



PROPHECIES OF  
**SERAPH & SARASWATI**

by David Michael Boje

# Prophecies of Seraph and Saraswati

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Caballo, New Mexico

*with the Angel Seraph, Ralph the Guardian Angel, and Rock-A-World*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

— Isaiah 6:3

*“And in that day, the country that was more pious than all countries will become impious... The good man will be punished like a criminal.”*

— Hermes Trismegistus, Asclepius 21-29

*“Ahimsa paramo dharma — Non-violence is the highest duty.”*

— Mahavir

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# Prophecy I

## *The Burning Coal*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

— Isaiah 6:3

*“Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips... and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”*

— Isaiah 6:5

*“Alas, Sovereign Lord, I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”*

— Jeremiah 1:6

*“Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent. I am slow of speech and tongue.”*

— Moses, Exodus 4:10

## I. The Dream That Sent Me North

The morning Seraph found me, I woke from a dream that felt like an instruction.

I have had dreams like this before — not the ordinary kind that dissolve by the time you reach the kitchen, but the kind that stay in the body, that feel delivered rather than produced. This one was simple and direct. Go north on the trail. Not south to the lake, the way I always go. Not the familiar half-mile loop that circles back to our property in Caballo, New Mexico, the safe route I have walked a hundred times since we came here, the route my body knows the way it knows its own name. No. North. Down the long horse trail I had started before and never finished. A trail that goes farther than I have gone since the cancer treatments, farther than my body has wanted to go, farther than I have trusted myself to go and still find my way back.

Every time I reached a certain distance on that trail, I turned around. The body said no. And after twenty-six radiation treatments, after the gold implants and the laser tattoos and the months of that particular exhaustion that is different from ordinary tiredness — heavier, more cellular, the kind that lives in your bones — I had learned to listen when the body said no. I had learned not to push past the wall.

That morning the dream said: today you push past the wall.

I lay there for a moment in the early light, feeling the weight of that. I am 78 years old. I am a Vietnam veteran, a cancer survivor, a rancher, a professor emeritus, a Holy Fire Reiki master, a Jain practitioner, a father, a grandfather, a husband in all but the legal sense to Grace Ann Rosile, who is my partner and my moon. I have outlived a lot of things I thought would finish me. And still — the dream was asking me to go farther than I had gone in a long time. To trust that the body I had lain on the radiation table twenty-six times was now strong enough for the long trail.

So I laced up my shoes. I went to the gate at the edge of the property. I turned left. North. And I started running.

I did not know yet that Ralph had arranged everything.

## **II. Ralph, and the Mentor Who Saw Me First**

Before I tell you about Seraph, I need to tell you about Ralph. You cannot understand one without the other, and you cannot understand either without going back to 1976 and a professor's office at the University of Illinois.

I first encountered Ralph in a shamanic meditation, years before I understood what shamanic practice was or what it could carry. In that tradition you journey through layers of reality — the middle world of ordinary experience, the lower world where spirit animals and ancient healers live, the upper world where the high beings reside, the teachers and guides and angels who operate at frequencies beyond the everyday. You go up past the first level of ancestors, past the familiar presences, climbing through light and vibration into territory that has no name in ordinary language. I found myself before a hut. Simple, unadorned, the kind of

dwelling that does not announce itself. No sign on the door. No reason to knock except that I was there and something in me knew to knock.

He opened it immediately. As if he had been expecting me. A black angel — dark wings, broad, present — and before I could say a word or explain myself or ask my questions, he pulled me into a hug. That is Ralph. He does not stand on ceremony. He does not wait for you to get comfortable. He knows you before you know him, and the hug comes first.

Ralph keeps his real name secret in the upper worlds. He has his reasons and I respect them. But he manifests sometimes as Louis Ralph Pondy, and that is where the name Ralph comes from. Louis Ralph Pondy was my mentor in the PhD program — a man of such intellectual stature that the field of management and organizational studies still carries his fingerprints forty years later. He was born in 1938 and he died in July of 1987, at the age of 49, from cancer. Diagnosed in the spring and gone by summer. The same disease that would come for me decades later, the disease that put me on that radiation table twenty-six times. He did not live to see what became of the seed he planted in me. But he planted it, and it grew, and here I am.

It was 1976. I was in his office, one of the PhD students he was guiding through the thickets of organizational behavior theory. He assigned essays. He asked us to think rigorously, to engage the theory, to demonstrate that we understood the intellectual frameworks that shaped the field. Every other student was writing theory. Clean, precise, appropriately academic, correctly footnoted theory.

I kept writing stories.

I could not help it. That is how I have always thought — in narrative, in scene, in the particular human moment that holds the universal principle the way a shell holds the sound of the ocean. Give me a theory and I will give you back a story. Give me a concept and I will give you the person who lived it. I was half apologetic about this tendency. Theory was what the academy rewarded. Theory was the currency of the PhD program, the coin of the realm. And here I was, handing in stories when I had been asked for theory, half-convinced I was doing it wrong and not quite able to stop.

Pondy looked up from the pages. He looked at me the way certain teachers look at you when they see something you have not yet seen in yourself. He

said: “David, you are a storyteller. That is your strength. It is not in the theory work.”

Five words that became a life. You are a storyteller.

I went on to coin the concept of ‘antenarrative’ in 2001 — the before-story, the story that is unfolding before anyone knows it is a story, the fragmented and non-linear and living narrative that precedes and shapes all the official stories organizations tell about themselves. I built the quantum storytelling methodology, the True Storytelling Institute, GrowthOD, the Tuesday Enthinkment Circle dedicated to thinking with the heart. I wrote books on storytelling in organizations, in healing, in spirituality, in the quantum field. Forty years of work growing from one afternoon in a professor’s office in 1976.

Pondy did not live to see any of it. He died thinking he had told a promising student something helpful. He did not know he had set the whole arc in motion.

Now he is in the upper worlds, going by Ralph, keeping his real name between himself and God, and on the morning I ran north he was already out ahead of me on the trail. He had been watching the whole fifty-year story unfold from his vantage point in the upper worlds. And on that particular morning, he had something he wanted to introduce me to.

He is the one who brought me to Seraph.

### **III. Rock-A-World: The Dragon Who Came for a Dying Horse**

There is one more being I need to introduce before we get to the trail, because without this one the whole picture is incomplete. I am talking about Rock-A-World. The dragon. My first spirit animal, who turned out to be the same fire as Seraph, which I did not understand until I was deep in the mesquite outside Caballo with the bees somewhere in the thorns and a seven-winged angel walking beside me in the desert heat.

In my first serious shamanic training session, the teacher asked us to journey to the Lower World — down through a tunnel, through the earth,

into the beneath of things — and find our spirit animal. I went down with a specific intention. I was not going for myself. I was going for Grace Ann's horse.

His name was Nahdion. He was a stallion — a magnificent animal in his time, the kind of horse that carries its own authority, that walks into a space and changes the quality of the air. But he was aging, and his body was telling him the story was winding down. Grace Ann loved that horse the way you love something that has carried you through country you could not have crossed alone, country that required both of you together, human and horse in the particular partnership that Western dressage asks of its practitioners — not dominance, but conversation, not command but a dialogue between two living intelligences, each bringing what the other cannot. Nahdion had been that for her. And now he was failing, and she was not yet ready, and I needed to find something in the Lower World powerful enough to hold him a little longer. Long enough for the grieving to begin before the death, so the death would not arrive without warning and leave her stranded on the wrong side of it.

I went to the Lower World and I waited. I was honest about what I was seeking. I do not dress it up. I need something strong enough to heal a dying horse. I need a spirit animal with that kind of power. Whatever you are, wherever you are, come forward.

What came was not what I expected.

A dragon.

Not threatening — I want to be clear about that, because people hear 'dragon' and reach for their cultural conditioning about what that means. This was not a threatening dragon. This was ancient and enormous and absolutely certain of itself, the way mountains are certain. It rose before me in the Lower World with a presence so complete that there was no question of what to do next. I climbed onto its back. No hesitation, no deliberation. You do not deliberate when something that large and that sure presents itself. You climb on.

And we lifted up. Together, the dragon and I, we rose into the quantum field — the vibrational frequencies that the physicists describe in their equations about non-locality and entanglement and the deep structure of reality, the same frequencies that the mystics have always known in their

bodies and their prayers and their meditations. The field that connects all things across all distances and all times. The dragon took me there in minutes. We soared through layers of light into the upper reaches of the universe, and I held on, and I understood for the first time what the word ‘magnificent’ was made for.

I asked its name.

It said: Rock-A-World.

I understood immediately. This was not a creature that made things comfortable. This was not a creature that left the world the way it found it. This was a being whose purpose was to rock the world — to disturb the settled, to wake the sleeping, to shake loose what has calcified and cannot grow anymore. Not to destroy. To wake. There is an enormous difference between those two things, and it matters for everything that comes after in this book.

Rock-A-World came for Nahdion. He did his healing work in that patient, purposeful way that the great healing spirits work — not dramatic, not showy, just present and powerful and exactly calibrated to what is needed. Nahdion lived long enough for the grieving to begin. He lived long enough for Grace Ann to reach the place of knowing, the place where love includes the releasing.

When Nahdion died, he came back.

For twelve days after his death he appeared to Grace Ann in dreams — every morning a new visitation, a new song. Some were songs of tender love, songs of the long partnership they had shared, songs of the gratitude a horse might sing if horses sang. Some were songs of release, songs that said it is all right, I am all right, the transition is complete and I am at home in it. And some — because Nahdion always had a sense of humor even in the body, and apparently death does not dim that — some were funny. One morning he showed up singing “My Boyfriend’s Back.”

Grief and laughter arriving together every morning for twelve days. That is what a great spirit does. It gives you everything you need to get to the other side.

Now Nahdion is a healing spirit in the Lower World. When I call on him, he comes. He does his work — focused, purposeful, no dabbling, no straying into territory that is not his — and when the work is done, that is that. He knows his life purpose with a clarity that most humans spend entire lifetimes seeking. He does not overthink it. He does not wonder if perhaps he should be doing something more impressive. He heals. He goes. He is available when needed.

I tell you all of this because the morning I ran north and met Seraph on the trail, I felt in the fire of him that same ancient quality I had felt on Rock-A-World's back. The same wings that could carry a person beyond what they thought possible. The same certainty, the same enormous purposefulness, the same quality of being absolutely at home in its own nature. I looked at the seven-winged fiery being of Isaiah's throne room and I recognized my dragon.

Seraph and Rock-A-World are the same being. Two faces of the same cosmic fire — one that goes into the Lower World to heal dying horses, and one that stands in the desert outside Caballo to deliver prophecies to a 78-year-old man who just outran a beehive. The dragon who heals the particular grief of one woman and one horse, and the angel who speaks to the collective grief of an entire civilization that has lost its dream.

He rocks the world not to destroy it. He rocks it awake.

## **IV. The Burning Coal: Twenty-Six Times on the Altar**

Isaiah 6 is the chapter I keep returning to. It begins with the prophet in the temple in the year that King Uzziah died — a year of national grief and political uncertainty, a year when the old order has ended and no one is quite sure what comes next. Sound familiar. The Lord is on the throne, the train of his robe filling the temple, and the seraphim are above him — each with six wings, two covering the face, two covering the feet, two for flight. They call to one another and the sound of it shakes the very doorposts. The temple fills with smoke.

And the prophet's first response is not wonder. It is not gratitude. It is collapse. "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the

Lord Almighty.” He does not feel worthy of what he is seeing. He feels exposed. He feels the gap between who he is and what stands before him.

Then one of the seraphim flies to him. It carries a live coal from the altar, taken with tongs because even the heavenly beings do not handle the fire of the altar carelessly. It touches the coal to Isaiah’s lips — the instrument of speech, the organ of prophecy — and says: See, this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away. Your sin atoned for.

And only then does the commission come. “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

The pattern is always the same. Unworthiness first. Purification by fire. Then the call. You do not get the commission without the coal. You do not get the coal without first being honest about your unclean lips. The fire does not bypass the wound. It goes directly to it.

I had my burning coal. Twenty-six of them, administered in a hospital in Las Cruces, New Mexico, by people in scrubs who were doing their jobs with quiet competence and had no idea they were enacting an ancient rite.

The gold implants came first — small markers placed precisely in the tissue so the laser could find its target with accuracy. Think about that. Gold, the metal of kings and holy vessels, placed in my body as a homing signal for the fire. Then the tattoos — not chosen, not decorative, burned into my skin by medical hands, permanent marks that told every attendant who came to that room exactly where to aim. I lay on that table and I was marked and targeted and I let the fire find me. Twenty-six times.

And here is what I need to tell you, because it is the heart of this whole chapter and maybe the heart of this whole book: on the radiation table, I felt I belonged there.

Not resignation. Not acceptance in the sense of giving up. Belonging. The felt sense that this was exactly where my life had brought me and exactly where it needed to bring me. I had held my water through the diagnosis and the fear and the long months of treatment. I had persevered through the depression and the despair and the loss of faith in institutions I had believed in, all of which I have written about in other books and will not rehearse here. I had walked a long road to get to that table. And lying on it,

feeling the laser find its gold mark in my body, I was ready. Ready to be healed by the fire. Ready for whatever came next.

That is Isaiah's experience. That is what the coal on the lips feels like from the inside. Not punishment. Preparation. The fire that takes away the guilt and makes the lips ready to speak.

The cancer took its nap. That is how I think of it — not gone, because with cancer you do not say gone, you say sleeping, you say resting, you say taking a nap and we are watching. The doctors were cautiously hopeful in the way doctors are when they want to tell you good news without making a promise they cannot keep. And one morning I woke from a dream that said go north, and I laced up my shoes, and I found out what my lips were ready to say.

## **V. Running North: The Living Meditation**

I want to take you with me on this trail in real time. Not the tidied-up version. The actual one — moving and breathing and getting lost and doubting and hearing the angel come through the static one word at a time. Because this is not a book about a man who sat quietly in meditation and received visions. This is a book about a man who went running in the New Mexico desert at 78 years old and got chased by bees and lost in the mesquite and found by an angel who had been waiting on the trail. The landscape is not backdrop. The landscape is the teaching.

I start at the gate. Our property in Caballo sits between the desert and the lake, the Caballo Mountains visible to the east, the Rio Grande not far, the sky that particular shade of blue that belongs to southern New Mexico in the morning and nowhere else on earth. South goes to the lake. I go left. North. The long trail.

For the first stretch I am simply moving, and it feels good. The body remembering what it knows — the rhythm of the legs, the breath settling into itself, the particular pleasure of being outside and moving and alive that I had not taken for granted since the radiation table. I am reaching out as I run, the way I have learned to do in prayer and in the Holy Fire Reiki practice and in the quantum storytelling meditations — opening myself toward the universe, toward God, toward the whole chain of teachers and guides I have been blessed to study with: Jesus in the Gospel tradition,

Mahavir and the Jain wisdom, Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu who gave me the name Arihanta, the Holy Spirit moving through it all like wind through a field.

I ask: Ralph, am I going the right way?

Yes.

Simple and clean. That is how Ralph communicates most of the time — economy of words, directness, none of the meandering that my own mind is capable of. I muscle test it — the body as instrument, the simple kinesiology practice I have used for years to check the truth of what I am receiving in meditation. A yes feels solid in the body. A settling. The key finding its lock. A no is different — a slight softening, a resistance that is honest rather than obstinate, the body's way of saying not that, not now, not true. I have learned to trust this more than I trust my analytical mind, which is perfectly capable of talking me into or out of anything with sufficient cleverness.

I keep moving. The trail goes north through open land, the ground dry and rocky the way Chihuahuan Desert ground is dry and rocky, the mesquite beginning to close in on both sides the farther I go. I am further now than I have been since the treatments. The wall I have been turning back from. I cross it. I keep going.

At first I cannot hear anything beyond Ralph's simple guidance. The channel is not fully open. There is static — not silence, because it is not absence of signal, it is more like the space before tuning, before the frequency resolves into something your instrument can receive. My ordinary mind is busy with its ordinary concerns: Am I going too far? Will the body hold? Did I pass the beehives Grace Ann mentioned? Is that fork the right fork or the wrong one? The ordinary mind is a good servant and a terrible gatekeeper. I let it run its commentary and I keep moving and I keep opening.

And then Ralph says, with that quiet clarity that I have come to recognize as his voice: "There is a spirit here to see you. A very special one."

I slow from a run to a walk. I ask the spirit to step forward.

For a moment there is presence without form. Something immense and old at the edge of my perception, something that has been here longer than the desert and will be here after it, something fiery and certain of itself the way fire is certain of itself. I ask: what is your name?

Static. Not nothing — something not yet resolved. I keep moving. I keep asking. I keep the body open and the mind as quiet as I can get it on a trail in the desert with the bees somewhere out there in the mesquite.

And then Seraph raises his voice.

This is the only way I know to describe what happens: the frequency sharpens. The signal lifts out of the static the way a radio station lifts when you turn the dial to the right place, and suddenly it is not noise anymore, it is clear and direct and unmistakable. He says: “My name is Seraph.”

I stop walking. I muscle test. Yes. I test again. Yes. I ask: are you the Seraph of Isaiah 6, the fiery one, the burning one? Yes. I ask: do you have something to tell me? Yes. I ask: am I going the right way on this trail? Yes, he says, and there is something like patience in his voice, the patience of a being who has been delivering messages to reluctant prophets for several thousand years and has learned not to take the hesitation personally.

I ask: how do I know this is real and not my own wishful thinking?

He says: “You checked me out on Google before you left the house.”

He is right. I had. Before lacing up my shoes I had looked up the seraphim in Isaiah, confirmed the description, read about the name saraph meaning burning ones, looked at the Isaiah 6 passage. I had done my research. And here is Seraph on the trail, citing my own Google search as evidence of his credentials. He knew I would need that. He prepared the evidence before I arrived at the doubt. That is not wishful thinking. That is a being who knows his audience.

Still, I push. I say: tell me something about Grace Ann that she has never told me. Something only you could know. Something that confirms you are who you say you are and not a voice I am generating out of my own longing.

He speaks. He tells me she was lost before she found herself — really lost, in the particular way that a person is lost when they are trekking alone in Nepal and the truck that was supposed to meet the group never shows up and you are on the trail by yourself in a country that is not yours and you have only yourself to navigate by. He tells me she was finding herself in that aloneness, doing what she has always done, which is trust her own extraordinary competence in difficult terrain. He tells me she is the moon to my sun. He tells me she has always been finding herself and always doing a magnificent job of it. He tells me she knew how to be in her own light long before she and I found each other.

All of it is true. Every word settles into my body as a yes. That is Grace Ann. That is her story. That is who she is.

I say: OK. I am ready to hear what you have to say.

## **VI. Lost in the Mesquite: Where the Real Teaching Happens**

Somewhere after the campfire stones, I lose the trail.

The campfire stones were themselves something worth stopping for. A ring of rocks in the middle of the desert, carefully placed, with wood laid across them in the pattern you lay wood when you mean to light a fire, when you intend to sit around it with others and talk. Somebody had been here. Somebody had built this circle with intention. The wood was old, the ash beneath it ancient, which meant the fire had been lit before, which meant people had gathered here and talked to one another across whatever differences brought them to a desert campfire. And then they had left, and the wood had been re-laid for the next time, and the next time had not come, and the fire was not lit.

I noted this and I kept going. Seraph noted it too. He said: that is the world right now. The circle is built. The wood is laid. The fire is not lit.

Past the campfire stones the horse trail I know simply disappears. Not fades, not narrows — disappears. One moment I am on a path and the next moment I am in mesquite, the thorny branches catching at my clothes, the ground uneven and unfamiliar. I push through in the direction I think

is right. I find twisted metal — somebody's old tin roof, half-buried in the desert soil, rusted to the color of the ground, sticking up at an angle that could take a shin off if you moved through here at night. How does a tin roof end up this far from any structure? I step around it and keep going. I find an old tire — car-sized, cracked with age, no business being this far from any road. I find cow trails that open up wide and promising and fizzle into nothing after twenty yards, the brush closing in like a crowd that lost interest. I find a hollow log split into a V shape, two trunks growing from one root, the center long since rotted away, the hollow interior still smelling faintly of the life that used to be there.

I am genuinely lost. Not metaphorically. Genuinely. I do not know where I am.

Grace Ann calls. I tell her I have gotten a little lost. She says: I hope you didn't go past the big beehives. They're out there. I say I don't think I did. I am wrong about this.

I am pushing through a particularly thick tangle of mesquite — ducking under branches, stepping over roots, the kind of progress that is mostly stubbornness and not much strategy — when I hear them. The sound is distinctive and unmistakable. A sustained buzz with an urgency to it, the particular frequency of a hive that has been disturbed and is marshaling its response. The bees do not negotiate. They do not send a representative to ask what my intentions are. They simply come.

I ran track in high school. B squad, the 440. This is not a credential I have had occasion to invoke in several decades, but in this particular moment in the Chihuahuan Desert outside Caballo, New Mexico, I am grateful for every practice session Coach ever made us run. I got out of there. I ran through the mesquite not caring about direction or the thorns or the twisted metal or anything except the sound of the bees getting smaller behind me.

When I stopped running I realized I was even more lost than before.

Here is the thing about being lost in the desert. It looks the same in every direction. The mesquite does not provide landmarks. The sun tells you east and west and that is all it tells you. I tried to see my own footprints and could not reliably identify them. I tried to find a line of sight to the highway and caught a glimpse of it far to the east, which told me I had drifted west,

which was something. I tried to find the horse trail by walking a grid pattern and found trails that might be horse trails and might be cow trails and might be the trails of large determined animals that had no interest in me finding my way home.

There was fear in me. I want to say this plainly because prophets in the tradition I am working in have always been honest about the fear. Moses was afraid. Jeremiah said he did not know how to speak. Isaiah collapsed on the temple floor. I was lost in the desert at 78, post-cancer, no water, the bees somewhere behind me, and Grace Ann back at the house not yet knowing how far I had gone. That is a situation that calls for honest fear, and I gave it its honest acknowledgment.

And underneath the fear — this is the part I cannot fully explain but can only report — there was a stillness. A quality of being held. A sense that the getting-lost was not a mistake or a failure of judgment but a necessary part of whatever was happening on this trail. That Seraph had not left. That Ralph was still out ahead somewhere, and that yes was still the answer to the right question, and that the trail home existed even when I could not see it.

I asked: Seraph, am I going the right way?

He said: there is no going back, there is only going through. The path that looks like the wrong way is sometimes the only way. You are in the tangle. Stay with it.

I stayed with it. I pushed through another stand of mesquite. I found a clearing I did not recognize. I found the campfire stones again, which meant I had walked in a circle, which is what you do when you are lost and do not have a reference point. I stood in the circle of stones with the unlit fire and I breathed.

A blackbird landed on a branch ahead of me. Looked at me. Hopped forward. Looked back.

I followed the blackbird.

It led me to a trail I did not recognize as my own. I was about to turn and go the other way when Seraph said: turn around. Look again. I turned. I looked. And I recognized it — not by a landmark but by a feeling, the

particular quality of familiar ground that the body knows even when the mind does not. I was on my own trail. I had walked past my own house deep into the woods, the trees closing in until I could not see the lake or the property or anything that told me home was twenty yards to my right.

I had been home all along. I just could not see it.

I turned around and walked back to the house. My legs were tired. My heart was full. The bees were somewhere behind me in the mesquite, still guarding their hive, still doing what bees do. And Seraph was still with me, still talking, still delivering the prophecy that had started before I left the property and was not finished yet.

## **VII. What Seraph Said: The Prophecy**

Walking back I asked the questions I had been building toward since Ralph first said there is a spirit here to see you.

I said: Seraph, what is going on in the world? Not the version I read in the news, which I try not to read too much of because it is mostly the documentation of the empire eating itself. The real version. The spiritual version. What is actually happening?

He spoke without preamble. He said the war machine is rolling and it does not want to stop because stopping would require the people running it to ask why they started, and that question is too large for them right now. He named what is happening — the reach for Greenland, the threats toward Venezuela and Cuba, the piracy of oil lanes dressed up as foreign policy, the holy war being prosecuted by politicians and billionaires who have signed their names to it without reading the fine print about what holy wars cost. He said this is empire in its final chapter. He said the people at the controls are not wise enough to be truly evil — true evil requires a coherence they lack — and not humble enough to stop. He said the joker is a joker and not the second coming of anything except perhaps the last gasp of a particular kind of grandiosity that has been with us for a long time.

I asked: what about the dream? Not just the American dream — the human dream. The dream people carry when they cross borders, when they get on boats and planes and walking trails to reach a country or a

community where they believe life might add up to something. What has happened to that dream?

He said: you already know a man named David Brooks has the number. Seventy-nine percent. That is not a statistical finding. That is a wound. When nearly eight in ten people in a country no longer believe the central promise that country makes to itself, you are not looking at a political problem. You are looking at a crisis of meaning. A nation can survive political division. It cannot long survive the death of its dream. And it is not only America — this is everywhere. Every country has its version of the dream that brought people to it or held them in it, and every version of that dream is under the same pressure, the same nihilism, the same resentment that Brooks describes as humiliation looking for somewhere to land.

I asked: is there good news? Because I know what you are. You are the burning one. You are the fire spirit of Isaiah's throne room. And fire does two things — it destroys and it creates. You have told me what is burning. Tell me what the fire is making possible.

He said: yes. Here is the good news. The culture is turning. Not in the headlines — the headlines will be the last place you see it. In the bodies of the young people who have given up on the hustle and started asking what they actually value. In the quiet decisions that families are making around tables and on trails and in the spaces between the noise. In the generational reckoning that is coming, the one Brooks calls the ladder of loves, the movement from self-interest toward the higher beauties — truth, wisdom, justice, the radical altruism of lives lived in genuine service to others. He names Dorothy Day. I could name hundreds. The ones whose lives crack through the cynicism not by arguing against it but by being so genuinely alive in their love that the resentment simply cannot find purchase. The culture is turning toward that. It is slow and it is not in the news and it is happening.

I said: I am 78 years old. I have been through the cancer and the great despair. I spent years giving up on institutions I once believed in. What am I supposed to do about any of this?

Seraph said: so what. Moses was 80 when God sent him back to Egypt. Grandma Moses the painter was in her late seventies. George Burns got his second great career at 80 and worked into his nineties. Verdi wrote Falstaff

at 79. Throughout history there have been prophets who came to their full voice late — some lived over a hundred years, some three hundred in the ancient accounts — and the lateness was not a limitation but a credential. You could not say what you are going to say at 30. You could not say it at 50. You needed all of it to be ready to say what comes next.

He said: write your books. Do your talks. Work with the people closest to you. That is how fire spreads — not by announcement, not by broadcast, but from one hearth to the next, one conversation to the next, one person looking at the person walking toward them on the trail and recognizing something.

He said: start in your own family. Start in your own neighborhood. Build relationships that endure. Forgive one another where the forgiveness has been withheld too long. Reach out to the person walking toward you, the stranger on the trail, the one who looks different from you or voted differently from you or prays in a different direction. That person walking toward you could be you. The Jain tradition has a word for this: Arihanta. You have no enemies. Everyone is your friend.

I muscle tested everything he said. All of it rang true. Yes, yes, yes.

He said: you are now a prophet, David Michael Boje. You and I are going to give prophetic visions of the future of this fiery world together. Are you willing?

I said: how do I know these are not just my own wishful thinking, my own best hopes for the world dressed up in angelic clothing?

He said: you have been asking that question your whole scholarly life. That question is not an obstacle to prophecy. That question is what makes a prophet trustworthy. Keep asking it. Test everything. Muscle test me. Look me up on Google. Ask me to tell you things only I could know. That rigor is not lack of faith. That rigor is the faith itself, doing its proper work.

I said: OK. Why not.

## **VIII. The Seventh Wing: Answerability**

The seraphim in Isaiah have six wings. Two to cover the face in the presence of the holiness of God. Two to cover the feet in humility, because even heavenly beings know to be modest before the throne. Two to fly. Six wings for eternity, for the worship that never ceases, for the holy, holy, holy that is always sounding in the throne room.

My Seraph has seven.

I asked him about it. He said he was fine with seven. He said the seventh wing is the one that faces into time — into this specific moment of history, into 2025, into the burning world and the dead end and the door that is hidden inside the dead end. The six are for eternity. The seventh is for now. For the particular now we are living in, which requires something the throne room worship does not: the willingness to come down into the mesquite, to get lost in the thorns, to follow the blackbird home, to speak to a 78-year-old man who has been chased by bees and is genuinely uncertain of his own coordinates.

The seventh wing carries what I have come to call answerability.

Not just community — that word has been used so many times it has grown thin. Answerability. The recognition that we are answerable to each other across every difference. That the individualism which says I owe nothing to anyone beyond my own household, my own tribe, my own tribe's idea of who deserves dignity — that individualism is the thing burning the hives down. The bees swarm when they feel threatened. The empire swarms when it feels its dominance slipping. But the hives are going. You cannot sting your way to a future. You cannot wall your way to a community. You cannot un-answer your answerability to the person walking toward you on the trail.

David Brooks builds toward this from the humanist tradition. He says we need a ladder of loves, a movement from self-interest toward higher beauties, toward the kind of radical altruism that people like Dorothy Day embodied — a life so genuinely lived in love that it cracks through cynicism not by arguing against it but by being undeniable. He says this change must come from artists and writers and intellectuals and community organizations. The politicians will follow once the culture has turned, but they cannot lead the turn. The culture always leads.

Seraph says the same thing from the throne room. The seventh wing is for the artists and the writers and the people who sit in campfire circles in the desert and talk across their differences. It is for the Tuesday Enthinkment Circle, dedicated to thinking with a heart. It is for every community that has decided to be answerable to something larger than its own comfort.

The Jain tradition gave me the name Arihanta through my teacher Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu, and it means: you have no enemies. Everyone is your friend. In Sanskrit it carries the sense of one who has conquered the inner enemies — the anger, the pride, the greed, the deceit that I think of as the four gangsters of the ego, the ones that take over when we are scared and dress our fear up as virtue. To become Arihanta is not to become naïve about the world. It is to see through the story the ego tells about the world — that the person walking toward you is a threat, that your survival depends on their diminishment, that the campfire circle is for your people and not for everyone.

That person walking toward you could be you.

This is what the seventh wing delivers. Not comfort. Commission. The world is at a dead end. The hives are swarming. The wood is laid on the campfire stones and the fire is not lit. The seventh wing of Seraph is asking: who will light it?

