



Contacting Spiritual Beings: Introduction

The study of esoteric arts, practices and philosophies in all ages begins with a celebration of the spiritual dimension of the cosmos. This involves more than merely thinking about or believing in spiritual matters. It means living and moving and having our being within the embrace of the Sacred.

The modern overemphasis on the intellect poses special problems in regard to developing a living relationship with spiritual reality. The difficulty is not so much that most people are too intellectual. The difficulty is rather that most of us participate quite unconsciously in consensus assumptions about the universe and our role in it—assumptions which derive from premises inherently lacking or excluding a spiritual element. These premises stem in turn from the rigid intellectualism of those materialist academics who function in our society as authorities.



Every culture, past and present, has its underlying community of “experts” who through their power as authority figures tend to influence and alter many of the consensus ideas regarding the nature and extent of reality. These are ideas that become, for good or ill, woven into the fabric of a culture or an age. They are notions that most of us pick up at our mother’s knee. They are assumptions we are, in a sense, born into and which are reinforced at every quarter by the established institutions. In our own time most of these assumptions tend to hamper our spiritual development primarily because they exclude the spiritual dimension of reality.

For most people in today’s modern societies, words like “real” and “reality” bring immediate, and often exclusive, associations with the physical, material world we are all so familiar with. This is not the case with ancient and archaic peoples who generally understand the physical world to be the reflection of an original spiritual Reality. What’s more, by the very fact that it mirrors and embodies a divine pattern, the physical world itself, and the life that is lived within it, is deemed sacred.

The current desecration of life and the narrowing of our scope of reality is largely a heritage of the materialist philosophies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the dubious values of the “Industrial Age” they attempted to justify.

The first step toward an expanded awareness of our place in the universe is to remind ourselves of the essential characteristics of spiritual reality. If we were to summarize the perceptions of cultures, traditions and ages in which people actively engaged the spiritual plane, we might make three key observations:

- 1) We are dealing with a realm that is somehow inseparably joined to the physical and psychological realities in which we tend to operate most of the time.
- 2) Yet it is, for all its intimacy, a plane of Mystery, of hidden power, knowledge, and wisdom, a fluid realm of possibility and potential.



3) It is a realm where other beings of various types and status may be contacted by means of a form of inner perception or participation. Some of these beings are of obvious spiritual advancement and have something valid to transmit to us. Others are of lesser or no importance for our development.

In the following papers we shall explore points one and two through the medium of point three. Focusing in this way upon the nature of contacts with the spiritual presences forces us into relationship with the spiritual plane itself.

Use of the word “spiritual” (and the noun form, “spirit”) in these pages is largely a matter of convenience. It generally refers to the Primal Sacred Power in the universe (the Divine Spirit) and the Holy Spark of higher consciousness in every living creature. However, the term can also refer simply to psychic and mystical contact with *spirits* (beings whose lives are centered on other planes of reality—the inner or other worlds of esoteric lore). Which meaning of the word is intended should be clear from its context, bearing in mind that in a number of instances both meanings are intended simultaneously. This is not to say that all spirits are spiritually advanced. They are not—as many of the more popular “channelled” teachings so tellingly reveal!

For obvious reasons we concern ourselves here primarily with those beings who are dedicated in some way to the welfare of incarnate humans, and who have the capability and spiritual authority to work for the betterment of humankind.

Each spiritual tradition seems to have its own means of grouping the various types of contacts. These include classifications such as the hierarchical orders of Angels, various forms of Elementals and Nature Spirits, Faery Beings, Saints, Magi, Inner Adepti, Bodhisattvas, God- and Goddess-forms, Power Animals, and many others.

I offer in this group of papers, in contrast, a very broad pattern of three basic types of inner-realm contact based upon spiritual function. By thus highlighting the particular activity involved in



each form of contact we build a common vocabulary—a means of speaking about spiritual beings which is not limited by the particulars of any given tradition or teaching. I have termed the three categories Guides, Guardians and Mediators.

