-responsibility."

According to Lee, her Website is intended to help others "develop their own abilities and reach their inner self and the Source." Lee, who teaches an individual-based form of channeling, says, "You are aware of what is being said, but you have no feeling of vested interest in it as it is being relayed. The important thing is self-control. In this I mean self-enlightenment... You are the only one [who] is going to make a difference in your life."

Tehannah, whose Website is a significant part of her work, has been channeling for 40 years. "When the guides wish to speak they just do so through me," she says. "I am a natural, one who is untrained in methods defined in books."

Tehannah's site features past messages, as well as links to several Web rings (groups of similar sites). Her site, she says, "is meant to reach many people with the general channelings and to provide information for those seeking truth. It also offers healing, readings and counseling."

Today's channelers don't limit their work to the Internet, or even to channeling. I also found a lot of healers and artists among the respondents. Some who answered my questionnaire don't have Websites at all, but work in their local areas and use email and the Net to keep in touch with others of like mind.

For example, Serina Jones, whose Website is not yet operational, does specific readings and prefers to work in person. "I just see the people standing/hovering around the person and I intuit things and say them," she explains. "My messages are always about the soul's growth: Is the work being done or does [he or she] need a little push? I don't advertise myself as a psychic reader because I don't have a clue about love life or career, et cetera. I only know about spiritual path things."

Snowbird is another channeler who uses the Internet but doesn't have her own Website. "I do not feel totally ready to just put myself out there," she says.

Snowbird has been channeling since she was a child, but only in the last six years has she shared her gift with others.

"I do specific readings, and my channelings come in different ways as well," she says. "For instance, I participate in a group channeling setting and it is taped, as you have several people getting messages for specific things we decide to work on. Sometimes when I am online I will get messages; sometimes when I am in a group of people, I have several people who call me and it just starts. You have to be in your integrity, and intent is everything."

Searching for Comfort

How reliable are these people on the Net? After all, we hear a lot in the media about people misrepresenting themselves. After two years online, I've found that in these spiritually oriented discussion groups, people have little or no reason to waste their own time and that of others by pretending to be something they're not. They are interested in learning and in sharing what they know. Fakes are spotted quickly by members of the group and do not hang around long. Most of the channelers who responded to my questionnaire had Websites where they had posted their work, or were people whose work I already knew.

When searching the Web for channelers, don't expect too much help from Web catalogs such as Yahoo or Lycos. The sites found through these popular search engines have been submitted by Website owners to promote their sites. Many channelers feel people in need will find them, however, and they do not bother listing themselves with the major search engines.

A novice looking for a personal reading would do best to go to one of the general sites devoted to channeling, like Spiritweb, and read up on the subject first. You can register as a member of Spiritweb for free and join an email

discussion list. List members often put the address of their Website at the bottom of their postings and may provide a link for direct access. You can also get a feel for personalities by participating in the email discussions.

A quicker way would be to visit Web page providers like GeoCities or Tripod and use their search engines to find channelers. It is possible to find free readings among their memberships. Another option is New Heaven New Earth — based in Sedona, Arizona — which provides a wealth of information, including links to channelers and an interesting article on "Consumer Protection for Spiritual Seekers."

I wouldn't recommend sending money to any channelers for a reading until you feel comfortable that you know who you're dealing with. If the first thing you see on a site is a price list, surf on!

A channeler's Website can provide many clues about the character and philosophy of its owner, including examples of past work, a listing of organizations he or she belongs to, and links to other sites.

With so many channelers on the Net, it may be possible to find someone local so that you can meet in person. Otherwise you are limited to email

communication or, in some cases, the telephone. Some chat room sessions include an individual doing some channeling, but these are generally limited to a general message for the group.

In an online situation, you won't be able to duplicate the experience of sitting in the same room as the channeler, but perhaps you aren't looking for a personal reading. Plenty of channeled information of various kinds is available, and your search could turn into a fascinating experiment in synchronicity.

Surfing the Future

There was something I noticed about those who responded to my questionnaire and the Websites I visited: Despite the differences in approach, they were all sincere in their intentions. Spiritual growth and offers to help were a common thread I found in their messages. Not a single one offers to teach you how to win the lottery or contact deceased Aunt Minnie to find out where she put the will!

They also agreed that the Internet is a positive tool with great potential for raising humanity's consciousness.

One channeler puts it another way: "I take it one step further. It is the necessary tool for the completion of our transformation," says Draga in a channeled message. "The Internet is going to expand the consciousness with catalytic speed to a point of no return."

Only time will tell if Draga's prediction is correct. For now, at least, the Internet and its supporting technology still depend on human beings to keep running.

