



A Guided Psychedelic Experience: Subjective Report*

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and SHIRLEY KASHOFF

A high-school drop-out in Rochester, N.Y., I returned to barely squeak through and after a period of work ranging from a machine shop to unloading banana boats in Tampa, I attended City College of New York nights and later earned the right to enter as a matriculated student. Returning to New York at war's end led me to graduate school and an incomplete Ph.D. Sixteen years ago I helped organize Community Consultation Services in New York City. Later I returned to Columbia University to complete my

work for a doctorate. Currently faculty Queens College, C.U.N.Y. Recent years have found me connecting strongly with humanistic psychology and moving out actively into international development work for the Association for Humanistic Psychology. I enjoy collaborative work and writing and seaside activities such as clamming and living off the sea. I am, naturally, a Sagittarius.
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I was born and raised in Philadelphia. In 1971 I received my Ph.D. in Human Behavior at United States International University, where I was fortunate to have Carl Rogers as my chairman. My work at present consists in part of a modest individual and group practice at my own Center, "Discovery," and in expanding and developing a course "Emotional Stress and Bodily Tension" for members of the helping professions. I am an Instructor on the faculty of the University of California-San Diego and The California School of Professional Psychology, as well as a frequent lecturer for groups of intensive care and cardiac care nurses. My hobbies and interests center around my guitar and homespun, spoof-songs, published under the collective title "Encounter Me," and in globetrotting. I live with my nine-year old son, David Eric, whom I find a most inspiring teacher and therapist. My sign is Taurus.—Discovery, 913 Hornblend Street, San Diego, California 92109.



Pre-trip, Shirley: To describe fully in words one's own LSD experience is, to begin with, incongruous and impossible. It requires

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finding words for that which is wordless; to share what is virtually unshareable; to pull in and somehow unearth a cosmic essence; to order, organize and extrapolate the experience of *nothing*—to account for an eight hour lifetime in not a vacuum but a void.

One is called upon to grasp, hold on to and integrate the fleeting details of feeling, whose very nature is elusive; to recapture and record sequences and images which, in their entirety were only bursts, glimpses and fragments. Where, in our "normal," usual realm of perception and familiar states of consciousness, can we find the rhetoric needed to communicate so much that is absurd and ambiguous, out of context in reverse, topsy-turvy, and *tohuwavohu* (Hebrew word for "upside down, inside out").

What is the language of chaos?

What is the sequence and chronology of a timeless void?

How do you communicate a fullness and beauty that is not of this world?

How can you sing a song, which has no sound?

In short, we wish to tell a story which has neither a beginning nor an end, and since the voyage itself defies all logic, reason and order, our very attempt to recount such an adventure is in itself a paradox. But we accept the challenge and will somehow endeavor to find a way to express a *wisp of smoke*.

Before telling you anything, I must first tell everything. Because everything in my life is/was relevant in preparing me for the LSD-trip, which was a trip into all of me—past, present and future, consecutively and simultaneously all rolled into one. Of course there were particulars that prompted my reaching out for such an extra-ordinary experience and very strong drives that pointed directly toward my search for a way to get deeper inside myself. And I can list particulars, and particulars *are* relevant. There were seven frustrating years of a more or less traditional psychoanalytically-oriented psychotherapy in which I made relatively little movement, growth or change. There was the birth of my son, followed closely by the death of my brother. I initiated a separation and divorce, ending an eight year marriage which somehow had never really begun. And finally my two-year bout with a near-critical illness, from which, medically at least, full recovery and cure were not considered possible.

Yet, even as I list these now, my perspective shifts and my momentary introspections, now fore-ground, move to the back-ground, where, in retrospect, strong insights as to my motives for taking LSD appear as only superficial, hackneyed hindsight—and once again I recognize how I strain with self-pressure to explain what is paramount to being unexplainable. All I know with certainty is that I'd been working for many years to get back to some critical points of departure, from which I was removed, distracted, pulled off course . . . leaving me with an intangible sense of dissatisfaction and an intense need for a personal and therapeutic sense of closure. Both in my personal and professional life I had reached an impasse. I knew I needed to move into an entirely new dimension of myself, one which simply was inaccessible by means of even the most effective of the newer therapy forms. I further recognized that I had no wish to explore yet another external resource. I felt deeply committed to find a way to somehow do it myself and finally be my own guru.

Pre-trip, Carmi: My approach to my first LSD experience was strikingly analogous to that leading up to my entering psychoanalysis years ago. I entered analysis, because it was judged essential to becoming a therapist; as it turned out, of course, my analysis was most helpful to me in my personal life, in becoming a more aware individual. Some of the same resistance that characterized my beginning psychoanalysis would come to the fore again as the hallucinogen took effect. My real analysis did not begin until the point, where I could admit that I was in analysis *for myself*. After that a greater awareness began to develop as well as an improvement in personal relationships. At the

termination of the analysis, the result was evaluated as good both by me and by my training analyst. Since then, I have attended various training weekends. Humanistic psychology captured my interest, and I was amazed at how issues that took so long in analysis could be resolved virtually overnight in behavior changes, rather than by insight. Yet up until recently, in groups of all kinds, although I felt myself to be a participant, I still needed at times to retain the cover of surveying and looking around, as a kind of advanced student-observer. Therefore, my involvement in group experience was still, to a certain extent, superficial. I began to be intrigued by LSD's reputed potential to bring a person to deeper levels of awareness than analysis or groups could accomplish. After receiving word that I had been accepted as a candidate for a clinically supervised LSD experience, I put the proposed trip on my calendar. I found out what I could about the leaders, did reading on the subject, and in other ways both conscious and unconscious tried to prepare myself.

