

A Stranger from the Past

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Introduction

This was my first book. I originally wrote it in 1990. Until 1989, I had no idea what the word *metaphysics* meant. I was in the dark, as far as spirituality goes. Then, in May 1989, I heard a lady on the radio claim that she had communicated with Nostradamus. I believed her and bought her book. In that book, *Conversations with Nostradamus*, Nostradamus stated that our civilization is quickly coming to an end and that, if we want an idea of what's going to replace it, we should look to the New Age movement.

Looking back, it was not as apparent back then that this was possible. Now you have to be extremely optimistic to ignore the trends of our time: looming oil and food shortages; debt at historical levels; a war on terror with no end in sight; a materialistic culture that only knows growth.

We live in a period of great change. Economic malaise (if not outright collapse) and social upheaval are quickly approaching. Soon there will not be enough food and oil to go around. The question of how we ration these and keep our culture intact seems insurmountable.

Why are these incredible changes going to happen? That's complicated, but I can give you the short answer. This current civilization is coming to an end. Just as Lemuria, Atlantis, and the Mayans had their end, so will the present civilization. And just as there is no remaining remnant of Atlantis, there will be very little remnant of our present civilization.

How much more time does the present civilization have? I expect the demise to begin within a decade. By 2015, the world will have changed so much that we will likely consider ourselves in a new era.

What is not recognized by most people today is the fact that we are now living in a transition period leading to a new civilization. We are on the cusp of the dawning of a New Age. *We* get to experience it. We *are* experiencing it.

Some of you may come to relish this imminent future, and come through the process of change as a phoenix that rises from the ashes. Others will rush forward in utter despair and confusion, and perish like the dinosaurs of old. Thus, many will have a short lifetime, this time around.

I do believe that knowledge is power, and spiritual knowledge represents the greatest, most life affirming power to be found anywhere. That's why I feel blessed to be able to share what I have learned with others through my books.

The purpose of my books is to help people prepare. The transition that has already begun is about spirituality. We are on a journey of learning that we are all one and discovering the inner-being that is our true reality.

Prologue

The technician approached the entrance to the high security lab and waited for the retinal scan. Two armed guards scrutinized him as he waited for the door to open. As he walked through the door, he glanced down at his clipboard for the location of the patient. The door opened, and he walked towards Row 23.

This lab was actually the location for thousands of cryogenically frozen human beings. It was more a warehouse than a lab. As the technician walked down Row 23, he glanced at the computer screens for each body. The screens stated the person's name, freeze date, and thaw date. Near the end of the row, he saw a dim flashing light—symbolizing that a thaw date had been reached.

He stopped at the body and pressed a few buttons, bringing up the patient's history. "Strange," he thought, reading that the patient was frozen at age thirty-three, while completely healthy, in the twentieth century. He had never unthawed anyone frozen so long ago.

He pressed a few buttons and the unthawing process began. Later in the day, he would retrieve the body, so the doctors could restart the patient's heart.

Chapter One

I woke up in a hospital room. I knew immediately that something was wrong. I felt fine, but had a strange feeling that I was in the future. I didn't recognize the hospital equipment. Even the hospital bed was strange.

I wasn't awake long, when they came for me. There were two soldiers and a doctor. The doctor was a woman. She looked American, but spoke Chinese with a perfect oriental dialect. The soldiers also were oriental. She pleaded with the soldiers, especially the one who appeared to be in charge. I couldn't understand what she was saying.

Finally, she gave up pleading, bowed slightly at the waist and abruptly left the room. Seconds later, a nurse, who also looked American, came with a wheelchair for me. The soldiers all stood at the base of my bed, and the nurse asked me to get into the wheelchair.

I never said a word to the soldiers. I wasn't afraid. In fact, I was detached. I calmly asked the nurse if I could ask a question. She shook her head. "They are taking you now. There is no time. You were frozen in 1994. Yesterday they unthawed you and started your heart. That is all I know." Those were the only English words that I heard there.

As the nurse wheeled me down the corridor, I wondered where I was. I wondered who *they* were and why I was unthawed. Strangely, I had no memory of going to the hospital to be frozen. My last memories had nothing to do with being frozen. I remembered being healthy, and thought only sick and dead people were frozen in the 1990s.

The more I saw of the building, the more I was convinced that I was in the

future. It was subtle differences, such as the wheelchair itself. It was made of light plastic tubing, and the wheels were like Rollerblades. If the nurse would have pushed and let go, I would have zoomed down the hall and crashed into something.