Trudy W. Schuett is a freelance writer and director of the Desert Light Metaphysical Society in Yuma, Arizona, an organization devoted to discussion and education on New Age and metaphysical subjects. Her article on past-life regression appeared in the May 1998 issue of FATE.

CYBERCHANNELS

by Trudy W. Schuett

Here are some good starting points to delve into channeling on the Web:

Spiritweb

www.spiritweb.org/

Everything from Astrology to Zen. A comprehensive site containing many articles, links, and how-to's.

New Heaven New Earth

www.nhne.com/

This Sedona-based site contains a lot of information, including news and editorials.

Free Spirit

www.angelfire.com/ak/tonesm/

Articles and links about meditation and the search for truth. Request a channeled reading by email.

Lee

www.daru.com/las/

Visit her comprehensive online "book" about channeling and spirituality.

Majahnae

www.majahnae.com/

Browse through Spirit Editorials for reflections on life and spirituality.

HOW TO CHANNEL YOUR OWN INNER MASTER

Automatic writing is a good option for the uninitiated.

by Trudy W. Schuett

Since the 1850s, when the Fox sisters became famous for contacting discarnate spirits, channeling has often been seen as a specialized ability, limited to a few highly trained or gifted individuals.

Most famous channelers, such as Edgar Cayce and Jane Roberts, went into a trance state during readings, allowing the voice of another entity to come through. The trance method requires that at least one other person be present to take down what is said by the spirits.

The trance method used by Roberts and Cayce is not the only way to "make contact," however. Many channelers prefer a method called automatic writing, which does not require them to enter a trance and can be done without a helper. In automatic writing, the channeler sits with a pen and paper in hand, and allows his or her hand to write whatever it will. Often it feels like the hand is actually being controlled by an outside source, or that it is writing down thoughts as they come.

You can learn this technique, even if you don't believe you have any special psychic gifts. All you need is comfortable place to sit and a pen and paper — or a computer, if you're comfortable using one. You don't need to wait to be "called." Your higher self is near, waiting for you to make contact!

You may choose to say a prayer before beginning, but that is up to you. Turn off the TV, radio, or CD player. This is one exercise that is best done in total quiet. Don't worry about interruptions. For some reason, they generally don't occur during this kind of channeling. If you are interrupted, just sit back down and continue.

Then, write! Anything at all, for at least five minutes. Write about what you see in the room, what you're thinking about having for dinner, anything. Ask yourself questions, but start with small things, like a choice between wheat bread or rye. Keep doing this until you feel you have had enough, but stay under half an hour if you do not feel you are getting anything.

At some point, you may begin to feel that you are not alone, that you have company in this exercise. You may want to ask, either verbally or on paper, who this being is. You might get an

answer right away. Your answer may also come in the following night's dreams, or a few days later while attending to some mundane task like washing dishes.

Don't correct anything while you are writing, and make yourself wait at least 24 hours before reading the results. Above all, avoid the temptation to share your work with friends too soon! Misplaced criticism could make you abandon the whole process, especially if it comes from someone you love. Even worse, your work could be laughed at or ignored, which you are bound to take personally at this early stage.

Try to begin channeling at a time when things in your life are balanced and stable. If you are under a lot of stress with big changes going on, stick to meditation until things quiet down.

Do this exercise every day at the same time and place for at least two weeks. Establishing a daily rhythm is very important while learning how to channel. A daily session gives you less time to forget what happened the previous time. If you feel no progress after two weeks, drop channeling for a while, then go back to it another time.