Looking forward to my LSD-trip entailed the practical process of making out the application, arranging for my interview, and learning that I was getting into a program that involved a two or three-year plan. These activities served to take the edge off my anxiety. Also, with a formal plan and goal for myself—to become a more aware therapist and individual—as in psychoanalysis, my resistance did not make itself known until the process of the experience actually began. However, I felt myself to be ahead of the game in the sense that I knew well about the layers of defense that lay between what material I had been able to reach and to work on, and what waited beneath—the unknown me. In approaching the LSD-trip I felt surges of anticipation of finding an answer to an important question, which I could not formulate. Perhaps in the nature of all paradoxes the answer is never found on either horn of the dilemma but rather through cutting through the paradox itself. Both the question and the answer had to do with affirmation of myself. Yet, no preparation sufficiently readied me for the experiences beginning even before the drug had taken effect. For instance, I remember the unusually great confidence I had in my guide. Everytime he asked, "Any questions?" I had none. My complete trust was a kind of blind plunging. He would take care of me. My need to express such infinite trust in a hitherto unknown person may have been the lid to the negative information and warnings from people, who I had told about my coming trip. They said, in essence: You may come out like a vegetable, or you may come out psychotic. I hear the good trips are great, but the bad ones . . . It could happen either way.

The coincidence of being scheduled for my initial LSD-experience overlapping with my friend and colleague Shirley Kashoff created another level of experience which appeared important in the total Gestalt. I welcomed the opportunity to speak with Shirley of our anticipatory fantasies, anxieties and concerns. While Shirley was more directly in touch with her own anxiety and could verbalize it, I reflected mine by being unaware of any direct anxiety other than perhaps that of "not performing well." Although I went through the process of arranging for my LSD-session, I now realize how anxious I was about not being accepted in the program. This was closely followed by equal anxiety about being accepted. I hoped that I would gain greater access to myself. I recognize now the degree of denial and defense which I employed in dealing with fearful anticipation of being

outside my own control for a period of many hours. Many experiences of recent years have led me cautiously to experience genuine trust in others, to place myself literally in their hands. This particular experience, however, did arouse a level of fear of which I was scarcely aware. Although I shrugged off many threatening suggestions, which vaguely spoke of the possibility of a "bad trip" or more ominously of a "psychotic break," I recognize that frequently I have gone toward danger by really not letting myself be emotionally aware of what I knew cognitively. I considered that this experience would be, despite the risks involved, an opportunity to get much deeper inside myself than ever before. Sharing the experience of preliminary tests and interviews, acceptance in the program and finally preparation for the trip itself gave me a feeling of mutuality and subjectively provided me with a strong sense of support and encouragement. My doubts and anxieties were expressed in my joining in humorous punning and wordplay. The verbal play was rich in imagery and in symbols and I felt that the exchange helped me to sharpen my anticipatory set of mind for the actual experience. This process helped me fix more firmly the sense of where I was at the time immediately preceding the LSD-trip. I found myself reviewing and revealing significant parts of my life history, my dilemmas, impasses and struggles to Shirley. This process of mutual revelation and examination helped me clarify some of my present and future needs and life goals.

I have put together a construction of my own life and antecedents in such a way that I have come more and more to experience myself as part of an ancient people and part of a historical flow and continuity. In an odd way I have felt this to be equivalent to immortality although not in terms of my own person. This has developed over recent years and has special meaning in terms of my identification with the Middle East, particularly Egypt and Israel where I spent about two years from ages five to seven. Early personal interests strongly centered around Egyptology, archaeology, history in general, anthropology, and finally psychology. In my psychoanalysis I came to see myself as "well-adjusted stranger," a foreigner in my own country where I had lived all my life except for brief periods of travel. My life-style has indeed taken me travelling widely and purposefully through much of the world. Leading workshops, giving lectures and seminars or participating in and organizing international conferences. In recent years this travel has been directly related to humanistic psychology and encounter, my own encounter with myself and the world.

I have become more and more aware of the degree to which I protect myself from intimacy. Despite the patent irrationality involved, it has been a dominant factor in my relationships, including a long and stable thirty year marriage. Growing dissatisfaction was expressed by my wife with the degree of my outward involvement with my profession, organizations, and other people and my relatively light intimate contact with her. In the past I had experienced her dissatisfaction self-critically but have come to accept my own difference more. I have become aware of the paradox of my public "presense" and my "inward shyness." Another paradox that came sharply to mind and was focussed in the exchange with Shirley was the need to be separate in order to come together with another as a fully independent person.

Carmi's Trip: The morning of the trip comes.

I am still not aware of any anxiety and am not even anxious about that. I eat a hearty breakfast and the phrase "the condemned man . . ." intrudes itself into my awareness. I speak with Shirley and feel her anxiety for me, but none of my own. I report to the special comfortable, nicely furnished room assigned and seeing a couch made up with pillow, linen and blanket perceive the situation instantly: I am to get out of my clothes. Courageously I strip naked and only note my behavior as unusual when I see the look on my male and female therapists' faces as they enter the room.