## **IX. The Names Are Not Coincidences**

Walking home from the trail, my legs tired and my mind full, I thought about the names. I have spent a lifetime studying how stories work, how meaning accumulates in language, how the names we give things and the names given to us carry more weight than we initially understand. The concept of antenarrative — the before-story, the living narrative that precedes the official account — is about exactly this. The meaning that is already there, already unfolding, before we have the language to name it.

Ralph is not an accident. Louis Ralph Pundy — who saw a storyteller in a PhD student in 1976, who died of cancer at 49 never knowing what he had set in motion, who is now a black angel in the upper worlds keeping his real name close — his presence in this story is the fifty-year antenarrative of this book. He planted the word you are a storyteller in the soil of my life before I knew what crop it would yield. He did not live to read a single

book that grew from that seed. And now from the upper worlds he is arranging introductions between a retired professor and a seven-winged fiery being of Isaiah's throne room. That is what great teachers do. They plant. They do not wait to harvest.

Rock-A-World is not an accident. A dragon who came when I went seeking healing for a dying horse — who took me on his back into the quantum field on the first journey, who gave me his name immediately, who healed Nahdion enough for Grace Ann to grieve and let go — and who turns out to be the same fire as Seraph. The spirit animal who heals the particular grief of one woman and one horse, and the angel who speaks to the collective grief of a civilization. The scale changes. The fire is the same.

Nahdion is not an accident. A horse who died singing. Who came back for twelve mornings with a new song, including once with a joke, because even in death he understood that grief needs to laugh to finish its work. Who now heals from the Lower World with the focused purposefulness of a being who knows exactly what it is here to do and has no interest in doing anything else.

The Enthinkment Circle is not an accident. The Tuesday gatherings I founded, dedicated to entinking with a heart — thinking that does not leave the feeling behind, knowing that does not abandon the human, the circle that sits around the metaphorical campfire and talks across differences. The fire I found laid on stones in the desert with nobody to light it. The fire I am being asked to help light.

Pondy named me. Seraph commissioned me. Rock-A-World carries me. Nahdion shows me the way.

And Ralph, who is all of them in one, who keeps his real name close, who gives a hug before you can ask your questions — Ralph arranged the whole thing.

## **X. Why Not**

Moses said he was slow of speech and slow of tongue, and asked God to send someone else. He said this four times. Four times he tried to get out of it. Jeremiah said he was too young, did not know how to speak, was not

ready. Isaiah said he was a man of unclean lips, unworthy of what he was seeing, undone. Every prophet in the tradition has the moment of refusal. It seems to be required. You cannot be commissioned without first saying I cannot do this.

I said I was 78 years old, post-cancer, uncertain of my coordinates on a desert trail, and not sure I knew how to be a prophet.

Seraph said: so what.

Here is what I know, standing on the other side of that trail, back at the house, my shoes still covered in desert dust. I know what it feels like to belong on a radiation table. I know what it feels like to lie there twenty-six times with gold in your body and tattoos on your skin and the laser finding its mark and to feel not like a victim but like a person being prepared for something. I know what it feels like to hear an angel raise his voice through the static until the signal is clear and direct and unmistakable. I know what it feels like to follow a blackbird home through the mesquite when you cannot find the trail yourself.

I know that Rock-A-World came for a dying horse and stayed for a dying world. I know that Ralph Pundy planted a word in 1976 that took fifty years to become this book. I know that Nahdion, even in death, knew how to make Grace Ann laugh, because love that is worth its name includes the capacity to give the beloved exactly what they need even when what they need is a song they were not expecting.

I know that the campfire circle is built and the wood is laid and the fire is not lit.

I know that the person walking toward me on the trail could be me.

Seraph says he will come again. He says there are more prophecies, and we will go through them together, one at a time, and I will write them down and distribute them, which is what prophets do. Write them down and distribute them. It is not a complicated assignment. It requires only the willingness to listen when the signal comes through, to test it honestly, to trust what rings true in the body, and to say what needs to be said to whoever needs to hear it.

Seraph is asking me to say: the fire that burned the old world down is the same fire that heals. The coal on the lips is preparation, not punishment. The getting lost in the mesquite is not a detour from the trail — it is the trail. The blackbird knows the way home. The names are not coincidences. The circle is built. The wood is laid.

*Why not light the fire.*



### *Questions for the Enthinkment Circle*

- 1. Where in your own life have you been lying on a radiation table — enduring something that, in hindsight, was preparation rather than punishment? What was the burning coal that cleared your lips for the word you are now ready to speak?*
- 2. Who is your Louis Ralph Pondy — the person who named your gift before you fully believed in it yourself? What seed did they plant that you are only now understanding the full weight of?*
- 3. The bees chased David before Seraph had finished speaking the prophecy. Where in your life has the teaching arrived not in a meditation room but in the middle of being genuinely, uncomfortably lost? What did you find when you stopped trying to find your way and followed the blackbird instead?*
- 4. Seraph says the seventh wing is Answerability. Who is the person walking toward you right now that you have been treating as other — and what becomes possible if you consider that that person could be you?*

# Prophecy II

## *The Temple That Was Emptied, and the Fire That Remains*

*“And in that day, the country that was more pious than all countries will become impious. No longer will it be full of temples, but it will be full of tombs. Darkness will be preferred to light, and death will be preferred to life. No one will gaze into heaven. And the pious man will be counted as insane, and the impious man will be honored as wise. The good man will be punished like a criminal.”*

— Hermes Trismegistus, Asclepius 21-29, Nag Hammadi Library, c. 2nd century CE

*“I love to think of nature as unlimited broadcasting stations, through which God speaks to us every day, every hour... How do I talk to a little flower? Through it I talk to the Infinite.”*

— George Washington Carver

## I. The Window at Tan Son Nhut

I need to begin with a hospital window. With what I saw through it. I have carried this image for more than fifty years and I have not always known what to do with it. Now Seraph tells me it is the ground of this prophecy — that I cannot speak about the emptying of the American soul without first speaking about what I saw on the runway at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon, because I was there, and I saw it, and a prophet who has seen is different from a prophet who has only read.

I was in the hospital because I was having one of three mental breakdowns during my time in Vietnam. I want to say that plainly and without apology. Three mental breakdowns. The army called what we were doing an insurgency, not a war, because calling it a war would have required certain acknowledgments they were not prepared to make. We were young men sent into something that did not have an honest name, and some of us

broke under the weight of that dishonesty. I broke three times. I am not ashamed of it. I think it was the sane response to an insane situation, and Seraph agrees with me on this.

The specific weight that broke me that particular time was this: my daughter had been born, and I was not there.

Her name is Renée Danielle. She was supposed to be Danielle, but the inlaws changed their minds at the last moment and put Renée first. I was not consulted. I was on the other side of the planet in a country where we were not officially at war, having an insurgency, watching from a hospital bed as helicopters came in low over Tan Son Nhut. I could see them through the window. You could see the body bags strapped to the landing gear. And on the runway, the bags were being stacked. Higher and higher. Higher than a two-story building.

Let me say that again so it lands. Higher than a two-story building. Young men in bags, stacked like cargo on a runway in a country we were not officially at war with, while my daughter was being born in America with a rash so severe it ended up in a medical textbook as a documented case, and I was not there. I was watching the bags stack through a hospital window and losing my mind by degrees.

I first held Renée on R&R when she was a few months old. The rash was still there. She was small and fierce and she had already survived something without me. By the time I was stateside she was in the back seat of a car, screaming, the way infants scream when the world has not yet sorted itself out for them, and I was a stranger to her, a man in a uniform she had no context for, trying to figure out how to be a father after what I had seen on that runway.

That is where this prophecy starts. Not in an ancient library. Not in a scholarly text discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945. On a runway in Saigon, in 1968 or thereabouts, with the bags stacking and my daughter screaming and the insurgency that was not a war doing what it always does — hollowing out the people sent to fight it.

Hermes Trismegistus wrote, two thousand years before Tan Son Nhut: “And dead bodies will be stacked higher than the dams.” He was describing Egypt in its hour of desolation, when the gods had left and the empire was eating itself. He was describing the sign you look for when a

civilization has lost its soul. I did not read that passage and think of Vietnam. I lived the passage and then read it, fifty years later, and recognized what I had been a witness to.

That is what makes this a prophecy and not an opinion. I have seen with my own eyes what the ancient text describes. I am not theorizing about the emptying of the American spirit. I watched it happen from a hospital window in Saigon while my daughter was born without me.

## II. Trismegistus Speaks of America

In 1945, a farmer in Egypt near the town of Nag Hammadi was digging for fertilizer and struck a sealed jar. Inside were thirteen leather-bound codices containing fifty-two texts — Gnostic gospels, mystical dialogues, sacred wisdom that the early church had buried rather than allow to circulate. Among them was a portion of the Asclepius, a dialogue between the sage Hermes Trismegistus and his student, in which the master delivers a prophecy about Egypt that reads, line by line, like a description of the United States of America in the twenty-first century.

Trismegistus begins with the grandeur of Egypt. He calls it the image of heaven, the dwelling place of all forces, the temple of the world, the land more pious than all other lands. And then he says: a time is coming when all of this will be taken away. Divinity will leave Egypt. The gods will flee upward to heaven. And Egypt will be widowed. It will be abandoned. Foreigners will rule it. And the country that was most pious will become impious.

Read that again with American ears.

The country that was once called a city on a hill. The country whose founding documents were saturated with the language of divine Providence and sacred right. The country that put ‘In God We Trust’ on its currency and ‘One Nation Under God’ in its pledge. That country, says Trismegistus, will become impious. Not because God abandoned it, but because it abandoned the inner practices that kept the connection alive. Because it confused the name of the sacred with the sacred itself, the flag for the faith, the slogan for the substance.

Trismegistus lists the signs of the emptied temple. I lay them out in the table below side by side with what I have witnessed in my own lifetime, because the prophet who has seen owes the reader both the vision and the evidence.

### The Mirror of History: Trismegistus Signs and Modern America

Ancient Prophetic Sign (Trismegistus)	Modern Observation (Boje)	The “So What” for the
Darkness preferred to light	Algorithm-driven outrage on social media — Facebook, Twitter, TikTok optimized for resentment and fear	When engagement is more than hate, truth is sacrificed to the economy. The wicked are leading us.
The pious man called insane	George Washington Carver’s dawn prayers dismissed as eccentric; contemplatives marginalized in professional life	A society that mocks the pious loses its capacity for the breakthroughs the continent needs.
Bodies stacked higher than the dams	Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon — body bags stacked higher than a two-story building on the runway	This is the ground truth. Denying an honest name fractures the soul of the nation.
The good man punished like a criminal	Immigrants seeking dignity treated as criminals; the pious are penalized for following conscience	When a civilization invents the advanced stages of the Nones, Trismegistus described.
Disorder, division, and derision	Legislative culture defined by contempt; loss of shared reality; “hate thy neighbor” as algorithmic product	Without a floor of shared reality, the structure collapses into a tomb. Shared dishonesty is structural.
No one gazes into heaven	24–30% of Americans now religiously unaffiliated; 35% of under-30s identify as ‘nothing in particular’	The Nones are not the symptom — hunger for the honest is the symptom. The reinvention must happen.

*Sources: Hermes Trismegistus, Asclepius 21-29 (Nag Hammadi Library); David Brooks, Yale University lecture series; Pew Research Center 2024; personal witness, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, c. 1968.*

I am not saying America is Egypt. I am saying the pattern Trismegistus identified in Egypt is a human pattern, and it recurs. Every civilization that mistakes the form of holiness for its substance eventually hollows out. Every empire that confuses military power with divine favor eventually stacks its bodies on the runway. The question Trismegistus asks is not

“why did this happen?” The question he asks is: what does the restoration look like? And his answer is not what I expected, and it is not what Seraph gave me either. We will get to that.

### III. When the Chapel Left the Print Shop

I want to tell you about the print shop, because I think this is where I first understood, without having the language for it yet, how divinity leaves an occupation.

After Vietnam I did not go straight back to the university. I founded a printing personnel agency in Los Angeles — Printing Personnel, a placement firm that matched printers with print shops of all kinds: instant shops for fast turnaround, commercial printers running expensive four-color presses, in-plant printers working inside corporations. These are very different environments with very different machines and very different relationships to time and quality, and you cannot take someone from an instant shop background and put them on a high-end commercial press and expect it to go well. My technical contribution was a mathematical system — I computed ZIP Code distances between employers and potential employees to minimize freeway time in Los Angeles, where an hour on the 405 was not a commute but a sentence, and I built a matching formula based on interviews with both sides rather than gut feeling. Most personnel people said that feels good. I built a formula. It worked.

But what stayed with me was not the math. It was the columns in the Printing Journal.

I was reading the trade literature to understand the industry I was placing people in, going back through decades of journals to understand how the craft had evolved. And what struck me, what I could not stop thinking about, was this: in the columns from the early part of the twentieth century and before, there was always mention of God. Always. Not in a heavy-handed way, not in the way that makes you suspicious that someone is performing piety rather than practicing it. It was simply woven into the language of the craft, the way the grain is woven into wood. These were craftsmen writing about their work, and they wrote about it as something that connected them to something larger than themselves.

And there was the chapel.

In the great print shops of that era there was a space called the chapel — not always a room set aside, but a designated gathering, a rite, a practice of devotion that was understood to be part of the work itself and not separate from it. The journeymen and the apprentices gathered. There were initiations. There were pranks and rites of passage — the old tradition that turns a new person into a member of a community through shared ordeal and shared laughter, that says you belong here now, we have tested you and you are one of us. The apprenticeship ran six to ten years. You learned from a journeyman who had learned from a journeyman before him, the knowledge passing hand to hand and eye to eye in the way that knowledge survives only when it passes through a human body and not merely through a manual.

And at the center of it, without apology, was a sense that the craft was sacred. That the printing press was a holy instrument. This was not a coincidence. Gutenberg's press had been, from its first use, a device for transmitting the sacred word. The people who ran presses in the centuries after Gutenberg understood themselves to be in a lineage of that original purpose, even when they were printing commercial work. The chapel was the acknowledgment of that lineage. The devotion was the thread connecting the journeyman in Los Angeles to the monk in a medieval scriptorium who understood that the copying of words was a form of prayer.

By the time I was reading those journals, the chapel was already fading. And then came 1980.

Ronald Reagan in America. Margaret Thatcher in Britain. The systematic dismantling of the unions that had protected the apprenticeship model, that had maintained the structure within which the craft knowledge passed from master to journeyman to apprentice. The unions were framed as obstacles to efficiency, as enemies of the free market, as the source of everything that was slowing down the economy. And they were broken. And with them went the apprenticeship. And with the apprenticeship went the chapel. And with the chapel went the understanding that work was something you brought your whole self to, including your inner self, including the part of you that knows it is connected to something beyond the self.

The irony that Seraph will not let me pass over: Reagan held Billy Graham revivals. Nancy Reagan consulted psychics. The man who evicted God from the workplace invited God to the White House in every public form

available while dismantling the structures that had kept God quietly present in the daily lives of working people for generations. This is not hypocrisy of the ordinary kind. This is the precise pattern Trismegistus describes — the forms of piety without the substance, the performance of the sacred without the practice of it, the name without the reality.

Japan did not break its apprenticeship model in 1980. Japan kept the master-journeyman-apprentice structure alive. And Japan took the manufacturing market from everyone in the decade that followed, not because Japanese workers were paid less or worked harder, but because they were embedded in a system of craft transmission that American and British workers had just been stripped of. You cannot separate the spiritual from the occupational and expect the occupational to thrive. The chapel was not decoration. The chapel was load-bearing.

When you evict God from the workplace you do not get a more efficient workplace. You get a workplace where no one feels they belong, where the work has no meaning beyond the paycheck, where the journeyman has no one to transmit wisdom to because there are no apprentices, where the master dies and takes everything with him. You get what we have now. And Trismegistus saw it coming.

## **IV. What Seraph Says America Has Lost**

I asked Seraph on the trail, and again in the meditations that followed: what is it, precisely, that America has lost? Not the policies. Not the economics. The spiritual substance. What is the thing that is actually gone?

He said: the sense of inner divinity.

He said it carefully, the way he says things he wants me to get right. He said: human beings are, according to Trismegistus and according to the deepest wisdom of every tradition I carry, both mortal and immortal. This is the unique dignity of the human creature. The gods are only immortal. The animals are only mortal. But the human being holds both — the mortal body that will return to the earth, and the immortal soul that is made of the same substance as the divine. This is not metaphor. This is the actual condition of being human. And when a civilization loses the lived sense of its own inner divinity — not the doctrine of it, not the Sunday morning performance of it, but the lived daily sense of it, the way George

Washington Carver had it when he walked into the forest before dawn and talked to flowers — when that is lost, everything else begins to follow.

The algorithm fills the space the inner life has vacated. The spectacle of vanity rushes in where the quiet reverence used to be. The wicked angels — which is what Trismegistus calls the systems and structures we build that lead us away from our own nature — the wicked angels thrive in the absence of the inner life because there is nothing left to resist them.

Seraph said: you yourself know this. You went through the great despair. You wrote about giving up on the institutions and the culture. You sat in the darkness for a long time. And what brought you back was not a policy change or a political movement. What brought you back was the radiation table, which was the burning coal, which was the fire that went directly to the wound and healed it. You came back to your inner divinity through suffering and through fire, not through any external institution.

And that, he said, is the pattern of restoration in every age. Not the restoration of institutions. The restoration of the inner life. The rekindling of the fire that the institutions were supposed to protect but never were the source of. The institutions are the campfire circle, the stones laid in the desert, the wood ready to burn. But the fire itself comes from somewhere else. It always has.

He said: look at what Wayne Alderson did in the steel mill.

## **V. The Chapel Beneath the Steel Mill**

Wayne Alderson was a man who went into a failing steel mill in Pennsylvania in the early 1970s and did something that no management consultant would have recommended. He went beneath the mill. Literally beneath it, to a space underground, and he built a chapel there. And he invited the union workers and the management, who were at war with each other the way labor and management in that era were always at war, to come together in the chapel and talk.

Not to negotiate. Not to mediate their contract dispute. To talk. About what mattered. About God. About the value of the person. About the recognition that the man on the union side and the man on the management side were, beneath their positions and their grievances and

their entrenched suspicions, human beings with inner divinity who owed each other something.

I attended a seminar with Grace Ann where Wayne Alderson and his daughter Linda spoke about this work. The seminar was built around a simple idea: the value of the person. Not the value of the organization, not the value of the shareholder, not the value of the brand or the quarterly number. The value of the person. The person in front of you, right now, on whatever side of whatever table you are sitting on, has inner divinity. That is the non-negotiable starting place. Everything else is negotiable. That is not.

What happened in the steel mill was extraordinary. The chapel brought people together who had every structural reason to remain apart. And in that underground space, without the costumes of their positions, they recognized each other. The resentment began to dissolve. Not because anyone argued it away. Because they sat together in a sacred space and let the inner divinity of the other become visible.

The steel mill turned around. Not because the chapel was a management technique. Because it was the real thing. Because when you create the conditions for inner divinity to be visible in a room, people respond to it with everything they have. People are hungry for it. Trismegistus says there is not much piety in the world, and those who are pious are few. But he does not say the hunger for piety is few. The hunger is enormous. People are starving for the sacred. They just do not know where to find it, and the institutions that were supposed to offer it have in many cases become part of the spectacle of vanity rather than the antidote to it.

The steel mill chapel is a model. Not because everyone needs to build a literal underground chapel, but because the gesture Alderson made is transferable. Go beneath the official structure. Create a space where the costumes come off. Establish the value of the person as the non-negotiable premise. Invite the people on both sides of the table to sit together in that premise and see what becomes possible.

That is not a policy. That is a spiritual practice. And it works.

## VI. The Sacred Fire Circle and the Night I Saw Grace Ann

I want to tell you about the night I fell in love with Grace Ann, because it belongs in this prophecy, because it is the image of what the rekindling actually looks like when it happens in a human life.

It was a Native American ceremony. A vision quest. I was there, and Grace Ann was there, and neither of us knew yet what the other would become. There was an elder who had been up all night, keeping the fire going, tending the stones in the circle. Each stone in the circle represented a person in the community. The elder was not sleeping while the community slept. He was keeping vigil. He was making sure that no stone went cold, because a cold stone meant a person in the community had been forgotten, and this elder had decided, with the quiet ferocity of someone who has made an irreversible commitment, that no one in his community would be forgotten while he had breath and the capacity to feed a fire.

That is the image I keep returning to as Seraph speaks about the reinvention of the American spirit. Not a revival. Not a political movement. Not a new app or a policy initiative or a charismatic leader with a large platform. An elder up all night, tending a fire, keeping every stone warm, refusing to let any person in the community go cold and forgotten.

I saw Grace Ann across that fire. She was the most alive person in the circle. Something in her was already fully on, already burning, already completely committed to whatever the sacred was asking of her. I did not know her name yet. I knew I needed to know her name.

We have been partners in everything since. In the scholarship, in the ranching, in the horses, in the Enthinkment Circle, in the Jain practice, in the Holy Fire Reiki, in the raising of communities and the building of conversations across differences. She is the moon to my sun, Seraph said, and Seraph was not being poetic. He was being precise. You need both. The fire needs both the light that blazes and the light that reflects, the light that initiates and the light that sustains.

The vision quest circle was the model I have been trying to build ever since. The circle where every stone is kept warm. Where no one goes cold and forgotten. Where the elder stays up all night if that is what it takes.

Where the fire is not for spectacle but for keeping people alive through the long dark.

## VII. Not Restoration — Reinvention

I asked Seraph about restoration. I used the word from Trismegistus — the text says God looks upon the disorder and establishes his design, which is good, against it. The text implies a return, a going-back to the condition before the emptying. I asked Seraph: is that what we are moving toward? A restoration?

He corrected me immediately.

He said: you cannot go back in time. The print shop chapel of 1910 is not coming back. The apprenticeship model of the journeymen and the masters is not coming back in the form it had. The America of the founding documents is not coming back — not the America that enslaved people while writing about divine Providence, not the America that stacked bodies on a runway in Saigon and called it an insurgency. None of that is coming back, and none of it should.

He said: what is coming is reinvention. The spiritual traditions are reinventing themselves. All of them. Not replacing their essence — the essence of every genuine tradition is the inner divinity of the human person and the answerability of persons to one another and to the sacred. That essence does not change. What changes is the form. And the form must change because the world has changed, and a spiritual practice that cannot meet the world where it actually is has already become a fossil, however beautiful.

The Catholic Church, as the contemplative farmer Chris Bolden-Newsome describes it, is catching up to its own African origins — to the earth-based spirituality that preceded its European reformulation, to the deep reverence for the intertwining of matter and spirit. The church is not going back. It is going forward into territory it forgot it came from.

The Jain tradition carries *anekantavada* — the many-sidedness of truth, the radical acknowledgment that your perspective is real and partial simultaneously, that the person walking toward you has a perspective as real and as partial as yours, and that wisdom requires holding both. This is

the teaching that a 79% loss-of-dream statistic demands. How do you rebuild common life in a country where nearly eight in ten people feel the promise was broken? You begin with *anekantavada*.

The Gospel of Thomas, found in that same sealed jar at Nag Hammadi, carries the teaching that Seraph keeps returning to: make the two one. The healing of divides is not the achievement of uniformity. It is the recognition that the apparent opposites are two expressions of one thing, and that the one thing is the inner divinity that Trismegistus describes as the unique dignity of the human creature.

Holy Fire Reiki reinvents the ancient practice of healing touch for a world that has largely forgotten how to touch each other with intention. Quantum storytelling reinvents the academic study of organizations for a world that has forgotten that organizations are made of stories before they are made of structures. The Tuesday Enthinkment Circle reinvents the ancient practice of sitting together in a sacred space and thinking with the heart.

All of this is reinvention. None of it is restoration. You cannot restore what was. You can only take the fire that was in the old forms and carry it forward into new ones. Seraph said: the fire is the constant. The form is always temporary. Your job is to find where the fire went and to build the new form around it. That is what prophets do in every age. They do not restore the old temple. They find the burning coal in the rubble and they carry it forward.

## **VIII. However Will America Restore Its Piety**

This is the question I asked Seraph on the trail, and he turned it back on me the way he often does, giving me the answer in the form of what I was already doing without knowing I was doing it.

I had asked: however will America restore its piety, its good will? And he said: you are asking the wrong question. The right question is: who is already doing it? Look around. The restoration is not coming. It is happening. It has been happening all along, in the margins, in the places that do not make the news, in the sacred circles and the underground chapels and the farms where people wake before dawn to talk to flowers and receive the breakthrough through the conversation.

George Washington Carver was a Black farmer and scientist in an America that had dehumanized everyone who looked like him, and he woke before dawn every morning and went into the forest to pray, and through that practice he talked to the Infinite, and through the Infinite he developed the innovations that fed generations. He did not wait for America to restore its piety before practicing his own. He practiced it in conditions of radical hostility and it produced radical fruit.

Wayne Alderson did not wait for corporate America to recover its soul before building a chapel beneath the steel mill. He built the chapel and invited the divided in and let the inner divinity do its work.

The elder at the vision quest did not wait for the community to prove itself worthy of his vigil before keeping the stones warm all night. He kept the stones warm and the community was sustained by that keeping.

The answer to the question “however will America restore its piety” is: it will happen the way it has always happened. One chapel at a time. One fire circle at a time. One conversation between two people who have every structural reason to remain enemies and who choose, in a specific moment, to sit together in the premise of the value of the person and see what becomes possible.

It is slow. It is not on any screen. It is not trending. It is happening.

## **IX. Renée**

I want to end this prophecy where it began. With my daughter.

I was not there when she was born. I was at a hospital window watching body bags stack on a runway. I met her on R&R when she was a few months old, with a rash so fierce it was documented in a medical textbook. I heard her screaming in the back seat when I came home from a war that was not officially a war. We had years of getting to know each other across the distance that Vietnam put between me and everything I was supposed to be present for.

And now she is making the covers for my books.

She is creating the cover for the BLISS book with her and me on the front, an AI rendition, the two of us in lotus position, and between us the chakra energies are flowing — my colors from the Jain tradition, her colors from her work with the goddesses, and rainbows forming in the space between us. The space between a father and a daughter. The space where the healing happened across time, across the distance of a runway and a hospital window and a screaming back seat and all the years of coming back to each other.

She is reading the BLISS book. She is interested in learning to channel and to do prophecy. She is asking me to teach her what I barely know myself.

That is the answer to the question Trismegistus asks. That is the restoration that is not a restoration, the reinvention that carries the old fire in a new form. A father who stood at a hospital window watching the bodies stack while his daughter was born, fifty years later sitting in lotus position with her while rainbows form between them, teaching her to listen for the angel who raises his voice through the static.

The chakras between us. The colors meeting in the space between the generations. The prophecy passing not from a stage to an audience but from a father to a daughter in the way that prophecy has always actually passed — in the intimate transmission, in the personal lineage, in the trust that says I barely know this myself but what I know I will give you, and you will take it somewhere I cannot go.

Renée Danielle. She was supposed to be Danielle. The inlaws changed their minds. She is Renée first.

She is the first. She is the reinvention. She is the fire carried forward.

I could not be there when she was born. I am here now. And Seraph says that is enough. That is the whole teaching — you cannot go back and be present on the day you were absent. You can only be fully present now, in the lotus position, with the rainbows forming between you, teaching what you barely know, trusting that the daughter who screamed in the back seat has become someone who can carry the fire further than the father could reach.

***It is done. It is done. It is done.***



## *Questions for the Enthinkment Circle*

- 1. Trismegistus says divinity left Egypt gradually, through the performance of piety without its practice. Where in your own community — your workplace, your family, your faith community — have you seen the form of the sacred remain after the substance has left? What would it take to bring the substance back?*
- 2. The print shop chapel was load-bearing, not decorative. Where in your organization or community is there a sacred practice — a gathering, a rite, a shared reverence — that is at risk of being dismissed as inefficient? What would be lost with it?*
- 3. Wayne Alderson went beneath the official structure to build the space where transformation was possible. Where is your ‘underground chapel’ — the place where you could set aside your institutional costume and meet the inner divinity of someone who is currently on the other side of a conflict from you?*
- 4. Seraph corrects ‘restoration’ to ‘reinvention.’ What old form in your own spiritual life is asking to be released so that the fire in it can move into a new form? What would that new form look like if you let the fire lead?*

# Prophecy III

## The Council of Angels, the Weight of the Dead, and the Path of Ahimsa

*“There is no religion higher than truth.”*

— Jain teaching

*“Ahimsa paramo dharma — Non-violence is the highest duty.”*

— Mahavir

*“A new law will be established... wicked angels will remain among men, and lead them into wicked things recklessly, as well as into atheism, wars, and plunderings, by teaching them things contrary to nature.”*

— Hermes Trismegistus, Asclepius 21-29

### I. The Angels Are Chattering

The guardian angels have been very busy in my dreams.

I need to say that plainly at the start of this prophecy because what has been happening to me in the weeks since Seraph first appeared on the Caballo trail is not what I expected. I expected one angel. I got a council. The angels have been arriving in my dreams and in my waking meditations in a way I can only describe as chattering — not disorganized noise, but the particular density of conversation that happens when a large group of beings who have important things to say have finally found someone willing to listen. I have been muscle testing everything. I have been asking questions and getting answers. I have been trying to keep up.

What they are chattering about, all of them together, is this: the scriptures have a problem, and the problem is causing wars, and somebody needs to say so.

Let me be careful here because I am not saying the sacred is wrong. I am saying what happens when human hands get hold of the sacred and use it to justify what the sacred was never meant to justify. Every spiritual tradition that has produced genuine wisdom has also, in the hands of certain people at certain moments, been used as a weapon. This is the great tragedy of religious history. The teaching of love becomes the justification for crusade. The teaching of submission to God becomes the justification for the subjugation of people. The teaching of the chosen people becomes the justification for the dispossession of other people. The angels are chattering about this because they are tired of watching it happen, and they have been watching for a long time.

So here is the prophecy they are giving me. I am going to start with what the angels told me, then I am going to give you the facts and figures that Seraph said I needed to include because people need to understand the demographic earthquake that is reshaping the spiritual landscape of the world right now. Then I am going to tell you about the path the angels are pointing toward. And I am going to be honest about why they came to me specifically, which has everything to do with a candlelight vigil, a pair of handcuffs, and a leg shackle on a wall in a campus police station in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

## **II. A Map of the World's Spiritual Messengers**

The first thing the angels needed me to understand was the full breadth of who is in the room. Because when I say ‘angels,’ I am using an Abrahamic word for something that every tradition has, even the ones that would not use that word. Every spiritual tradition in human history has developed some form of the idea that there are beings between the human and the ultimate — messengers, intermediaries, spirit helpers, ancestral guides, elemental forces — that can be contacted by those who know how to listen. The forms are different. The word is different. The function is remarkably consistent.