As we approached the exit, I didn't see many faces. Those I did see appeared to be American. They stared at me with an intense curiosity. What did they know about me? I wanted to talk. I wanted to ask someone where I was, but the soldiers were in charge. All I could do was remain silent.

Then we were outside. The buildings that I could see didn't look futuristic. In fact, they looked old, extremely old. My first reaction was recognition. This had to be future America. It was too similar not to be. It reminded me of a small town that had aged noticeably.

The bus waiting in front wasn't an ordinary bus. But then, what was happening wasn't ordinary. The bus was shaped somewhat like a missile. I had never seen anything like it. One of its distinct features was a lack of regular windows. The windows that circled the bus were like small portholes on an airplane.

The door to the bus opened. Waiting for me were two more Asian soldiers. As they escorted me down the aisle, I discovered this was a prison transfer bus. About twenty other people on the bus were tethered to their seats. It was eerie.

At an empty seat, the two soldiers strapped me down. My hands were free, but the strap prevented me from moving.

The other prisoners appeared to be Americans, like me. They were dressed in prison-issue blue jumpsuits, like the one I was wearing. (That was why people had been staring at me in the hospital.)

I was told not to talk or else I would be shot. Nobody in the bus was talking. I looked at the people around me. Few would meet my eyes. I sensed a pervasive fear.

I wondered where they were taking us. The Asian bus driver kept a busy

eye on us through his rearview mirror. His two cohorts sat comfortably behind him—armed and ready.

Then the bus engine roared to life. The driver shifted into gear and we began our journey.

As the bus drove through the small town, I tried to see as much as I could, but the small windows restricted my view. I didn't see any people or any vehicles. The buildings were old and uninhabited. Before long, we were at the edge of town and into a desert.

We drove for hours. I had the impression that the bus was traveling much faster than seventy miles per hour. The nondescript terrain of the desert swept past us in a blur. The bus never stopped.

The guards fed us. The food we were given was a bag of green chips and a cup of water. When we needed to use the restroom, we pushed a button on our seat, then were escorted to the restroom in the rear of the bus. On these occasions, I tried to look into the other prisoners' eyes. Few looked back. It was depressing. And so passed the night.

On the second day, an older woman actually spoke to me as we drove through a decayed, uninhabited large city. "An ugly sight. Nothing of value. It looks as if looters were here, then went on their way."

Continuing through the city was more of the same. We drove slowly, in order to avoid the potholes that dominated the road. There was no other traffic, no other vehicles, no sign of life. It was like a ghost town in old westerns, except this town once had been a modern metropolis.

Suddenly we were speeding away from the city. I turned my head to the porthole window. The sprawling, large city was definitely uninhabited. The huge skyline was like a tombstone.

I turned back and gave an inquiring look to the person next to me. In a low somber voice, he said, "Houston." He immediately looked away.

I tried to get him to talk again. With the risk of being shot, I asked several

questions, but received no response. All I could do was look at the surroundings and wait. Now I *knew* that I was in the future.

A few hours later, there was a gasp in the back of the bus, a gasp that I will never forget, a gasp no human being should ever have to make, a gasp of horror. The man next to me was also afraid. He literally shook with fear. At first, I didn't understand. I looked out the window and noticed some odd-looking towers. One tower every quarter mile stretched out in a circular configuration indefinitely. The towers circled something. I couldn't tell what it was. But as we came closer, I understood. It was another city.

At the outskirts, we encountered a huge wall, thirty feet high and solid concrete. On top of the enormous wall, at regular intervals, were cameras. We were approaching a huge prison.

The bus stopped. A large steel door slowly opened in front of us, the entrance to what I presumed was hell. We drove through. The door closed behind us. Four walls and numerous security guards surrounded us in a small courtyard.

The Asian guards wore military uniforms and were heavily armed. Several guards entered the bus and removed our straps. They marched us to a one-way revolving door, and ushered us into the prison, but they didn't accompany us.

Once through the steel door, off in the distance, I saw a decayed city, a city that should have had no inhabitants—yet was teeming with life. The skyline was ten miles away. The huge wall surrounding the city was twenty miles in diameter. I couldn't see a wall on the other side of the city, but I knew it was there.

I followed the others. They walked toward the skyline. Everyone was silent, as if no words needed to be spoken. I kept my mouth shut.

The stench was dreadful. The people that we saw didn't speak. Blank expressions masked their faces. The rags that they wore were inordinately dirty. They looked near death.

After a few hours, we started getting closer to the middle of the city. Many of the people we now encountered were talking to each other, and their hygiene

was not in such dire straits.