I select Near Eastern, Indian and other related music for my trip. At first I move and sway actively and snap my fingers to the music while lying on the couch. So actively, in fact, that my earphones keep falling off, requiring repeated attention from my guides. Then I feel myself to be in the midst of the lush richness of a noisy, crowded oriental bazaar in Syria or Egypt. I feel comfortable and at home. I am excited, joyful and happy. I give in to my strong need to talk about what I am experiencing. Every new perception I want to verbalize, to communicate. From time to time throughout the trip my guides admonish me, "Don't talk. Experience!" Again and again they make me stop. The music that connects me with the historical flow of my past and childhood feelings encourages release, along with the caring presence of my guides. Nevertheless I repeatedly attempt to maintain rational control with descriptions of the process. Despite intellectual commitment and repeated agreement to stay with the experience, I continue to verbalize.

I find myself in ancient Egypt and Palestine, a happy place for me. A kaleidoscope of scenes, I am just here without plan or purpose. Somewhere this scene shifts and I have a sense of being in prehistoric time in an unidentifiable place, and another sense comes in — of being somewhere before time began. Despite my conscious feeling of pleasure I seek reference points in past memories or identification of persons in the room.

Now I am in a scene, it seems a long time ago, a hundred years ago or more in a little *stetl*. It is an East European Jewish village, like Sholem Aleichim's *Kasrilevke*, but without his gentle humor, just poverty, bleakness, and sadness. Unpaved dirt streets and many people, they all seem familiar yet I recognize no one as I wander about speaking to them in Yiddish, my real first language of childhood; but I am not a child. There is one poor, thin frail woman who stands out. I feel very compassionate, I want to help her, but I can only feel my own helplessness. She seems vaguely familiar and I want to reassure her, I want to reassure myself, that it is all right to just be and that she does not have to be any special way or any special kind of person. A great sense of profound sadness overwhelms me, a sadness of degree hitherto unknown to me. Cries and sobbing come from me without will or censure.

Now I am seeking to identify a non-existent brother and this somehow becomes fused with my male guide. I can't remember his name and I become panicky, calling out a string of names, "Andrew, Carl, Walter," only one name appearing meaningful, that of a boyhood chum and close companion from infancy to age 10 or 12. The fusion with my guide (whose name I can't remember either) is very disturbing. If I can't remember his name I can't call him, and then I will be lost. He reassures me that he is still here with me, but somehow that doesn't seem to help. I cannot figure out what is wrong, why I can't remember. Is this a part of myself that I fear losing contact with? Is it the split in myself that I fear? I am not reassured. Maintaining speech or contact seems to signify maintaining sanity or control of the experience.

A medieval tavern, it feels like France or England — The scene is crowded like a Breughel painting but the mood is Rabelaisian, lusty! I am holding on to a large buxom peasant woman, wrapped around her, intertwined with her. I feel lustful and jovial, my sweaty face in a huge grin of enjoyment — or is it a sense of forced well-being?

I find myself rubbing my chest and abdomen with agitated rubbing and pulling movements toward and away from my groin; hard, upward pulling movements. I seem to be trying to reach something forgotten. It seems close to the surface, a factual memory, a trauma at about age three? Or is it something from much earlier—an archetype? I hear myself saying "man, woman, man, woman, man." Am I dealing with my own birth, am I being reborn? I finally give it up as unresolvable and the problem of confused gender appears resolved once I give it up. Another paradox. I solve the problem by giving up the problem.

With considerable feeling and anger in my voice, I repeatedly declare that "I need it hard and sharp." But what is *it*? It feels like me, but what? Is it clarity and definiteness as opposed to ambiguity? Is it my need to test myself against something firm that will provide a needed counterforce? A vivid scene. I am holding on to a woman whom I do not recognize. She appears to be drifting or fading away from me, and now I am just holding her arm. That too, to my great surprise, begins to fade away. Finally I have hold of only her sleeve. Her sleeve appears to unravel into threads and as it disintegrates, my fingers follow and seem joined with the threads which are oozing away from me; gradually the rest of me oozes away into my fingers and into the disappearing threads. And then "I" am gone. I am vaguely aware of trying to hold myself back but cannot help myself. Again and again I have the experience of involuntary submission and surrender and a surprising feeling of relief and resolution in each instance. This feels to me like an experience in the Void, in pre-time. Remarkably, I feel comfort in the Void, comfort in the loosening of my boundaries.

I have a strong feeling of needing pressure against which to press in order to feel myself sufficiently. (Is this the "hard and sharp" that I expressed such a need for?) I ask for and get four hundred pounds or more of pressure with both my guides sitting on me. I feel myself locked in a tight place and know I must get out. I am in a rage! I never experienced such rage, and I rise from the couch to smash a low table in the room.

Several times a vignette floats into my awareness, the face of an indescribably beautiful young woman appearing to be French or English. Her appearance is exquisite in detail and I have the strong impression of a carved cameo. This vision appears for me always in association with an incredibly sweet, highpitched melody which I do not recognize and cannot remember except vaguely.

(As I write I am aware of the episodic and to me unconnected sequences and yet I know that I am the connection. Clearly when I get all this together I will be more together.)