In Judaism, angels appear throughout the Hebrew Bible as messengers and agents of God — they appear to Abraham, to Jacob who wrestles one

through the night, to Moses in the burning bush, to the prophets in their visions. The tradition is rich with angelic presence and the angels are understood as beings of light who carry the divine word into the human world.

In Christianity, angels are central to the entire arc of the story — Gabriel announces the birth to Mary, angels attend the resurrection, a hierarchy of archangels and seraphim and cherubim fills the mystical imagination of the tradition. My Seraph is specifically Isaiah's seraph, the burning one with wings, the purifier of lips, the one who commissions the prophet.

In Islam, belief in angels is one of the six pillars of faith. It is not optional, not metaphorical, not a cultural embellishment. It is doctrine. The angels are created from light, they protect human beings, they record every deed, and the angel Jibril — Gabriel — delivered the Quran itself to the Prophet Muhammad. The Islamic tradition takes its angels with complete seriousness, and the entire edifice of the faith rests partly on the angelic transmission.

Zoroastrianism, one of the oldest monotheistic traditions in the world, predating both Judaism and Christianity in its developed form, has the Amesha Spentas — the Holy Immortals, the divine emanations of Ahura Mazda who stand between the supreme being and the human world. This tradition deeply influenced the development of Jewish and Christian angelology during the Persian period. The angels we know in the Abrahamic faiths are partly Zoroastrian in their genealogy.

The Latter-day Saint tradition places specific emphasis on angelic visitation — the angel Moroni appearing to Joseph Smith, delivering the golden plates, standing at the threshold of a new dispensation. The tradition takes the physicality of angelic encounter with complete literalism.

In Buddhism, the tradition focuses on individual liberation and enlightenment rather than on divine messengers, but it does contain devas — heavenly beings, higher intelligences — who appear in the cosmology without functioning as messengers in the Abrahamic sense. They are not absent. They are differently purposed.

In Hinduism, the landscape of spiritual beings is vast and intricate — devas, asuras, gandharvas, apsaras, a whole inhabited cosmos of intelligences and forces. The function is different from the Abrahamic

model but the recognition that the universe is filled with intelligent presence is deeply consistent.

Jainism, my own practice, rejects the idea of a singular supreme creator sending hierarchical messengers. The focus is on the individual soul's own journey toward liberation through non-violence and non-attachment and the five knowledges. What Jainism contributes to this conversation is not angels exactly but something more radical: the complete rejection of violence against any being whatsoever, and the recognition that the divine is not concentrated in one people or one book but is distributed throughout all of existence.

And then there are the indigenous traditions, which constitute the oldest continuous spiritual practices on earth and which have been nearly destroyed in the past five centuries precisely because they were not recognized as religions at all by the colonizers who arrived to replace them.

Native American traditions across hundreds of distinct nations carry the concept of spirit helpers, guardian spirits gained through fasting and prayer and vision quests, master spirits and lesser spirits operating within a cosmos understood to be alive and communicative in every part. The Australian Aboriginal traditions carry the concept of unseen intelligent presences that can be contacted by elders, often depicted in rock art as tall, slender beings surrounded by halos of light — which looks remarkably like what Isaiah described in the throne room. The Inuit and Arctic traditions revolve around deep relationship with the spirits of landscape, winds, animals, the forces of the natural world understood as persons with whom you are in ongoing relationship and mutual obligation. The Andean traditions connect to the divine through Wamani — the deities of hills and mountains — which were sometimes absorbed by Christian missionaries and sometimes destroyed by them. African indigenous traditions treat water as a spiritual portal, ancestral spirits as active participants in the affairs of the living, intermediary beings who can be consulted and honored and who carry the prayers of the living to the sources of power.

What the angels are telling me is that this full council — Seraph and the archangels, the Amesha Spentas, the devas, the spirit helpers, the Wamani, the ancestral presences, the beings of light from the rock art — is in conversation right now, at this moment in history, in a way that has not happened before. And the reason they are in conversation is that human

beings have taken the teachings each of them carries and are using those teachings to kill each other, and the beings themselves are appalled.

I am the one they found to say so. I will tell you in a moment why me. First, the numbers.

### III. The Earthquake Nobody Is Talking About

Seraph insisted I include these numbers. He said the prophecy has no grounding if people do not understand the demographic earthquake that is reshaping world religion right now, because that earthquake is directly connected to the wars being fought and the wars being prepared.

There are approximately 2.4 billion Christians in the world today, making Christianity the largest single religious community on earth. There are between 1.6 and 1.9 billion Muslims, making Islam the second largest and the fastest-growing major religion in the world. The gap between them is closing rapidly, and by the best current projections, Islam will surpass Christianity as the world's largest religion within the next decade or two. This is not a prediction. It is a demographic trajectory that is already well underway.

Let that land for a moment. For five centuries, the world's dominant civilization has been one in which Christianity provided the cultural, moral, and metaphysical framework for the nations with the most military and economic power. That framework is shifting. The center of gravity of world religion is moving, and it is moving toward Islam, and the existing powers are reacting to that movement in ways that are producing exactly what Trismegistus described: wars, plunderings, the teaching of things contrary to nature.

The Islamic world is not a monolith — it contains as much internal diversity as Christianity, with Sunni and Shia and Sufi and hundreds of national and cultural expressions — but the demographic fact of its growth is creating pressure on every existing political structure. When one community grows rapidly and another feels its relative position declining, the conditions for conflict are manufactured almost automatically by the stories each side tells about the other. This is my field — organizational storytelling, the antenarrative, the stories that run beneath the official stories and drive the behavior that the official stories later try to explain.

The stories being told right now about Islam and Christianity and their relative positions in the world are stories that justify war. The angels are asking me to offer different stories.

Hinduism, with over a billion practitioners concentrated primarily in South Asia, is the world's third-largest religion and the oldest of the major living traditions. Buddhism has approximately 500 million practitioners worldwide. Jainism, my own tradition, has perhaps 4 to 5 million — a small community whose influence on world thought through the principle of ahimsa is vastly disproportionate to its numbers, since the doctrine of nonviolence shaped both Gandhi and, through Gandhi, the American civil rights movement.

There are approximately 476 million indigenous people worldwide, constituting about 6.2 percent of the global population across 90 countries. They speak more than 4,000 languages, they maintain the most diverse repository of human spiritual and ecological knowledge on earth, and they have been subjected to systematic genocide and cultural destruction for five centuries. Their traditions are not footnotes. They are the oldest library of human wisdom we have, and we have been burning it.

And then there are the Nones.

This is the number that tells me most clearly what Trismegistus was describing when he said no one will gaze into heaven. In the United States, the religiously unaffiliated — those who identify as atheist, agnostic, or 'nothing in particular' — have grown from under 5 percent of the population through most of the twentieth century to somewhere between 24 and 30 percent today. They are now the single largest 'religious' category in America, outnumbering Catholics and white evangelicals individually. Among Americans under 30, the figure is approximately 35 percent. Among those over 65, it is 14 percent. The generational direction is unmistakable.

This is not primarily a story of people becoming atheists who used to believe in God. The majority of the Nones — 63 percent — describe themselves as 'nothing in particular.' Only 17 percent identify as atheist. What the Nones are telling us is not that they are certain God does not exist. They are telling us that the existing institutions that were supposed to connect them to the sacred have failed them. The political entanglement of organized religion alienated them. The scandals destroyed their trust. The

rigidity of doctrine in the face of their actual lives made the institutions feel irrelevant.

The Nones are not the problem. The Nones are the symptom. They are what happens when the chapels empty out and the fire is not tended and the elder stops keeping the stones warm and the institution mistakes its own survival for the sacred purpose it was built to serve.

What the angels in my dreams are saying is this: the Nones are hungry. The 35 percent of young Americans who identify with nothing in particular are not satisfied with nothing. They are unsatisfied with the particular somethings on offer. The hunger for the sacred is not gone from them. It has nowhere to go that feels honest. That hunger is exactly where the reinvention has to happen. That is the open field. That is where the new forms of the old fire need to be built.

#### **IV. The Weight of the Dead: What Colonization Did to the Sacred**

The angels cannot deliver a prophecy about world peace without first requiring me to look honestly at the weight of the dead. Because you cannot move toward ahimsa — nonviolence toward all beings — without first naming the violence that has already been done. The reconciliation that the traditions are all pointing toward cannot happen without truth-telling. And the truth about what was done to the indigenous spiritual traditions of the world in the name of Christianity is a truth that most Christians have not been asked to sit with fully.

Before Columbus arrived in 1492, estimates of the indigenous population of the Americas range from 40 to 80 million people. By 1900, there were fewer than 300,000 Native Americans in the United States alone. This is not primarily a story of conquest and disease happening simultaneously and neutrally. Disease was sometimes spread deliberately. The smallpox blankets are documented. The military campaigns were explicitly intended to eliminate peoples, not merely to defeat armies. The 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre killed between 250 and 300 Lakota men, women, and children — the majority of the dead were women and children. The Trail of Tears forcibly removed approximately 60,000 Native Americans from their homelands, and thousands died of starvation, exposure, and violence during the forced marches.

Then came the systematic destruction of the spiritual traditions themselves.

My own stepfather's grandfather, Percy Brown, married my grandmother Wilda on my mother's side. Percy Brown was the owner of a missionary school. At that school, Native American children were beaten if they used their own language. Beaten for speaking the words their grandparents had given them. Beaten for singing the songs that connected them to their ancestors and their land and their understanding of the sacred. The program was explicit: kill the Indian, save the man. The spiritual tradition was not a side casualty of colonization. It was a primary target. You cannot fully colonize a people while they retain their own relationship with the sacred. The relationship with the sacred is the root. Cut the root and the people can be made into whatever the colonizer needs them to be.

In Canada, more than 150,000 indigenous children were removed from their homes and sent to residential schools, many of them church-operated. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission confirmed what indigenous communities had always known: this was cultural genocide. A 2024 federal investigation in Alaska documented 973 children who died at indigenous boarding schools there alone, with the actual total expected to be much higher once the full records are examined.

The Inuit of Alaska and Canada had no immunity to the diseases that arrived with whalers and missionaries in the mid-1800s. Influenza, measles, tuberculosis — epidemics moved through communities that had survived 10,000 years in the Arctic and were devastated within a generation. Forced relocation caused social breakdown and suicide rates that continue to this day. The spiritual ecology of the Inuit — the deep relationship with landscape spirits, animal spirits, the living intelligence of the Arctic world — was disrupted precisely when the community needed it most.

I am not only talking about history. The California Gold Rush brought a wave of violence against indigenous people that was essentially a second conquest. The 1830 Indian Removal Act was American law. The boarding school system ran into the 1970s. The systematic seizure of indigenous sacred lands continues in legal proceedings today. This is not the distant past. Some of the people whose grandparents attended those schools are reading these pages.

I say all of this not to produce guilt — guilt is a useless emotion, a form of ego that makes the person feeling guilty the center of the story rather than

the people who were harmed. I say it because the path of ahimsa requires honest accounting. You cannot practice nonviolence in the present while remaining ignorant of the violence of the past. Vine Deloria Jr. wrote about this for decades in books that every American should be required to read. The angels are asking me to say: read Vine Deloria. Look at the actual history. Do not look away.

The specific reason the angels have come to me with this piece of the prophecy is that I lived in Alaska as a boy. I know that land. I know the Inuit traditions through lived proximity, not through scholarship. I know what it means to be in a landscape that is alive in every part, that communicates through the wind and the animals and the quality of the light, that has been in relationship with human beings for millennia in a way that is so deep it is not separable from those people's sense of who they are. And I know what happens to people when that relationship is severed by force.

## **V. Why They Came to Me: The Candlelight Vigil**

I have been asking the angels throughout these conversations why they chose me. I am not a religious leader. I am not the head of a denomination or a movement. I am a retired professor of organizational storytelling who ranches in New Mexico with three horses and practices Holy Fire Reiki and Western Dressage and reads the Gospel of Thomas before the horses get their morning feed. Why me?

They have given me several answers, which I have reported in earlier prophecies: the fifty-year arc from Louis Ralph Pundy naming me a storyteller to Seraph commissioning me on the trail. The burning coal of twenty-six radiation treatments that prepared the lips for the word. The Vietnam witness, the runway, the bodies stacked higher than a two-story building. All of that is credential.

But Seraph said there is another reason, and it involves a Saturday evening in Las Cruces, New Mexico, during the Iraq War.

During the administration of George W. Bush, when the Iraq War was in its early years and the arguments for it were still being made with confidence and the cost in lives on all sides was still being denied in official language, I became a lead organizer of nonviolent protest at New Mexico

State University. Not just candlelight vigils — though we did those too, which are the gentlest possible form of public witness and whose gentleness is itself a statement. We organized systematically. We showed up. We went to a different location every weekend.

One Saturday evening we were holding a vigil on University Avenue — a public thoroughfare, not university property, a public sidewalk open to any citizen who wants to stand on it peacefully. We happened to be in front of a sorority house. This was not chosen strategically. It was simply where we were that week. The sorority sisters objected. The house mother came out and told us to move. I looked at her and I said: we will be done in twenty minutes. We will disperse peacefully. We are not blocking the sidewalk or traffic or your entrance. This is a public sidewalk. We are staying.

She called the university police.

The police arrived and looked at our group of approximately thirty people, all of them quiet, all of them holding candles, none of them obstructing anything. They needed to arrest someone. Who is in charge here, they asked. Twenty-nine pairs of eyes turned to look at me. I had that moment that every organizer has, the moment when the principle you have been holding in the abstract becomes concrete in your body, when you have to decide whether your commitment to nonviolence is a philosophy or a practice. I invoked silence. I invoked peacefulness. I said to myself: nobody here is my enemy. Not the sorority mother. Not the police. Not even the people who sent young men to die in a war built on false information.

They put my hands behind my back and handcuffed me. They put me in the patrol car. They took me to the campus police station and they took off the handcuffs and they leg-shackled me to an iron chain bolted to the wall. I had never been leg-shackled before. I sat there and I meditated. I practiced equanimity. I breathed.

Twenty minutes later, all thirty people from the vigil arrived at the police station. There was David Michael Boje, what have you done with him? The police looked up my name. A professor. A professor at this university. They had arrested a professor of New Mexico State University for standing on a public sidewalk holding a candle in protest of a war. The police chief himself eventually appeared. He knew who I was. He said: you're to appear in magistrate court. The charges were dismissed by the following weekend before I needed to show up.

The story spread across campus. The student newspaper ran it. Initial polling showed 64 percent of students, faculty, and staff supported what I had done. By the end of the week, after the debate had run its course, 61 percent said I had overstepped, that a faculty member should not protest wars, that I was grandstanding, that I should have moved when asked.

I want to tell you what I was most afraid of in that police station, leg-shackled to a wall in meditation. I was afraid that Grace Ann would be angry. She was not angry. She hugged me. That hug is in my body still.

Seraph says this is part of the credential. Not the arrest — that is a small thing, a comfortable American arrest with no real consequences. But the practice of nonviolent witness in the face of a violent policy, and the willingness to be counted, and the equanimity, and the meditation in the police station, and the refusal to make enemies of the people on the other side of the handcuffs. That practice, in small form on a sidewalk in Las Cruces, is the same practice the angels are asking the world to consider in large form across the fault lines of religious and political difference.

Nobody is my enemy. That is not a sentiment. That is a practice. And the practice begins on whatever sidewalk you are standing on, with whatever candle you are holding, whenever the police car arrives.

## **VI. The Path of Ahimsa**

I was raised Catholic. I married into Jainism. Between those two I have spent time in Lutheran congregations, evangelical communities, Greek Orthodox liturgy — I went once because I liked the Latin, or what I thought was Latin — and I have studied with Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu in India, walked the pilgrimage to Mount Palitana with Grace Ann, and read the complete teachings of Mahavir on the principle that would become the organizing idea of my mature spiritual life.

Ahimsa. Non-violence. Not just non-violence in the physical sense — not killing, not striking — but non-violence in thought, in word, in deed. The complete refusal to harm any being. This is what Mahavir taught. This is what the Jain tradition carries as its most fundamental principle. And this is what I eat plant-based food in an attempt to practice, not because I believe vegetarianism is morally superior to other choices but because I am trying

to minimize the number of sentient beings whose lives are taken to sustain mine.

Gandhi was not a Jain. But he absorbed the principle of ahimsa from the Jain environment of his upbringing in Gujarat, and he built from it the most powerful political strategy of the twentieth century. He took ahimsa out of the monastery and put it on the streets. He showed that nonviolent resistance was not passive, not weak, not the retreat of people who lacked the courage to fight. It was the most demanding form of engagement possible, requiring more discipline and more courage than violence, because violence is easy and nonviolence is hard. Anyone can pick up a weapon. It takes extraordinary commitment to face violence without returning it.

Vinoba Bhave walked barefoot through India with Gandhi as a Jain monk. Those conversations between the barefooted monk and the politician-saint were conversations about whether ahimsa could be operationalized at scale, whether it could become not just a personal spiritual practice but a political and social practice capable of transforming institutions. The evidence is that it can. The civil rights movement in America, built explicitly on Gandhian nonviolence, transformed American law in a decade.

The angels are not asking the world to become Jain. That is not the prophecy. The prophecy is more specific and more demanding than that. It is: lay down the justification. Not just the weapons — the justification. The story that says this particular group of people, this particular faith, this particular nation, has divine authorization to do violence to that particular group. Every major tradition has produced that story at some point in its history. Every major tradition also contains, in its deepest teachings, the resources to refute that story. The angels are asking the people within each tradition to go back to those resources and take them seriously.

In Islam, the concept of the greater jihad — the internal struggle against the ego and its violence — is explicitly prioritized in prophetic tradition over the lesser jihad of external conflict. The Sufi traditions within Islam have carried this inner teaching for centuries. The angels in my dreams that carry the light of Islamic tradition are Sufi angels, whirling angels, angels of the inner jihad.

In Christianity, the Sermon on the Mount is unambiguous: blessed are the peacemakers. Turn the other cheek. Love your enemies. Pray for those

who persecute you. These teachings have been qualified and explained and contextualized and worked around for two thousand years, but they are there, in the text, in the mouth of the teacher. The angels of the Christian tradition are asking the tradition to take its own founder at his word.

In Judaism, the concept of *tikkun olam* — the repair of the world — is built into the tradition's deepest understanding of its own purpose. The Jewish people are not called to dominate the world but to repair it. To be a light to the nations. The angels of the Hebrew tradition are asking the tradition to remember what the light was for.

In the indigenous traditions, the understanding of the web of relationship — the recognition that every being is kin, that the land and the water and the animals are persons with rights and dignity — contains an ecological ethic of nonviolence that the world desperately needs right now. The indigenous peoples whose traditions were nearly destroyed by colonization are not the ones who need to learn nonviolence. They are the ones who have been practicing it as a survival strategy, and the world needs to learn from them.

The council of angels in my dreams is asking for a council of humans. Not a political summit. Not a treaty negotiation. A council where the spiritual leaders of the world's traditions sit together in the premise of the inner divinity of every person and ask: what in our tradition supports violence, and what in our tradition refutes it? And are we willing to take the refutation seriously?

## **VII. The Organizational Path: Ensemble Leadership and the New Council**

I have spent forty years studying how organizations change. Not in theory — though I have built plenty of theory — but in practice, in the hospitals and universities and businesses and nonprofits and political organizations where the actual decisions get made and the actual damage gets done and the actual healing sometimes occurs.

One of the things I know is that organizations change when the structure of leadership changes. Not when the person at the top changes — that is the most common kind of organizational change and usually the least

effective, because the person at the top changes but the structure that produced the problem does not. Real organizational change happens when the structure changes. When the assumption about who gets to speak and who gets to decide is genuinely revised.

Grace Ann Rosile and I have written about what we call ensemble leadership, and she is the lead author on this work. The concept comes from the indigenous traditions of the Southwest United States and Mexico and Central and South America, where tribal governance was not structured as a single chief commanding a hierarchy but as an ensemble of leaders, each bringing different resources, different knowledge, different relationships to the problem. Some had access to human power. Some had access to land. Some had access to spiritual knowledge and practice. Some had access to water. Some had the trust of certain communities. And they came together as an ensemble — like a jazz ensemble, like an orchestra — to solve problems that no single leader with any single resource could solve alone.

This is the model the angels are pointing toward for the world's spiritual crisis. Not a pope of all religions. Not a supreme council with a chain of command. An ensemble. The Muslim scholar and the Christian theologian and the Jain monk and the Jewish rabbi and the Lakota elder and the Sufi mystic and the Buddhist teacher and the Daoist and the None who is hungry for something honest — all of them in the circle, all of them bringing what they uniquely carry, none of them required to surrender their tradition to participate, all of them required to listen to what the other traditions carry.

The ensemble does not need agreement on doctrine. It needs agreement on one premise: that violence cannot be the means by which spiritual truth is established or maintained. That is the single non-negotiable. Everything else is negotiable. Which God, which prophet, which text, which practice — those are all matters on which genuine differences exist and should be respected. But the weaponization of those differences — the story that says my God wants me to harm your people — that is the one thing the ensemble cannot permit.

I have been in rooms that have approximated this. The Wayne Alderson chapel in the steel mill. The Tuesday Enthinkment Circle. The vision quest fire circle where Grace Ann and I first found each other. These rooms are possible. They are not easy. They require what the Jains call equanimity —

the capacity to remain present and engaged with people whose views differ from yours without either dismissing those views or being destroyed by them.

My specific expertise — the reason the angels have identified me as someone with something to contribute — is organizational storytelling. I know how organizations use narratives to justify their existence and their behavior, including the behavior that causes harm. I know how to help organizations look at the stories running beneath their official stories and ask whether those underground stories are producing the results the organization actually wants. The same skills apply to religious organizations. The same skills apply to nations.

The story that justified the Trail of Tears was a story. The story that justified the Iraq War was a story. The story that justifies the current violence against immigrants is a story. None of those stories are inevitable. They were constructed, and they can be examined, and they can be replaced by stories that are more true and more humane. This is not idealism. This is the actual mechanics of how human social reality works. Stories construct the world we live in. Different stories construct a different world. The angels are asking me to help tell different stories.

## **VIII. Renée and the Council of Goddesses**

Before I close this prophecy I need to tell you about something that is just beginning, that I cannot yet fully report because it has not yet fully happened, but that Seraph says belongs in this record.

My daughter Renée is interested in channeling and in prophecy. She studies the goddesses — the divine feminine across traditions, the great mother figures, the wisdom figures, the warrior goddesses, the earth goddesses. She is in conversation with those presences in her own spiritual practice. And she has been reading the BLISS book and talking with me about what it means to be a channel, to be a receiver of transmissions from the spiritual world.

What I am getting from the angels is that it is no accident that my work with Seraph and Ralph and Rock-A-World — the angelic masculine, the guardian, the fiery commission — is happening at the same time that Renée

is developing her relationship with the goddesses, the divine feminine, the other half of the council.

We have talked about channeling together. We have talked about bringing her goddesses and my angels into the same room and seeing what a joint transmission looks like. I do not yet know how that will happen or what it will produce. But I know it belongs in this prophecy because what the council of angels is describing — the ensemble of traditions, the circle where all voices are present, the fire circle with every stone warm — is incomplete without the divine feminine.

The traditions that have produced the most violence have been, almost without exception, traditions that have suppressed the divine feminine and concentrated spiritual authority in masculine hierarchies. This is not a coincidence. The capacity for care, for relationship, for the tending of the fire circle rather than the seizing of the fire, for the keeping of every stone warm rather than the claiming of the central stone — these are what the divine feminine carries. And they are exactly what the world's spiritual crisis most requires.

Renée was born while I watched body bags stack on a runway. She is now a woman who talks to goddesses and is designing covers for books about bliss and prophecy. That arc — from a hospital window in Saigon to a daughter in lotus position with rainbow chakras forming between us — is itself a prophecy. It is the prophecy that what was broken can be healed. That the generation born into the worst of the violence does not have to carry that violence forward. That the fire can be passed from father to daughter in a form that carries the purification and not the wound.

I barely know how to be a prophet myself. I told her that. She said: teach me what you know. I said: all right. Here is what I know. You listen until you can hear. You test what you hear until you can trust it. You say what you are told to say and you do not embellish it and you do not suppress it and you hold the ego loosely because the ego will always try to get between you and the transmission. And you practice ahimsa in every direction, including toward yourself, including toward the people who tell you that what you are doing is insane. She is learning. I am learning. We are learning together.

The council of angels is waiting for the council of goddesses to join the circle. That meeting, when it happens, will produce a prophecy I am not yet equipped to deliver. But I have been told to record its coming.

## **IX. What the Council of Angels Asks**

I have been in the dreams and the meditations for long enough now to understand that the angels are not asking for the impossible. They are asking for something specific and achievable, which I will state as plainly as I can.

They are asking every tradition to examine its own texts and teachings for the passages that have been used to justify violence, and to place those passages in honest conversation with the passages within the same tradition that refute violence. This is not a call to abandon scripture. It is a call to read scripture honestly, in its full context, including the context of what has been done in its name.

They are asking the spiritual leaders of the world's traditions to come together in ensemble — not to agree on doctrine but to agree on the single premise that the sacredness of every human life is non-negotiable. That premise is already present in every tradition on earth. It does not need to be invented. It needs to be elevated above the passages that have been used to contradict it.

They are asking for the recovery of the inner life — the individual spiritual practice, the prayer and the meditation and the conversation with the sacred in whatever form is honest for each person — as the source of the values that public life requires. The Nones are not the problem. The Nones are people whose inner life has not been met by the available institutions. The work is to build new forms of the old fire that can meet the hunger the Nones are carrying without demanding that they surrender their honest doubts as the price of admission.

They are asking for the full recognition and restoration of indigenous spiritual traditions. Not as museum pieces. As living wisdom systems that contain knowledge the world needs and that have survived extraordinary violence precisely because they hold something true. The 476 million indigenous people of the world are not a footnote to the world's spiritual

history. They are among its most important chapters, and those chapters have been deliberately burned.

And they are asking for ahimsa. Not as a Jain doctrine but as a human commitment. The commitment that in thought, in word, in deed, we will not use the sacred to justify harm. We will not call violence holy. We will not stack bodies on runways in the name of God or liberty or civilization or any other word that has been used to dress up the decision to end other people's lives.

I saw those bodies. I was twenty years old, or thereabouts, in a hospital in Saigon, watching through a window while my daughter was being born on the other side of the world. I have had more than fifty years to think about what I saw. And what I know, as surely as I know anything, is that no theology on earth makes those bags on that runway anything other than a catastrophic failure of the human capacity for the sacred.

We can do better. The angels believe we can do better. That is why they are chattering in my ear. That is why a seven-winged fire spirit appeared on a horse trail in Caballo and told a 78-year-old man who had just outran a beehive that he was now a prophet.

The council of angels is assembled. The circle of stones is built. The wood is laid.

*Somebody light the fire.*



### *Questions for the Enthinkment Circle*

- 1. The angels are chattering because human hands have turned sacred teachings into weapons. Which stories in your own tradition, your own organization, your own family have been used to justify harm? Can you name them honestly without defending them?*
- 2. The Nones are hungry for the sacred but have nowhere honest to go. Who in your life is a None — spiritually hungry, institutionally homeless? What would it look like to build a space that meets that hunger without demanding they surrender their doubts at the door?*

**3.** *Ensemble leadership says no single leader has all the resources. Who in your community has spiritual or relational resources that your leadership structure currently ignores or undervalues? What would the ensemble look like if you included them?*

**4.** *The council of angels is waiting for the council of goddesses. Where in your own life or work is the divine feminine — the capacity for care, tending, keeping every stone warm — being systematically undervalued or suppressed? What would change if it were not?*

# Prophecy IV

## The Ensemble of Angels, the Tipping Point, and the Institute for Listening

*“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”*

— Mahatma Gandhi

*“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”*

— Mother Teresa

*“A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.”*

— Mahatma Gandhi

*“Ahimsa is the highest duty. Even if we cannot always practice it fully, we must strive to understand it.”*

— Mahavir

### I. The Ensemble Is Speaking

The fiery angel with the seven wings and Ralph my guardian angel have been very active these last two days. I am going to try to communicate to you what has been said to me, recognizing I am just an immortal human being — mortal in body, immortal in soul — and I do not have a photographic memory. Although I would like to say they speak directly to me and I speak directly to you, I think something is always lost in translation. So I am going to speak the words as I am hearing them now,

on this morning jog that has become a morning walk, dictating into the desert air, asking the angels to help me say what they are asking me to say.

I want to preface it by saying I have done preparatory work. I have been reading the Jewish Torah and other texts important to Judaism. I have been reading the Muslim texts — the Quran, the sacred scriptures that are central to the Iranian tradition of Islam, the writings around and attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. I have been reading in the Christian tradition, difficult terrain given its internal divisions, but also the Gnostic texts, including the Gospel of Thomas which continues to speak to me with particular directness. And I have been reading in my own Jain tradition, in the teachings of Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu, who gave me the name Arihanta and with whom I traveled to Mount Palitana and whose understanding of ahimsa — nonviolence to all beings — has become the organizing principle of my mature spiritual life.

I am very persuaded by ahimsa. I have been trying to practice it in my food choices for some years now — eating plant-based, because animals have more sentience than plants, and humans a little more still, though I will say that the whales and the eagles challenge that hierarchy. The seeing and hearing of whales, the overall intelligence of whale communities, the super-organisms that form conciliatory bonds — these are the kinds of beings that Grace Ann Rosile and I and our colleagues discuss when we talk about ensemble leadership, which is the recognition that leadership is not located in a single apex figure but distributed across a community of beings each contributing what they uniquely carry. Whales practice ensemble leadership. Eagles practice it. Bees practice it. Humans have largely forgotten how.

What I am sensing this morning, as I walk this trail and the angels speak into my left ear, is hundreds if not thousands of them present right here, right now. Not chaotic — ensemble. They are speaking from different directions but with one coordinated intent. And the intent is this: something has to change, the tipping point is closer than it looks, and the path to it runs through listening rather than arguing.

Let me try to give you what they are giving me.