One of the members of our group was leading the way. We all deferred to him. I got the impression that he knew where he was going. After hours of walking, we found ourselves in the streets of the old inner city. We passed under an arch leading to the downtown district—San Antonio.

The city was desolate. No electricity. No lights. All of the buildings were decayed, with broken windows, dirt, and grime. The downtown streets were devoid of people, but I had the feeling of being watched.

Finally, we reached our destination. The man leading us approached a building and entered. The rest of us followed. Suddenly, we were in a room full of people. I was up against a wall, listening in sheer astonishment.

The group we found was unsightly. They wore rags and most hadn't washed their faces in weeks. The smell in the room was horrid. At least they were human beings, and articulate and intelligent.

A man seated at a table spoke to the man who had led us. He was evidently a leader among the prisoners. “The death rate has been terrible. The Soylent Green they feed us has little nutrition. If you can't purchase anything on the black market, death is a few years away. They don't care. The Chinese *want* a high death rate so they can bring in more like us.”

“I know how bad it is,” replied the man who had led us. “We are ready to join the Underground and prepare for the day when we will be released. Yes, we might die here, but this prison can't last forever.”

The local leader nodded. “Do you know all of the men who are with you?”

“All except one. We're ready to join. I'll take personal responsibility for these men.” He paused and looked at me, against the wall. “Except him,” he said, pointing at me.

The local leader looked at me, for the first time since we had entered the room. Once his eyes met mine, his demeanor changed. “Who are you?” he asked, in a raised voice. I was obviously different from the others.

“I’m not sure,” I said.

Suddenly tension filled the room.

He laughed. “Are you for real?” He looked over at the man who had led us. “Where did he come from?”

“We picked him up in the desert. At a hospital, in a small town outside Las Vegas. Hell, the rest of us came from detention centers, but not this guy. They wheeled him out in a wheelchair and escorted him onto the bus.”

The local leader looked at me intently. “My name is Jackson. I’m one of the leaders of the Underground. The Underground controls the prison. *We* make the rules and *we* enforce the rules. If you value your life, you’ll be straight with me. Do I make myself clear?”

I nodded.

He continued, “Now, what were you doing at that hospital, and who are you?”

I raised my eyebrows. “Do you want to talk in front of all these people?” I asked hesitantly.

“Come,” he said, rising to his feet. Several of his companions accompanied us up some stairs, then into a sparse room at the top, where we found a dirty bed and several tattered old chairs. After the door was closed, several of us sat down, and he nodded at me to begin.

“What year is this?” I asked.

“What year?” asked Jackson, bemused. “Are you kidding me?”

I shook my head. “One day I was in the twentieth century. The next I was in some futuristic hospital, lying in a bed, wondering where I was.”

The men all looked at each other. Finally, the leader continued. “Tell us more.”

“There isn’t much to tell. Two days ago, I woke up in a hospital. There wasn’t anyone in the room when I woke. I looked around and saw all of this bizarre equipment. I was definitely not in the twentieth century. Anyway, I was

lying in a hospital bed. Then two Asian military officers came into my room with a doctor, a woman. She argued with them in Chinese. She was upset, but apparently didn't have much say in the matter. The next thing I knew, I was in a wheelchair heading for the exit. It happened fast."

Jackson scratched his thick beard and shook his head. "Hard to believe, my friend, hard to believe. But it is possible."

He paused when he saw my interest. I stared at him inquisitively.

"Yes, it is possible," he continued. "Around the year 2000, the old U.S. government started putting people into hibernation. Still, your story is difficult for me to accept. There's a man here who would be interested in hearing about the period when you lived. I will take you to him."

Jackson paused. From the look on his face, he wasn't sure if this was a good idea, and he was having second thoughts. "What was the last date that you remember?"

"1994. January 11. I remember it clearly. President Clinton was on a trip to Europe. The economy was doing well, and most people were happy."

Jackson looked at me. "Wow, that was a long time ago. Thinking back, maybe you didn't want to live through the next forty years. That was the end times for the previous civilization. It was, perhaps, even worse than what we are now experiencing. We only know it from history, but it was a difficult time for people. More than two-thirds of the population perished."

Jackson rose from his seat. "Come, let's go see Anderson. He lives in the inner city. It will take us about an hour to get there."

I followed Jackson and his friends out of the building. We walked through the decrepit wasteland that was once San Antonio. An old 7-11 convenience store was barely recognizable by its battered sign.

"Jackson, see that building there, with the 7-11 sign?"