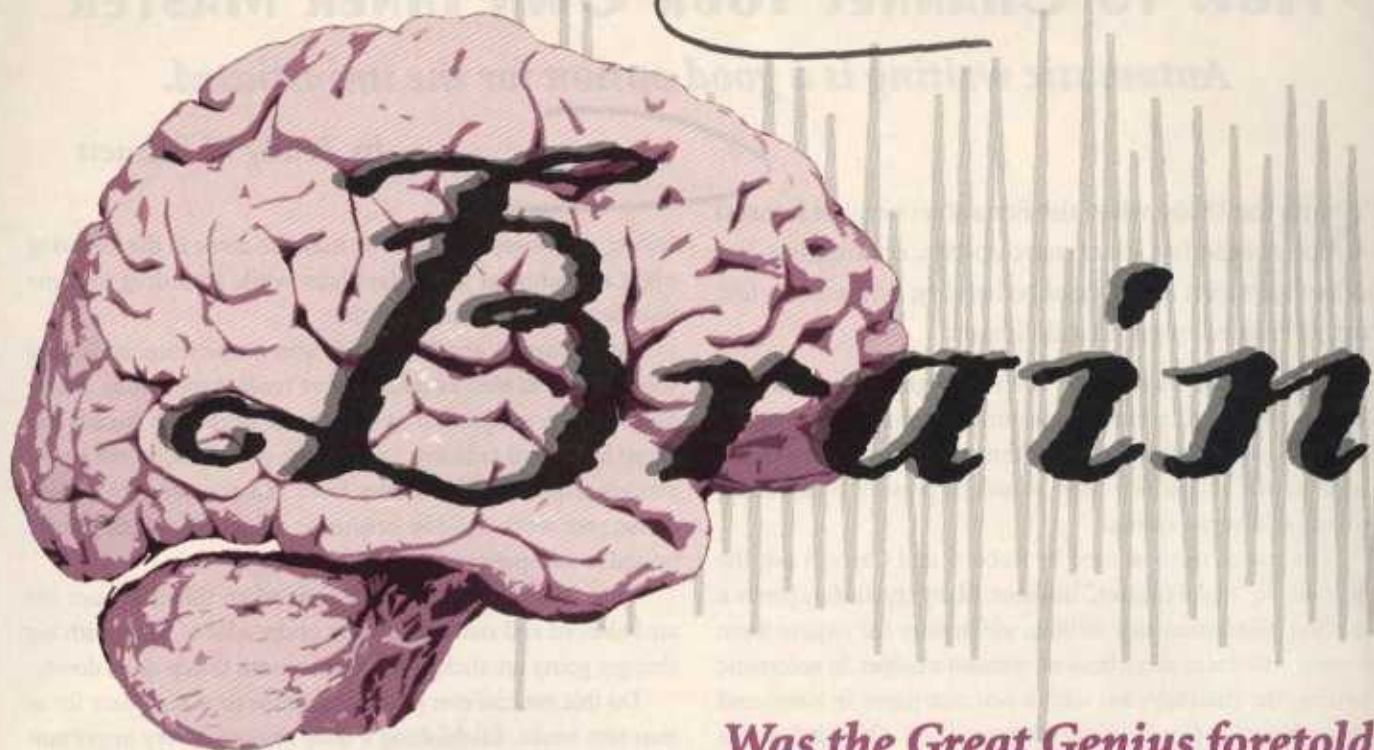
What does channeling feel like? How do you know anything is happening? The physical indicators of channeling vary: Many people feel an actual physical warmth on their neck or arm. Some feel a sensation of pressure — like a band around the forehead. Others feel nothing at all, but they know the words they are writing are not something they'd make up on their own. There are no hard and fast rules for knowing when a connection has been established. Since everyone is different, you are the best judge of whether you are channeling.

Channeling is about connecting with your higher self and expanding your awareness, so don't expect major predictions to come through. Consider your motivation before you start. If what you really seek is to become a celebrity and make buckets of money as a guru to the stars, forget it — chances are nothing will happen, no matter how hard you work at it. If your intention is to become more self-aware, however, then your chances for success are far better ■

CHANNELING TIPS

by Trudy W. Schuett

1. Choose a comfortable place to sit with pen and paper, or use your computer.
2. Quiet is essential! Turn off the television, radio, or CD player.
3. Write — anything at all — for a minimum of five minutes.
4. Don't correct anything as you go.
5. Don't read the results until the next day.
6. Keep your work to yourself at first.
7. Above all, be persistent. Keep going at the same place and time for at least two weeks, whether or not you seem to be making progress.



**Was the Great Genius foretold
by Nostradamus born on September 30, 1998?**

Nostradamus called him the Great Genius. According to a Dead Sea Scroll, he is Melchizedek reincarnate. And prophet Gordon-Michael Scallion has described him as a "teacher of teachers of teachers." Whatever you call him (or her), this person is commonly prophesied to have incarnated last year. But when exactly? And what kind of mission would he or she have? Does anyone have more information? An unassuming family man from rural South Dakota says he does.

Outwardly, the life of David Stith may appear plain, but his inner life has always been rich. He has experienced prophetic dreams and occasional psychic phenomena since childhood. Intuition has guided him throughout life, from knowing as a child when school homework would not be collected to indications of where to live in adult life.

Many of Stith's dreams are quite singular and give him direct information. In late January 1998, he received such a dream. He saw, simply, a horoscope wheel — the wheel of a person about whom he had been praying, a person whom many expected to incarnate within the year. It was the "Great Genius" that Nostradamus had written about, Stith says. The vision was quite brief and provided Stith with only one piece of data: "9 degrees Taurus on the nadir."