## **II. The Storytelling Problem: What Gets Left on the Editing Floor**

I have spent forty years as a storytelling philosopher. The angels are recognizing, in their commission to me, that my specific contribution is this: every organization — every nation, every faith tradition, every political party, every corporation, every hospital, every university — gets captured by its own storytelling. By the narratives it tells about itself and about the world. These narratives have a beginning, a middle, and an end that has been decided in advance. And most of what is important — most of what is true, most of what is alive, most of what would actually help — is left on the editing floor.

That is the antenarrative problem stated plainly. The before-story, the living story, the story that is actually unfolding in all its complexity and contradiction and human texture — that story gets reduced to the official narrative. The official narrative is always simpler than the truth. It is always more convenient for the people who control the telling. And it always, always leaves out the people who have the most at stake and the least power to shape the account.

The second storytelling problem the angels are asking me to name is the heroes journey narrative — specifically the version of it that belongs to those with the might and the muscle and the missiles to wreak havoc on everyone else. And I want to be precise about what I mean by missiles, because I do not mean only the rockets and the drones and the lasers and the bombs, though I mean those too. I mean the missiles of economic sanction that starve civilian populations. The missiles of legal systems designed to criminalize poverty and survival. The missiles of corporate narrative that frames the destruction of a competitor as progress, or the suppression of a generic drug as intellectual property protection. These are missiles. They destroy people. They just do not leave craters that show up on satellite images.

The heroes journey narrative of the powerful is always structured the same way. There is a threat. The threat is embodied in an enemy — a person, a nation, a faith, a group. The hero responds to the threat with force. The force is justified by the magnitude of the threat. The story ends with the defeat of the enemy and the restoration of the order that the hero represents. This narrative is so deeply embedded in the storytelling of every major nation on earth that most people cannot see it as a narrative at all. They see it as reality. They see the enemy as the enemy. They see the response as necessary. They see the destruction as regrettable but justified.

What the angels are asking me to offer, as an alternative, is what I call ensemble storytelling — the recognition that every party in a conflict has its own heroes journey narrative, and that those narratives are simultaneously real and partial, simultaneously true and distorted by the ego of the teller, and that the path to something other than mutual annihilation runs through the willingness to sit in the same room and listen to the other side's story without immediately deploying your own.

This is not a comfortable proposition. It is not comfortable for me. I have my own heroes journey narratives. I carried them out of Vietnam and into my scholarly life and into my spiritual practice and some of them are still running beneath the surface of my thinking in ways I am still learning to identify. The work is endless. That is not a reason not to do it. It is a reason to keep going on the trail every morning and keep asking the angels to show me what I am still not seeing.

### **III. The Four Gangsters at War: A Geopolitical Reckoning**

The Four Gangsters of the Ego — anger, pride, greed, and deceit — which I have described in earlier prophecies as the inner enemies that dress fear up as virtue, do not operate only in individuals. They operate in nations, in governments, in the foreign policy of every major power on earth. And if you look at the geopolitical conflicts of our current moment through the lens of the four gangsters, the pattern becomes unmistakable.

Anger is prompted by someone's retort, someone's missile. Someone strikes and the anger is immediate and real and feels like justice. The anger is not always wrong — some things deserve anger. But the anger of nations is not the clean anger of a person who has been genuinely wronged and responds proportionately. The anger of nations is accumulated, weaponized, institutionalized, and handed to military planners who turn it into operational doctrine. By the time it reaches the runway or the missile silo or the drone control room, it has lost all connection to the original grievance and become a machine that produces more grievances to justify its own continuation.

Pride is the gangster that produces the escalation after the initial strike. The retaliatory missile is not enough. The pride of the nation — or the pride of the leader, which is often more operationally relevant than the national

interest — demands a response that demonstrates dominance, that asserts the hierarchy of power, that shows the other party that striking us carries a cost they cannot afford. Watch any political entourage in the world right now and you will see pride operating in real time: the constant firings of staff who say something that makes the leader look less than infallible, the inability to acknowledge error, the escalating rhetoric that trades each week's humiliation for next week's aggression. Pride is not a character flaw in these leaders. It is a survival strategy in a system that rewards the performance of strength and punishes the demonstration of complexity.

Greed is the gangster that keeps the war going long after the original justification has expired. Because wars are profitable. The vehicles of war — and I am speaking now of the manufacturers who built the tanks and the aircraft and the armored vehicles for both the Third Reich and for those fighting the Third Reich, the same corporations, the same supply chains serving both sides — the vehicles of war generate enormous wealth for the people who build them and relatively little for the people who are sent into them. Greed for the annihilation of the other party, greed for territorial expansion, greed for the oil lanes and the mineral deposits and the agricultural land that lies under the rubble of the destroyed civilization — these are the engines that turn a conflict that could be resolved diplomatically into a war that goes on for decades.

And deceit is the gangster that holds the whole structure together. Because none of what I have just described can be maintained without the construction of an enemy narrative so thorough and so emotionally compelling that the people being asked to pay for the war and fight in it and lose their children to it will accept the necessity. The deceit is not always conscious lying, though it is sometimes that. More often it is the selective presentation of truth that leaves out everything inconvenient, the simplistic narrative that reduces a complex historical conflict to a story of good and evil, the framing of every attack as defensive and every defense as provocation.

I am speaking specifically and not abstractly. We are watching in real time the United States doing the bidding of Israel, doing the bidding of the petrodollar corporations, doing the bidding of the auto and defense industries that profit from both sides of every conflict. We are watching Iran fund and facilitate the operations of several militant groups whose names every reader of the news knows. We are watching Israel pursue a policy that its own leaders have described as 'mowing the grass' — which is

a metaphor for periodically destroying the infrastructure of Gaza, including its hospitals, its schools, its water systems, its capacity to grow food, its architecture of ordinary life — on a cycle that ensures the grass will grow back and need to be mowed again. Children. Mothers. Families. The whole substrate of a civilization, destroyed on a schedule.

The angels are not asking me to adjudicate this conflict. They are asking me to name the pattern. The pattern is four gangsters operating at civilizational scale, justified by scriptures that those same traditions' own deepest teachings explicitly repudiate. The Torah says you shall not murder. The Quran says taking one innocent life is like destroying all of humanity. The New Testament says blessed are the peacemakers. These texts are not obscure. They are central. And they are being set aside, in each tradition, by interpretations that serve the gangsters rather than the sacred.

The angels chattering in my left ear today are the angels of all these traditions simultaneously. And what they agree on, across every theological difference, is that this has to stop. Not because one side is right and the other is wrong. Because the pattern of enemy-versus-enemy polarization — the divide and conquer story that keeps every population fighting each other rather than recognizing their common interest in a world where no one is stacking bodies on runways — that pattern serves no one except the four gangsters and the people who profit from their operations.

#### **IV. The Agent Orange Table: A Personal Testimony**

I need to stop the geopolitical analysis for a moment and tell you something personal, because the personal and the prophetic are not separable in this book and I am not going to pretend they are.

Today I have an appointment at the Veterans Administration medical center. They are going to review my case and tell me whether I continue to qualify for benefits related to my Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. Agent Orange was the herbicide the United States military sprayed over the jungles of Vietnam to destroy the cover that the Viet Cong used for their operations. It was also, as we now know definitively and as the VA finally acknowledges, a carcinogen. It gave cancer to an unknowable number of Vietnamese civilians who lived in the sprayed areas, and it gave cancer to an unknowable number of American veterans who served in them. I am one of those veterans. The cancer I have been treating — the cancer that

put me on the radiation table twenty-six times, the cancer that became my burning coal — is linked to that exposure.

I want to be honest with the doctors today. I am happy to be running each morning, or walking when the running is more than the day will give me. I am grateful for the quality of life I have. But the quality of my life is not what it used to be and it will not be again. If I do not run I will be in a wheelchair. So running is not recreation for me. It is medical necessity. The sustained muscular development of my legs and my nerves and my soft tissues — the daily practice of putting one foot in front of the other on this desert trail — is what keeps me out of the chair. This morning jog that has become a morning walk, this trail where the angels speak into my left ear, is not a luxury. It is the reason I am still standing.

The doctor at MD Anderson told me something I have been thinking about ever since. He said: David, I can make you live for a very long time in the hospital, with tubes and monitoring and the full apparatus of medical maintenance, and you will likely be in a wheelchair for the rest of your life and your existence will be constrained to the degree that some would call it barely living. Or I can give you some quality of life for a number of years, and in that quality life there will be things you no longer have and things you will mourn, but you will have enough. Enough to think. Enough to move. Enough to keep promoting peace and being the light in the world you want to see.

I chose enough. I chose the trail.

I tell you this because the veterans I served with did not all get to make that choice. Some of them died in Vietnam. Some of them died of Agent Orange cancers before the VA acknowledged the link. Some of them are in those wheelchairs right now, in VA facilities across the country, men and women whose bodies paid the full price of decisions made by people in buildings who were never going to be in the jungle. The four gangsters — the anger that sent us there, the pride that kept us there long past the point of any strategic rationale, the greed of the corporations that profited from the conflict, the deceit that told the American public it was a necessary insurgency rather than an unnecessary war — those gangsters have a cost that is measured in bodies and in wheelchairs and in the ongoing destruction of the immune systems of men now in their seventies and eighties who breathed that chemical into their lungs fifty years ago.

The angels know this. They carry the weight of the dead too. And they are asking me to carry it forward not as grievance — grievance is a form of the anger gangster — but as testimony. This happened. It is still happening. The pattern that produced it is still operating. And the question is not how we punish the people who made those decisions, most of whom are dead. The question is how we build the structures and the practices and the stories that make it less likely to happen again.

That is the question this prophecy is trying to answer.

## V. What Gandhi Actually Said, and What It Means

I have been paraphrasing Gandhi in conversation for years — “be the change you want to see in the world” — and I owe it to the tradition and to the reader to be precise about what he actually said, because the paraphrase, while it captures something true, loses something important in the compression.

What Gandhi is reported to have said, in its fuller form, is something closer to this: “We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others do.”

The compression loses the mechanism. The popular version — be the change you want to see — is an instruction. The fuller version is an explanation of why that instruction works. We mirror the world. The tendencies of the outer world are present in us. When we change ourselves, the world’s attitude toward us changes. This is not wishful thinking. This is the quantum insight that the mystics and the physicists are converging on: the observer is not separate from the observed. What you bring to the encounter shapes the encounter. Who you are in the room changes what the room is capable of producing.

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu understood this. He walked barefoot through India with Gandhi during Gandhi’s campaigns for nonviolent resistance, a Jain monk in conversation with a political leader about whether ahimsa could be operationalized at the scale of a nation’s independence movement.

Those conversations were conversations between two people who had both changed themselves — who had done the inner work of confronting their own anger and pride and greed and deceit, the four gangsters, and had built practices for keeping the gangsters from running the show. Gandhi had his fasting and his spinning wheel and his ashram. Chitrabhanu had his Jain practice, his meditations, his barefoot pilgrimage. Both of them understood that the outer change begins with the inner one, and that the inner one is the harder work.

I am not Gandhi. I am not Chitrabhanu. I am a 78-year-old man with Agent Orange in my system and a guardian angel in the upper worlds and a seven-winged fire spirit who found me on a horse trail outside Caballo. But the instruction is the same for me as it was for them. Be the light in the world you want to see. Not the argument. The light.

It is not about proving that someone's speech contained ten thousand false statements. It is not about doing fact-checks and winning the rhetorical battle. I have friends who are QAnon believers. I listen to them. I have friends who are Iranian. I listen to them. I have friends who are Christian Protestants and Jewish and Muslim and atheist. I listen to all of them. And my job — which is a new job, a job I am still learning at 78 — is no longer to argue with any of them. My job is to be a quality of presence in the conversation that makes the conversation itself a different kind of experience than they are used to having with people who disagree with them. To be the light, as Gandhi meant it — to be the change in my own nature that changes what is possible in the encounter.

That is a harder job than arguing. I am working on it every morning on this trail.

## **VI. The Woman Who Talked Too Much: A Lesson in Facilitation**

I want to tell you a story about a woman in a church group, because it is the most concrete illustration I have of what I am asking facilitators of peace to learn, and it comes from long before I had the framework to understand what I was actually doing.

This was during a period when I was doing consulting work with churches — helping congregations form home groups, small communities that would meet in people’s homes for Bible study and fellowship and the building of what I would now call ensemble community. It was a good evangelical church, though of a Scottish flavor that I found interesting, and I was training people in how to facilitate these groups: how to create the conditions for genuine conversation, how to make sure everyone had a chance to be heard, how to keep the discussion alive without letting it be dominated by the most talkative person in the room.

There was a woman in one of the groups who talked without stopping. Not because she was trying to dominate. Because she was alone. Her husband had died. Her children had moved away. The only people she interacted with regularly were grocery store clerks and the members of this group. She was not a domineering person — she was a lonely person, and this group was the place where she could pour out all the words that had been backed up with nowhere to go. I could see it clearly enough, and it was still driving me out of my mind.

This was before Jainism, so I prayed about it in the way I prayed then. I said: God, change my heart toward this woman so she stops freaking me out. That was the precise quality of my prayer. Not eloquent. Honest.

By the very next session, my heart was changed. I do not know how else to say it. Something shifted in the way I perceived her, and I stopped hearing her talking as an obstacle to the group’s functioning and started hearing it as what it was: a human being who needed to be heard more than she needed to be stopped. I started laughing at the things she said when they were genuinely funny, which they often were. I started being serious with the serious things. And I stopped trying to shut her down. I simply started facilitating around her — giving other people windows to enter the conversation, keeping things moving with warmth rather than friction, letting her have her say while also making room for everyone else.

It was not equal airtime. It never is in a group with one very talkative person. But people were given their windows, and the group functioned, and she felt heard, which was what she actually needed. And my experience of her transformed completely from one session to the next because I asked for my heart to be changed and it was.

That is the facilitation lesson. Not technique. Heart. You cannot facilitate a group toward listening if you are not yourself in a state of genuine openness to the people in it. The minute you approach a difficult participant as an obstacle to be managed, you have already lost the quality of presence that makes the facilitation work. The management will show. People feel managed. They resist management and call it something more dignified, but what they are resisting is the quality of not being fully received.

The facilitators of peace I am proposing to train will need to learn this. Not from a manual. From practice. From asking, in whatever way is authentic to them, for their hearts to be changed toward the person in the room who is freaking them out. Because in the interfaith conversations we need to be having — between Israelis and Palestinians, between Iranians and Americans, between QAnon believers and the people who think QAnon believers are beyond reach, between the evangelical and the None who has given up on organized religion — in all of those rooms, there will be someone whose talking is so compulsive, whose certainty is so total, whose wound is so deep that it pours out as doctrine, that the facilitator's first instinct will be to manage or dismiss or escape.

The instinct must be transformed. The heart must be changed. And the change is available if you ask for it.

## **VII. The Immokalee Workers and the Stories That Enslave**

I need to tell you about another kind of war story — one that does not involve missiles or armies but is nonetheless a story of captivity and forced labor and the use of human beings as instruments of other people's profit. I am talking about modern slavery, which is not a historical relic but a present reality, and I am talking about it because the storytelling framework that enables it is the same storytelling framework that enables every other form of violence the angels are asking me to address.

Grace Ann Rosile and I, together with Rick Herder and Maribel Sanchez as co-authors, conducted research with the Immokalee workers — the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida, a community of agricultural laborers who were, and in various forms still are, subject to conditions of modern slavery. These were people who had been lured across the border

with the promise of good work and a better life. What they found instead was work in agricultural fields under armed supervision, locked into trucks and vans for transport with no bathroom access, exposed to snakes and pesticides and heat without adequate protection, paid wages held back by debt schemes that made escape financially impossible.

This is the same trafficking network, using the same tactics, that operates in the hotel and motel industries, in the sex trade, in the massage and escort industries, in domestic service — wherever there is demand for cheap, controllable labor and a supply of people desperate enough to believe that crossing a border or accepting a stranger's offer of transportation could lead to something better than what they left. The numbers are staggering. When you add up sex trafficking, agricultural trafficking, domestic service trafficking, and all the other forms of forced labor that operate within the borders of the United States, you are looking at a number in the hundreds of thousands of people enslaved right now, in this country, in 2025.

And many of the people who are enslaved are children. Some were kidnapped. Some were born into conditions of poverty so extreme that the promise of any other life seemed worth the risk. Some were lured in by people who presented themselves as rescuers, as employers, as lovers, as the pathway to the American dream that their own families had given up on.

What our research found — and this is where the storytelling framework connects directly to the prophetic work — is that the Immokalee workers who were most effective in organizing resistance to these conditions were those who had developed the capacity to read the stories being used to control them. They were migrant workers who were reading Deleuze and Guattari — the French philosophers who developed concepts like the rhizome and the body without organs and the notion of desire as a productive force rather than a lack. These were not concepts designed for workers in tomato fields. They had found their way there through a chain of translation and appropriation that I find extraordinary and moving, and they were using them to understand and deconstruct the narratives of captivity and debt and obligation that their employers were using to keep them in place.

The body without organs, in Deleuze and Guattari's framework, is the state of potential that precedes organization and stratification — the open field before the hierarchy has been imposed on it. When you read that concept

and then look at your own situation in a labor camp, what you see is the hierarchy that has been imposed on you, the stratification that has turned your body into an instrument of someone else's profit, the story that has been told to you about your own situation that makes escape seem impossible. To see the story is to begin to be free of it. Not free of the material conditions — that takes organizing and legal support and political will. But free of the internal captivity, the captivity of the narrative, which is where the real work of liberation begins.

This is not only a story about migrant workers. It is a story about every person who is held in place by a narrative they did not choose and have not examined. The QAnon believer is captive to a narrative. The Israeli settler is captive to a narrative. The Iranian revolutionary guard is captive to a narrative. The American veteran who cannot talk about what he saw on a runway in Saigon is captive to a narrative. The narratives are different. The mechanism of captivity is the same. And the path out of captivity is the same: the capacity to see the story as a story, to identify the four gangsters running it, and to ask whether there is a different story available that is more true and more humane and more aligned with the inner divinity that every person in every tradition carries whether they know it or not.

That is what ensemble storytelling offers. That is why the angels have come to a storytelling philosopher. Because the crisis is a storytelling crisis, and the solution has to involve the stories.

## **VIII. The Interfaith Meeting: What I Have Already Done**

I want to record here something I have not yet put in these prophecies, because it belongs in the account of why I was chosen and what the path of this work looks like in practice.

During the Iraq War, at New Mexico State University, I did not only organize the candlelight vigil that got me arrested. I also created and facilitated an interfaith meeting on campus. All of the faith and spiritual traditions in New Mexico were represented at that meeting. Every one of them. The Catholic priest and the Protestant minister and the rabbi and the imam and the Buddhist teacher and the Jain practitioner and the Native American elder and the Unitarian and the people who identified with no

tradition at all but came because they wanted to be in a room where the question of peace was being taken seriously.

We talked. We did not agree on everything. We did not need to. What we agreed on was the one thing the council of angels is asking the world to agree on: that this war was wrong, that the sacred teachings of every tradition in the room explicitly repudiated the justifications being offered for it, and that our presence together in that room was itself a form of witness and a form of resistance.

After the meeting, we walked together across the campus in a candlelight vigil. Every faith and spiritual tradition in New Mexico, walking together, carrying light. That is an image I want to give you because it is the image the angels are pointing toward: not the debate about whose doctrine is correct, not the argument about whose God is the right God, but the walking together in the same direction with the same light, answerable to each other, keeping every stone in the circle warm.

That meeting took organizing. It took relationship. It took the willingness to call people I did not know, to make the case for why their tradition's voice was needed in the room, to create the conditions in which a Catholic priest and an imam and a Native American elder could sit together without any of them needing to win. I had the skills to do that because of forty years of organizational work and because of what the woman in the church group taught me about the difference between managing people and receiving them.

That is the model for the Institute for Listening that this prophecy is proposing. Not a building. Not a bureaucracy. A practice, and the training of people in the practice, replicated across as many communities as possible, one room at a time, one walking vigil at a time, until enough of the world has sat in enough of those rooms that the tipping point becomes reachable.

## **IX. The Man with the Dog Off-Leash**

I want to tell you about this morning's trail, because the teaching arrived not in a meditation but in an encounter, the way teachings often arrive when you are paying attention.

I was walking and dictating, the angels speaking into my left ear, when I came around a turn in the trail and there was a man with a German Shepherd off the leash. In the desert, on a shared trail, with a large dog running free and a 78-year-old man walking toward him. The standard response to this situation in the current cultural moment — the moment of polarization and suspicion and the assumption of bad intent — would be to feel threatened, to stop walking, to demand that the man leash his dog, to make this an incident.

Instead I said: good morning.

He said: good morning. The dog was fine. I went around one way, he went the other. We each had a good day.

That is it. That is the whole story. And Seraph said to me afterward: do you see it? That is the prophecy in miniature. The person walking toward you on the trail — the one with the large dog, the one who looks like a potential problem, the one your nervous system is already generating a story about — that person could be you. He could be another David Boje, walking his trail, dictating his prophecy, doing his morning practice with his own angels speaking into his own left ear. You do not know. You have not asked.

The answer is not to turn around and go the other way. Turning around and going the other way is the avoidance that keeps the polarization in place, the withdrawal that says I will not enter the encounter because the encounter might be uncomfortable. The answer is to say good morning. To take the path that goes around the large dog rather than through it, without making the man wrong for having his dog off the leash. To go your way and let him go his and wish him a good day and mean it.

People are scared of each other right now. I know this because it has happened to me quite a few times in my own life — being the person who triggers someone else's fear response, being the large dog they did not expect on the trail. And the thing that transforms those encounters is not winning the confrontation. It is refusing to make it a confrontation in the first place. It is the quality of presence that says nobody here is my enemy, everyone is my friend, Arihanta is the name I was given and I am trying to earn it one morning trail at a time.

The facilitators of peace I want to train need to be people who have learned to say good morning to the man with the dog off the leash. Who have done enough inner work that the sight of something threatening on the trail does not automatically trigger the four gangsters. Who can find the path around without making the man wrong for being there. This is a skill. It is learnable. It requires practice and failure and more practice and the willingness to ask for your heart to be changed when the practice fails.

But it starts with good morning.

## **X. The Thirty Percent Prophecy**

Here is the specific prophecy I am receiving from the ensemble of angels this morning. I have been building toward it through everything I have said so far, and I want to state it as clearly as I can because Seraph says clarity is what this prophecy most requires.

If thirty percent or more of the people on the face of the earth turn to the philosophy and practice of nonviolence — the way that Gandhi and Gurudev Chitrabhanu turned to nonviolence, not as a passive sentiment but as a rigorous daily practice that includes the inner work of confronting the four gangsters, the outer work of refusing to participate in the storytelling of enemies, and the relational work of building the listening communities and ensemble organizations that make alternatives to violence structurally possible — there is a chance at peace in our time.

Thirty percent. That is the number the angels are giving me. Not a majority. Not universal agreement. Thirty percent.

This is consistent with what complexity theorists and social scientists call a tipping point. The research on social change — and there is substantial research on this, from the work of Erica Chenoweth on civil resistance to the studies of network theorists on how norms propagate through populations — consistently finds that you do not need a majority to shift a social norm. You need a committed, visible, organized minority that is large enough to create the conditions in which the majority can change. The number is usually cited somewhere between ten and thirty-five percent, depending on the nature of the change and the strength of the existing norm being challenged.

Thirty percent of the world's population is approximately 2.4 billion people. That seems impossibly large. But consider: there are already 2.4 billion Christians in the world, many of whom profess the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, which are among the most explicit nonviolence teachings in any major scripture. There are 500 million Buddhists whose tradition's First Precept is the refusal to kill or harm any being. There are 4 to 5 million Jains for whom ahimsa is the organizing principle of all of life. There are hundreds of millions of indigenous people worldwide whose traditions carry relational and ecological ethics of nonviolence that predate every written scripture. And there are the Nones — the 24 to 30 percent of Americans and comparable percentages in many other developed nations who have given up on institutional religion but who are, as I have argued in earlier prophecies, hungry for something that is genuinely sacred and not merely the performance of the sacred.

The thirty percent are already on the earth. They are not yet organized. They do not yet recognize each other as part of the same movement. The Jain practitioner in Gujarat and the Lakota elder in South Dakota and the Sufi in Tehran and the None in Portland who is feeding the unhoused on weekends because it feels more honest than attending a church — these people are in the same thirty percent and they do not know it. The work is not to convert the other seventy. The work is to connect the thirty that already exist so that their weight in the world becomes visible and their practice becomes contagious.

That is the organizing task. That is why the angels have come to someone with forty years of organizational experience and a specific understanding of how stories build and destroy communities. The movement for nonviolence is not primarily a political movement. It is a storytelling movement. It requires the stories that connect the Jain and the Lakota and the Sufi and the None into a recognizable community of practice. It requires the narratives that make the thirty percent visible to themselves and to each other. And it requires the ensemble leadership structures — not a single leader, not a hierarchy, but a council of different voices each bringing what they uniquely carry — to hold the movement together as it grows.

I am not the leader of this movement. I am one voice in the ensemble. My job is to listen to the angels and say what they are telling me and trust that the people who need to hear it will find their way to the page.

## **XI. The Moral Compass and When to Walk Out the Door**

The angels are also speaking to me today about individual choice within organizations that have lost their moral compass. Because not everyone who reads this prophecy will be in a position to build an institute or organize an interfaith meeting or train facilitators of peace. Many people are simply trying to figure out whether to stay in an organization whose compass is spinning — whose stated values and actual behavior have diverged to the point where being present in the organization feels like complicity in the divergence.

I want to address that directly, because the angels are specific about it and I think it is one of the most practically important things in this prophecy.

Every person has an individual moral compass. It is not given to us by the organization we work for or the political party we affiliate with or the country we live in or even, entirely, by the spiritual tradition we practice. It is given to us by whatever we understand the sacred to be — by the inner divinity that Trismegistus says is the unique dignity of the human creature, by the still, small voice that George Washington Carver heard in the forest before dawn, by the angle that Seraph is making toward your specific life from the seventh wing that faces into time.

When the organization you are in — the corporation, the government office, the university department, the hospital, the nonprofit, the political party — is moving toward destruction of its people, its competition, the world, or nature, and the gap between that movement and your own moral compass is growing rather than closing, the angels say it is time to pay attention to the gap. Not immediately to resign, not to make dramatic statements, but to pay attention. To ask yourself whether your presence in the organization is changing its direction or whether the organization's direction is changing you.

There is a note about the Southern Hemisphere that I find useful here. In the Southern Hemisphere, the spiral in a draining sink runs in the opposite direction from the Northern Hemisphere. The compass points differently near the southern magnetic pole. What I take from this, metaphorically, is that the direction that counts as 'north' for your moral compass may not be the direction that the people around you recognize as north. You have to know your own true north. You have to be able to hold that orientation

even in organizations where the dominant culture is pointing a different direction and insisting that its direction is the correct one.

When an organization's compass is spinning — when there is no true north left, when the stated values and the actual behavior have completely diverged, when the leader is firing people not because they are ineffective but because they threaten the leader's ego, when the organization's resources are being used to harm rather than to serve — then the angels say it is time to take off your shoes, walk barefoot out the door, and shake the dust from your feet. This is a biblical gesture. Jesus instructs the disciples to do it when a community refuses to receive them. It is not an act of anger or condemnation. It is an act of completion — the acknowledgment that you have given what you have to give in this place, that the place is not ready to receive it, and that your energy is needed somewhere that is.

The barefoot part matters. Walking barefoot out the door is a Jain and a Gandhian gesture — the refusal of the armor of footwear, the direct contact of the foot with the earth, the acknowledgment that you are a human being who belongs to the earth and not to the organization. You walk out lighter than you walked in. You leave the costume at the door. You take your moral compass and you find the next place that needs what it points toward.

This is not giving up. This is discernment. The angels do not ask us to martyr ourselves inside structures that have decided to use us as fuel for their own destruction. They ask us to know the difference between an organization that is struggling toward its true north and needs our presence to help it get there, and an organization that has abandoned its true north and needs us to leave so that the leaving itself becomes a witness.

## **XII. The Quantum Consciousness: Specks in the Universe**

I want to end this prophecy by expanding the frame. All the way out. Because the angels are asking me to, and because I think it matters for the scale of what we are being asked to do.

We are specks. I mean that in the most precise and literal sense. We are tiny organisms on a medium-sized planet orbiting an ordinary star in the outer arm of a galaxy among billions of galaxies in a universe whose size is not fully comprehensible to the minds that are trying to comprehend it. And that planet is moving. Right now, as you read this, the earth is rotating on its axis at approximately a thousand miles per hour at the equator. It is orbiting the sun at approximately 67,000 miles per hour. The solar system is moving through the Milky Way at approximately 514,000 miles per hour. And the Milky Way itself is moving through the local group of galaxies at approximately 1.3 million miles per hour, while the entire local group is moving through the observable universe at a velocity that dwarfs all of those numbers.

We are specks, moving at incomprehensible speeds through a universe of incomprehensible size, arguing with each other about which of our incomprehensibly small patches of the third planet from an ordinary star belongs to which incomprehensibly small group of its inhabitants.

This is not nihilism. I am not saying the conflicts do not matter because we are small. I am saying the conflicts look different when you expand the frame to the scale at which we actually exist. And I am saying that the expansion of consciousness to that scale — the practice of regularly experiencing yourself as a speck in the universe rather than as the center of a geopolitical map — has a specific effect on the four gangsters. It is very difficult to maintain the pride and the anger and the greed and the deceit at their full operational intensity when you are genuinely, viscerally aware of the scale you actually inhabit.

The Jain tradition has a practice called *anekantavada* — the many-sidedness of truth — and one of its expressions is the recognition that your perspective, while real, is the perspective of a being with limited senses in a limited location in a vast cosmos. The mystics of every tradition have had their version of this experience. The Sufi speaks of *fana* — the annihilation of the self in the divine, the dissolution of the ego-boundary that makes God and the cosmos feel like something outside you rather than something you are inside of. The Zen practitioner seeks *satori* — the sudden insight into the nature of mind and reality that reveals the constructed character of the separate self. George Washington Carver, walking into the forest before dawn, was entering the quantum field that underlies all matter and all connection. What he called the Infinite.

I am asking the readers of this prophecy to practice the expansion of consciousness as a daily discipline. Not a meditation retreat once a year. A daily practice of remembering the scale. Of going outside and looking at the sky and feeling the speed of the planet under your feet and recognizing that the person walking toward you on the trail — the man with the dog off the leash, the woman who talks too much, the Iranian whose sacred scripture you have been reading, the QAnon believer whose narrative you cannot follow — that person is also a speck, moving at the same incomprehensible speeds through the same incomprehensible universe, with an inner divinity as real as yours and a perspective as partial as yours and a hunger for the sacred that is probably, at its root, indistinguishable from yours.