"Where?" he asked.

I pointed it out.

“Yeah, I see it. Why?”

“Do you know what it is?”

“I have no idea.”

“It’s a convenience store from the twentieth century. Everyone wanted to save time. Convenience stores were like mini-grocery stores that didn’t provide produce or meat. They provided speed. At a token increase in price, you could go into a convenience store and purchase an item in about one minute. The 7-11 stores were the king of convenience stores. There were thousands of them across the country.”

Jackson laughed. “One minute? Today we have distribution centers, and we wait in line, and the centers carry only a few types of foods. Here in the prison, we are given Soylent Green and water. On the outside, it’s not much better.”

He continued. “I’ve heard about the twentieth century. A paradise compared to today. You lived during a period of affluence. Anderson will tell you what happened. He likes to talk.”

The streets were empty. There were neither automobiles nor any other means of transportation, not even bicycles. Nothing but waste and valueless garbage. We were imprisoned in a city desolate of any resources.

Most of the buildings were empty, as well. I could see signs of life inside some of the buildings. People lived here. The people that we saw had hollow eyes, and avoided our inquiring looks. They seemed to fear Jackson and his group.

Jackson stopped and looked at me. “Anderson lives in a bad neighborhood. People have attempted to get him to move, but he has lived here for thirty years and he hates change. . . . The next couple of miles can be dangerous.”

I interrupted. “I thought you were a leader of the Underground? Who is a threat to *you*?”

One of Jackson’s friends laughed.

“We’re the so-called good guys,” Jackson said, “but there are other groups

who have disassociated from our leadership. There are several Underground groups in the prison.”

“Then each group has a different agenda?” I asked.

“It’s more complicated than that. In general terms, that’s true. Each group has a different mindset. Ask Anderson, he’s much better at this than I am. Anyway, it can be dangerous here.”

“What do you want me to do?” I asked.

“Stay with Olson.” Jackson pointed to one of his friends. “He’ll direct you, okay?”

I nodded.

“Olson and you will follow us at a short distance. We’ll spot any trouble. If something happens, Olson will know what to do, okay?”

“Sure, let’s go.”

“You have a lot of nerve,” Jackson said. “What’s your name?”

“John.”

“Johnson,” he replied.

“Why Johnson?” I asked.

“The Chinese changed everyone’s name. Today, everyone’s name ends in *son*.”

Jackson headed off down the desolate empty street with his group. Olson and I watched them go.

I asked Olson, “Do the Chinese make you keep your new names?”

He gave me a squeamish look and turned away.

“What’s wrong? What did I say?”

“I don’t like to talk, that’s all.”

I nodded.

Olson started walking and I followed. We remained a half block behind the others, as we wound our way through the dilapidated streets. The road, at one time smooth asphalt, today had potholes and large cracks every few feet. The

roads hadn't had any maintenance for decades, maybe centuries.

We were in an old, downtown business district. Uninhabited single-story buildings lined the streets. Olson walked close to the buildings, along the sidewalk. I followed by a few feet. The buildings were empty, except for dirt and grime and old worthless furniture and junk.

Olson appeared to be relaxed. I didn't discern any fear in his demeanor. We followed the group slowly, up the deserted streets, turning corners and heading up other streets. Each street was similar to the previous one. There was nothing here.

After several blocks, Jackson and his group stopped. Olson and I made our way to them.

Jackson said, "There isn't anyone in this sector today. We're safe." He pointed to a building on the corner. "That's where Anderson lives. Come on, I'll take you to him."

Across the street, we approached an old American Savings & Loan. The door was steel. There were no windows.

"It's impossible to break in," Jackson said. "That's why Anderson lives here."

Jackson pushed an intercom. "Anderson, it's Jackson."

He turned to me. "He knows someone is at his door, because he has an infrared security system. If anybody walks on this street, he knows about it."

After about ten seconds, a voice came over the intercom. "Hello, Jackson, how are you today?"

"I'm fine. Listen, the sector is empty. Everything is quiet today. I have a guy here that I think you will be interested in meeting. Open up, and I'll bring him in."

After a slight delay, the voice replied. "Jackson, are you sure it's safe?"

"Andy, I'm sure. This guy's on the level. No problem."

After a short pause, a buzzer went off, and Jackson pushed open the door.

“Let’s go,” he said, nodding for me to follow. The two of us went inside. The rest of the group remained outside.

“Andy is paranoid,” Jackson explained to me. “I’m his main contact in the local Underground, so he trusts me. I’m probably the only guy who could have gotten you through that door.”