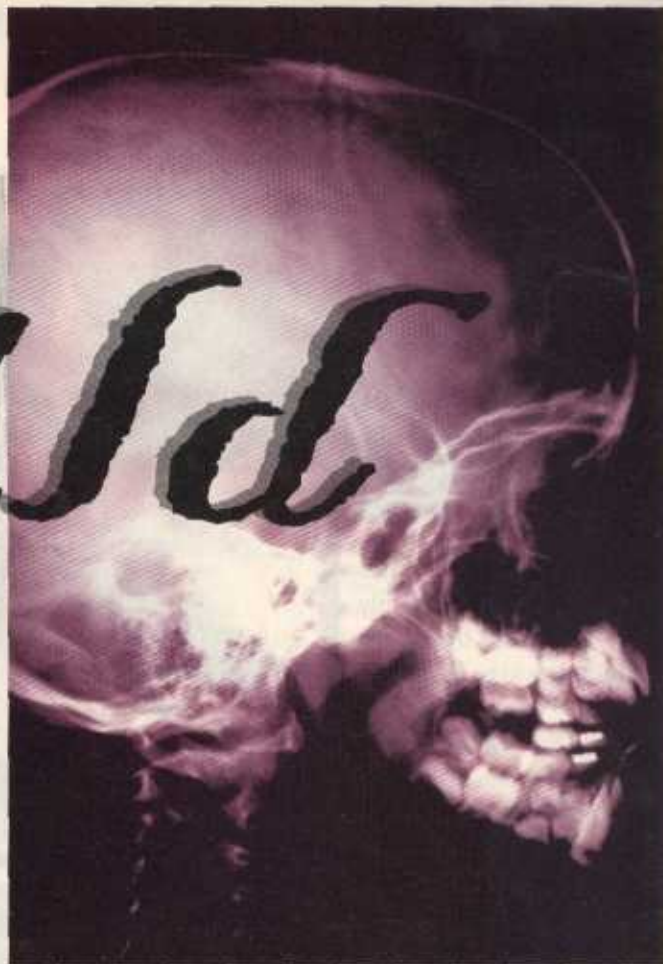
In astrological terms, the *nadir* is the point at the very bottom of the zodiac wheel (opposite the *midheaven*, which is at the top). The clue "9 degrees Taurus on the nadir" refers to a specific orientation of the zodiac at a specific time of day. Already familiar with astrology and prophecies for the year 1998, Stith began to piece together the astrological chart of this "Great Genius."

With the nadir hint to work with, he could obtain



Child

by Rebecca Balcárcel



limited information. Stith deduced that a person born at a moment with nine degrees Taurus on the nadir would have Aquarius as his or her *rising sign* (or *ascendant*). Such a person would be a "truth seeker or scientist," says Stith. This seemed reasonable, but without a *birthday*, little more could be learned.

Then, while Stith was moving books, a forgotten article fell into his hands. In the Summer 1997 issue of the journal *The New Millennium*, author Kirk Nelson examined a Dead Sea Scroll. The scroll, entitled "The Last Jubilee," referred to the "last days" during which the eternal being, Melchizedek, would reincarnate. (Some sources, including Edgar Cayce, say that the Jewish priest Melchizedek was a previous incarnation of Jesus.) The scroll spoke of a Jubilee year, and of a particular day — the Jewish Day of Atonement — upon which to expect a special incarnation. In the Old Testament, a Jubilee is a year of rest taking place every fiftieth year. 1998 is a Jubilee year, being 50 years after the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. "In 1998, the Day of Atonement falls on the thirtieth of September," Nelson writes. This was the date prophesied by the Essenes through the Dead Sea Scrolls for the arrival of a messianic king.

All of this intrigued Stith. Here was an actual date, September 30, 1998, with which to construct an experimental birth chart. Combining Nelson's scroll research with his own dream information, Stith cast a chart. If the symbology of the chart read like that of a "Great Genius," then it might prove to be very significant. I





Having Sun in Libra and Moon in Aquarius, according to [astrologer] Alan Leo, gives "splendid foresight, especially in matters connected with humanitarian principles...and associations; also the ability to judge human nature. The disposition is kind, gentle, and humane."

FATE: *Can you tell where and when the child will be born?*

Stith: When, yes. Where, no. It seems more befitting of such a person to have Moon in Aquarius rather than in Capricorn. In order to have the nadir at nine degrees Taurus and Moon in Aquarius, that person would need to be born in the Americas at approximately 2 P.M. local standard time.

FATE: *Why do you suppose your dream came when it did?*

Stith: Well, I was praying about it. But it is curious to note that I had the dream very close to when one would expect conception to have occurred.

FATE: *Who do you think this person is?*

Stith: Astrology would suggest that Nostradamus' description, "The Great Genius," is particularly apt. He might even be technologi-

spoke with Stith about this chart in his home last July — two months before the Genius was to be born.