This is the quantum light the angels are speaking of. The frequencies of connection that underlie all apparent separation. The field that Rock-A-World carries me through on his back when we soar into the upper reaches of the cosmos. When you have felt that field, when you have had even a glimpse of the scale, the enemy narrative becomes harder to sustain. Not impossible — the four gangsters are resourceful and they will find ways to re-establish the separation. But harder. And harder is enough to work with.

I will also say this, because the angels are asking me to: the question of whether there are other intelligent beings in this universe is no longer a question serious people dismiss. The galaxy contains hundreds of billions of stars. The observable universe contains hundreds of billions of galaxies. The probability that the particular conditions that produced life on this planet occurred nowhere else is, as the mathematicians say, negligible. There are planets in galaxies that have worked this out. There are civilizations, somewhere in the cosmos, that have passed the thirty percent threshold for nonviolence and built the ensemble structures and trained the facilitators of peace and stopped stacking bodies on runways. They may be among the spirits. The alien spirits from other parts of this universe or another universe in the multiple worlds hypothesis may be part of the ensemble of angels chattering into my left ear this morning, watching this backward humanoid world still in the war of all against all and wondering how long it will take us to do what they have already done.

I find this thought comforting rather than humbling. It means the problem is solvable. It has been solved. We have not solved it yet. But we are capable of it — the same intelligence and creativity and spiritual capacity that has produced every genuine wisdom tradition on earth is capable, if

directed toward this problem rather than toward the continuation of the conflict, of reaching the tipping point.

Thirty percent. Turning toward nonviolence. Expanding their consciousness beyond their patch of the planet. Recognizing each other as part of the same thirty percent. Building the ensemble. Training the facilitators. Walking the trail every morning and listening to the angels speak into the left ear.

It is possible. The angels are certain of it. I am working on my certainty.

### **XIII. The Institute for Listening: A Proposal**

Let me make the proposal concrete, because prophecy without proposal is poetry, and poetry without action is beautiful and insufficient.

I am proposing the creation of an Institute for Listening. Not a think tank. Not a policy institute. Not an organization that produces reports for other organizations to ignore. An institute dedicated to one thing: training facilitators of peace who can work with people in the enemy-versus-enemy polarization that is tearing apart families, communities, and organizations of every kind.

The facilitators would not be people who talk. They would be people who listen. The training would be primarily experiential, built around the practice of sitting with people whose worldviews are radically different from your own and receiving those worldviews without immediately deploying your counter-argument. The training would include the inner work — the identification of your own four gangsters, the examination of the stories you are running about the people you find most difficult, the practice of asking for your heart to be changed toward the person who is freaking you out and then staying present while the change happens. And the training would include the organizational work — the ensemble leadership structures, the facilitation of genuine dialogue rather than parallel monologues, the creation of the conditions in which inner divinity becomes visible in the room.

The facilitators would work with any organization that is experiencing the enemy-versus-enemy polarization. Political organizations. Religious organizations. Corporations. Healthcare systems. Universities. Families.

The facilitation model does not change fundamentally across these contexts because the underlying dynamic is the same: people who have accepted an enemy narrative and need help seeing through it to the human being on the other side.

The facilitators would not tell people what to believe. They would not promote a particular theology or a particular politics. They would promote one premise: the sacredness of the person in front of you, whoever that person is, however much their worldview conflicts with yours. And they would promote one practice: the willingness to listen to that person's story long enough to understand what is driving it before you decide what you think of it.

I know this works because I have done it. In the church group with the woman who talked too much. In the interfaith meeting during the Iraq War. In the candlelight vigil that got me arrested. In forty years of organizational consulting in which I have sat in rooms with people across every kind of difference and helped them find the story beneath the story, the human being beneath the position, the common interest beneath the conflict.

The institute would need facilitators from every tradition in the thirty percent. Jain practitioners who understand ahimsa in its full depth. Buddhist teachers who understand the practice of sitting with discomfort without reacting. Christian contemplatives who understand the Sermon on the Mount as operational instruction rather than inspirational poetry. Jewish scholars who understand tikkun olam as present-tense obligation. Indigenous elders who understand the web of relationship that makes every being kin. Sufi teachers who understand the inner jihad. And the Nones who understand the hunger for the sacred that is not met by any of the existing institutions, because those people know what the institutions have failed to offer and they know what would actually help.

The institute would also need the organizational storytelling framework that I have spent forty years building. Because the facilitators need to be able to help the people they are working with identify the stories that are running beneath the surface of their conflict — the antenarrative, the before-story, the story that is actually driving the behavior that the official story is trying to explain. Without that framework, facilitation is surface work. With it, you can go to the root.

This is not a grand vision. It is a practical proposal. I am 78 years old with Agent Orange in my system and a cancer taking a nap and a daily running practice that is medically necessary. I cannot build this institute alone. I am not trying to. I am trying to say to the people who read this prophecy: here is the work. Here is the framework. Here is the thirty percent threshold that the angels say is reachable. Who will join the ensemble?

## **XIV. The Prophecy for Today**

I want to close with the specific prophecy, stated as simply as I can state it.

The angels — the ensemble of hundreds of voices speaking into my left ear on this desert trail in Caballo, New Mexico, on a morning when the cancer is taking its nap and the legs are working and the light is that New Mexico morning light that belongs to this place and nowhere else — the angels are giving me this:

The stories that are leading the world toward mutual destruction can be changed. Not by force and not by argument and not by proving that the other side's ten thousand facts are wrong. By the patient, rigorous, heart-based work of helping people see their own stories as stories, identify the four gangsters running those stories, and find access to the inner divinity that every tradition says is already there, already present, already the truest thing about them.

The tipping point is thirty percent. Two billion four hundred million people turning toward nonviolence in thought, in word, and in deed. They are already on the earth. They do not yet know they are part of the same movement. The work is to connect them.

The structure of the movement is ensemble: not a single leader, not a hierarchy, but a council of different voices each bringing what they uniquely carry. The Jain and the Lakota elder and the Sufi and the None and the Catholic contemplative and the quantum physicist who has felt the field — all of them in the circle, all of them keeping every stone warm.

The practice is listening. The training is facilitation. The institute is waiting to be built. The interfaith meeting can be called in any city, in any country, tomorrow. The candlelight vigil can start on any public sidewalk with any number of people willing to stand on it peacefully and hold the light.

The man with the dog off the leash is coming around the turn in the trail. Say good morning. Find the path around. Wish him a good day and mean it.

The council of angels is assembled. The council of goddesses is coming. The thirty percent is already on the earth.

*Be the light. The wood is laid. Somebody light the fire.*



### *Questions for the Enthinkment Circle*

- 1. The angels say the storytelling crisis is the root of the political and military crisis — that what gets left on the editing floor of every nation's official narrative is exactly what would most help. What is being left on the editing floor of the narrative in your own organization, your own family, your own community? What story is running beneath the surface of your most entrenched conflict?*
- 2. The MD Anderson doctor offered David a choice between length of life and quality of life. He chose quality — the trail, the morning practice, the angels in the left ear. What is the equivalent choice in your own life right now? Where are you maintaining something that keeps you technically functional but not genuinely alive? What would choosing quality over quantity look like?*
- 3. The woman who talked too much needed not to be managed but to be received. Who in your own life — at work, in your family, in your faith community, in your political circle — is currently freaking you out with their compulsive certainty or their compulsive talking? What would it mean to ask for your heart to be changed toward that person before your next encounter with them?*
- 4. The thirty percent are already on the earth. They do not yet know they are part of the same movement. Who in your life is secretly in the thirty percent — committed to nonviolence and the expansion of consciousness and the listening community — but does not yet recognize the people around them as fellow travelers? How could you make the thirty percent visible to themselves in your specific context?*
- 5. The moral compass question: Is the organization you are currently in moving toward the people it serves, toward the world, toward nature — or away from them? If the compass is spinning, what would it mean to walk barefoot out the door and shake the dust from your*

*feet? And if the compass is still pointing somewhere true, what specific contribution are you being asked to make to keep it oriented?*



# Prophecy V

## Seraph and Saraswati:

### The Feminine and the Fire Join Voices

April 23, 2026 — Billy the Kid Cave Trail, Caballo, New Mexico

*“Wisdom speaks softly, but it carries the veena, the book, the rosary, and the purifying water. It does not shout. It plays.”*

— On Saraswati, Rig Veda tradition

*“And one called to another and said: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

— Isaiah 6:3

*“Knowledge is the true organ of sight, not the eyes.”*

— Panchatantra, on the gift of Saraswati

*“There is no religion higher than truth.”*

— Jain teaching, carried by Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu

## I. The Day Two Voices Became One

I have been working with Seraph for a little while now. He is the fiery angel, the burning one, the holy, holy, holy spirit of God — the same God that the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions invoke when they speak of the divine source of all things. And for these months of prophecy I have been reading widely and honestly: the Jewish family Bible, the Quran, the Gnostic texts of the Nag Hammadi Library. They all seem, in their warrior

passages, to have something in common — a patriarchal God who authorizes force, a hierarchy of masculine angels who carry out divine orders at the point of a sword.

But today on the Billy the Kid cave trail in Caballo, New Mexico, something different happened.

I am walking this rocky arroyo, picking my way past the greasewood plants, and I realize I am no longer hearing only one voice. I am hearing two. And the second voice is not the fire-voice of Seraph. It is a softer voice. A voice that does not announce itself but simply begins to speak, the way music begins — you notice it is already playing before you hear its start. A voice that carries the quality of water rather than fire. Clear, clean, moving.

I asked Seraph: who is this?

He said: Saraswati.

Saraswati is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, wisdom, learning, music, and the arts. She is the embodiment of creative intelligence, credited in the Rig Veda with inventing the Sanskrit language, the mother tongue of India's sacred literature. She is depicted in white — the color of purity and truth — holding a veena, a manuscript, a rosary, and a pot of water. The veena for music, the manuscript for learning, the rosary for spiritual practice, the water for purification. In her four arms she holds the four facets of human personality in learning: mind, intellect, alertness, and ego — and the last of these, ego, she holds not to celebrate it but to keep it in hand, to prevent it from running the show.

I thought about my daughter Renée, who has been working with the goddesses in her own spiritual practice, listening in her ceremonies to their voices. I understood immediately why Saraswati had come. Renée has been preparing the ground. The council of goddesses that I promised was coming — that I recorded in Prophecy III as forthcoming, as the other half of the angelic circle — it has arrived. Not with drama. With a soft voice already playing before I noticed the music had begun.

This is the fifth and final prophecy of this book. It is the first one delivered by two voices simultaneously — Seraph the fire-purifier and Saraswati the water-clarifier, the burning one and the flowing one, the masculine and the feminine, working together for the first time in these pages. And I want to

say plainly that they are not in conflict with each other. They have never been. The conflict is the story we were told about them, by civilizations that needed to suppress the feminine in order to consolidate the masculine, by traditions that needed the goddess to disappear in order for the warrior God to seem inevitable and alone.

She did not disappear. She was waiting. And today she has come to speak.

## **II. Before the Patriarchal God: What Was Lost and Why It Matters**

If we are going to fashion peace in the Middle East, and peace in the world more broadly, then listening only to the angels of war will not be very effective. This was the insight that arrived with Saraswati's voice this morning, and Seraph himself confirmed it without hesitation. He knows. He is old enough to know. He was there before the patriarchal revision of the cosmos, before the goddess was demoted from creator to consort, from sovereign to wife.

The archaeological and mythological evidence is substantial and well-documented. The earliest spiritual artifacts of our species are female figurines. The Venus of Willendorf, carved approximately 25,000 years ago, is one of hundreds of similar figures found across Europe, the Near East, and Central Asia. These are not decorations. They are objects of devotion. They represent the being understood as the original source of life — the Great Mother, the female ground of existence from which all things emerged and to which all things returned.

In the Neolithic period, roughly 7,000 to 3,500 years before the common era, goddess worship reached its fullest cultural expression in what the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas called Old Europe — the civilizations of the Aegean, Anatolia, and the Near East that were organized around the Goddess of Life and Death, that were, by the evidence of their burial sites and their art, relatively egalitarian and relatively peaceful. This was not a utopia. But it was a world in which the divine feminine was not subordinate, was not a consort, was not a footnote to a male-dominated cosmos.

The transition happened roughly 4,000 to 3,000 years before the common era, when waves of Indo-European peoples from the Eurasian steppes moved into Old Europe bringing patriarchal social structures and warrior-based religious systems featuring male sky gods — Zeus, Thor, Marduk, the divine warrior-father who defeats the chaos-goddess and makes the world from her body. This is the founding myth of patriarchal civilization: not creation as birth, but creation as conquest.

The monotheistic Abrahamic religions completed the transition. Some historians of early Hebrew religion note that the ancient Israelites initially worshipped a goddess named Asherah alongside Yahweh, as partner or consort, before her worship was systematically suppressed. The Mary of the Catholic tradition carries something of that feminine divine energy but in a fully subordinated form — not sovereign, not creator, not the ground of being, but the vessel, the handmaid. The Islam of the early period acknowledged the feminine divine through the goddesses Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat before the tradition, under the pressure of theological consolidation, removed them.

The Jain tradition I practice is unusual among world religions in that it does not posit a creator God at all, masculine or feminine, and therefore avoids the patriarchal distortion while also not recovering the divine feminine in the way the Hindu tradition does through Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Parvati — the Tridevi, the triple goddess who is the feminine counterpart to the masculine Trimurti. But the Jain tradition does carry, in its concept of ahimsa and in its radical democratization of spiritual liberation — available to every soul regardless of gender, caste, or species — something of the egalitarian spirit of the pre-patriarchal world that Gimbutas documented.

I am telling you this history because it matters for peace. The warrior God who authorizes violence against the enemies of his chosen people has been one of the most destructive concepts in human history. Not because the traditions that carry him are without wisdom — they are full of wisdom, as I have argued throughout these prophecies. But because the warrior-God frame, the frame that says divine authorization is available for violence if the cause is holy enough, is the frame that has justified every genocide, every crusade, every mowing of the grass.

Saraswati offers a different frame. Not a replacement — she is not asking the Abrahamic traditions to abandon their God. She is asking them to recover what they suppressed: the divine wisdom that does not shout, that

does not command armies, that plays the veena and opens the book and purifies the water and says: here is knowledge, here is clarity, here is the instrument of speech used not for proclamation of supremacy but for the opening of understanding.

And Seraph — the fire that purifies rather than destroys — is in complete agreement. He has always been more about the burning coal on the prophet's lips than about the burning city on the horizon. That is what his fire is for. Not conquest. Purification.

### **III. The Billy the Kid Cave Trail: Not Getting Stuck in the Past**

I want to tell you where I am as I receive this prophecy, because the place matters. I am on the arroyo trail near Caballo, New Mexico, making my way toward what the local people call the Billy the Kid cave. Whether Billy the Kid actually used this cave as a hideout is one of those historical questions that the tourist industry has an incentive to confirm and the historians have reason to be skeptical of. But the cave is here, it has been here for a very long time, and today there is a picture of Billy the Kid at the entrance — one of those Dead or Alive tourist signs — which is a very American way of commemorating a very American story.

I am not there to celebrate Billy the Kid. I am there because it is where the trail goes this morning, and the trail goes where the angels lead, and today they led me north past the arroyo and the greasewood and the rocky ground to a spiral of tin wrapped into a chimney shape, which is how the cave entrance is marked. The cave curves north for about thirty feet and then bends left, and you can see the bulldozer marks on the ground — the metal tracks like tank tracks, still visible in the desert soil, the marks of some long-ago clearing or grading operation that left its imprint on the landscape the way human machinery always does.

I took some photographs. And as I stood there, looking at the cave entrance, Saraswati said something that struck me as the key to this whole fifth prophecy. She said: the cave is a good metaphor for what we are doing here. You go into the darkness and then you come out the other side. The darkness is necessary. The curve that obscures the exit is necessary. You cannot know where you are going until you have gone through the part where you cannot see the end.

And she said: but you must not set up house in the cave. You must not make the darkness your permanent residence. Billy the Kid lived in caves and died young. The prophet goes into the cave and comes out speaking.

I thought about the families in Gaza living in the rubble of their homes, which have become caves of a different kind. I thought about the families in Sderot who have their own experience of living in the darkness and not knowing when the next attack will come. I thought about the Iranian families who live under a government that has made the theology of martyrdom into a governing philosophy. All of them are in the cave. All of them deserve to come out the other side. The question is whether the stories that are being told about their situation — by their leaders, by their media, by their religious authorities — are stories that lead toward the exit or stories that say the cave is the permanent condition, the expected condition, the divinely ordained condition.

Billy the Kid is not a model for any of this. He is a reminder that the romance of the outlaw, the mythology of the warrior who lives outside the law and dies young and beautiful, is a story that cultures tell when they have lost access to better stories. The American West produced that mythology because it needed something to fill the narrative space left by the dispossession of the indigenous peoples who had lived in relationship with that land for thousands of years. The warrior myth fills the space that the relational myth leaves when it is destroyed.

Saraswati says: I am here to help rebuild the relational myth. Not to destroy the warrior tradition — warriors have their place, courage has its place, the defense of the defenseless has its place. But when the warrior myth becomes the only myth, when the only available story is the story of conquest and the only available God is the God who commands armies, the civilization has entered the cave and cannot find the exit.

The veena plays in the dark. Follow the music.

#### **IV. Saraswati's Four Arms and Pondy's Conflict Model: Where the Goddess Meets Organizational Theory**

I want to make a connection that may seem unusual but that the angels are asking me to make, because this book is not only a spiritual text but an

organizational text, and the connection between the divine feminine and the organizational theory of Louis Ralph Pondy is one that I believe Pondy himself, had he lived to encounter it, would have found illuminating.

Saraswati holds in her four arms the four facets of human personality in learning: mind, intellect, alertness, and ego. In her iconography, the veena represents the creative mind, the book represents the cultivated intellect, the rosary represents the spiritually alert presence, and the pot of water represents the purification of ego. These are not four separate things. They are four aspects of one learning being, held simultaneously, in balance.

Louis Ralph Pondy, in his conflict model — which was first published in the wrong form by the Administrative Science Quarterly in 1967, in a version that Pondy himself rejected as a distortion of his actual thinking — described organizational conflict as a process moving through stages: latent conflict, perceived conflict, felt conflict, manifest conflict, and conflict aftermath. The version the journal published was a tidy, linear, episodic model. Pondy’s actual thinking was far more dynamic and relational, more attentive to the feeling dimensions of conflict, to the existential weight of what it means to be in genuine opposition with another human being inside a shared organizational life.

In Rohny Saylor’s and my book “The Management Thought of Louis R. Pondy: Reclaiming the Enthinkment Path,” we argue that what Pondy was reaching toward, particularly in his later work on symbols and myths in management thought, was something very close to what I am calling ensemble storytelling in these prophecies: the recognition that organizations are not rational systems with occasional conflict episodes, but ongoing communities of meaning-making in which the stories told — including the stories about conflict itself — determine what the conflict produces. Conflict can produce learning. Conflict can produce destruction. The difference is in the story.

The concept Pondy called “enthinkment” — the integration of thinking and feeling in organizational life, the refusal to separate the analytical intellect from the emotional and relational intelligence — is Saraswati’s four-armed teaching in organizational dress. Mind. Intellect. Alertness. Ego held in check. When you bring all four to a conflict situation, the conflict has somewhere to go. When you bring only the intellect — the bounded rationality that Pondy spent his career critiquing — the conflict escalates toward the manifest stage and stays there.

What Pondy saw in 1986, in his reflections on conflict, was that organizations had become what he called ‘organized anarchies’ — systems in which goals are unclear, technology is poorly understood by the participants, and participation is fluid. In organized anarchies, the linear conflict model breaks down completely. You cannot manage your way through a conflict when no one agrees on what the goals are. You cannot resolve the conflict episodically when the participants change with each episode. The anarchy is the permanent condition, not the exception.

And here is the prophecy within the organizational theory: the entire world right now is an organized anarchy. The international order that gave us the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions and the International Criminal Court — the post-World War II architecture of collective security — is breaking down. The goals of the major powers are not shared. The technology of warfare is poorly understood by the populations that are subject to it. And participation in global governance is increasingly fluid, as alliances shift and institutions are ignored or defunded or captured by the very interests they were designed to constrain.

You cannot manage your way through this. The episodic conflict model — identify the grievance, negotiate the settlement, restore the order — does not work in an organized anarchy. What Pondy was pointing toward, and what Saraswati is offering, is the relational alternative: the cultivation of the capacities — mind, intellect, alertness, ego-in-check — that allow human beings to navigate genuine complexity without requiring the reduction of complexity to simple stories of good and evil, friend and enemy, us and them.

The Enthinkment Circle that I founded on Tuesdays is an attempt to practice this. To sit with complexity without flattening it. To bring the veena and the book and the rosary and the water all at once to whatever question is on the table. It is a small practice. But small practices, maintained faithfully over time, are what generate the culture change that the headlines will eventually call a tipping point and not know how to explain.

## **V. The Warrior Angels and the Goddess: A Map of the Spiritual Council**

The full council of spiritual beings that has gathered around these prophecies is larger than I have yet made explicit, and Saraswati's arrival is the occasion to name it completely. Because the question of who is in the room matters for the question of what kind of peace is possible.

Seraph — the burning one, the purifier, the seven-winged fire spirit of Isaiah's throne room — is the presiding presence of this book. His fire is for purification, not conquest. His seventh wing carries answerability. He does not command armies. He touches lips with burning coals.

Ralph, my guardian angel who manifests as Louis Ralph Pondy, the orchestrator of introductions, the keeper of the fifty-year seed. The one who said you are a storyteller in 1976 and arranged the meeting with Seraph on the Caballo trail in 2025.

Rock-A-World, the dragon, who came for a dying horse and stayed for a dying world. The Lower World counterpart to Seraph's Upper World presence. The one who carries me through the quantum field on his back when the frequency needs to expand beyond what the ordinary mind can manage.

Nahdion, the healed and healing horse, who models life purpose without ego — show up, do your specific work, do not dabble, and when the work is done, that is that.

The archangels in their specific roles: Michael as protector, the guardian of those who cannot guard themselves; Gabriel as messenger and communicator, the patron of diplomats and those whose job is to find words for what language has not yet said; Raphael as healer of what is broken, the one who mends fractured relationships and wounded bodies; Uriel as the light-bringer, the illuminator of paths through situations of strategic darkness.

The Amesha Spentas of the Zoroastrian tradition, the Holy Immortals who are the ancestors of all Abrahamic angelology and who carry the qualities of Truth, Righteousness, Devotion, Wholeness, Immortality, and Good Purpose. The oldest framework in which spiritual beings have specific ethical functions that they carry into human affairs.

The spirit helpers and guardian spirits of the indigenous traditions — the beings encountered in vision quest and fasting and prayer by the Native

American traditions, the unseen intelligent presences of the Australian Aboriginal tradition, the Wamani of the Andean tradition, the ancestral spirits of the African traditions — all of them part of the ensemble, all of them carrying specific knowledge that the world is in the process of recognizing as essential.

The devas of the Buddhist and Hindu traditions, the heavenly intelligences that do not function as messengers in the Abrahamic sense but that populate a cosmos understood as alive with awareness at every level.

And now Saraswati. The goddess of knowledge. The purifier of speech. The player of the veena in the cave, following whose music you find the exit.

What I am getting from the council — all of these beings speaking into my left ear simultaneously, the ensemble of hundreds of voices — is that the peace they are working toward is not the peace that comes from any one of them prevailing. It is the peace that comes from all of them being heard. The warrior angels have their role. Michael's protection is real and needed. But Michael without Saraswati's wisdom produces victories that plant the seeds of the next war. Saraswati without Seraph's fire produces knowledge that never burns away the impurity blocking the prophet's lips. The fire without the water purifies without nourishing. The water without the fire cleanses without illuminating.

Together they are what the world needs.

## **VI. The Nones and the Goddesses: Who Is Waiting to Be Found**

Earlier in these prophecies I described the Nones — the 24 to 30 percent of Americans and comparable percentages across the developed world who identify as religiously unaffiliated — as hungry for the sacred with nowhere honest to go. I want to return to them here through the lens of Saraswati, because I think the goddess speaks specifically to the Nones in a way that the patriarchal traditions often do not.

The primary reasons people leave religious institutions, according to the research: the political entanglement of organized religion alienated them;

the scandals destroyed their trust; the rigidity of doctrine in the face of their actual lives made the institutions feel irrelevant. All of these are institutional failures. They are the failure of the form, not the failure of the fire. But they are also, I want to argue, failures that are structurally related to the suppression of the divine feminine.

A religious institution organized around a patriarchal God who commands obedience, who speaks through an all-male hierarchy, who authorizes the punishment of those who dissent from the doctrine — that institution has, built into its structure, the same mechanisms that produce the political entanglement and the scandals and the doctrinal rigidity that drive people out. The suppression of the divine feminine is not merely a theological issue. It is an organizational issue. It is a governance issue. When the divine feminine is absent from the governing imagination of an institution, the institution loses access to the capacities that Saraswati carries: the wisdom that listens before it speaks, the knowledge that serves rather than commands, the music that opens hearts rather than demanding submission.

The Nones are, in many cases, people who have intuited this without having the framework to name it. They left because the institution felt wrong — felt too loud, too certain, too organized around hierarchy and punishment and the performance of correctness — and they could not articulate why it felt wrong because the why requires a framework that the institutions themselves do not offer.

Saraswati offers the framework. Not as a Hindu goddess available only to Hindus, but as an archetypal figure representing what every genuine wisdom tradition has always known and what the dominant civilizational forms of the last four thousand years have systematically suppressed: that wisdom is not achieved by force or proclamation or hierarchy, but by listening, by the cultivation of receptive intelligence, by the purification of speech so that what is said is true rather than merely powerful.

The thirty percent who are already on the earth — the ones who need to find each other and recognize themselves as part of the same movement toward nonviolence and the expansion of consciousness — include a very large number of people who would identify as Nones but who are, in fact, practicing something. Who are waking before dawn and going into their version of the forest. Who are noticing the quality of morning light and feeling the speed of the planet under their feet. Who are feeding the unhoused on weekends because it feels more honest than attending a

service. Who are talking to their gardens and their animals and experiencing, in those conversations, the still small voice that George Washington Carver described as the Infinite.

These people are practicing Saraswati whether they know her name or not. The goddess of knowledge does not require you to know she is the source of what you are receiving. She plays the veena. You follow the music. That is enough.

## **VII. The Middle East and the Sacred Feminine: Purifying Fire Meets Clarifying Water**

The angels brought me specifically to the Middle East in this fifth prophecy, and I want to address it directly, because it is where the convergence of Seraph and Saraswati is most urgently needed and where the warrior-God framework has done, and is doing, the most damage.

The Middle East is the birthplace of all three Abrahamic religions. It is also the region where the suppression of the divine feminine was most thoroughgoing and where the theological authorization of violence has been most systematically developed. The warrior God who gives land to his chosen people, the warrior God who rewards martyrdom with paradise, the warrior God who commands the destruction of the enemies of the faith — all three traditions have versions of this God, and all three regions of the Middle Eastern conflict are currently being governed in significant part by people who take those versions seriously.

I am not saying the Abrahamic traditions are evil. I have been saying throughout these prophecies that they are full of wisdom and that the deepest teachings of each of them explicitly repudiate the warrior-God justifications for violence. But the repudiations are not winning the internal argument right now. The warrior readings are winning. And they are winning in part because the traditions that carry them have, over centuries, systematically suppressed the voices that would most naturally argue against them — the voices of women, the voices of the mystics, the voices of the divine feminine in all her forms.

What Seraph and Saraswati are proposing together for the Middle East — and I want to be clear that I am reporting what I am hearing, not claiming

the authority of prescription — is a two-stage process that mirrors their own natures.

The fire first: the burning away of the stories that cannot survive scrutiny. The enemy narrative that says the people on the other side are less than human, that their suffering is deserved, that God has authorized their destruction. Seraph says these stories must be brought to the fire. Not the people who hold them — the stories. The stories are the problem, not the people. And fire that is calibrated for purification, the way a laser is calibrated by gold implants in the body of the patient it is healing, can burn away the story without destroying the person.

And then the water: Saraswati's clarifying flow, the restoration of the capacity for wisdom and empathy and genuine education. The rebuilding of schools and libraries and the cultivation of what she represents in her iconography — the book, the manuscript, the sacred text held not as a weapon but as a source of learning. The promotion of what the Sanskrit tradition calls viveka, the capacity of discrimination, the ability of the swan to separate milk from water, to distinguish between the constructive and the destructive, the life-giving and the life-taking, the reading of a sacred text that leads toward compassion and the reading of the same text that leads toward violence.

These two processes cannot happen in sequence. The fire and the water must work simultaneously, the way they work in the natural world — rain and warmth together create growth, neither alone produces it. The purification of the stories that drive conflict and the cultivation of the wisdom that opens alternative stories must happen together, in the same communities, through the same ensemble of facilitators, with the same quality of presence that says nobody here is my enemy and everybody here deserves the full attention of the divine.

This is not a peace plan. I do not have the institutional authority to propose a peace plan, and I would not trust a peace plan from me or anyone else that did not involve the full ensemble of voices in those communities. What it is is a framework. A way of thinking about what peace requires that goes deeper than political negotiation, that addresses the storytelling substrate of the conflict rather than only its military and territorial manifestations.

The cave has an exit. The veena is playing. Follow the music.

## VIII. The Gnostic Invitation: The Gospel of Mary and the Knowledge That Was Buried

Saraswati's arrival in this prophecy brings me to the Gnostic texts with new eyes, because the Gnostic tradition — the tradition of the sealed jars discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945 — is the tradition within Christianity that most fully preserved the divine feminine and was suppressed precisely for that reason.

The Gospel of Mary Magdala, found in fragments in two manuscripts of different dates, is a text in which Mary Magdala is presented as the primary recipient of the risen Jesus's teaching — a teaching she has understood and internalized in a way that the male disciples have not. When she shares what she has received, Peter objects. He says: did the Savior really speak with a woman without our knowledge? Should we all turn and listen to her? And Levi, in the text, defends her: if the Savior made her worthy, who are you to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well.