Ready for Take-off, Shirley: The preparation and the voyage: Christmas week 1971. I'd been interviewed and tested up and down on tests of emotionality, visual- and perceptual-motor skills, sorting cards and rating scales. I'd submitted a resume and a statement of justification of my interest in such a study; finally I had undergone a careful medical examination including urine and blood studies. I felt and fully believe that I had answered all the direct questions with the utmost honesty and sincerity. To wit, Question: "Do you consider yourself a stable person?" Answer: "Hell, No!" Question: "How do you feel when you think about taking LSD?" Answer: "Scared shitless." In short I had been very 'out front' and kept no secrets. I figured that the rest was up to them and if they accepted me anyhow it was *their* responsibility. My scheduling had amazingly coincided with Carmi's so that our actual LSD-training sessions were only two days apart, during which time, pre- and post-, we would both be at the research center.

Carmi's voyage came two full days before mine. The entire day of Carmi's trip, my anxiety level reached an all time high. Not until later did I realize that on that day, as I waited for Carmi with *my* trip still two days off, I had constructed for myself in my fantasies, the most maximal conditions of psychological insecurity imaginable. I had already begun to notice imperfections in my primary therapist whom I had picked to be my guide. But on this day—Black Tuesday—my inventiveness ran amuck. I exaggerated the exaggeration and complicated the complexities by concentrating my fullest capacity for self-induced terror on the wide range and spectrum of my therapist's real and imagined flaws. By late afternoon I was certain of two things; first, that Carmi was dead and that they just weren't telling me;

secondly that I had made a terrible mistake in my choice of a therapist and that to go on now with the trip as planned would constitute the ultimate risk conceivable—with consequences too awful even to consider. I weighed several possible alternatives, but the threat of impending disaster was prominent in all of them.

At five o'clock on the dot, my head suddenly cleared. Then, for no apparent reason, my deranged state of anguish dissolved and was gone. It was as if someone had pushed a tabulator clearance button in my head, returning me to a fresh, untortured level of vitality. There were voices in the hall. I scrambled to my feet. Carmi was *back!* Not only was he alive, he was radiant. I stammered out some question or other, to which Carmi responded with a strong affirmative "Go, baby, go!" He was high and happy and I felt immeasurably relieved. That evening we partied with some of the staff and I 'babysat' Carmi. It seems to me he was more relaxed, reassured, exuberant and alive than I'd ever known him before. The next day, amidst my preparatory sessions and Carmi's follow-up sessions we watched portions of his videotapes together. Carmi was spectacular—a true Tevye *par excellence*. Sholom Aleichem himself would have found new meaning for his beloved character seeing Carmi's portrayal of himself, with all the pathos, depth and simplicity of the old *stetl* type of Jewish European soul. A beautiful day indeed.

And then, it was Thursday. I awoke with my paranoid fantasies newly reactivated. I had touched on some of them at dinner the night before but with none of the forcefulness and conviction I now felt. Carmi listened, but I could tell he wasn't convinced. He simply refused to accept my fantasies as facts. He maintained the stubborn, unbending point of view that I had invented for myself, a dybbuk. The fact was that as serious as I felt the matter to be, just by sharing it with Carmi the fear changed to a kind of playfulness that took on shades of funning and punning, which lasted from early-morning breakfast clear through to takeoff time. Interestingly, the seriousness never quite disappeared. I believe we both sensed somehow the relatedness of our words and play to the direct text of my coming trip. I noticed during breakfast how very ready I felt. I was aware of a growing sense of purpose and mission, incredibly real and strong. There was something I had to do and somewhere I had to go. There was something I had to finish, pull together and integrate. There was something new I had to discover but the new would only come out of the old, which I first had to rediscover.

I told Carmi I felt I had to go back in time to all the old archetypes of my life, the ones that had symbolically become my dybbuks. Carmi chewed that over for awhile and then thoughtfully rephrased it. "What you are reaching for, then, are your archetypes, your dybbuks, which are no doubt *archetypical*. Historically speaking, they are 'archedybbical.' Hmmm, So you are obviously in search of your archedybbuks." That broke me up for at least ten minutes. When I finally stopped laughing and dried my eyes, I realized that Carmi was 'right on.' I felt there was even more to my mission than the search for my dybbuk. I also had to climb a mountain, my mountain, and somehow get to the top. My mountain was Mount Taurus. Carmi rolled that around on his tongue. "You've got to get to the top of Mount Saurus," which somehow got converted to 'Mount Tzaurus' (Yiddish word for trouble). I joined in laughing, "and I gotta come back with Sara" (my Hebrew name). That *was* my mission. I knew it was and we'd put it together over a cup of coffee and a walk filled with symbolism, love and laughter.

'Cocktail-hour' was at 9:15 A.M. I bade Carmi farewell and he wished me bon voyage. I had my guitar with me as my security blanket and as I sat with my two therapists (my male and female guides) waiting for the cocktail and the booster to take effect, I began drifting back in time and found myself playing some very old Hebrew songs of ancient Israel. In particular I went back to one I hadn't sung for many years. It was the 13th century creed of Maimonides, *Ani maamin*, grimly revised in our own lifetime, sung and recited as a spiritual anchor by the Jews in the holocaust. Its meaning in English speaks for itself:

I believe, I believe in the coming of the Messiah,

With perfect faith I believe.