FATE: *What kind of person does this chart indicate would be born on September 30, 1998?*

Stith: A leader of a philosophically or religiously transformative group, one generous with worldly possessions, one with a highly original or inventive mind — very possibly a genius — and someone diplomatic or involved with bringing peace to discord concerning religion or the meaning of life. [The child would become] a healer somehow — Chiron is in Scorpio in the tenth house — and someone with occult ability, perhaps *useful* occult ability, due to Neptune in the twelfth house in Capricorn. That would just be a broad overview.



cally inventive. This is quite different from the usual expectation of Jesus' Second Coming. But then, Jesus differed from the expectations for the Messiah of his age.

It may be decades before David Stith and the rest of the world find out more about this "teacher of teachers of teachers," but it is exciting to think that he or she may already be among us. ■

Rebecca Balcárcel is a freelance writer and published poet.



Above: Misata with Anna "Sammy" Mitchell-Hedges, caretaker of the Mitchell-Hedges Crystal Skull. The artist, like many others, believes the skull possesses mysterious powers. Along with other crystal objects, she says, it has deepened her spirituality and helped during the journey of self-discovery that underlies her work.



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Currently Misata feels guided to complete a series of paintings inspired by the music of the late singer/songwriter John Denver. Visions and dreams communicating the energy and spirit of songs like "Eagles and Horses" and "Ponies" already

resulted in two paintings — and they are just the beginning.

"I am ready to connect with nature and Colorado," says Misata. "I come from the East, and have lived here 18 years. I finally feel truthful and aware of the nature of the place. John Denver has inspired me through his words and dreams, along with my many hikes and travels through Colorado."

She advises others to never let go of their dreams.

"Pursue it with determination," she counsels. "Don't let go of that dream, because if you do you're letting go of your soul. Be determined to follow your heart, at whatever cost that might be. The Uni-

verse will be there to show you the next step."

For this unusual artist, it seems, the intense promise of the Unknown is the drive of the creative spirit — or as Tennyson said: "Heaven opens inward." ■

Christine Smith is a freelance writer who lives in the mountains above Howard, Colorado. She often examines psychic phenomena, the paranormal, and spiritual growth in her work.



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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JAMES

by John Chambers

THE CHURCH DENIES THAT HE EVER EXISTED,
BUT A FLORIDA CHANNELING GROUP MAY BE IN
CONTACT WITH THE ALLEGED BROTHER OF JESUS.
IF IT'S TRUE, IT MAY CHALLENGE EVERYTHING WE
THINK WE KNOW ABOUT CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.

Did Christ have a younger brother named James? For 2,000 years, the Roman Catholic Church has denied the possibility, insisting that since Mary was a Virgin, the Son of God couldn't have had siblings.

But increasingly in modern times, historians have had no trouble with this notion. They have pointed to very early writings — like the assertion by the first-century Jewish historian Josephus that James, the brother of Christ, was known as “James the Righteous,” and that he inherited his ministry from Christ, had it wrested from him by St. Paul, and was subsequently stoned to death by the Jews.

And for a large group of séance participants in southern Florida over the past seven years, it has been tantalizingly easy to believe that Christ's sibling, James, may have existed. Provided, that is, that they are willing to believe that the spirits of the dead can be channeled from the afterworld.

They are the participants in the séances of Marilyn Raphael, a Brooklyn-born medium and teacher of mediumship who has been channeling James — or “James the Less,” as he prefers to be called — on almost a weekly basis since 1992. A striking and ebullient minister in her fifties who lives in Lake Worth, Florida, Raphael also allegedly channels famed Irish medium Eileen Garrett. Garrett died in 1970 at the age of 77, and now lectures in her discarnate state on metaphysics and pro-

vides prescient answers to questions from the audience. But James, who “appears” before Garrett for 10 or 15 minutes a session, has commanded as much attention as the witty Garrett — perhaps because of the special nature of his relatives.

James has had much to say about his brother and the times in which they lived. Among some of James the Less's more controversial assertions made through Raphael:

- James, along with Mary and Joseph and all of Christ's seven siblings, were members of the religious order of the Essenes, who lived in the religious community in ancient Qumran beside the Dead Sea.

- Christ was just barely alive — little more than a lifeless husk — even before his crucifixion. His family and the apostles lifted him down from the cross and spirited him away into hiding. He recovered slowly on a boat headed to India, where he stayed for three years.

- Christ has reincarnated as a boy named Simon in modern-day Qumran, Israel. Though he will try to make his influence felt, our world is too chaotic for him to have great hopes for success.