The lobby was empty, except for beautiful white marble floors and walls. They were clean. Even the teller counter was dust free. The cleanliness caught my attention. Who lived *here*?

Jackson went directly to an elevator, which surprised me, because the building had only one floor. He pressed B for Basement.

In the basement, a man was waiting for us. He was tall, thin, and clean-shaven, though his hair was long. He wore clean Levi’s and an ironed, short-sleeved printed shirt. His distinct features would be easily remembered: a chin, square and larger than normal, and penetrating light blue eyes that exuded intelligence.

Jackson approached Anderson with a smile and shook his hand. “Andy, it’s always a pleasure. Is everything fine? Do you need anything?”

Andy remained silent and cautious, staring at me. I followed Jackson, a few feet behind him.

“Who is this?” he demanded.

“Andy, meet John. You are not going to believe where he’s from,” Jackson laughed.

“Jackson, please do not be so impetuous. I’m a busy man.”

“Sorry, Andy,” Jackson said, in a serious tone. “He came on the transport bus from Los Angeles today. I noticed something different about him. I asked a few questions, and he told me he’s from the twentieth century. . . .”

“What?” Anderson interrupted. “What are you talking about?” Anderson glanced at me with a glare. This obviously sounded preposterous to him.

I put my hand up to stop Jackson from answering. I took a step toward

Anderson and extended my hand. "It's a pleasure to meet you." He shook my hand.

"Could we go sit down?" I asked. "And do you have something to drink? I've been walking for hours."

"Of course," Anderson replied curtly. He turned and walked away, and we followed.

The basement was beautifully furnished: thick carpeting on a polished hardwood floor, dark mahogany furniture, shiny brass lamps, and beautifully framed prints on the walls. Impressive, even if there were no windows.

We went into his office. It was equally impressive. The work desk was huge, though bare. The only substantial thing on it was a computer. On one wall, a series of bookshelves held at least a thousand volumes. The most striking thing about this room was the skylight. I stared, transfixed, at the skylight.

"I used mirrors," Anderson said, relaxing a little.

"It's nice."

"Please sit down," he invited.

He sat behind his desk. Jackson and I sat in the two large comfortable leather chairs in front of it.

Anderson pressed a button and a servant appeared, who looked at me and raised his eyebrows.

"Water," I said. "Water will be fine, thank you." I thought of asking for food, but I didn't know what to ask for. What was Soylent Green, anyway?

Anderson turned to the servant. "Bring us some sandwiches, as well."

After the servant left, Anderson turned to me. "Now, who are you?"

"Hmm. That isn't easy." I paused. "I was born in California in 1960. I had a wonderful childhood. Until I turned eighteen and graduated from high school, life was fairly easy. I had no problems and few responsibilities."

"Then life started. Until that time, I didn't think about the future. High school graduation was a big shock to me, and I didn't know what to do. Society

gave me, basically, two options: go to college or get a job. I chose a job, but it wasn't what I wanted. Life began to feel like a prison. I wasn't satisfied. My mind was restless.

"I began changing. Previously, I had never looked at life in a philosophical way. Throughout childhood, I was never a good student. I never tried very hard. My sisters were A students and headed for college; I was a C student who didn't do his homework. I rarely read anything besides a newspaper or a sports magazine. Then, after high school, my brain started kicking in. Since I had rarely used it before, it was ready for some stimulation.

"Growing up, I had always looked forward to the chase—the next party, the next pretty girl. Life was a game, with few rules.

"But after high school, I realized that I couldn't play that game anymore. It was no longer fun. I had to find a new game, but what? I didn't have a clue. I knew that society didn't have the answer. Society said I should play their game. I knew *that* would never satisfy me. Society wanted me to get married, go to church, pay my taxes, be a good citizen, and keep my mouth shut. I couldn't do that. I began looking for another game, something as exciting as in my youth, yet more satisfying.

"From high school until now, I have searched. Seven years in college, two degrees. Society said that I could go to school, so I did. I was scheming. I was trying to understand society, so I could change it. Not subtly, but radically.

"College was rewarding for me. It provided the opportunity to mature as a person and become educated. I left college a much better person. College sparked my interest in learning. And then I found something worth learning.

"My new game was spirituality. I read a book entitled *Conversations With Nostradamus*. In the book, Nostradamus talked about how the New Age movement would become the foundation for the Age of Aquarius. He said that Christianity would wither away and be replaced by the principles of the New Age movement. At the time, I was a Christian, but Nostradamus' book rang true to me.