And even though he may linger and be delayed,

I still believe in the coming of the Messiah.

Time was changing rapidly and as I felt myself taking leave of the familiar here and now, I retired to the couch, where earphones and eyeshades awaited me. It was to be an inside trip—the only structure would be music coming through the phones. The rest was up to me.

Shirley's trip: It took almost no time at all for the drug to reach its powerful effect. *The moment my eyes are covered I feel myself catapulted—shooting way, way out into a vast billowy network of cumulus clouds that have the texture of cotton candy, and there are splashes of vivid color. The predominant quality is a sense of speeding jet-propulsion. All of me is undergoing a kind of shell-shock, distinctly unfamiliar, but pleasant, all my senses keenly involved, fairly bursting their seams in response to this explosive force. The sounds have a distinct quality which invades my tastebuds so sharply that my mouth becomes a living fountain of prickly spurts. Every nerve-ending comes to life and is raw with excitement. I feel shivery as radiant icecold white heat pours down my neck into my arms and tingles my fingertips. I become an exotic desertflower and feel all of myself moving with an undulating rhythm as my petals open to the greedy red-orange tropical sun.*

I am a mass of movement, swaying and dancing to the pulsation of liquid fire coursing through my veins. I become a lacy network of geometric shapes and concentric circles which somehow are really very funny and make me laugh. Now I become a buzzing, streaming, screaming nervous system taking the greatest delight in my synapses, where pinkish bright orange ganglions are playing a terrific game of hop scotch on my myelin sheaths.

I am inside and outside of me at the same time. If I want to I may just watch and if I feel like it I may participate. I feel completely and totally free, yelling out "It's All Me!"

I recognize The New World Symphony and move back to a moment of awareness as the tune of "Going Home" drifts in, bringing the memory flash of a final scene from the movie "Snake Pit." I am overcome with sadness and I sob out something about my leaving this world now because of wanting for a long time to go home. I am filled with a tremendous yearning and I think my heart will break.

I feel myself being pulled upward with an enormous force but I can't let go because at the same time I am anchored and being pulled downwards from below by a force of equal strength. I am caught in the middle and it feels like my neck will snap. I know I am holding on and I tell myself to let go over and over again. I hear myself ask, "But where am I going?" Then I remember: I am going home; and I relax. I experience a period of blissful peace, calm and serenity. Everything is as it should be and I taste total perfection for the first time.

They must have put on some powerful earthy music now, because now there is a rushing, gushing upsurge of red-hot energy, erupting through my anatomy in places I didn't even know existed. I'm not just 'turned-on,' I am super galloping skyhigh, wall-climbing turned on. I don't know what to do with myself. I just can't stay still on the couch. I'm moaning and groaning and lifting and laughing and giggly and moving until once again my head gets into the act and my uptight party—pooping computer feeds me a barrel of disapproval for my erotic misconduct. (The message is coded, but familiar: Simply feeling erotic constitutes misconduct). My head doesn't quit. The more turned on I get (and it keeps going, like a peak experience that keeps peaking), the more activated my head gets. Now I am certain I pick up disapproval from my therapist, particularly from the one I cast as dybbuk. I'm sure I hear him say, "Enough of that stuff, Kashoff. You've got more important places to go."

I panic. I try to turn myself off. All I succeed in doing is to get myself back into that terrible middle zone where I am caught between two worlds: one pulling me up, the other pulling me down. I am actually wracked with pain, certain I will break in half. I seem to sense that I am fighting myself, but I'm not willing to accept *all* the responsibility. I still strongly perceive my therapist-dybbuk pulling me down. I yell at him: "Get that weight off me!" I have to get two worlds together and I can't get them together. I'm crying. Can't he trust me and stop weighing me down? I promise I'll be good (not get turned on any more). I realize what I've just promised and get angry. I can get turned on if I want to. I'm a Taurus and this is an earth-trip and all I can do is to go on my own fucking trip. I scream at the dybbuk, I tell him to fuck off, get off my back and let me go. In that instant, I see not just one dybbuk, but three. They are all standing together in a row weighing me down, burdening me, holding me back. There is my therapist-dybbuk, my father and my brother—all in the role of my destroyers. (Both my father and brother have taken their own lives. All three of us have been victims of the same counter-revolutionary conditioning, the source of our self-destructiveness. But not until now do I realize how burdened with guilt and resentment I still feel by their deaths.)

What am I to do, which way to go? The two Worlds become symbols of life and death—But no, each is both. And each is also the other. To stay down is to choose death by never soaring again, never flying again, never being free like I was when I was out there in space, laughing and playing hop scotch. But DOWN is also life, where my body is, my excitement, my sensuality. And UP is not just freedom, it is also The Great Unknown. There is not only light. There is darkness out there and even death. (The conflict has another dimension. My father and brother have not only destroyed themselves; it appears that they are out to destroy me. There is a look of viciousness and vindictiveness on their faces. [They never made it; why should they let me.] I feel a sense of contest, as if I am being strangled. They are telling me that if they let me go and I get to the top, their chance of making it will be forfeited. They are saying we can't all make it, it is either them or me.)

I understand *all* of this—in the flash of a moment.