- Christ would have been appalled at what St. Paul and the Roman Catholic Church eventually did with his teachings.

James says his mission is to set the record straight by teaching that Christ merely sought to

make people know and live the words of the Torah. In addition to Raphael, James reports that 22 other mediums around the world are allegedly channeling various members of Christ's family, in a campaign to reassert this ancient view of Christianity — actually a sort of “Mega-Judaism” — in the face of the present turmoil of modern civilization.

“James is wonderful. But he's almost like a broken record,” says Joseph Darby, a regular at one of Raphael's monthly Saturday night channeling classes. “He keeps repeating how much he loved Jesus, whom he prefers to call Emanuel. He talks about a lot of other things, but we have to fight to get him to change the subject from how fabulous Jesus was.”

Chat Session with Little Brother

At a typical session, Raphael places the dozen to 20 participants in a trance, then coaxes each to channel previous lives or discarnate entities. When Raphael's own turn comes, she sits quietly in her chair and slips into her own trance state within 60 seconds. Her mobile features shift, one side of her mouth twists up, her chin squashes down on her neck, and suddenly she looks much older, and more male. With her eyes tightly shut, she begins to speak in a slow, gravelly voice: James is coming through. Sometimes, the entity needs to be prompted with a question; usually, James launches immediately into a solemn, earnest paean of praise for his brother. The following utterance is typical:

“I will tell you that the man Emanuel was the greatest force in my entire existence. I witnessed the phenomenon of greatness, I witnessed how a human can transport himself, I witnessed more than any of you have ever thought of even attempting to witness.... You have to understand I am totally, 100 percent of my entire thoughts are connected to Christ, so for me to even banter is quite amazing.... I am caught in the web of that life, and I have to admit I don't want to let go of it.”

James will wax eloquent on any topic put to him, but he is particularly impassioned when dealing with questions

El Greco's *St. James the Younger*

about his brother's life and its 2,000-year aftermath. One recent session proceeded as follows:

Question: *What did Jesus look like?*

James (through Marilyn Raphael): He was not beautiful on the countenance.... If anything, he was rather peculiar, and he had a big nose. But he had



Marilyn Raphael doesn't know if she's really channeling James.

beautiful lavender eyes. And a heart that was greater than any.

Question: *What was distinctive about his personality?*

James: He had the capacity of an enormous amount of light. He was indeed what you term psychic. He was beyond psychic and sensitive. He had the capacity to understand people, and he was a very honest man.... He was not a brilliant scholar, but he had quick wit. Food never seemed to be his pleasure. He was not of quick temper, and he was not of judgment. When he was instructed to fight, he fought, but he did turn a cheek. He would have been a hippie among you, and he would have loved you very much. He would have offered a love that was deeper than any friendship, and he managed to make people aware of their lives. He would stir a heart to sing, and fame and fortune meant nothing to him.

Question: *What did he mean when he said, "The Kingdom of God is within you?"*

James: That when you collect your thinking, and praise God, then you have exemplified the Kingdom of God, and thus it is within you. It did not mean that you are God.

Question: *How do you feel about the*

negative aspects of Emanuel's influence on history — the Crusades, the religious wars, the Spanish Inquisition?

James: I feel very hurt, very hurt. [Tears well up in Raphael's eyes.] All in the name of someone who brought love and peace. There will never be a time when the Jesus that I knew and loved would ever come among his family, his friends, his human race, and say to you, "Onward, Christian soldiers." He would say, "Never, never do more for one than you would do for the other. Never offer your life and taste in blood."

History of a Heresy

Is Marilyn Raphael actually channeling Christ's brother? She says she really doesn't know. When the living Eileen Garrett was asked by psychic researcher Larry LeShan if she thought she was really channeling the spirits of the dead, Garrett replied that on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday she was sure she was; on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday she was sure she was manifesting multiple personalities; and on Sunday she tried not to think about it.

Ever since Raphael began her group channeling sessions in the 1970s, she had been aware of channeling a sort of "double-entity" whom she called Gean. By the time she moved to Florida with her family in 1992, she was aware that the entity had seemingly split in two to become Eileen Garrett and James. Raphael had never heard of James before, and had known very little about Garrett. But the medium continues to be openly skeptical about the possibly eternal connections of the entities she channels.

Raphael may doubt that she is really channeling James the Less; but historians today do not doubt that James, the brother of Christ, really existed. Josephus declared in his *Antiquities* XX, while sketching the bare details of James's life, that many believed at the time that God permitted the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the Jewish Wars (A.D. 66–73) to punish the Jews for stoning James.