I headed to the bookstore and found the New Age section. From then on, practically all I read was New Age material."

I paused to wait for Anderson's response.

Anderson stared at me, without a word. He stared at the floor in deep thought. After what seemed an eternity, he glanced back at me. "How did you get here?"

"Three days ago, I woke up in a hospital. Instead of being told where I was, they put me on a bus that brought me here. I was only told that I had been unthawed. I have no memory of going to a hospital in 1994 to be frozen. The last day I remember is January 11, 1994. As far as I remember, nothing eventful happened that day. My memory still thinks I'm in 1994."

"Your story is possible," Anderson said. "I will try to find out what happened to you."

"How?" I asked. "I thought this prison was isolated from the outside world?"

Anderson smiled. He turned and looked at the array of monitors on the wall, then glanced back and raised his eyebrows. "I can find out." He paused. "I want you to stay with me," he said thoughtfully.

Next, he turned to Jackson. "Jackson, there is a shipment coming next week. The date and time are on my desk."

Jackson rose, went to the desk and found the directions. "Andy, is there anything else?"

"No, I will see you next week."

Jackson smiled, waved, and walked out.

Anderson was finally smiling at me. "So, your new game was enlightenment? How did you play that game?"

I paused. "Can I ask some questions first? How did you come to live here? And I would like to know about the current state of the world and this prison."

"In time, John, in time. Please, I am interested in the game you found.

Spirituality is my favorite subject. That and history are all I really care for. Don't worry. We'll talk about the world as it is now. First, I want to hear what you discovered."

I smiled at Anderson's enthusiasm. He was truly interested in what I had to say. I could now see that he was kind, and I trusted his sincerity. I felt comfortable in his presence. And I believed he had the answers to my questions.

"When I began looking for my new game, I never thought it would be a spiritual quest, but that's what it became. Once I began, I was consumed by it. I cannot overstate my focus. *Everything* I did was connected to my spiritual quest.

"I use the analogy of playing a game, because that's how I perceived life while growing up. But I was looking for a new way to live, a new philosophy, and that was exactly what I found in spirituality. Indeed, my whole life became encompassed by my spirituality. Nothing was separate from my spiritual quest."

"What was this quest?" Anderson asked.

"To learn about God, the creator. What questions haunt us from birth?

Who am I? Where did I come from? Where do I go when I die? What is the meaning of life? These questions became the focal point of my quest. At first, I was amazed at the quantity of knowledge available. After awhile, I learned that spirituality isn't for everyone, at least not the answers to these questions. The 1980s were a good time to look for spiritual answers. I found source after source.

"I am an old soul. It was my destiny to seek the answers to these questions. More importantly, being an old soul, I had the ability to grasp the answers. Younger souls aren't ready for these answers. I was ready, and I absorbed it.

"Steadily, I was exposed to deeper and deeper layers of knowledge, and answers were revealed to me. In fact, the answers were available to anyone who looked hard enough, but you had to look hard."

I paused, grabbed a sandwich off the table, and took a bite as I leaned back in my chair. I was actually happy. I didn't know what was happening, but I trusted the universe and I knew that I wasn't alone. I knew that Joe, my spirit

guide, was with me. I glanced around Anderson's office, and wondered where he'd found his furniture. As I ate my sandwich, I stared at a beautiful painting.

"What is this?" I asked, pointing to the painting.

"That's from the future. A print from the Wingmakers. The painter is unknown."

"What do you mean, it's from the future?"

"I'll tell you about it later. The Wingmakers are time travelers. They brought us some of their artwork, as well as other materials from their civilization."

"Tell me more."

"Later. First, tell me the meaning of life?"

"You don't know?"

"I would like to hear your opinion."

"What year is this?"

"2272."

"My God! You mean this planet is still spiritually in the dark? What happened to spiritual evolution? How many know that God is *All That Is*?" I was concerned.

Anderson took a breath and blew out a long sigh. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to mislead you. Many are aware that God is *All That Is*, at least fifteen percent. Many more are coming to accept it every day. Spirituality is flourishing around the world. I just want to hear it from you. I want to hear your views."

Anderson's sincerity was so heartfelt that I didn't ask any of the questions that were flooding my mind.

"Okay, I'll tell you. The meaning of life is simple: To be. We are here to learn, to expand our spirit, but, more importantly, to be representatives of God. Our bodies are nothing more than suits. After this life, we leave the suit behind. The experience . . . that we take with us.

"It is much more complicated than that, of course. I could speak for hours.