In a split second I am catapulted out and up. It is as if I am being shown, in a flash, the road I need to take to get to the top of my mountain. I am only given a faint glimpse of the road and then I am lifted up and delivered to the top of my mountain. I find myself atop Mount Taurus, the Kingdom of Light and Glory. There it is. In a second's time I have confirmed the answer I was looking for. There is a place up here for everyone. There is a separate marker for everyone, a gold placemark for each of us. I look around. No one's name is missing, no one is left out and no one has to be left out. No one is sacrificed, substituted or forfeited. That had been my suspicion all along. I was right. No one needs to step on anyone else to get here. No one has to kill or be killed. No one goes in anyone else's place. Neither is anyone excluded by another. There is room for everyone. Neither destruction nor self-destruction are part of the Actual design.

We just *all* meet up here together. I knew I had been right. And now if only there were a way to tell them.

I could stay longer—forever maybe, if I want to—but I am afraid of being greedy and taking too much, so I choose to leave. Besides I have found what I was looking for and now feel content as well as compelled to go on. There is still more to do. I haven't finished yet.

I don't leave gently. Suddenly I am popped off my mountain and thrown clear out into the midst of darkness and abyss. I feel terror and reach for something to cling to. There is nothing to cling to but the darkness. All I know, all that is familiar tells me to hang on, hold on—to anything, even to nothing. So I hold on with my body. I hold on with my neck, I grit my teeth and hold on with all of me. I almost collapse with pain. In one instant I see what I am doing: I am going to hold on 'till it kills me. Is that what I want to do? I have to make another choice. I am spinning wildly out in space, picking up more and more speed. The more I try to hold on, the faster I go. I yell out something—"You're a fucking mess, Kashoff. Give up the fight and surrender!" My voice changes and Kashoff answers: "I keep getting lost, don't I? And I keep holding on, don't I? Mark this well. Mark it well. This is the place where I hurt myself." And the other Voice says: "You know you can get out of this if you want to." And Kashoff answers: "Yeah. I'm in pain and I'm stuck. But I've got to stay stuck a little longer. The pain is not bad enough yet."

As I whirl through space separated from my tortured body down on earth, I look for the road I had been shown hours ago, years ago. It seems to me that I remember a big wide road, painted white and well lit. The only roads I see now are tiny ones. None of these could be mine. They aren't big enough. One tiny one looks familiar, but I won't trust it. I swoop down and take a close look. It has my name on it, but it is leading down instead of up, so I won't take it.

For one last time I distrust, and I am hurled out into darkness again. There is nothing but a void—a chaotic void. Faces and voices whiz past me, tittering and jeering. They are my three dybbuks, laughing at me, laughing at the answer I thought I found. I am so set on proving their destructiveness wrong that I am busily destroying myself. I see my mistake: I am trying to be my brother's keeper, but I'm not willing to be my own.

I am finally ready to surrender. A total unconditional surrender—this time to the void. I ready myself with clenched teeth but the pain on earth only gets worse. I've waited too long. There is nothing left to surrender to. I get a glimpse of myself whirling out there forever—eternally lost. I must do something, but I can't think of anything to do. I cry out for help. "I have to surrender." How do I surrender, what do I do to let go? And I hear my own voice answer, "All You Have To Do Is Nothing!" Nothing, nothing, nothing. Oh, god, what a joke—what an incredible joke. I put myself through such hell, only to be released by doing nothing.

Down on earth I laugh and laugh and laugh, and out in space the spinning slows down and I am gently dropped onto my own special footpath—the one with my name on it. The path leads straight back to earth and safety. I feel myself land and remember. Have I forgotten anything? The others of course. Have I only made it back alone? Did I destroy anyone to create my own safe return? I turn around and see them, all three dybbuks. I've rescued them all—very simply by rescuing myself. They are still bound to me, and have been all along. So they were automatically safe as soon as I was. I hear myself say, "I don't think I could have held on much longer. I didn't want to lose that badly."

(My mission was complete. I had found my old dybbuks and tried the old way and when it failed I had tried something new and won: Surrender. My mission had been rescue, not destruction. I felt myself bask in enormous gratitude and finally let go again—this time with tears of relief and appreciation. My final surrender.)

Post-Trip Shirley: There were a number of paradoxes I ran into along the way; enormous cosmic paradoxes, jokes really. These are the ones I have come up with so far: To find anything you must first lose everything. God is never where you expect to find him. You have to accept all of your earthiness before you can experience the spiritual realm. You cannot destroy without being destroyed. You cannot be destroyed unless you want to be destroyed. You cannot be your brother's keeper until you are your own. You must go in alone but once you are in, you are no longer alone. You have to get back by yourself, yet in finding your own safety you have created safety for others. By attempting to control anything you lose everything. Rejecting pleasure brings on pain. The only way to free yourself is through surrender. Any effort to surrender is no longer surrender. The only way out of an impasse is through the impasse. In attempting to hold on to an experience, you lose the experience. In reaching for an answer, there is no answer. The most fertile resources come out of a void. I couldn't go up until I went down. The path up started by going down. Struggle is the opposite of surrender, but surrender only has meaning once you have struggled and lost. There is no process except your own. There can be no surrender except total surrender. There are no guarantees for risks, but without risk there is nothing. Unless the stakes are high there is nothing to win. If you reach for anything but yourself you wind up with nothing. The only real help anyone can give us is to help us trust our own way. And finally, there is no one true path to the Kingdom of Glory, there are only billions of tiny footpaths from which we must discover our own. Anyone else's path will get us lost; only our own leads towards freedom. *And so my new learning begins.*

Post-Trip Carmi: I came in touch with two aspects of myself that had been heretofore unavailable to me: rage and pain. The rage had evidenced itself in the smashing of the table; the pain and sorrow in the cries torn from me and from my deep sadness. So often I express feelings indirectly, but here I was face to face with levels of feelings, sadness, pain, compassion, rage I had never really touched. This was part of what my trip was for—to get in direct contact with these levels of myself.