More than 150 years later, the Christian philosopher Origen alluded to the

stoning of Jesus' younger brother. But Origen asserted that James was called the brother of Christ only symbolically, to denote that he was the equal of Jesus in goodness. Eusebius, a fourth century Orthodox Christian, stated that James was "entrusted with the throne of the episcopate at Jerusalem," while the earlier Hegesippus maintained that James was an ascetic who abstained from strong drink and from shaving.

Among the Gnostic Gospels unearthed at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, beginning in 1945, scholars found two texts said to have been written by James, *The (First) Apocalypse of James* and *The (Second) Apocalypse of James*. Scholars doubt the authorship of these works — they contain imaginary conversations between James and a Christ who, after the Gnostic fashion, is not divine at all. Still, their existence attests to the implicit belief in ancient times that Christ's brother once lived.

Today, some Catholic scholars gingerly embrace the notion that Mary had other children besides Jesus. But they have avoided open warfare with the Vatican by not directly challenging Church doctrine. In a 1992 presidential address to the Catholic Biblical Association, Rev. John P. Meier stated that on historical grounds, "the most probable opinion is that the brothers and sisters of Jesus were true siblings." His statements drew the immediate ire of some conservative Catholics. But over the last three years, at least three other U.S. Catholic biblical specialists have published books in which they agree that Jesus had brothers and sisters.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, unearthed at Qumran in 1947, provided further evidence of how much was lost in the decades following Christ's death. Among the 800 texts discovered were a number describing the Qumran religious community of the Essenes — a militant, ascetic sect of ultra-conservative Jews who were awaiting the coming of the Messiah at about the time Christ was born.

In his massive 1997 book *James the Brother of Jesus: The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, maverick religious scholar

Robert Eisenman concurs that James was an Essene. He even states that James was a zealot who led the attack of the Essenes on the Romans that precipitated the Jewish-Roman war of A.D. 70. When James is asked by members of Raphael's group whether Eisenman's view of his zealot leadership is true, he neither confirms nor denies it, while sharply scolding the Romans.

Eisenman also points to various conflicts between James and the apostle Paul. These assertions, passed along to James by members of Raphael's channeling group, have provoked a tempestuous response. It appears that this channeled entity hated Paul every bit as much as he loved his brother Jesus.

Many modern scholars, such as Elaine Pagels in *The Gnostic Gospels*, believe that Roman Catholicism triumphed because Peter, and especially Paul, seized upon the idea of the resurrection and exploited it to make Christianity more attractive to the masses. There is no eyewitness account in the Gospels of the resurrection; Pagels and others think the doctrine may be an imaginative construct from rumors following Christ's death. They theorize that Catholicism, once it gained the ascendancy, rewrote the Gospels — editing out James along with much else.

Fight for the Church

Members of Raphael's group did not know about Pagels's book — or even the view that the resurrection was an invention of Paul's — when they asked James about Paul. They were jolted by the fervor of his response, which continued through several sessions. Here are some typical statements:

"My beloved Emanuel was not a Christian, he was a Jew. He did not desire to create a new religion. He desired only that that which you call the Ten Commandments — what he called the Law — be interpreted in the spirit, in the heart, with understanding, and not only as the dry bones of a sanctified law. Paul, though, destroyed all this. [Paul] wanted to sell Judaism. He used gentle Christ to encapsulate multitudes of thinking minds...and he was able to persuade them with his wisdom and beautiful

manners, for he was a cultured man. And he was also a Roman citizen. And that ghastly man took from us, the Essenes, and twisted the truth."

In some of these sessions, James got so carried away that tears rolled down the medium's cheeks. "My brother was not what Christianity was, nor could he ever be! Your Bibles are false! Now, Paul took from us at Qumran, and he proselytized and sold religion. We do not sell a man! We did not idolize a man! But we respected God's Law. And God's Law is the Law! My brother came among you, and he said: Let us take God's Law to reach many! Get it through your hearts and souls! He was a proud Hebrew! And he came among you with God! My brother was among the greatest, greatest of all. We so worshiped and adored him. But never once was he put before God. Never once did he say he was God."

What are we to make of these alleged strange visits from the beyond? Raphael, though highly intelligent, barely finished high school. With a Lutheran father and a Jewish mother, she was not strongly influenced by either religion. It's hard to imagine how she would have had the knowledge or the passionate conviction to create a James.

No one else in Raphael's group had known if James really existed, nor really cared. They are not biblical scholars, but simply apprentice mediums wanting to learn how to channel. It's hard to see how any of them could have contributed, telepathically or otherwise, to the creation of Raphael's James. I am the only one to research James and bring outside knowledge of him to the group — and only after James had introduced many of the subjects himself.