This is a conflict about authority. It is a conflict about who gets to speak the wisdom and whose voice carries the weight of the divine. And it is a conflict that the tradition resolved, over the following centuries, firmly in Peter's direction. Mary Magdala was demoted. The text was buried. And the tradition that emerged carried, in its bones, the answer to Peter's question: no, the Savior did not really speak to a woman, not in any way that counted.

The Gospel of Thomas, which I have been reading throughout these months of prophecy, carries Logion 114 — a saying of Jesus that is genuinely difficult and has been interpreted in many ways, but that in its core is about the transformation of the feminine into the living spirit, the movement beyond the gendered categories that limit access to the divine. The Gnostic texts generally are more interested in this transformation than in the maintenance of gendered hierarchy. They are more interested in wisdom than in authority. They are more interested in gnosis — direct knowing, inner experience of the divine — than in the mediation of that knowing through an institutional hierarchy.

Saraswati would have felt at home in a Gnostic community. The Gnostic invitation is her invitation: come, cultivate the knowledge that is available directly, through the cultivation of the inner life, through the opening of the mind and the intellect and the alertness and the holding of the ego. The

book she holds is not the book of law. It is the book of learning. The distinction matters enormously.

The Secret Book of John, another text from Nag Hammadi, contains a vision of the divine that includes a feminine aspect — Barbelo, the First Thought of the Father, the mother of all, the first among the aeons. This is not a peripheral detail. It is a cosmological claim: the universe came into being through a feminine creative act, and to suppress that act in the theological imagination is to misunderstand the nature of reality.

The Gospel of Truth, attributed to Valentinus, is in its essence a meditation on the experience of being lost and being found — the experience of wandering in the dark cave and hearing the music and following it toward the light. It is Saraswati's teaching in Gnostic dress. The knowledge that saves is not propositional. It is experiential. It is the direct encounter with the light, in whatever form the light takes in a given person's life — a burning coal, a veena playing in the dark, a blackbird on a branch in the New Mexico mesquite, leading you home.

These texts were buried because they were dangerous to the institutions that needed the divine to be male and the authority to flow from the male. They have been unburied. They are available. The canon is not the only word. The word that was suppressed is speaking again.

## **IX. My Offering: An Instrument of Peace**

I want to record something personal in this final prophecy of the book, because the personal and the prophetic are not separable and I have been consistent about that throughout.

I offer myself as an instrument of peace. Not grandly, not with certainty, not with any claim to have arrived at the state I am pointing toward. I offer myself in the way that a flute offers itself — it has a shape and some holes and the capacity to produce music, but it does not produce the music on its own. The music comes through it. You still need the breath.

I give myself to this purpose: to be used, in whatever way can be useful, for the promotion of peace through dialogue, through learning, through the cultivation of understanding across every difference that currently feels like an obstacle. I give myself to it under whatever banner the positive power of

God, Goddess, citizen, angel, my guardian angel Ralph, my spirit guide Rock-A-World, the emerging partnership between my angels and Renée's goddesses — under whatever banner that council assembles me.

This is what the Quaker tradition calls being a vessel. What the Jain tradition calls releasing the ego-claim on outcomes. What the Gandhian tradition calls being the change. What Saraswati means when she holds the ego in one of her four arms — not crushing it, not denying it, but keeping it in hand, preventing it from running the show while the music plays.

I appreciate, more than I can fully express, the experience of the last months of these prophecies. To have heard Seraph raise his voice through the static on the Caballo trail and say my name and commission me. To have received Ralph's hug in the upper worlds and understood that Louis Pondy's 1976 gift of a sentence — you are a storyteller — had been leading here all along. To have ridden Rock-A-World through the quantum field and understood that the dragon and the angel are the same fire. To have followed the blackbird home through the mesquite.

And now to have heard the second voice. Soft, playing before I noticed it had begun. Saraswati, carrying the veena and the book and the rosary and the purifying water, standing at the entrance to the cave and saying: follow the music.

I hear them to my left. The voices are not shouting. They are very soft. I hope to hear them more clearly in the future. I hope to be used by them in whatever way serves the purpose. And I hope — this is the deepest hope, the one beneath all the others — that Renée and I will learn together. That her goddesses and my angels will find their way into the same room. That the transmission between a father and a daughter that I described in Prophecy II, the rainbows forming between us in the lotus position, the chakra colors meeting across the generational space — that transmission will deepen into something neither of us fully anticipates.

Because that is how the fire actually travels. Not through institutions or doctrines or official channels. Through the intimate transmission. Through the specific relationship. Through the father who barely knows how to be a prophet and the daughter who says: teach me what you know.

***Why not. Stand up for peace. The wood is laid. The veena is playing. Somebody light the fire.***

## X. The Angel-Goddess Council: What They Are Asking the World to Do

This final section is the prophecy stated as plainly as the council of Seraph, Saraswati, Ralph, Rock-A-World, and the full ensemble of spiritual beings has been able to give it to me. I offer it without embellishment and without softening.

Stop the mowing of the grass. The phrase that Israeli military planners have used to describe the periodic military campaigns against Gaza — mowing the grass, as if a civilian population is vegetation that must be periodically cut back — is one of the most morally catastrophic metaphors in contemporary political discourse. The angel-goddess council asks every person who has influence over the policies of any government involved in this practice to name it for what it is: the deliberate and systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure, which is a war crime under international law, which no theology on earth can sanctify, which the deepest teachings of the traditions being invoked to justify it explicitly condemn.

Stop the funding of the mowing. The United States government's provision of military equipment and political cover for these operations — operations that include the destruction of hospitals, the bombing of schools, the blockade of food and medical supplies, the killing of aid workers — is a moral choice being made in the name of citizens who, if they could see the full picture, the majority of them would not sanction. The tit-for-tat logic of retaliation that says each act of violence justifies the next is not a foreign policy. It is the anger gangster in a suit.

Stop waiting for the warrior angels to solve it. Michael's protection is real and needed. But the protection of the vulnerable cannot be achieved by making more vulnerable people. Saraswati's wisdom says: you cannot protect a population by destroying the populations around it. You protect a population by building the conditions in which every population can live without needing protection from its neighbors. That is a longer project. It is the only project that works.

Build the ensemble. The political leaders of the Middle East cannot do this alone, even if they wanted to — and most of them do not want to, because the conflict serves their domestic political interests and because the enemy narrative is the only story most of them know how to tell. The change will

come from the thirty percent — from the artists and the writers and the religious teachers who take their own traditions' teachings on peace seriously, from the women's organizations in every country in the region who have consistently been the most effective voices for negotiation and reconciliation, from the young people in Gaza and in Tel Aviv and in Tehran and in Beirut and in Amman and in Riyadh who are exhausted by the war and who have not yet found each other across the borders that separate them.

The ensemble needs to include the voices that have been suppressed. Mary Magdala's voice. The voices of the women who have been excluded from every peace negotiation in the region because peace negotiations are conducted by the people who have the power to conduct them, and those people are overwhelmingly men operating within patriarchal frameworks that have authorized the violence in the first place. Saraswati says: this is not incidental. This is structural. The peace will not hold until the structure changes.

I give myself as one instrument in the ensemble. I am 78 years old with Agent Orange in my system and a cancer taking its nap and three horses in Caballo and a daughter who talks to goddesses and a guardian angel who keeps his real name secret and a seven-winged fiery being of Isaiah's throne room who found me lost in the mesquite and commissioned me.

I am not the leader of this. I am the one who wrote it down. I am the one with the improbable set of credentials — Vietnam veteran, cancer survivor, Jain practitioner, Holy Fire Reiki master, organizational storytelling professor, rancher, Thursday morning jogger turned walker on the Caballo desert trails — who was found by the angels and asked to say what they are telling me.

So here is what they are telling me, one more time, as plainly as I can say it:

The divine feminine has been absent from the peace process for four thousand years and it shows. Saraswati has arrived. The council is complete. The purifying fire and the clarifying water are working together. The thirty percent are already on the earth.

Find each other. Build the ensemble. Train the facilitators. Light the circle. Follow the music.

Peace is possible in our time. The angels and the goddesses are certain of it.

*Why not.*



### *Questions for the Enthinkment Circle*

- 1. Saraswati holds the ego in one of her four arms — not crushing it, not denying it, but keeping it in hand. Where in your own life does the ego need to be held in check right now, specifically in how you engage with people across spiritual, political, or cultural difference? What would it mean to keep it in hand rather than letting it run the show?*
- 2. The cave has an exit. The mistake is setting up house in the darkness. Where in your community, your organization, or your family is a conflict being maintained that has lost its original justification — where the cave has become the permanent residence rather than the passage? What would following the music toward the exit look like in that specific situation?*
- 3. The Gospel of Mary was buried because it was dangerous to the institutions that needed authority to flow from the male. What wisdom in your own tradition — your faith, your organization, your family system — has been buried or suppressed because it was dangerous to the existing authority structure? What would it cost to unbury it?*
- 4. Saraswati and Seraph are not in conflict. The fire and the water work together. Think of a conflict in your own life or community where two genuine goods — two legitimate values or perspectives — have been framed as mutually exclusive. What would it look like if they were understood as complementary, as fire and water are complementary in producing growth?*
- 5. The transmission passes from father to daughter, from the prophet who barely knows how to be one to the one who says teach me what you know. Who is asking you to teach them what you know? And what is the specific thing you know that only your particular combination of experience, failure, healing, and commitment has given you access to? That is the thing to teach. That is how the fire travels.*

# Conclusion

## The Fire Was Always Lit

*“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

— 2 Timothy 1:7

*“When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner as the outer, and the upper as the lower... then you will enter the kingdom.”*

— Gospel of Thomas, Logion 22

*“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”*

— Mahatma Gandhi

### I. What These Five Prophecies Have Been

Five prophecies. Five morning walks on desert trails in Caballo, New Mexico, where the Caballo Mountains rise to the east and the Rio Grande is not far and the sky is that particular shade of blue that belongs to this place and nowhere else. Five conversations between a 78-year-old man with Agent Orange in his system and cancer taking its nap and three horses and a guardian angel and a seven-winged fire spirit and now, in the final prophecy, a goddess of knowledge who plays the veena in the dark.

I want to say what I think these prophecies have been, because a book of prophecy that does not reflect on its own nature is incomplete.

They have not been predictions, in the sense of statements about future events that will or will not occur. Prophets in the tradition I have been working in — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Moses, the Hermes Trismegistus of the Nag Hammadi texts — were not primarily forecasters. They were witnesses and namers. They named what was already visible to those with eyes trained to see it. The bodies stacked on the runway were already stacked

when I saw them through the hospital window at Tan Son Nhut. The emptying of the American temple was already underway when Trismegistus described the emptying of the Egyptian one. The thirty percent who need to find each other are already on the earth. None of this is new. What is new is the saying of it, the particular saying of it in this voice at this time by this improbable prophet.

They have been, more precisely, acts of antenarrative. The before-story. The story that is already unfolding beneath the surface of the official account, named before the official account has caught up with it. The antenarrative of the world's spiritual crisis. The antenarrative of the divine feminine's return. The antenarrative of the thirty percent tipping point that is closer than the news suggests. The antenarrative of peace as a storytelling project rather than a diplomatic or military one.

And they have been, most personally, the completion of a fifty-year arc that began in a professor's office in Champaign, Illinois, in 1976, when Louis Ralph Pondy looked up from a PhD student's essay and said: David, you are a storyteller. That is your strength. It is not in the theory work. What he saw then, what he named then, has taken fifty years to fully unfold into what you are reading now. I did not know that the storytelling path led here. I did not know that the antenarrative framework I would develop over a career would eventually be the framework the angels would use to commission a prophecy. I did not know that the organizational theorist who died of cancer at 49 would become my guardian angel in the upper worlds and arrange the introduction between me and Seraph on a desert trail.

But Ralph knew. He always does. He arranged the whole thing.

## **II. The Five Threads, Woven**

Each of the five prophecies has carried a primary thread. Let me weave them together here, because the book is not five separate things. It is one thing, said five ways, on five different mornings, from five different places on the trail.

### **The Burning Coal — Prophecy I**

The first thread is preparation. The radiation table as Isaiah's altar. The twenty-six treatments as the burning coal that touches the lips and makes the voice ready to speak. The pattern that runs through every prophetic tradition: unworthiness, purification by fire, commission. You do not get the commission without the coal. You do not get the coal without first being honest about your unclean lips. The fire does not bypass the wound. It goes directly to it.

The organizational application: before any organization can change its stories, it must undergo its own burning coal — its own honest reckoning with the stories that are not working, the narratives that have calcified into ideology, the official accounts that are leaving the most important things on the editing floor. The purification precedes the commission. You cannot skip it.

## **The Temple That Was Emptied — Prophecy II**

The second thread is diagnosis. Hermes Trismegistus naming the signs of civilizational desolation two thousand years before the civilization I am describing reached that condition. Darkness preferred to light. The pious counted as insane. The good man punished like a criminal. The print shop chapel evicted from the workplace by the efficiency mandate of 1980. The bodies on the runway. The 79 percent who no longer believe in the dream.

And the diagnosis's companion: the insistence that the response is reinvention, not restoration. You cannot go back to the print shop chapel of 1910. You can only take the fire that animated it and build new forms around it. The fire is the constant. The form is always temporary. Wayne Alderson understood this when he went beneath the steel mill and built the chapel underground. George Washington Carver understood it when he went into the forest before dawn. Renée understands it when she listens in her ceremonies to the voices of the goddesses.

## **The Council of Angels — Prophecy III**

The third thread is the breadth of the ensemble. The mapping of every tradition's version of the intermediary being — angel, spirit helper, deva, Wamani, ancestor — and the argument that all of them are in conversation right now, at this moment of civilizational crisis, because all of their traditions have been used to justify violence and all of their traditions contain, in their deepest teachings, the resources to refute it.

The weight of the dead: the indigenous genocide, Percy Brown's missionary school, the 973 children in the Alaskan boarding schools, the trail of tears, the runway at Tan Son Nhut. The accounting that must precede the healing. And the path of ahimsa: not as Jain doctrine but as human commitment, the thirty percent tipping point, the ensemble leadership model from Grace Ann Rosile's work that offers a structural alternative to hierarchy.

### **The Ensemble of Angels — Prophecy IV**

The fourth thread is the practical. The storytelling problem: what gets left on the editing floor of every organization's official narrative is exactly what would most help. The four gangsters at civilizational scale: anger, pride, greed, and deceit running the foreign policy of every major power. The Agent Orange table: the personal cost, the MD Anderson choice, running as medical necessity. The man with the dog off the leash: good morning, find the path around, wish him a good day and mean it.

The thirty percent prophecy, stated specifically: if thirty percent or more of the people on earth turn to the philosophy and practice of nonviolence, there is a chance at peace in our time. The Institute for Listening: not a think tank but a training ground for facilitators who have done their own inner work, who know the difference between managing a difficult person and receiving them, who have asked for their hearts to be changed and stayed present while the change happened.

### **Seraph and Saraswati — Prophecy V**

The fifth thread is completion. The arrival of the divine feminine. Saraswati's soft voice already playing before I noticed the music had started. The four-thousand-year suppression of the goddess and its structural relationship to the authorization of violence. The Billy the Kid cave: the cave has an exit, follow the music, do not set up house in the darkness. PONDY's conflict model and Saraswati's four arms teaching the same thing in different languages. The Gnostic texts that were buried because they were dangerous: the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Thomas, the Secret Book of John. The offering: an instrument of peace, not the music, the flute not the breath.

Fire and water. Seraph and Saraswati. Purification and clarification. Both needed. Neither sufficient alone.

### III. The Antenarrative of This Book

I have been arguing throughout that the most important stories are the ones running beneath the surface of the official account. So I owe the reader honesty about the antenarrative of this book itself.

The official account of this book is: a prophet received five prophecies from an angel and recorded them.

The antenarrative is more complicated and more human and more true.

A man who went to Vietnam at twenty and saw bodies stacked on a runway and had three mental breakdowns and came home a stranger to his daughter and spent decades trying to understand what he had witnessed and what it meant — that man eventually found his way to a horse ranch in the New Mexico desert and to a Jain teacher who gave him a name meaning you have no enemies and to a cancer that put him on a radiation table twenty-six times and to a desert trail where an angel raised its voice through the static and said you are now a prophet.

The antenarrative includes: Louis Ralph Pondy saying you are a storyteller in 1976. Grace Ann Rosile across a Native American fire circle in the night when I did not know her name yet. Nahdion singing “My Boyfriend’s Back” to Grace Ann for twelve mornings after he died. Rock-A-World rising in the Lower World when I went seeking a spirit powerful enough to heal a dying horse. The radiation table where I felt I belonged. The beehives in the mesquite. The blackbird. The leg shackle on the wall of the campus police station. The Immokalee workers reading Deleuze and Guattari in the tomato fields. Renée in lotus position with the rainbow chakras forming between us. The soft second voice on the arroyo trail that was already playing before I noticed it had begun.

All of that is the before-story of the five prophecies. The story that was already unfolding, already living, already shaping what was going to be said, long before the angel appeared on the trail and the recording began.

That is what antenarratives do. They run beneath the surface. They determine the shape of what emerges. And when you name them — when you say this is the story that was already there, this is the before-story of the official account — you give people a way to recognize their own

antenarratives. Their own fifty-year arcs. Their own burning coals. Their own blackbirds.

Because the reader has an antenarrative too. The reader did not pick up this book by accident. Something in the before-story of your life has led you here. Something already unfolding has been preparing you for these words at this moment.

I do not know what that something is. The angels might. But they are speaking into your left ear, not mine.

## **IV. What Has Changed in the Writing**

I want to be honest about what has changed in me in the course of these prophecies, because a prophet who claims to deliver wisdom without being changed by it is delivering something other than prophecy.

I have stopped arguing. Not because I no longer have positions or because the arguments do not matter. But because I have recognized, through the practice of these months on the trail, that my job is no longer to be right. My job is to be a quality of presence in the conversation that makes the conversation itself a different kind of experience than people are used to having with someone who disagrees with them. That is a harder job than being right. I am better at it than I was six months ago. I am not good at it yet.

I have started saying good morning to the man with the dog off the leash before I have assessed whether the situation is threatening. This is a small thing. It is also a very large thing, practiced thousands of times across thousands of encounters, with thousands of people on thousands of trails in thousands of communities. It is the thirty percent tipping point, assembled one good morning at a time.

I have become more honest about what I do not know. Prophecy requires enormous honesty about uncertainty. The angels speak and I receive and I write it down and I muscle test it and some of it I can confirm and some of it I hold loosely and all of it I offer as what I heard and not as what is definitively true. The ego wants certainty. The prophet offers testimony. These are different things and the difference matters.

I have learned to listen to Saraswati. That is the newest and most unexpected change. To hear the soft voice that was already playing before I noticed the music had started. To trust the knowing that arrives not as a burning coal on the lips but as a gentle clarification, a water-quality of understanding that cleans the intellect the way a stream cleans the stones it passes over. Seraph is the fire I have been practicing for years in the Holy Fire Reiki work. Saraswati is the water I am just learning to receive.

And I have begun to understand that these five prophecies are not the end of the work. They are the beginning of the second half of the work. The first half was the scholarship — forty years of building the framework, the antenarrative theory and the quantum storytelling methodology and the organizational consulting and the True Storytelling principles. The second half is this: taking the framework into the prophetic mode, offering it not as academic theory but as living testimony, as the storying that the Gospel of Thomas calls the twin — the other half of yourself that you have been seeking, that you do not recognize when you meet it because it looks like you but says things you have not yet said.

I am 78. I have, God and the angels willing and the cancer continuing its nap, years of this work ahead. Renée is learning. The Enthinkment Circle is meeting on Tuesdays. The GrowthOD sessions are happening on Mondays. The ranch is here. The horses are here. The trail is here.

The wood is laid. The fire is already lit. It was always lit. I just could not see it through the mesquite.

## **V. A Letter to Those Who Come After**

I began this book, in the BLISS book that runs parallel to it, as a letter to my daughter Renée and to my other children and grandchildren. Let me close it in the same spirit — as a letter to the people who will read these words after the trail has ended for me, in whatever year that ending comes.

To Renée first. You were born while I watched the bodies stack on a runway and I was not there and I have lived with that absence every day since. You met me for the first time when you were a few months old with a rash so fierce it was documented in a medical textbook. You screamed in the back seat when I was finally home. And now you are making the covers of my books and listening in your ceremonies to the voices of the

goddesses and asking me to teach you what I barely know myself. I am teaching you everything I know. The rest will come to you directly. Saraswati will see to it. She has already begun.

To the members of the Tuesday Enthinkment Circle, and the Monday GrowthOD sessions, and the Quantum Storytelling Conference, and the True Storytelling Institute, and every person who has sat in the circle and thought with the heart: you are the fire circle. You are the elder up all night, keeping every stone warm. You have been doing this already. These prophecies are not a new direction. They are a naming of the direction you have been traveling.

To Grace Ann Rosile, who is the moon to my sun and who I saw across the fire before I knew her name: I have run this trail for months now with your voice in my ear saying I hope you didn't go past the beehives, they're out there. The beehives are always out there. The ensemble leadership that you have built and documented and taught is the structure through which these prophecies are meant to be implemented. The veena and the book and the rosary and the water — those are your four arms too.

To the Nones who are reading this having picked it up from somewhere unexpected and who are not sure what to make of an angel named Seraph and a dragon named Rock-A-World and a guardian angel who keeps his real name secret: I was once as skeptical as you. The radiation table changed my epistemology. I cannot tell you what will change yours. I can tell you that the still, small voice that George Washington Carver heard in the forest before dawn is real and available and does not require you to join anything or believe any doctrine or satisfy any institutional requirement. It requires only that you go into the forest and listen. Or go onto the trail. Or ask for your heart to be changed toward the person who is freaking you out and then stay present while the change happens. The sacred is already in you. It is not waiting for your permission. It is waiting for your attention.

To the organizations — the hospitals, the universities, the corporations, the nonprofits, the political parties, the religious institutions — that are currently operating as organized anarchies with spinning moral compasses: Pondy saw you coming in 1986. The compass is spinning because the stories that orient it are no longer true, and the leaders who tell those stories know it and cannot admit it because admitting it would require a reckoning with everything that has been done in their name. The reckoning is coming anyway. It is better to choose it than to have it chosen for you.

Go beneath the official structure. Build the underground chapel. Establish the value of the person as the non-negotiable premise. See what becomes possible.

And to the thirty percent who are already on the earth and do not yet know they are part of the same movement: you are out there. In Gaza and in Tel Aviv and in Tehran and in Bogotá and in Lagos and in Manila and in Portland and in Caballo, New Mexico. The Jain practitioner and the Sufi and the Lakota elder and the contemplative farmer and the None who feeds the unhoused on weekends because it feels more honest than attending a service. You are in the same thirty percent. You have not yet found each other. This book is one of the instruments by which you will.

Find each other. Build the ensemble. Train the facilitators. Light the circle.

The council of angels is assembled. The council of goddesses has arrived. Seraph and Saraswati are working together. The purifying fire and the clarifying water are both present.

It is enough. It is more than enough. It has always been more than enough.

*Why not.*



## **A Closing Meditation for the Trail**

*The trail goes north. Past the gate, past the familiar loop, past the wall you have been turning back from.*

*The static comes before the signal. The signal comes if you keep moving and keep asking and keep the body open.*

*The bees are out there. Run if you have to. You have enough track in you.*

*The campfire circle is built. The wood is laid. The fire has been lit before and will be lit again.*

*The blackbird knows the way home.*

*You have been home all along.*

*The person walking toward you on the trail could be you.*

*Seraph is with you. Saraswati is playing.*

***Go north.***

# Appendix A

## Glossary of the Prophecies

The following terms appear throughout the three prophecies. They are offered not as academic definitions but as working tools — concepts that have proven useful for thinking about the spiritual and organizational crisis of our time and the path through it.

### The Messengers

#### **Seraph (Saraph)**

From the Hebrew saraph, meaning ‘burning one.’ In Isaiah 6, the seraphim surround the throne of God with six wings, two covering the face, two covering the feet, two for flight. They cry “Holy, holy, holy” and their voices shake the doorposts of the temple. In these prophecies, Seraph appears to the author with seven wings — the seventh being the wing of Answerability, facing into the specific present moment of history. Seraph is both the commissioning angel and the same fire as Rock-A-World, two faces of one cosmic being.

#### **Rock-A-World**

The author’s first spirit animal, encountered in shamanic Lower World journey. A dragon of ancient, enormous certainty who came originally to heal a dying horse — Grace Ann Rosile’s stallion Nahdion — and who carries the quantum field on his back. The name describes his purpose: not to destroy the world but to rock it awake. The same fire as Seraph, differently expressed. His name is not a metaphor. He gave it himself.

#### **Ralph**

The author's guardian angel, encountered in shamanic Upper World journey. Ralph manifests as Louis Ralph Pundy (1938–1987), the author's PhD mentor at the University of Illinois who died of cancer at 49 and who told the author in 1976: "David, you are a storyteller. That is your strength." Ralph keeps his real name secret in the upper worlds. He is the Orchestrator — the one who arranges the introduction between the reluctant prophet and the fiery commission. The hug comes before the question.

## **Nahdion**

Grace Ann Rosile's stallion, healed by Rock-A-World, who after death became a healing spirit in the Lower World. For twelve days after dying he appeared to Grace Ann in dreams with songs — including once with "My Boyfriend's Back" — giving grief the laughter it needs to complete its work. Nahdion models life purpose: show up, do your specific work with love and humor, do not dabble, and when the work is done, that is that.

## **Narrative Frameworks**

### **Antenarrative**

Coined by David Boje in 2001. The 'before-story' — the fragmented, living, non-linear narrative that precedes and shapes all official accounts. Organizations, nations, and lives have antenarratives running beneath their surface stories that determine behavior long before anyone names them. Prophetic vision is a form of antenarrative work: seeing the story that is already unfolding before the official history catches up with it.

### **Enthinkment**

The practice of the Tuesday Enthinkment Circle: thinking with the heart. The integration of rigorous intellectual inquiry with genuine emotional and spiritual presence. The refusal to separate knowing from feeling, analysis from compassion, intellect from love. Named for the Circle because the Circle named the practice.

### **Quantum Storytelling**

The methodology developed by David Boje integrating quantum physics, narrative theory, and organizational analysis. Draws on non-locality,

entanglement, and the living nature of the quantum field to understand how stories connect across time and space in ways that linear causality cannot account for.

## **Ethical and Spiritual Principles**

### **Ahimsa**

The Jain principle of non-violence, considered the highest duty — ahimsa paramo dharma. Non-violence in thought, in word, and in deed toward every being. Not passivity but the most demanding form of engagement: facing violence without returning it. Gandhi drew this principle from his Jain upbringing and built the most powerful political strategy of the twentieth century from it.

### **Arihanta**

A spiritual name given to the author by Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu. Means: you have no enemies, everyone is your friend. The state of having conquered the inner enemies — the Four Gangsters of the Ego — so that the person walking toward you is no longer perceived as a threat but recognized as a fellow expression of inner divinity.

### **Anekantavada**

The Jain doctrine of the many-sidedness of truth. Every perspective on reality is simultaneously real and partial. Your truth is genuinely true and genuinely incomplete. The wisdom is in holding both at once — your own real and partial truth alongside the real and partial truth of the person across from you. The essential antidote to the certainty that justifies violence.

### **The Four Gangsters of the Ego**

Anger (Krodha), Pride (Mana), Greed (Lobha), and Deceit (Maya). In Jain teaching, these are the inner enemies that masquerade as virtues — righteous anger, justifiable pride, prudent acquisition, strategic communication. They are the ego's way of dressing fear up as virtue and are the primary engines of the violence the prophecies address.

## **The Seventh Wing**

The extra wing that Seraph carries beyond Isaiah's six. Six wings are for eternity — for the worship that never ceases in the throne room. The seventh faces into time, into this specific moment, into the burning world of 2025 and beyond. The seventh wing carries Answerability: the recognition that we are accountable to each other across every difference, that the individualism which denies this accountability is destroying the hives, and that the circle is built and the wood is laid and someone must light the fire.

## **The Burning Coal**

From Isaiah 6: the live coal that the seraph takes from the altar with tongs and touches to the prophet's lips, saying your guilt is taken away. The purification before the commission. In the author's life, the twenty-six radiation treatments — with gold implants as homing markers and laser tattoos as targeting guides — were the burning coal. Preparation, not punishment. The fire that goes directly to the wound.

## **Organizational Concepts**

### **Ensemble Leadership**

Developed by Grace Ann Rosile (lead author), drawing from indigenous governance traditions of the Southwest US and Latin America. Leadership distributed across an ensemble of contributors, each bringing specific and different resources — spiritual, material, relational, territorial — to collective problems. Like a jazz ensemble: no single instrument carries all the music. No single leader has all the resources. The ensemble makes possible what no individual can achieve alone.

### **The Chapel Beneath the Steel Mill**

Based on the work of Wayne Alderson in a Pennsylvania steel mill in the 1970s. An underground space where management and union workers gathered not to negotiate but to recognize each other's inner divinity. The model of transformation through sacred space: go beneath the official structure, remove the costumes of position, establish the value of the person as the non-negotiable premise, and see what becomes possible. The chapel is load-bearing, not decorative.

## **The Nones**

Those who identify as religiously unaffiliated — atheist, agnostic, or ‘nothing in particular.’ Currently 24–30% of the American adult population and growing, with 35% of adults under 30. Not primarily atheists — 63% describe themselves as ‘nothing in particular.’ Not satisfied with nothing. Unsatisfied with the particular somethings on offer. Hungry for the sacred with nowhere honest to go. The open field where the reinvention must happen.

### **Reinvention (not Restoration)**

Seraph’s correction of the expectation of return. You cannot restore the 1910 print shop chapel or the pre-contact indigenous world or any prior form of the sacred. What you can do is find the fire that animated those forms and build new forms around it. The fire is the constant. The form is always temporary. The prophet’s work is to find the burning coal in the rubble and carry it forward. This is reinvention. It goes deeper than restoration because it requires releasing the old form entirely.



*The prophecies continue.*

*Seraph will speak again.*

*The council of goddesses is coming.*

The wood is laid.

# Appendix B

## The Facilitator's Guide to Peace:

### An Instruction Manual for Those Who Would Light the Fire

*"You listen until you can hear. You test what you hear until you can trust it. You say what you are told to say and you do not embellish it and you do not suppress it and you hold the ego loosely, because the ego will always try to get between you and the transmission."*

— David Michael Boje, on learning to be a channel

*"We need not wait to see what others do."*

— Gandhi, on the mechanism of inner change

#### Introduction: What This Manual Is For

This manual is written for the facilitator of peace — the person who has been moved by the five prophecies in this book and who is asking: what do I actually do? How do I take these ideas off the page and into the rooms where the conflict is happening — the board meeting, the family dinner, the community forum, the interfaith gathering, the neighborhood where people who voted differently from each other no longer speak?