In a nutshell, the meaning of life is simply *to be*. We don't have to learn. We don't need to achieve. We only need to be. The reason is that we are perfect manifestations of God already."

Anderson was visibly stunned. He rose from his chair and marched around the room, as if distraught. "You say this with such nonchalance. How well do you understand it? Do you realize that only a few people understood this in the twentieth century?"

"No, no. There were many who knew."

"How much do you know?"

"I learned a lot. As I told you, it was my game."

"Please, tell me more."

I grabbed another sandwich and leaned back in the chair in front of his desk. "Okay, I'll talk, but after I'm finished, you have to answer my questions. You have to tell me about history and the current civilization. I presume this should be easy, since you're a historian?"

Anderson smiled. "We have plenty of time. I have more information than you can imagine. Don't worry, John, I have everything you need."

I smiled. "Where to begin? I'll just start talking. I've made two points so far: God is *All That Is*, and that the meaning of life is *to be*. Let me talk about those two concepts.

"Everything is God, *everything*. This chair, the air we breath, the cells in our body, our soul, everything. This is why God is referred to as *All That Is*. What does this imply? First, that we are God, and there is no separation between God and us. In fact, there is no separation between us and anything or anyone else.

Everything is connected. Everything is one.

"Everything is interrelated, because everything *is* God. God is the whole, and everything else makes up the whole. Thus, our souls are pieces of God. An important point to understand is that each piece of the whole is as important as the next. To God, it's the whole that is important. To God, all pieces make a circle. If

one piece is taken out, the circle is broken and it is no longer a circle. Thus, each link is as important as the next.”

Anderson rose from his chair and walked around the room in contemplation. “Why is the meaning of life *to be*?”

“Because the whole is just as alive as we are. The whole is alive! The whole is one big consciousness, of which we are a part. The whole is not a being, separate from us. We are part of it! We are *being* God.”

Anderson stopped and leaned against the bookcase. He nodded. “Yeah, we are being. . . . Keep explaining. I’m enjoying this.”

“Think in terms of connections. We are connected to the whole, and we are connected to everything we perceive. Enlightenment is *knowing* that we are part of the whole. This is called *I AM* awareness. It’s a realization that we are one with God, and so is everything. ‘I am God.’ When we come to this realization, our perceptions change dramatically. We view the world from a new perspective: spiritual awareness.

“The whole is a consciousness, in which everything interrelates. In effect, everything is alive and interrelating with everything else. For instance, our thoughts impinge on everything around us. . . .”

Anderson interjected. “God is all-aware, and our thoughts permeate among all consciousness. Our thoughts affect plants, animals, and especially people.”

I nodded. “Exactly. The planet is a mass consciousness, in which all thoughts impinge on each other. This mass consciousness, as we interact with it, provides us with experience. We provide the input (belief) and the mass consciousness provides the output (experience). Thus, we can experience only what the mass consciousness allows. We can’t escape its influence.

“Mass consciousness doesn’t care how we live. Our beliefs can be whatever we want. Mass consciousness is like a giant computer taking our input (thought) and producing output (experience). Mass consciousness provides our possible experiences: our choices. There are no right or wrong choices. What we

select is perfect. So we can be whatever we want.”

Anderson grinned. “There are still a few unanswered questions. For instance, what are the universal laws of God?”

“I’ll give you one: unconditional love. God, or the whole, uses unconditional love as the guideline to create our experience. All experiences are created with the intent of learning about unconditional love. Each experience we have is co-created with God, and thus perfect.”

Anderson squinted. “That’s quite a statement. If it’s true, then there can be no such thing as free will.”

“The concept of free will is misleading. God is always with us, constantly co-creating our experience with us. There is never a moment when God is not aware of our thoughts. We do not have a separate identity, apart from God. Likewise, we are connected to the mass consciousness. We cannot have an experience that the mass consciousness does not agree upon.”

Anderson looked puzzled. “Earlier, I thought you said that the whole allows us to choose our experiences. If we’re allowed to choose, isn’t that free will?”

“On the surface, it may appear to be free will. But when you look below, you can see that everything is orchestrated. Choices are limited, because of the integration of consciousness.”

Anderson nodded. “I get it. God controls the integration.”

I smiled. “Very good.”

Anderson asked. “Since we are all at a different level of spiritual awareness, does that mean we each have different degrees of freedom?”

“To a certain degree that’s true, but that’s not the right question. We limit ourselves before we ever incarnate. We curtail our own freedom. What must be understood is that God is intricately involved in selecting our experiences. God realizes that growth is the objective. God is relentless in steering us home.”