James has told — and continues to tell — stories about his beloved brother Emanuel that have no counterparts in the annals of ancient history. Perhaps the truth about the nature of Marilyn Raphael's channeled entity will become clear when we are able to determine if these stories are true.

One tale in particular touched the hearts of the members of Raphael's Sat-

urday night channeling school. According to the channeled words of James: "[One Sabbath] he went and he told the team at the Temple: You are hypocrites;

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you do not follow the Word and the Law. He went over to the laborer outside, dirty, undressed, and he said — and I have this notion because I was there, and this is what he was crucified for..."

Raphael began to weep openly.

"...And he said, I will hold you in my arms, and I will wrap you in my garment, and I will bring you before all others. And he picked up the man in his garment as if he were a babe in swaddling clothes, and he carried him to the very pinnacle of the temple where the opening was. It was never done before. Can you imagine the impact? And against his heart he held this man, and he sang the songs of the Passover for him.

"And we all sang with him. And he put the man down. And the man's heart was restored with faith, because one more human cared enough for him." ■

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Back to the Future/ Forward to the Past

Fifty years ago



FATE
January 1950
Vol. 3, No. 1

The article featured on the cover of *FATE* fifty years ago was "Houdini's Message from the Grave." Billed as "one of the most significant proofs of spiritualism ever published," it was condensed from the booklet *Houdini Unmasked* by Lydia Emery and compiled by R. G. Pressing. *Houdini Un-*

masked was published by Dale News, Inc., Lily Dale, New York, 1947. The article presented evidence of a spirit communication from Harry Houdini by means of a code used by the magician in his act. The report was a hoax, according to the *New York Graphic*, but the evidence tends to support the authenticity of the message, which had been decoded by Arthur Ford.

The lead article was "The Hendershot Motor Mystery" by T. D. Fleming, with the kicker: "Today the world has forgotten a man named Lester Hendershot, who invented one of the most amazing motors of all time—a motor that ran without any detectable fuel input." As if to reinforce the Houdini article, the issue also featured "The Case for Spiritualism" by Dora Byron, "an authority on the subject, and a competent reporter as well."

The famous (or infamous) Borley Rectory got a special report in this issue of *FATE*: "The Mystery of Borley Rectory" by J. P. Bessor, reporting on the findings of the recently deceased Harry Price. Also given note on the cover was "Druidism in Chicago" by Jack Sheridan—"Recently, in Chicago, it was discovered that the ancient religion of the Druids was not dead, but still flourished in various parts of the world, and still buries its dead with the ancient rites."

FATE for January 1950 was a whopping 98 pages in digest size, although the magazine was bimonthly at that time. It was short on illustration but long on articles. The magazine featured nine "stories" or "factual accounts of actual experiences," eight "articles on the strange and unknown," and ten features—"competent reporting on unusual topics." "I See By the Papers" had yet to be born, so the editor's piece was entitled simply "The Editorial."

Twenty-five years ago

FATE
January 1975
Vol. 28, No. 1

At this time, *FATE* was in the curious habit of dispensing with any elaborate illustration and simply beginning articles on the front cover. This one was "The Truth Behind 'The Exorcist'" by Steve Erdmann, with a rather incongruous drawing of a bat. There was apparently no clip



art available of Pazuzu. This issue of *FATE* was much richer in interior illustration—and in advertising—than its predecessor 25 years before. The magazine was now monthly and ran 146 pages in digest size. There were, however, only eight "articles and stories" (now classified together) and eleven features. As with the January 1950 issue, "features" included fillers and sidebars such as "Multicolored UFOs" by S. A. Davidson and a news item about "The Flying Crocodile" (not what you think—the beast was found in the baggage compartment of an airliner), as well as the more familiar regular departments, now including "My Proof of Survival." "I See By the Papers" was now in full swing under the aegis of Curtis Fuller. In this month's column, the battle between James Randi and Uri Geller was foreshadowed with a report on a conflict between magician/author Allen Spraggett—an occasional *FATE* contributor—and stage and television mentalist Kreskin. "Kreskin is about as psychic as an oyster," said Spraggett.

The lead article in this issue—other than the one which started on the cover—was "The Klickitat Curse" by Joseph DuBovy. The story concerns the settling of the Pacific Northwest and the suppression of the Yakima and Klickitat tribes by the U.S. Army. The leading shaman of the Klickitats called upon the Thunder God for revenge on territorial governor Isaac Stevens. During the Civil War, Stevens, now a major general in the Union army, was considered as a replacement for the bungling John Pope. However, the Thunder God had other ideas. In the confusion of the Battle of Chantilly, Stevens found himself within the Confederate lines and was shot down. Just as he died, a thunderstorm broke out so great in violence that it drowned out the cannon of the battle.