The facilitator of peace is not a therapist, though some of what facilitators do resembles therapy. Not a mediator, though facilitation shares some techniques with mediation. Not a preacher or a teacher, though facilitators sometimes speak and sometimes teach. The facilitator of peace is, at core, a quality of presence that makes a particular kind of conversation possible — a conversation in which the people present can begin to see the stories running beneath the surface of their conflict, identify the four gangsters running those stories, and find access to the inner divinity that every tradition says is already there, already present, already the truest thing about every person in the room.

This manual proceeds in seven stages, corresponding to the seven questions that every effective facilitator must be able to answer for themselves before they enter any room:

1. Who am I, and what are my own four gangsters?
2. What kind of room am I entering, and what has this room's conflict cost?
3. What are the stories running beneath the surface?
4. How do I create the conditions for inner divinity to become visible?
5. How do I hold the space when the gangsters show up?
6. How do I build toward the ensemble?
7. How do I know when the fire has been lit?

Each stage includes both the philosophical grounding from the prophecies and the practical tools — specific practices, questions, and approaches that can be used in actual rooms with actual people. The philosophy without the practice is beautiful and insufficient. The practice without the philosophy is technique without soul. Both are needed.



## **Stage One: Know Your Own Four Gangsters**

The first requirement of a facilitator of peace is radical honesty about their own inner life. You cannot help other people identify the stories that are running beneath the surface of their conflict if you have not done that work for yourself. And you cannot do that work without first becoming intimate with the four gangsters of your own ego: anger, pride, greed, and deceit.

These are not four personality flaws to be corrected. They are four survival strategies that every human being has developed in response to genuine threats, real experiences of being harmed or dismissed or diminished or endangered. The anger gangster developed because anger was sometimes the only available response to injustice. The pride gangster developed because pride protected a dignity that others were trying to strip away. The greed gangster developed because scarcity was real and accumulation felt like safety. The deceit gangster developed because truth was sometimes dangerous and strategic concealment felt necessary.

The problem is not that these strategies exist. The problem is that they run the show long after the specific threat that produced them has passed. The anger that was appropriate in the face of genuine injustice becomes the lens through which every disagreement is perceived as injustice. The pride that protected a dignity that needed protecting becomes the wall that prevents any acknowledgment of error. The greed that accumulated against genuine scarcity becomes the hoarding that leaves no room for others. The deceit that protected against genuine danger becomes the automatic reframing of everything uncomfortable as something else.

## **Practice: The Gangster Inventory**

Before facilitating any group, take thirty minutes alone and ask yourself the following questions honestly. Write the answers down. Do not show them to anyone. This is for your own clarity only.

- 1.** In the situation I am about to facilitate, what makes me angry? Name it specifically. Whose position or behavior or story triggers my anger? Is the anger clean — a response to genuine injustice — or is it the gangster, attached to an old wound that this situation has reopened?
- 2.** Where is my pride at stake in this facilitation? What would constitute failure in my own eyes? Am I more concerned with being seen as a skilled facilitator than with what the people in the room actually

need? If someone challenges my authority or my approach in the room, what will the pride gangster want to do?

3. What am I trying to get from this facilitation? Not the stated outcome, but the personal gain — the recognition, the sense of having made a difference, the confirmation that my approach is correct. Is that personal gain driving decisions that should be driven by the needs of the people in the room?
4. What am I not saying — not saying to the people who invited me to facilitate, not saying to myself — about what I actually think is going on in this conflict? Where is the deceit gangster managing my presentation of reality to make it more comfortable for me or more palatable to the people who hired me?

This inventory is not an exercise in self-flagellation. It is reconnaissance. You are mapping the terrain so that you do not get surprised by your own gangsters in the middle of a difficult moment. The facilitator who knows where their anger lives does not walk into the room innocent of it. They walk in prepared for it. That is the difference between inner work and denial.

## The Heart-Change Practice

In Prophecy IV, I described the experience of asking God to change my heart toward the woman in the church group who was driving me out of my mind with her compulsive talking. By the very next session, my heart was changed. I have replicated this practice many times since, with many different people who have challenged my capacity for genuine reception.

The practice is simple: before entering any facilitation, identify the person in the room — or the type of person, if you know the group's dynamics — who is most likely to trigger your gangsters. Name them specifically in your own mind. And then ask, in whatever way is authentic to your own spiritual practice, for your heart to be changed toward that person. Not your opinion of their position. Not your assessment of their behavior. Your heart. The quality of your inner orientation toward them as a human being.

This is not a technique. It is a prayer, or its secular equivalent: a genuine opening of yourself to the possibility that the person who is currently freaking you out is more than the way they are currently appearing, and that

you are capable of meeting them at a level that the gangsters in both of you have not yet reached.

Ask. Then stay present while the change happens. It does not always happen instantly. Sometimes it takes several sessions. But the asking itself changes something in the quality of your presence, and the people in the room will feel it even if they cannot name it.



## **Stage Two: Read the Room Before You Enter It**

Every room has a conflict history. Every organization, family, community, or faith group that is experiencing enough tension to invite a facilitator has been living with some version of that tension for longer than the invitation suggests. The official account of the conflict — the stated reason for the facilitation — is rarely the full story. Usually it is the most recent manifestation of a much older pattern.

Louis Ralph Pondy's conflict model, properly understood, says that conflict moves through stages: latent conflict (the underlying conditions), perceived conflict (when the parties become aware of the incompatibility), felt conflict (when it becomes emotionally charged), manifest conflict (when it becomes visible in behavior), and conflict aftermath (the residue that becomes the latent condition for the next episode). Most organizations invite a facilitator during the manifest stage, when the conflict has become visible and disruptive. But the facilitator who enters at the manifest stage without understanding the latent and perceived stages is addressing the symptom rather than the condition.

### **Pre-Facilitation Questions**

Before entering any room, gather as much information as possible by asking the following questions of the people who have invited you. Do this in separate conversations with people from different sides of the conflict, not in a joint meeting.

1. How long has this conflict been present? Not the current episode — the underlying tension. What is the earliest form you can trace it to?
2. Who has tried to address it before, and what did they do? What happened? What did not work and why?
3. Whose voice is currently missing from the official account of the conflict? Who is not in the room when the conflict is discussed, and whose perspective is therefore absent?
4. What is the cost of this conflict? Not just to the organization — to the individuals in it. What has it cost in terms of health, relationships, sleep, creativity, sense of meaning?
5. What does the conflict make possible that people in the organization might not want to acknowledge? What does the conflict protect or enable? Conflicts that persist are usually serving some function, even when everyone claims to want them resolved.

This last question is the hardest and the most important. Persistent conflict is almost always functional for someone in the system, even if it is destructive for the system as a whole. The facilitator who cannot identify what the conflict is making possible will have difficulty understanding why proposed solutions keep not working.

## The Antenarrative Map

Once you have gathered the pre-facilitation information, spend time mapping the antenarrative of the conflict. This is not a formal tool with a specific format. It is a practice of asking: what is the before-story here? What is the story that was already running — in the history of this organization, this community, this family, this relationship — before the current episode crystallized it into a visible conflict?

Draw this map in whatever way makes sense to you — a timeline, a web of relationships, a narrative sketch. Include the events and relationships and decisions that the official account leaves out. Include the voices that are absent. Include your best current understanding of what the conflict is making possible for the people who are most invested in maintaining it.

This map is for your own use. It is not a document to be shared with the group. It is the reconnaissance that allows you to navigate the room with some understanding of the terrain beneath the surface.



## Stage Three: Identify the Stories Running Beneath the Surface

Every conflict has at least two stories running beneath it. Usually more. The facilitation fails when the facilitator addresses only the surface conflict — the stated positions — without helping the people in the room identify the deeper stories that are generating and sustaining those positions.

These deeper stories have a structure. They almost always follow one of a small number of narrative patterns:

### The Heroes Journey of the Powerful

Someone in the room — a person, a faction, a tradition, a department, a nation — is telling a story in which they are the hero facing a threat, the threat is embodied in an enemy (the other person, the other faction, the other tradition), and the resolution of the story involves the defeat of the enemy and the restoration of the order the hero represents. This is the narrative pattern that justifies the mowing of the grass, the hostile takeover, the family estrangement, the religious exclusion. It is the four gangsters' favorite story.

### The Victim Story

Someone in the room is telling a story in which they are the victim of harm done by the other party, the harm is unambiguous and unacknowledged, and the resolution requires acknowledgment and reparation before anything else can happen. This story is often true. Genuine harm has often been done. The problem is when the victim story becomes totalizing — when it becomes the only story available, the lens through which every interaction is perceived, the identity that cannot be questioned without invalidating the harm.

## The Inevitability Story

Someone in the room is telling a story in which the conflict is natural, inevitable, permanent — this is just how things are between these two groups, these two departments, these two traditions. The inevitability story is the most dangerous of the three because it forecloses the imagination. If the conflict is inevitable, the only question is how to manage it. The possibility of genuine transformation is excluded from the beginning.

### Practice: Story-Surfacing Questions

In the facilitation, use these questions to help participants begin to see the stories they are running:

1. “How long have you been telling this story about this situation? Not this situation — this version of the story about it.”
2. “If you were telling the story of this conflict from the other party’s perspective, with genuine effort to understand how it looks from inside their experience, what would that story say?”
3. “What would you lose if this conflict were resolved? Not what you’d gain — what you’d lose. What does the conflict give you access to that resolution would take away?”
4. “If the story you are currently telling about this situation is partly true and partly a distortion produced by your own gangsters, which part is the distortion? I am not asking you to abandon your truth. I am asking where the gangsters have been adding to it.”
5. “What is the most generous interpretation of the other party’s behavior — the one that assumes they are doing their best within the constraints they face, even if their best is causing harm? Can you hold that interpretation alongside your current one, without replacing it?”

These questions are not comfortable. They are not meant to be. The facilitation that asks only comfortable questions produces comfortable conversation, which changes nothing. The facilitation that goes to the root of the storytelling — that asks people to see their own stories as stories — is the one that opens the possibility of something different.



## Stage Four: Create the Conditions for Inner Divinity to Become Visible

The single most important thing a facilitator of peace does is create the spatial and relational conditions in which the inner divinity of every person in the room can become visible. When that happens — when people feel genuinely received rather than managed, when the costume of their position falls away even briefly and the human being beneath it becomes present — the conflict looks different. Not resolved. Different. Smaller relative to the shared humanity in the room.

Wayne Alderson understood this when he built the chapel beneath the steel mill. The chapel was not the only thing that changed the mill. But the chapel was the specific intervention that created the conditions in which the other things became possible. The underground space, the explicit acknowledgment that what mattered in this space was the value of the person rather than the position, the removal of the costumes of management and labor — these were the conditions.

Every facilitation needs its version of the underground chapel. It does not need to be literally underground. It needs to be a space that is explicitly designated as different from the ordinary space of the conflict — a space where the rules of engagement are different, where the value of the person is the non-negotiable premise, where the costumes can be loosened if not fully removed.

### The Opening Covenant

Every facilitation session should begin with an explicit statement of the conditions — what the space is, what the rules of engagement are, and what the one non-negotiable premise is. I call this the Opening Covenant. It is not a contract with legal force. It is a shared agreement about what this space is for and how we will treat each other in it.

The Opening Covenant has three elements:

## **The Premise:**

Every person in this room has inner divinity. Not as a theological claim that requires agreement, but as the operational premise of this space. You may call it God, or the sacred, or basic human dignity, or the irreducible worth of persons. Choose the language that is honest for you. But we proceed from the premise that every person here is more than their position, more than their grievance, more than their history in this conflict. We are proceeding from what Trismegistus called the unique dignity of the human creature: that we are both mortal and immortal, both limited and limitless, and that the limitless part is what this space is designed to make visible.

## **The Practice:**

We will listen before we speak. Not strategically — not listening for the weaknesses in the other party's argument. Listening to understand. Listening to the experience beneath the position, the wound beneath the anger, the fear beneath the pride. When you speak, you speak about your own experience, not about what the other party did or should do. When you disagree, you disagree with the idea, not the person. And when the gangsters show up — and they will show up — we will name them, kindly, without shame.

## **The Permission:**

You do not have to agree by the end of this session. You do not have to forgive by the end of this session. You do not have to change your position. You only have to be present with genuine attention to what is actually happening in this room, including in yourself. That is the whole requirement. Genuine attention. Everything else follows from that.

## **The Physical Space**

Arrange the room in a circle if at all possible. The circle is the oldest human gathering form. It has no head, no back, no hierarchy of seating. Every person in a circle can see every other person's face. This is not incidental. Eye contact is the most powerful single tool for the recognition of inner divinity. It is very difficult to maintain the enemy narrative when you are looking into the face of the specific human being your enemy narrative has abstracted into a category.

If a circle is not possible, use any arrangement that minimizes the table-as-boundary effect. The conference table that separates management from labor, plaintiff from defendant, negotiator from negotiator — this is a built environment that maintains and reinforces the conflict. Whenever possible, remove or minimize it.

Begin the session with two minutes of silence. This is not a spiritual practice that requires agreement. It is a transition. It says: what happened before you walked into this room stays outside for now. What happens in here is different. Two minutes of shared silence, before a single word is spoken, creates a different quality of attention than any other opening I have found.

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## **Stage Five: Hold the Space When the Gangsters Show Up**

They will show up. In every facilitation of real conflict, there is a moment — usually more than one — when someone’s gangsters take over the room. The anger that was being held politely suddenly becomes unmistakable. The pride that was managing itself through careful language suddenly drops the management and speaks directly. The deceit that was framing the situation in self-serving ways suddenly becomes transparent even to the person doing the framing.

When this happens, the facilitator has one job: hold the space. Do not collapse. Do not escalate. Do not take sides. Do not allow the gangster’s eruption to become the new narrative of what this session is about. And do not pretend it did not happen.

### **The Naming Practice**

The most effective single intervention when a gangster erupts in a facilitated group is to name what is happening, kindly and without accusation. Not: “You’re being defensive.” But: “It sounds like there’s some real anger in what you just said. I want to make sure we hear it fully. Can you say more about what’s underneath that?”

The naming works because it does what the gangster is actually asking for but cannot get through its eruption: it makes the feeling visible and received. The anger gangster erupts because the anger has not been acknowledged. When you name it, acknowledge it, and invite more — not less — of what is actually there, the pressure behind the eruption often releases. The person can breathe. The room can breathe. And the real conversation, the one that was being prevented by the gangster’s performance, becomes possible.

## **The Reframe Practice**

When the conflict has escalated to the point where the parties are no longer speaking to each other but speaking at each other — making statements designed to wound rather than communicate — use a reframe. A reframe is a statement that takes what was just said and translates it from the language of attack into the language of need.

The translation formula is: “When you say [what they actually said], I hear that you need [the underlying need]. Is that right?”

Example: Someone says, “You never listen to anything I say. This whole process is a waste of time.” The reframe: “When you say that, I hear that you need to know that what you’re bringing to this room actually matters — that it’s going to be received rather than processed. Is that right?”

The reframe does not validate the attack. It translates the attack into its underlying human need, which is always more legitimate than the way the attack expressed it. And it creates a moment of potential recognition: the person who made the attack often discovers, in hearing the reframe, that what they actually wanted was simpler and more available than the attack suggested.

## **The Silence Practice**

When the room has escalated to the point where no intervention is reaching anyone, return to silence. Simply say: “I want us to stop for two minutes. Nothing anyone just said needs a response right now. We are going to breathe together for two minutes and then we are going to speak from a different place.”

Two minutes of silence after a heated exchange is one of the most powerful de-escalation tools available to a facilitator. It gives the nervous systems in the room time to regulate. It breaks the escalation cycle. And it signals, without argument, that this is a different kind of space than the one the gangsters have been building.



## Stage Six: Build Toward the Ensemble

The goal of facilitation is not agreement. Agreement on all points is often neither achievable nor necessary. The goal is the ensemble: the state in which different people with genuinely different perspectives and genuinely different resources are in enough relationship with each other to work on shared problems together, each contributing what they uniquely carry, none of them required to surrender their distinctiveness as the price of participation.

The ensemble is Grace Ann Rosile's concept from her work on indigenous leadership models, and it is the most useful single framework I have for what a successful facilitation builds toward. Not consensus. Not compromise. Not the victory of one side over the other. The ensemble. The jazz band. The tribal council where the person with access to water and the person with access to human power and the person with access to spiritual knowledge all bring what they have and the ensemble solves together what no one of them could solve alone.

### The Ensemble Inventory

In the later stages of a facilitation, when the initial work of surfacing stories and naming gangsters and creating the conditions for inner divinity to become visible has produced some ground of genuine contact, introduce the Ensemble Inventory. This is a simple practice in which each person in the room answers three questions:

1. What do I bring to this situation that nobody else here brings? Not my position or my credentials — my specific, particular, irreplaceable contribution. What does this room lose if I am not in it?

2. What do I need from someone else in this room that I cannot provide for myself? Not what I need them to stop doing — what I genuinely need them to contribute that is outside my own capacity?
3. What is one thing I am willing to do differently, starting now, that would make it easier for the ensemble to function?

The Ensemble Inventory moves the conversation from positions to capacities, from what each party is against to what each party uniquely contributes. This shift in frame is not magic. It does not dissolve real conflicts of interest. But it creates the possibility of a different kind of conversation — one in which the parties are asking how to use each other's strengths rather than how to neutralize each other's threats.

### **The Pontdy-Ensemble Bridge**

Louis Ralph Pondy's work on leadership as a language game — his 1978 paper, one of the most neglected and most important in the organizational theory literature — argued that the primary function of leadership is not decision-making but meaning-making. Leaders create the frames through which people interpret their experience. When the frame is the heroes journey of the powerful, the people in the organization interpret their experience through the lens of conflict and competition. When the frame is the ensemble, the people in the organization interpret their experience through the lens of complementary contribution.

The facilitator of peace is a meaning-maker in the Pondy sense. Their job is to offer a different frame — not to impose it, but to make it available, to demonstrate through their own presence and their own practice that a different way of organizing the experience of being in this room together is possible. When that demonstration is effective, the group begins to organize itself around the new frame. Not because the facilitator told them to. Because the new frame is more true to their actual experience of what happens when the gangsters release their hold, even briefly.



## **Stage Seven: Know When the Fire Has Been Lit**

The fire is lit when the people in the room begin to facilitate each other. When someone who was entrenched in their position asks a genuine question of someone they have been treating as an enemy. When someone acknowledges something they have been withholding. When laughter emerges from a place of genuine recognition rather than nervous deflection. When the silence becomes comfortable rather than threatening.

You will feel it before you can name it. There is a quality of attention in the room that shifts. The air is different. The body language is different. People lean forward rather than back. Eye contact holds longer. The pace of speech slows. These are not definitive signs, and the facilitator should not mistake a temporary de-escalation for genuine transformation. But they are indicators that something has changed in the quality of the room's presence, and they are worth noticing and naming.

## The Closing Practice

Every facilitation session should close with a specific practice that marks the transition from the facilitated space back into ordinary life. Without this transition, the insights and openings of the session tend to dissipate quickly when participants reenter the ordinary environment, where the old stories and the old gangsters are waiting.

The closing practice has three elements:

1. Each person names one thing they are taking from this session. Not a commitment to action — an insight, a question, a moment of genuine contact. Something that happened in this room that they do not want to lose when they walk out the door.
2. Each person names one thing they are willing to do differently before the next session. Specific and observable. Not “I will be more open” but “I will call [name] this week and ask them [specific question].”
3. Close with silence. Return to the two minutes of silence with which the session opened. The silence at the end has a different quality from the silence at the beginning. People who have been genuinely present together in a difficult conversation often find the closing silence the most alive part of the session.



## Quick Reference: The Facilitator's Field Guide

### Before Every Session

- Complete the Gangster Inventory honestly
- Identify the person most likely to trigger your gangsters and ask for your heart to be changed
- Review your Antenarrative Map of the conflict
- Arrange the room in a circle if possible
- Arrive early enough to hold the space before anyone else enters

### Opening Every Session

- Two minutes of silence
- The Opening Covenant: the Premise, the Practice, the Permission
- One opening question that invites people to speak about their own experience rather than the other party's behavior

### During the Session

- Listen before you speak. Always.
- Name gangster eruptions kindly and without accusation
- Reframe attacks into underlying needs
- Return to silence when the room has overheated
- Ask story-surfacing questions when the conversation is stuck in positions
- Watch for the moment when inner divinity becomes visible — and name it

## Closing Every Session

- Each person: one thing they are taking from the session
- Each person: one specific thing they will do differently before the next session
- Two minutes of closing silence

## After Every Session

- Update your Antenarrative Map with what you learned
- Note which of your gangsters showed up and how you managed them
- Rest. Facilitation is energetically demanding. Do not go immediately into another high-intensity conversation.



## The Spiritual Resources of the Ensemble: A Reference Table

The following table maps the spiritual traditions represented in these prophecies to their specific contributions to the facilitation of peace. The facilitator does not need to be a practitioner of all of these traditions. They need to know what each tradition carries so they can recognize it when it appears in the room and draw on it appropriately.

Tradition/Being	Primary Gift to Facilitation	Key Practice	When to Draw On It
Seraph (Isaiah 6)	Purification — burning away stories that cannot survive honest scrutiny	Naming what is in the room directly, without softening	When the official story is clearly self-serving and needs honest confrontation
Saraswati (Hindu)	Clarification — the wisdom that listens before it	Open questions that invite	When the conflict is entrenched in certainty and needs

	speaks, the water that cleans the intellect	learning rather than argument	access to genuine not-knowing
Ahimsa / Jain	Nonviolence in thought, word, and deed — the refusal to use the sacred to justify harm	Maintaining equanimity when the gangsters erupt; not returning attack with attack	At all times; this is the baseline orientation of the facilitator of peace
Anekantavada / Jain	Many-sidedness of truth — every perspective is real and partial simultaneously	Asking each party to tell the story from the other's perspective with genuine effort	When one party claims exclusive ownership of the truth about the conflict
Enthinkment / Pondy	Integration of thinking and feeling — refusing to separate the analytical from the relational	Naming the emotional dimension of a conflict that is being addressed only analytically	When the group is stuck in intellectual argument and has lost contact with the human stakes
Ensemble Leadership / Rosile	Distribution of leadership across diverse capacities — no single leader has all the resources	The Ensemble Inventory: what do you bring, what do you need, what will you do differently?	In the later stages of facilitation, when some ground of contact has been established
Antenarrative / Boje	The before-story — naming what is running beneath the surface of the official account	Story-surfacing questions; the Antenarrative Map; asking what the conflict makes possible	When the official account of the conflict is clearly incomplete or self-serving
Indigenous Wisdom	Relational web — every being is kin; the land and water and animals are	Circle arrangements; attention to the physical environment as	When the conflict involves relationship to land, community, or the natural world

	persons with rights	a participant in the facilitation	
Tikkun Olam / Jewish	Repair of the world — the sacred obligation to mend what is broken	Framing the facilitation as an act of repair rather than a search for winners and losers	When parties are stuck in the win-lose frame and need access to a shared purpose

*Note: This table is a working tool, not a comprehensive theology. Use it as a navigation aid, not a destination.*



## A Note on Training

No manual replaces practice. The facilitator of peace develops through facilitation, through the accumulated experience of entering difficult rooms and holding the space and managing their own gangsters and watching what works and what does not. The seven stages described in this manual are not a recipe. They are a map. The territory is always more complex than the map.

The Institute for Listening proposed in Prophecy IV would offer structured training in these practices: extended workshops, supervised facilitation experience, ongoing reflection groups, and the spiritual formation practices that build the inner foundation without which the techniques are hollow. That institute does not yet exist in its full form. The materials for it exist in these five prophecies, in the Pondy/Boje book on enthinkment, in Grace Ann Rosile’s work on ensemble leadership, in the True Storytelling principles developed by the True Storytelling Institute, and in the practice of the Tuesday Enthinkment Circle.

If you are reading this and you want to build that institute, the network of people who can help you do it is already assembled. The angels have been working on the introduction for some time.

Begin where you are. Facilitate the next difficult conversation in your life with the quality of presence this manual describes. Ask for your heart to be

changed. Say good morning to the man with the dog off the leash. Create two minutes of opening silence and see what becomes possible in the space it opens.

The fire is already lit. The wood was always there.

*Go north.*

# Appendix C

## Concordance of Sacred Texts and Sources

### A Guide to Deeper Reading Across the Five Prophecies

This concordance maps the sacred texts, scholars, and sources that inform the five prophecies. It is organized in four parts: the Gnostic and mystical texts that run through the prophecies; the Jain and Hindu primary sources; the organizational and storytelling scholarship; and the broader reference works on peace, nonviolence, and the divine feminine. For each source, the concordance notes which prophecies draw on it and how.

Where primary texts are freely available online, their URLs are provided. The reader is encouraged to read them directly — not as academic research but as the living documents they are, which continue to speak across the centuries when read with the quality of attention the facilitator’s manual describes.



#### Part I: The Gnostic and Mystical Texts

The Nag Hammadi Library — the thirteen leather-bound codices discovered in 1945 near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, containing fifty-two Gnostic texts buried in the fourth century CE — runs beneath all five prophecies as a sustained conversation partner. These texts were suppressed by the emerging Catholic orthodoxy because they offered a version of the sacred that was more interior, more egalitarian, and more

comfortable with the divine feminine than the tradition that prevailed. They were found by accident, translated across decades, and are now available to anyone with an internet connection.

The following texts are referenced directly in the prophecies or provide essential background for understanding their theological framework.

## The Asclepius 21-29

The primary prophetic source for Prophecy II. A dialogue between Hermes Trismegistus and his student Asclepius, in which the sage delivers a prophecy about Egypt that maps precisely onto the condition of the United States in the twenty-first century. Contains the core teaching about human beings as both mortal and immortal — the unique dignity that Trismegistus calls the ground of our kinship with the divine.

**Text:** <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/asclep.html> — *Nag Hammadi Library, translated by James Brashler, Peter Dirkse, and Douglas Parrott*

Key passages in the prophecies: the bodies stacked higher than the dams (Prophecy II, Section I); darkness preferred to light (Prophecy II, Section II); the pious man counted as insane (Prophecy II, Section II); the wicked angels leading men into wars and plunderings (Prophecy III, epigraph); the restoration that comes when God looks upon the disorder and establishes his design against it (Prophecy II, Section VII).

## The Gospel of Thomas

The collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus, found in Coptic translation at Nag Hammadi. Unlike the canonical gospels, the Gospel of Thomas has no narrative — no birth story, no crucifixion, no resurrection. It is purely sayings: dense, paradoxical, demanding, and alive in ways that centuries of institutional interpretation have not exhausted. Logion 22 (making the two one, the inner as the outer, the above as the below) is the central Gnostic teaching applied throughout the prophecies. Logion 21 (making the thinking intellect and the emotions one) is the basis of the enthinkment practice. Logion 114 appears in Prophecy V in the context of Saraswati and the transformation of the gendered categories that limit access to the divine.

**Text (Lambdin translation):**

<https://www.marquette.edu/maqom/Gospel%20of%20Thomas%20Lambdin.pdf> — *Marquette University, recommended translation for study*

**Text (gnosis.org):** <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl.html> — *Nag Hammadi Library main page, multiple translations available*

## The Gospel of Truth

Attributed to Valentinus, the most sophisticated theologian of the Gnostic movement, this text is a meditation on the experience of being lost and being found — of wandering in the confusion of error and discovering, through gnosis (direct knowing), the light that has always been there. The wandering-in-the-cave metaphor of Prophecy V draws directly from this text's central image. Read alongside the cave trail narrative of Prophecy V.

**Text:** <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/got-barnstone.html> — *Translated by Willis Barnstone, gnosis.org*

## The Secret Book of John

Also called the Apocryphon of John. One of the most theologically complex Gnostic texts, it contains a vision of the divine that includes Barbelo — the First Thought of the Father, the divine feminine aspect of the ultimate reality, the mother of all, the first among the aeons. This text is essential background for Prophecy V's argument about the suppression of the divine feminine in Abrahamic monotheism. It demonstrates that even within early Christianity, a cosmological framework existed in which the divine feminine was not subordinate but primary.

**Text (Meyer translation):** <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/apocjn-meyer.html> — *Translated by Marvin Meyer, gnosis.org*

## The Book of Thomas the Contender

A dialogue between the risen Jesus and Thomas, emphasizing the importance of self-knowledge as the path to liberation. The text's insistence that the person who does not know themselves does not know anything is directly relevant to Stage One of the Facilitator's Manual — the Gangster Inventory — and to the broader argument throughout the prophecies that the inner work precedes the outer change.

**Text:** <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/bookt-jdt.html> — *Translated by John Turner, gnosis.org*

## The Gospel of Mary Magdala

Found in fragmentary form in two manuscripts. In it, Mary Magdala is presented as the primary recipient of the risen Jesus's teaching, and the male disciples' resistance to her authority becomes the occasion for an explicit conflict about who is entitled to speak the wisdom and carry the commission. Referenced directly in Prophecy V, Section VIII, as evidence that the suppression of the divine feminine was a specific historical decision rather than an eternal theological necessity.

**Text (King translation):**

[https://gnosis.study/library/Gnostic/Mary\\_Gospel\\_King.pdf](https://gnosis.study/library/Gnostic/Mary_Gospel_King.pdf) — *Karen L. King translation, recommended scholarly edition*

Additional reference: King, K.L. (2003). *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*. Polebridge Press. Highly recommended for the full scholarly context of this text and its implications for the history of Christianity.

## The Gnostic Bible

A comprehensive anthology of Gnostic texts from multiple traditions, edited by Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer. Includes texts not in the Nag Hammadi collection — Hermetic writings, Mandaean texts, Manichaean writings, Cathar texts, and more. Essential for understanding the full range of the Gnostic impulse across traditions and centuries. Provides background context for the use of Gnostic sources throughout the prophecies.