With Shirley's help, I got back in touch with some very special moments of my trip: exquisite moments of simplicity and wordlessness. As we watched parts of my tape, she recounted the tale of Sholem Aleichem's character, Bontche Schweig, who after a life of abject poverty, deprivation and piety reaches heaven where he is encouraged to ask for anything he wants. After much reflection, he answers, "Could I, could I, may I have a roll and butter?"

I broke out of my tight place and felt purposeful and right in doing so. Was this a form of rebirth? Giving birth to my own freedom of emotional expression? Is there a relationship between my lust and joy in the tavern and punishment and confinement following? Is this my own guilt which I must also break away from? Rage and anger at being restricted and held in appear to be projected against women, and I storm against "a cold bitch." (The image of the beautiful young "cameo" woman has remained hauntingly with me. It feels foreign to me and yet familiar and attractive, so different in quality from the images of either a poor frail woman or a buxom peasant woman. Is this in some way an image of an aspect of myself, an idealized self?)

Another important sequence in my Trip was the one of confused gender. At times I seemed to be trying to ascertain who I was, whether man or woman. I didn't know. I pulled upward from my groin area as though pulling my sexuality into myself. Finally I gave up the issue as unresolvable. The resulting feelings which lasted after the Trip are of feeling good about myself; though not as fixed about my maleness, perhaps more of a man. The implication is that gender identity may be easier to come by when the rules are less strict and the pressure is off. An increased sense of self accompanies this relaxation, and in me fostered my experience of greater integration. Although there were still many control features present, I succeeded in really going beyond many boundaries for the first time. I was exhausted, but satisfied. There was a flow and sureness about myself and a conviction about my strength of being. I know that I am doing what I want to do, although I am not always sure *what*. I felt sadness and loss in the Trip, but mostly a good feeling. I felt there were things I wanted to change in my life, particularly my marriage, which had become much less meaningful over the past several years. I do not find myself at this writing critical of my marriage or of my wife, but more inclined to regard it as what was necessary to my own growth and development. The principal learning, which I am attempting to take from my marriage is that separateness and clarity of separate identity appears to me essential to interrelationship. I feel strongly that a sense of freedom and choice is essential to clarity. These last few lines feel rather cold and intellectual and yet the quality which I am attempting to describe appears very real and emotional. To some extent, what I am attempting to put down on paper is my thoughts that true relationship is not a merger, but rather a coming together with a clear contract and no hidden agenda. I think my wife and I moved toward separation as a sign of maturation rather than as a negatively stated marriage failure. The strength I see is that we both came to see our own sense of self and individuality as more important to us than remaining together. Undoubtedly we could find many grounds on which to remain together and yet this would seem at this writing to take away from each of us a quality of freedom, productivity and new vigor.

In many ways an LSD-trip or dissolution of a marriage represents a trip into the unknown. There are no real guidebooks which chart the way and there is a departure from safe and known conventions and habitual responses or non-responses. My appetite has been whetted and I feel a resurgence of curiosity and an edge of excitement at getting at my own inner and outer unknowns. I find myself thinking of Hillel's phrase:

If I am not for myself, who am I?

If I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?

To be for myself I must really know myself much better and not in the former traditional ways in which I have learned to know myself. I find that I want much more, I need much much more, and I am more in touch with many negative aspects of myself. But the opening of myself to greater awareness has also resulted in my being more aware of many positives and much more self-affirmation. Another result of which I am aware is that I am much more truly accepting of others in a way that is similar to my own greater self acceptance.

My general feeling of well-being lasted for many months. I grew eager to

return for the next Trip. I felt that I could take a *better* Trip next time with a vow of silence and a commitment to feel what I feel without explaining it away.

Integration, Carmi: As I report my subjective experience in finding in the LSD experience a means of being in closer touch with my own center I am also very aware that my path is not the only path. There are many paths to the truth and to the center. Curiously as I reflect on this very statement I am struck by the fact that although I value my own experience and my continuing experience in a clinically directed research program that I do not find myself an advocate or salesman to others of what has proven useful for me. I think that a variety of experiences with yoga, zen, meditation or other approaches may equally lead to altered states of consciousness and may singly or in combination with pharmacological approaches prove to be an effective path toward enlightenment for other people. As I think of it more these other modalities of approach might well prove useful to me in my own seeking if undertaken intensely.