Anderson had a sudden epiphany. “Exactly! Freedom is not worth

pondering! It's the relationship with God that matters, which we experience with our relationships with fellow souls."

I smiled and clapped. "You earned your star today."

Anderson continued. "God created us to experience and learn about God, which is unconditional love. Our lives are a process of remembering who we are. We live one life after another, until we remember. As the saying goes, we live and learn."

"Anderson, that's music to my ears. It's a pleasure to be in your company. I can see that you are a true student of metaphysics."

"For many years. And if you'll indulge me, I would like to hear more about free will."

"You seem to have a pretty good grasp of the subject."

Still excited, he pleaded with me with his eyes. "I can always learn more. Just a few more minutes."

I took another bite of my sandwich. "Okay, a few more minutes. God doesn't care what kind of experiences we have, but God makes sure that each experience provides spiritual growth. The mass consciousness is always evolving, with love and harmony as the objectives. So, when we are co-creating with God, God knows that love and harmony are destined. Even when we choose negative energy, the result is growth.

"Just look at our lives. We have ups and downs, but we learn. Earth is an incredible school. The mass consciousness loves experience on Earth. Why? Because to know joy, we must know sorrow. To know love, we must know hate. As much hate as there is on this planet, the whole is always working toward harmony. And, in the end, harmony *always* wins."

Anderson interrupted. "Let me see if I understand this. Mass consciousness lets us experience anger, hatred, and the gamut of negative emotions. But in the end, the mass consciousness brings us together."

I nodded. "It's inevitable. Every life provides spiritual growth. Rarely do

we regress, and even then, we learned lessons along the way. The mass consciousness makes sure that we are always learning something. In essence, God watches our back. That's what co-creation is all about. Free will is an illusion. We are part of the whole, and we can't really be free if we aren't separate from the whole.

"No one incarnates without planning how we will live our life, and this planning process is done with the whole. Thus, God is aware of our plan. God doesn't ignore us, nor anyone, for a single moment. God is right there with each and every one of us, involved in the planning process of our lives.

"God follows our every thought to help us on our path. If we fall off the path, God teaches us something else. The further from the path we get, the more God becomes involved in our life. We actually lose our free will when we leave our chosen path. When we are in harmony with God, our free will is at its height. Then we can consciously co-create with God.

"Mass consciousness knows what we have planned, and also knows our previous and future lives. Mass consciousness is intricately involved in our experiences.

"So, tell me, Anderson, after hearing me explain free will, do you feel free? Do you think you can do something without God being aware of it?"

Anderson raised his eyebrows. "I don't know. I suppose God is aware of my thoughts and actions. What you say definitely implies that our free will is illusionary. It's disconcerting, in a way. But it also implies that we have nothing to fear."

"Indeed," I said. "If the whole is watching out for our welfare—because it is the whole's welfare as well—we have nothing to fear." I paused. "I think that's enough for now. It's your turn."

"Were you a writer?" he asked. "Did you ever write any of this down?"

"Yes and no. I'm not a professional writer. I have tried to get published, but I've been unsuccessful. I do write stories about the future in a spiritual

context. I do write about my beliefs.”

Anderson looked away and reflected, then turned back. “You may have been published. What’s your last name?”

“Randall.”

Anderson rose from his chair, and walked across the room to the shelves of books. He returned with one and handed it to me. “Surprise!”

I looked at the cover. My name was under the title. I opened it to see what year it was published: 2003.

Anderson smiled. “At the beginning of the twenty-first century, many people began reading metaphysics. A new spirituality was inspired by the New Age movement that began in the late twentieth century. I suppose the popularity of metaphysics caused your book to make it into the hands of a publisher.”

I stared at Anderson. “I need answers,” I said impatiently, and with a tone of frustration. “I need to know where I am, who you are, and what happened to the world.”

He put up his right hand. “Okay, okay, sorry. I wanted to make sure you are who I think you are.”

“What does that mean?” I asked, squinting.

“There is a prophecy that *you* fulfill. A stranger from the past is supposed to come and lead us to our freedom. The stranger is supposed to be enlightened.”

I stared at Anderson. “Who is the source of this prophecy?”

“It was channeled through a man named Bradley Adams. He published a book titled *The Future of America*. It’s a classic, and widely known by the Underground. Many people believe in the prophecy.”

“Do you take it seriously?” I asked.

“Now that I’ve met you, I do.”

“Is the book here?”

“Yes.”

“Can I read it later? Then we can discuss it.”