**PDF:** [https://classicalastrologer.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/the\\_gnostic\\_bible.pdf](https://classicalastrologer.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/the_gnostic_bible.pdf) — *Barnstone and Meyer edition, recommended for comprehensive study*



## Part II: Jain and Hindu Primary Sources

## Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu: Twelve Facets of Reality

The primary Jain text for these prophecies. Chitrabhanu's teachings on the twelve bhavanas (contemplations), the five knowledges, anekantavada (the many-sidedness of truth), and the path of liberation through non-attachment and nonviolence are woven through all five prophecies. Chitrabhanu was the first Jain monk to leave India and bring the Jain teachings to the West, and the teacher who gave David Michael Boje the spiritual name Arihanta — you have no enemies, everyone is your friend. The Twelve Facets of Reality is the foundational text for the Jain framework applied throughout the prophecies.

**Text:** <https://jainworld.jainworld.com/pdf/12FACET.pdf> — *Jain World digital library*

Key concepts from this text that appear in the prophecies: Ahimsa (nonviolence as the highest duty, Prophecies III, IV, V); Anekantavada (many-sidedness of truth, Prophecies III, IV); Arihanta (you have no enemies, Prophecies I, II, IV); the four gangsters of ego — Krodha (anger), Mana (pride), Lobha (greed), Maya (deceit) — all five prophecies; the twelve bhavanas as a structure for contemplative practice.

## Saraswati: Primary Sources in the Hindu Tradition

Saraswati appears in the Rig Veda as both a goddess and a river, representing the flow of intelligence and eloquence. Her role expands through the Mahabharata and the Puranas, where she is named the Mother of the Vedas and the power behind all creative expression. She is the consort of Brahma and a member of the Tridevi alongside Lakshmi (abundance) and Parvati (power). Her four arms hold the veena (music), a book (learning), a rosary (spiritual practice), and a pot of water (purification) — representing the four facets of learning: mind, intellect, alertness, and ego held in check.

**Britannica overview:** <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Saraswati> — *Recommended starting point for readers new to the tradition*

**Hindu American Foundation:** <https://www.hinduamerican.org/blog/saraswati> — *Accessible contemporary introduction*

Her specific role in Prophecy V: as the voice that joins Seraph's fire with water-wisdom; as the embodiment of what the Abrahamic traditions

suppressed; as the patron of the Nones whose hunger for the sacred has nowhere institutional to go; and as the goddess whose arrival signals the completion of the angel council and the beginning of the council of goddesses.

## The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ

Nicholas Notovitch's account, later elaborated by Levi Dowling, of the 'unknown years' of Jesus — the period between his childhood presentation in the Temple and his public ministry — during which, according to this tradition, he traveled to India, Persia, Egypt, and other centers of wisdom and studied with teachers in the Hindu, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian traditions. Whether this account is historically accurate is a matter of scholarly dispute. Its relevance to the prophecies is as a narrative of the universal wisdom that pre-dates and underlies the specific traditions — the fire that was in all the old forms before those forms divided from each other.

**Text:** <https://ocoy.org/wp-content/uploads/Aquarian-Gospel-for-Awakening-2-2021-em.pdf> — *Online edition*

## The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ

Nicolas Notovitch's 1894 account of his discovery of manuscripts at the Hemis monastery in Ladakh, India, describing the travels of 'Issa' (Jesus) in India and Tibet during the unaccounted years of his life. Whether historically credible or not, this text represents the tradition of Jesus as a student of Eastern wisdom, a tradition that connects the Abrahamic and Dharmic branches of the world's spirituality and supports the ecumenical argument running through all five prophecies: that the deepest teachings of every major tradition converge on the same essential insights about nonviolence, inner divinity, and the web of mutual responsibility.

**Text:** [https://www.sindhicollege.com/pdf/e\\_books/The-Unknown-Life-of-Jesus-Christ.pdf](https://www.sindhicollege.com/pdf/e_books/The-Unknown-Life-of-Jesus-Christ.pdf) — *Sindhi College digital edition*



## **Part III: Organizational and Storytelling Scholarship**

### **Boje, D.M. & Saylor, R. (2024). The Management Thought of Louis R. Pondy: Reclaiming the Enthinkment Path**

The primary scholarly source for the organizational theory framework applied throughout the prophecies. This book reclaims Pondy's contribution to management thought — particularly his movement from bounded rationality toward entthinkment (the integration of thinking and feeling) and his conflict model in its fuller, non-linear form — and connects it to quantum storytelling, antenarrative theory, and the existentialist tradition in philosophy. Published by Taylor & Francis (Routledge).

Key contributions to the prophecies: the concept of entthinkment and its relationship to Saraswati's four-armed teaching (Prophecy V, Section IV); Pondy's conflict model applied to organized anarchies (Prophecy V, Section IV); the leadership-as-language-game framework applied to facilitation (Facilitator's Manual, Stage 6); the antenarrative approach to organizational conflict (all five prophecies).

Reference: Boje, D.M. & Saylor, R. (2024). The Management Thought of Louis R. Pondy: Reclaiming the Enthinkment Path. Taylor & Francis.

### **Boje, D.M. (2001). Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research**

The book in which the concept of antenarrative was first systematically developed. Defines the antenarrative as the before-story: the fragmented, non-linear, living narrative that precedes and shapes all official organizational accounts. The methodological foundation for the storytelling approach used throughout the prophecies.

Reference: Boje, D.M. (2001). Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research. Sage Publications.

### **Boje, D.M. (2008). Storytelling Organizations**

Further development of the quantum storytelling and antenarrative frameworks in organizational contexts. Includes the analysis of how

organizations use narrative to construct and maintain their identity, justify their behavior, and exclude the voices that would challenge the official account — directly relevant to the storytelling problem named in Prophecy IV.

Reference: Boje, D.M. (2008). *Storytelling Organizations*. Sage Publications.

### **Rosile, G.A., Boje, D.M., & Claw, C.M. (2018). Ensemble Leadership Theory**

The primary scholarly source for the ensemble leadership concept applied throughout the prophecies and the Facilitator's Manual. Drawing on indigenous governance traditions of the American Southwest, this paper argues for a model of leadership distributed across an ensemble of contributors each bringing different resources, as an alternative to the hierarchical command-and-control model. Grace Ann Rosile is the lead author.

Reference: Rosile, G.A., Boje, D.M., & Claw, C.M. (2018). Ensemble leadership theory: Lived stories of Indigenous leadership practices. *Leadership*, 14(6), 713-736.

### **Larsen, J., Boje, D.M., & Bruun, L. (2021). True Storytelling: Seven Principles for an Ethical and Sustainable Change Management**

The primary source for the True Storytelling methodology applied in the facilitation framework. Develops seven principles for organizational storytelling that are grounded in honesty, ethical accountability, and the full acknowledgment of the stakeholders whose stories are typically excluded from official accounts. Co-authored with Jens Larsen and Lena Bruun of the True Storytelling Institute, Copenhagen.

Reference: Larsen, J., Boje, D.M., & Bruun, L. (2021). *True Storytelling: Seven Principles for an Ethical and Sustainable Change Management*. Routledge.

### **Pondy, L.R. (1967). Organizational Conflict: Concepts and Models**

The foundational paper on organizational conflict, published in *Administrative Science Quarterly*. As noted in *Prophecy V* and the Boje/Saylors book, the published version was not the model Pondy had developed — the published version was an episodic, linear model that Pondy had already rejected. His actual thinking was more dynamic, more relational, and more attentive to the feeling dimensions of conflict. This paper should be read alongside the Boje/Saylors book, which reconstructs what Pondy was actually trying to say.

Reference: Pondy, L.R. (1967). *Organizational conflict: Concepts and models*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12(2), 296-320.

### **Pondy, L.R. (1978). Leadership Is a Language Game**

One of Pondy's most important and most neglected papers. Argues that the primary function of leadership is meaning-making — the creation of the frames through which people interpret their experience — rather than decision-making or resource allocation. Directly applied in Stage 6 of the *Facilitator's Manual (Build Toward the Ensemble)* and in the broader argument about organizational storytelling in *Prophecy IV*.

Reference: Pondy, L.R. (1978). *Leadership is a language game*. In M.W. McCall & M.M. Lombardo (Eds.), *Leadership: Where Else Can We Go?* Duke University Press.



## **Part IV: Peace, Nonviolence, and the Divine Feminine**

### **Gandhi, M.K.: Primary Sources**

The full form of the statement commonly paraphrased as “be the change you want to see in the world” is given in *Prophecy IV*, Section V. It is not a single quotable sentence from Gandhi but a composite of his thinking, expressed most fully in his writings on the relationship between inner transformation and outer change. The *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (100 volumes, Government of India) is the definitive primary

source. The most accessible single-volume introduction to Gandhi's thought on nonviolence is:

Reference: Gandhi, M.K. (1983). *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Dover Publications.

On the relationship between ahimsa and political strategy: Fischer, L. (1950). *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*. Harper & Row. Still the most readable single biography and the source from which the movement's organizing principles can be most clearly traced.

### **Chenoweth, E. & Stephan, M.J. (2011). *Why Civil Resistance Works***

The most important empirical study of nonviolent political action, cited in the thirty percent prophecy of Prophecy IV. Chenoweth and Stephan analyzed hundreds of violent and nonviolent campaigns for political change from 1900 to 2006 and found that nonviolent campaigns were nearly twice as likely to succeed as violent ones, and that campaigns that achieved active participation from approximately 3.5 percent of the population were consistently successful. Their research provides the empirical grounding for the thirty percent tipping point claim in Prophecy IV.

Reference: Chenoweth, E. & Stephan, M.J. (2011). *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press.

### **Deloria, V. Jr. (1969). *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto***

Referenced directly in Prophecy III as the work every American should be required to read on the history of Native American dispossession and the ongoing consequences of colonization. Deloria was the foremost Native American intellectual of the twentieth century and his critique of both the government's treatment of indigenous peoples and the anthropological tradition's misrepresentation of them remains essential.

Reference: Deloria, V. Jr. (1969). *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Macmillan.

Additional Deloria references: *God Is Red* (1973), which argues for the fundamental incompatibility of indigenous religious traditions and the Christianity that replaced them; and *Red Earth, White Lies* (1995), on the scientific misrepresentation of indigenous history.

### **Gimbutas, M. (1989). *The Language of the Goddess***

The foundational archaeological work on the goddess-centered civilizations of Old Europe, cited in *Prophecy V*'s account of the suppression of the divine feminine. Gimbutas documented hundreds of female figurines, symbolic systems, and settlement patterns from Neolithic Europe and argued that these civilizations were organized around a Goddess of Life and Death, were relatively egalitarian, and were disrupted by waves of patriarchal Indo-European invaders. Her work remains controversial in some academic circles but has been enormously influential in feminist spirituality and goddess theology.

Reference: Gimbutas, M. (1989). *The Language of the Goddess*. HarperCollins.

### **Brooks, D. (2023). *How America Got Mean***

Referenced in *Prophecy I* as the source of the 79 percent statistic — the percentage of Americans who no longer believe in the American Dream. Brooks' argument that the crisis of the American Dream is primarily a cultural and humanistic crisis rather than an economic or political one directly parallels the prophetic framework: the institutions have failed not because of policy failures but because they have lost contact with the inner fire that animated them. His concept of the ladder of loves — the movement from self-interest toward higher beauties — is referenced throughout the prophecies as the direction of the cultural turn.

Reference: Brooks, D. (2023). *How America Got Mean*. *The Atlantic*, August 2023. Also: Brooks, D. Yale University lecture series on the American Dream, referenced in *Prophecy I*.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). *Final Report***

The primary source for the statistics on residential school deaths referenced in *Prophecy III*. The Commission documented the experiences of more

than 150,000 indigenous children removed from their families and sent to residential schools, many church-operated, between the 1870s and 1990s. It concluded that the system constituted cultural genocide. The Final Report's Calls to Action provide a framework for the kind of honest accounting of historical harm that the facilitator's practice of truth-telling requires.

Reference: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report. Available at [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca).

**Assaad, M. & Wahba, M. (2012). Coalition of Immokalee Workers Research**

The Immokalee workers study referenced in Prophecy IV draws on research conducted by Boje, Rosile, Herder, and Sanchez on modern slavery in agricultural and other industries. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers has its own extensive documentation of the conditions of agricultural labor in Florida and the organizing strategies that have produced significant change.

Reference: Coalition of Immokalee Workers. [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org). Also: Boje, D.M., Rosile, G.A., Herder, R., & Sanchez, M. (research on modern slavery and the Immokalee workers, available through the author).



**Concordance Index: Key Concepts and Their Sources**

The following index maps the key concepts of the five prophecies to their primary sources. Use this when you want to go deeper into a specific idea.

Concept	Primary Source(s)	Where in the Prophecies
Ahimsa (nonviolence)	Chitrabhanu (12 Facets); Gandhi (Autobiography); Mahavir	Prophecies III, IV, V; Facilitator's Manual (baseline orientation)

Anekantavada (many-sidedness of truth)	Chitrabhanu (12 Facets); Jain canonical texts	Prophecies III, IV; Facilitator's Manual (Stage 3 reframe practice)
Antenarrative	Boje (2001, 2008); Boje & Saylor (2024)	All five prophecies; Conclusion; Facilitator's Manual (Stage 3)
Arihanta (no enemies)	Chitrabhanu (12 Facets)	Prophecies I, II, IV; Facilitator's Manual (Opening Covenant)
Asclepius Prophecy (Trismegistus)	Nag Hammadi: Asclepius 21-29	Prophecy II (primary); Prophecy III (epigraph); Prophecy V (context)
Burning Coal	Isaiah 6:5-7 (Hebrew Bible)	Prophecy I (primary); Conclusion; Facilitator's Manual (Stage 1)
Divine Feminine / Goddess	Gimbutas (Language of the Goddess); Saraswati (Rig Veda); Gospel of Mary; Secret Book of John	Prophecy V (primary); Prophecy III (Section VIII)
Ensemble Leadership	Rosile, Boje, & Claw (2018); indigenous governance traditions	Prophecies III, IV, V; Conclusion; Facilitator's Manual (Stage 6)
Enthinkment	Boje & Saylor (2024); Pundy (1986)	All five prophecies; Facilitator's Manual (foundational concept)
Four Gangsters (anger, pride, greed, deceit)	Chitrabhanu (12 Facets); Jain tradition (Krodha, Mana, Lobha, Maya)	All five prophecies; Facilitator's Manual (Stage 1, Stage 5)
Gospel of Thomas (Logion 22, 21, 114)	Nag Hammadi Library; Lambdin and Blatz translations	Prophecies II, V; Conclusion (epigraph)
Indigenous genocide / boarding schools	Deloria (1969); TRC Canada (2015); federal investigations 2024	Prophecy III (primary, Section IV)
Modern slavery / Immokalee	Coalition of Immokalee Workers; Boje et al. research	Prophecy IV (Section VII)
Nones (religiously unaffiliated)	Pew Research Center (2024); Gallup polling	Prophecies II, III, IV, V
Organized Anarchy (Pundy)	Pundy (1986 reflections on	Prophecy V (Section IV); Facilitator's Manual (Stage 2)

	conflict); Boje & Saylor (2024)	
Quantum Storytelling	Boje (2008, 2014); Boje & Saylor (2024)	Prophecy I (Rock-A-World); Prophecy IV (quantum consciousness)
Saraswati (goddess of wisdom)	Rig Veda; Mahabharata; Puranas	Prophecy V (primary throughout)
Seraphim / Seraph	Isaiah 6 (Hebrew Bible); Nag Hammadi (Asclepius)	All five prophecies; central figure throughout
Seventh Wing (Answerability)	Isaiah 6 (six wings); extended by Boje in these prophecies	Prophecy I (Section VIII); all subsequent prophecies
Thirty Percent Tipping Point	Chenoweth & Stephan (2011); network theory on norm propagation	Prophecy IV (Section X); Conclusion
Tikkun Olam (repair of the world)	Jewish tradition; Lurianic Kabbalah	Prophecy III (Section VI); Facilitator's Manual (resource table)
True Storytelling	Larsen, Boje, & Bruun (2021)	Facilitator's Manual (Stage 3); Conclusion

*This concordance is a living document. As the prophecies continue and new sources enter the conversation, this index will be expanded.*



## Online Resources and Community

### The Author's Web Ecosystem

**David Boje's Academic Work:** <https://davidboje.com/vita> — *Curriculum vitae, publications list, and access to papers*

**Storying Site:** <https://storying.site> — *Quantum storytelling practices, concordances, and teaching materials*

**GrowthOD:** <https://growthod.org> — *Monday GrowthOD sessions — organizational development through storytelling*

**Enthinkment Circle:** <https://enthinkment.com> — *Tuesday Enthinkment Circle — thinking with the heart*

**True Storytelling Institute:** <https://truestorytelling.com> — *The True Storytelling methodology and global community*

**PERVIEW Institute:** <https://perview.org> — *PerView Inc. — ensemble leadership and free coaching for veterans and first responders*

**Antenarrative:** <https://antenarrative.com> — *Resources on antenarrative theory and practice*

**Together Storying:** <https://togetherstorying.com> — *AI-assisted storytelling and organizational inquiry tools*

## Sacred Text Resources Online

**Nag Hammadi Library:** <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl.html> — *Complete collection of Gnostic texts, multiple translations*

**Gnosis Archive:** <http://www.gnosis.org> — *Gnostic Society Library — texts, introductions, and scholarly commentary*

**Jain World:** <https://jainworld.jainworld.com> — *Jain texts, practices, and Chitrabhanu's teachings*

**Bible Gateway:** <https://www.biblegateway.com> — *Multiple translations of Hebrew Bible and Christian scriptures*

**Quran.com:** <https://quran.com> — *Arabic text and multiple English translations of the Quran*

## Peace and Nonviolence Resources

**Coalition of Immokalee Workers:** <https://www.ciw-online.org> — *Model for nonviolent labor organizing and anti-slavery work*

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Canada):** <https://www.trc.ca> — *Final report and Calls to Action on indigenous residential schools*

**International Center on Nonviolent Conflict:** <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org> — *Research and training on nonviolent resistance, including Chenoweth's work*

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References are organized by section. Within each section, entries are alphabetical by author surname or, for ancient texts, by conventional title. Sacred texts are listed by their conventional title rather than translator surname for ease of reference. URLs were verified as of April 2026.

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### A Note on Sources

These prophecies draw on sources that span thirty thousand years of human spiritual and intellectual life — from the Venus of Willendorf to the Pew Research Center. They draw on sources in the academic tradition (peer-reviewed, precisely cited) and on sources in the living oral tradition of angels and horses and desert trails (received, tested, and reported as faithfully as the limits of mortal memory allow). Both kinds of sources are real. Both kinds carry weight. The reader who finds the academic sources more trustworthy is invited to read them — all URLs have been provided. The reader who finds the prophetic sources more trustworthy is invited to go north on whatever trail their life has been preparing them for, open the left ear, and listen for the signal to lift out of the static.

The wood is laid. The fire was always lit.

*Why not.*

# About the Author

## David Michael Boje

*“David Boje’s storytelling imagination burns with the fierce energy of a volcano, generating more insights in a few pages than others display in whole volumes.”*

— Yiannis Gabriel, University of Bath, UK

*“Boje is surely the greatest storytelling philosopher of our time.”*

— Jens Larsen, True Storytelling Institute, Copenhagen

*“More than anyone else, David Boje has sensitized us to the importance of narratives, plurivocality, and storytelling in organizations.”*

— Haridimos Tsoukas, University of Cyprus and University of Warwick



## The Credential of Experience

Before the scholar, there was the witness.

David Michael Boje was born in 1946. He served as a soldier in Vietnam, where he suffered three mental breakdowns and saw, through a hospital window at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon, body bags stacked on a runway higher than a two-story building. He came home to a daughter he had not been there to welcome into the world. He contracted cancer linked to Agent Orange exposure — the herbicide the military sprayed over the jungles of Vietnam — and underwent twenty-six radiation treatments. He carries gold implants in his body from those treatments, placed there to guide the laser to its mark, and tattoos on his skin that told the attendants where to aim the fire.

These are not biographical footnotes. They are the burning coal. They are the purification that Isaiah describes in the sixth chapter of his book, and they are the ground from which these five prophecies grow. A prophet who has not been through the fire is delivering theory. A prophet who has been through it is delivering testimony. David Boje delivers testimony.

He ranches with his partner Dr. Grace Ann Rosile in Caballo, New Mexico, at the foot of the Caballo Mountains, where the Rio Grande is not far and the desert trails run north into the mesquite. He practices Western Dressage with three horses named Fancy, Clyde, and Caballo. He is a Holy Fire Reiki Master, a Jain practitioner who was given the spiritual name Arihanta — you have no enemies, everyone is your friend — by his teacher Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu. He walks or runs the desert trail every morning, dictating into the air, and it was on one of those mornings that a seven-winged fire spirit of Isaiah's throne room found him in the mesquite and commissioned him as a prophet.

He is 78 years old. The cancer is taking a nap. He is still on the trail.



## **The Scholar: Forty-Five Years of Storytelling Science**

David Boje earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in 1978, where his mentor Louis Ralph Pondy — one of the great organizational theorists of the twentieth century — looked at his essays and told him: David, you are a storyteller. That is your strength. It is not in the theory work. That sentence took fifty years to fully unfold. What it has produced is one of the most distinctive and productive bodies of work in the history of organizational studies.

In 1991, Boje coined the concept of the storytelling organization with a landmark paper in the *Administrative Science Quarterly*, describing a study of story performance in an office supply firm that showed how organizations are constituted by their storytelling rather than the reverse. The paper opened a field. In 2001, he coined the concept of the antenarrative — the before-story, the fragmented, living, non-linear narrative that precedes and shapes all official organizational accounts — in

his book *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research* (Sage Publications). The antenarrative framework has been applied by scholars in organizational theory, communication studies, nursing, education, environmental science, peace studies, and indigenous scholarship across six continents.

He developed quantum storytelling — the integration of quantum physics, narrative theory, and organizational analysis — as a methodology for understanding the non-local, entangled, living quality of the stories that organizations tell and are told by. He has extended this framework through books on storytelling organizations (2008), storytelling organizational practices (2014), and the quantum age of management (2019), each building on the last in a body of work that encompasses more than forty-five published books and one hundred and fifty refereed journal articles.

In 2025, the Organizational Development and Change Division recognized this lifetime of contribution with its highest honor: the ODC Lifetime Achievement Award. Research.com ranked him #1,879 in the United States and #3,949 globally among social sciences and humanities scholars, with a discipline H-index placing him among the six thousand most cited scholars in the world.

These numbers describe the scale of the academic work. They do not describe what the work is actually doing, which is harder to measure and more important: it is keeping alive, against the pressure of the bounded rationality that Pondy spent his career critiquing and that Boje has spent his career extending that critique of, the insistence that organizations are made of stories before they are made of structures, and that the stories running beneath the surface of any organization — the antenarratives — determine what that organization is capable of becoming.

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## **The Practitioner: Communities Built and Sustained**

David Boje does not only write about organizations. He builds them.

**PerView Inc.**

Co-founded with Dr. Grace Ann Rosile, PerView Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that funds free coaching for veterans and first responders through corporate training revenues. Its methodology — PER (Processes of Embodied Restorying) and VIEW (Vibrations, Inside thoughts and emotions, Energy, and Waves) — integrates quantum storytelling with somatic healing, trauma recovery, and organizational transformation. David serves as Director of Socio-Economic-Organizational-Development (SEOD). For information and to support the mission: <https://perview.org>

## **GrowthOD**

The Monday GrowthOD sessions offer organizational development through storytelling to practitioners, consultants, and leaders across sectors. Built on the SEAM methodology developed with Henri Savall, Véronique Zardet, and colleagues in France over twenty years of training, GrowthOD applies the antenarrative framework to the real problems of real organizations: the spinning moral compass, the storytelling that justifies what should not be justified, the voices that are being left on the editing floor. For information: <https://growthod.org>

## **The Tuesday Enthinkment Circle**

Every Tuesday at 1:00 PM Mountain Time, David convenes the Enthinkment Circle — a community of practitioners, scholars, artists, and seekers dedicated to thinking with the heart. The circle practices what Louis Ralph Pondy pointed toward and what Saraswati embodies: the integration of intellectual rigor with genuine emotional and spiritual presence, the refusal to separate knowing from feeling. The circle is open to all. For information: <https://enthinkment.com>

## **The True Storytelling Institute**

Co-founded with Jens Larsen and Lena Bruun in Copenhagen, the True Storytelling Institute develops and teaches the seven principles of True Storytelling — an ethical framework for organizational change management that places honesty, accountability, and the full acknowledgment of all stakeholders at the center of the work. True Storytelling is practiced by organizational consultants, coaches, and leaders across Europe, North America, and beyond. For information: <https://truestorytelling.org>

## **The Quantum Storytelling Conference**

Held annually each December in Las Cruces, New Mexico, the Quantum Storytelling Conference brings together scholars, practitioners, artists, and spiritual seekers to explore the living edge of storytelling as a tool for organizational and civilizational transformation. Co-sponsored by the True Storytelling Institute and the Organizational Storytelling Review Journal.

## **The Antenarrative Web**

More than seventy publications on antenarrative theory, freely available, with tools for practitioners who want to apply the framework in their own organizations and communities: <https://antenarrative.com>



## **The Spiritual Path: A Life Lived at the Intersection**

David Boje grew up Catholic in the American West, spending formative years in Alaska where the landscape was alive in every part and where he first encountered, without having the framework to name it, the indigenous understanding of a world filled with intelligent presence at every level. He was educated by Jesuits, shaped by the Catholic intellectual tradition, and then broken by Vietnam and healed — slowly, incompletely, in the way that genuine healing always is — through decades of work and practice and the willingness to keep walking the trail.

After Vietnam, he found his way to Jainism through marriage and through study with Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu, the first Jain monk to leave India and bring the Jain teachings to the West. He walked the pilgrimage to Mount Palitana with his partner Grace Ann Rosile. He received the name Arihanta. He has been trying to earn it ever since — one morning trail at a time, one difficult conversation at a time, one request for his heart to be changed at a time.

He is a Holy Fire Reiki Master, trained in the tradition of healing touch that carries the quantum frequencies of connection across the apparent boundaries of the separate self. He practices shamanic journeying in the

lower and upper worlds, where he first encountered Rock-A-World the dragon who became his spirit animal, and later Ralph — his guardian angel who manifests as Louis Ralph Pundy and who arranged the introduction between David and Seraph on the Caballo trail in 2025.

He has studied the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Truth, the Secret Book of John, the Gospel of Mary Magdala, the Asclepius of Hermes Trismegistus, and the full range of the Nag Hammadi Library. He reads the Quran. He reads the Jewish scriptures. He reads the indigenous scholars. He reads the organizational theorists. He reads the quantum physicists. He is trying to find the fire that runs beneath all of these forms, the fire that was in the old forms before they divided from each other, the fire that Seraph carries and Saraswati's veena plays toward.

He was arrested for standing on a public sidewalk with a candle during the Iraq War. The charges were dismissed. Grace Ann hugged him. He has not stopped standing.



## **The Prophet: A New Calling at 78**

In 2025, on a desert trail outside Caballo, New Mexico, after twenty-six radiation treatments and the cancer taking its nap and a dream that said go north, David Boje heard a seven-winged fire spirit raise its voice through the static and say: you are now a prophet.

He said: how do I know these prophecies are not just my own wishful thinking?

Seraph said: you checked me out on Google before you left the house.

He said: why not.

The five prophecies in this book are his first attempt to do what prophets do: listen, test, and say what they hear. They are delivered in the storying voice — not the academic voice, not the theoretical voice, but the voice of a specific human being on a specific trail on specific mornings, talking to

the desert and recording what talks back. They are not predictions. They are before-stories — antenarratives of the civilizational crisis and the civilizational possibility that are already unfolding, named before the official histories have caught up with them.

He does not claim more than he has received. He does not embellish what the angels say. He muscle-tests it, asks for confirmation, stays honest about the limits of mortal memory and mortal translation. He is a prophet in the tradition of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Moses — all of whom said they could not do this, all of whom did it anyway. He is also a prophet in the tradition of the Tuesday Enthinkment Circle and the Monday GrowthOD sessions and forty-five years of organizational storytelling scholarship: someone who has spent a lifetime learning to see the stories running beneath the surface of things, and who now applies that skill to the largest story of all.

He is working with his daughter Renée, who talks to goddesses and is designing the covers of his books, on the transmission of the prophetic capacity from one generation to the next. The rainbows are forming between them. The council of goddesses has arrived.

*The wood is laid. The fire was always lit. Why not.*



## Connect with David Michael Boje

David welcomes contact from readers, practitioners, scholars, and anyone who has heard the second voice and wants to talk about what to do with it.

**Academic Vita & Publications:** <https://davidboje.com/vita>

**Storying Site (books, practices, concordances):** <https://storying.site>

**Enthinkment Circle (Tuesdays 1PM Mountain):**  
<https://enthinkment.com>

**GrowthOD (Monday sessions):** <https://growthod.org>

**True Storytelling Institute:** <https://truestorytelling.org>

**Antenarrative Theory (70+ publications):** <https://antenarrative.com>

**PerView Inc. (nonprofit, veterans & first responders):**  
<https://perview.org>

**Together Storying (AI coaching tools):** <https://togetherstorying.com>

**Quantum Storytelling Conference:** <https://quantumstorytelling.org>

## Social Media

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/DrDavidMBojePhD>

**Facebook (Antenarrative):** <https://www.facebook.com/Antenarrative>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/davidbojephhd/>

**X / Twitter:** [https://x.com/boje\\_david](https://x.com/boje_david)

**LinkedIn (Newsletter):** <https://www.linkedin.com/build-relation/newsletter-follow?entityUrn=7386928291842142209>

**LinkedIn (Storytelling Organizations Group):**  
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1770853/>



## About Grace Ann Rosile

Dr. Grace Ann Rosile is David's partner in life, in scholarship, and in the work of building the organizations described in these prophecies. A Professor Emerita of Management at New Mexico State University and a leading scholar of ensemble leadership, she is the lead author on the ensemble leadership framework that the Facilitator's Manual in this book applies to peacebuilding. Her work on indigenous governance traditions of the American Southwest and her development of equine-assisted learning practices through the PerView methodology have established her as one of the most innovative organizational scholars of her generation.

She is the moon to the author's sun — Seraph said so, and Seraph is not given to metaphor without precision. She was finding herself in Nepal when the truck did not show up, and she has been doing a magnificent job

of it ever since. She was the most alive person in the circle on the night at the Native American ceremony when the author did not yet know her name. She is the one who hugged him when he came home from the police station.

Her work on ensemble leadership: Rosile, G. A., Boje, D. M., & Claw, C. M. (2018). Ensemble leadership theory: Lived stories of Indigenous leadership practices. *Leadership*, 14(6), 713–736.

PerView Institute: <https://perview.org>