I know of some of the research findings with patients diagnosed as schizophrenics, with patients with terminal illness such as cancer and am impressed with the results obtained. As for general uses in mental health work the very process, which has led me to feel great confidence in the effects of LSD-treatment for myself a sense of caution impels me to urge more research on applications in clinical practice with a wide range of persons coming for therapeutic help. I am most impressed however, with the effects on myself as a clinician and am aware that in many instances my sensitivities are greatly increased, particularly in the areas of peripheral interpersonal phenomena and my greater boldness in addressing myself to them. This leads me to say that for the clinician and the clinician in training, LSD training or an equivalent means of coming more in touch with one's inner and outer experiential worlds is of enormous value. I am impressed by a process, which has united me with greater sureness with my own ancient archetypal wisdom and have found this a way to overcome my heavily weighted intellectual side in favor of a greater capacity for direct emotional experience and response.

The question of how to assess my own growth and change makes me aware of my bias and subjectiveness. To outside eyes I may well appear "crazier" or "less responsible," taking greater risks, putting aside appropriate caution and risking outside approval of myself. I need to risk my own self-evaluation as holding a deeper and more meaningful truth. More than ever I am convinced that I have complete responsibility for myself and am quite willing to accept the consequences of my own choices and behavior. Only I can give or withhold approval from myself. The LSD experience is a journey alone. It is embarking on Life. And when I was there, everyone I needed was there. Following the trip I found myself with greater frequency calling people who were just about to call me. I have noted an increase of "coincidence" in contact and relationship with friends and acquaintances. The remembrance of a particular person whom I have not seen for some time occurs a split second before we meet accidentally in some unlikely place. Or else, the night before we meet, I have dreamed of the particular person. I more readily accept ESP-type experiences, both my own and those that friends and clients present to me. I need less to cling to facts and logic. Without knowing where my intuition is coming from, I often act on it with a sense of certainty. My pull toward the irrational

has increased. I note corresponding increase in productive functioning in my professional and personal life.

Integration of the LSD experience has been an unfolding process and I am even more aware of the significance of "set and setting" as influencing and being influenced by LSD. I think of it now as an important catalyst to enhance processes already underway. I am struck by the fact that although in many areas my reactions remain as fast or faster than in the past my certainties have diminished greatly. I am aware of a considerable increase in flexibility in direct and immediate awareness of alternatives, even though they may not always be discernable at the moment. I am less ready to judge where a given individual is on the continuum of adjustment or adaptation and this has increased greatly my growing negative view of diagnostic labels and categories. I regard categorizing what we do not understand as a means of pseudo-explanation. I feel similarly about classification in science, when we give mysteries the appearance of certainties by naming them. The directional signs East and West are merely arbitrary impositions on what is and aid voyaging and discovery rather than representing reality. I have an increased sense of humanistic psychology, which is much more concerned with processes, than with mere end goal gaining. I sense and feel the unknowable as a path to more serious contemplation and knowledge of my world, interior and exterior.

Interaction and Reflections, Shirley: For many weeks now I've been reaching for a statement, an extraordinary statement that would finally summarize with profound erudition the wisdom I gleaned from my LSD adventure. I wanted somehow to share with Carmi a concluding statement about process, ego-involvement and conditioning. There are no words that are intrinsically profound, and in reaching for wisdom and profundity, of course, I find none. In striving for mastery and coming up with confusion. I once again have the sense of becoming my own paradox, which paradoxically reinstates a kind of clarity.

I presumed in my session to instruct my dybbuks about their destructiveness. Instead, I learned a great deal from them. I learned that they were my creations and that my ego-involvement with them, my fantasies, projection and past conditioning, were not resolveable in the conclusive fashion I earlier would have designed for my goal. For instead of a goal, I found a process. And the changes that have come about are modifications rather than new endings.

I brought my dybbuks back with me. I didn't need to leave them behind to make my resolution. Having returned with them, I feel no need for an "exorcism"; and have no wish to bury them, destroy them or get rid of them. So often there is a notion that to be therapeutic you must deal with something and finish it. I have changed my thoughts on that. Instead of a disintegrative ego process I experience a new level of integration and synthesis. I have invented my dybbuks. They are a part of me, the part I learn to bury, hate, reject. My dybbuks symbolize the Void: they are my images and my darkness, my ignorance and fear, my sleep-state. I rejoice now in their safe return and delight in the symbolism of a greater level of self-acceptance. My dybbuks themselves contain the kernels of new learning for me, a level of growth consistent with inclusion rather than exclusion.

I wish to express my thanks to my friend and teacher, Dr. Russell Paul

Schofield, Founder of the School of Actualism, whose instructional tools of enlightened work with expanded states of consciousness have been invaluable in the processing of my LSD experience. Reaching more and more into cosmic dimensions of our awareness, there is a growing need for information and tools to process the discoveries of the Void. It is easy to get lost in so much darkness. We must reach for the tools of enlightened awareness.

Carmi's Response: In writing together with Shirley, bridging 3000 miles by telephone, my processing goes on with a sharp and welcome resurgence of feeling, full feeling. Cold shivers, moments of incredible elation, beautiful and ecstatic moments and deep pain, but the JOY OF FEELING. Shirley just called to add:

One small sequence has been concluded.

A moment of rapturous closure

And then

Another vital

Beginning. □

FALSE START

By JUDY ROCK*

A gathering hope
focused the tenuous days.
I saw the sun rise yellow,
full of promise,
a blazing crack of light
like a slit eye
staring under the door
of my mind's tunnel.
Standing dizzy in the morning glare,
I swayed too far
and fell away from the timid ridge
over one sheer edge of the double abyss.
The sunrise turned to rock
from the depths of darkness
and fell on me.

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