

Ancient Astronauts Modern Mysteries

JOHN A. KEEL

UFOs AND SOUL SHIPS

Ancient peoples believed that great "soul ships" cruised the night skies, collecting the Spirits of those who had just died in order to transport them to some far-off world beyond the stars. The Egyptians visualized the human soul as a bird fluttering upward from the inert body. Great Pharaohs were buried with a large boat designed to carry them heaven-wards. Some modern religions maintain similar beliefs.

The fact that UFOs have a curious habit of hovering over funeral homes and cemeteries has added to this lore. Death—the ultimate mystery—plays an integral part in the flying saucer phenomenon.

A New York psychiatrist once asked me if I'd ever heard of deceased people appearing in flying saucers. He told me how a young patient, a teen-aged boy, claimed to have witnessed a UFO landing and was astonished to see his late father emerge from the object. The psychiatrist knew nothing of UFOs and assumed the whole thing was nothing but a childish fantasy. Actually, however, there have been hundreds of similar reports although they are usually ignored by the hard core believers in extraterrestrial spaceships.

The most famous event of this kind took place in England in 1965 when a witness claimed to encounter a flying saucer occupant who identified himself as "Yamski," implying that he was the reincarnation of George Adamski, a world-renowned UFO contactee who had coincidentally died in a hospital in Washington, D.C., *the day before* the UFO landing in Great Britain.

These strange cases lead inevitably to the question: are UFOs actually connected to the haunted realm of the human psyche inhabited not by all-knowing spacemen but by the spirits of the dearly departed of our own narrow reality? Modern Christians believe that Christ will one day descend to Earth in the midst of some great glowing cloud,

just as tradition asserts that the body of Christ was removed from the tomb by a trio of white-clad beings who came down in some noisy aerial object. In fact, the religious beliefs of all cultures overlap into the still philosophically undefined world of ufology. While a few thousand hard nosed UFO researchers maintain that UFOs are the product of a corporal world with an advanced technology, many millions of people continue to believe that the mysterious objects are part of some religious cosmic system. The ancient concept of soul ships still remains with us.

THE ULTIMATE TRIP

"I came away from the meeting with the feeling that the followers were going to die," a man in Eugene, Ore., recently stated after attending a lecture by two strange people who professed to have the ability to guide people to a rendezvous with flying saucers. That meeting in Oregon received national publicity after about 20 people abandoned their homes and families and wandered into the sunset. They had been promised a union with the cosmic forces behind the UFO phenomenon even though their guides suggested that the trip would be agonizing.

There have been many such meetings and many such groups in the past 28 years. Usually they receive little or no publicity. Five years ago several dozen young people in New York City suddenly abandoned their normal pursuits and traveled to New England to a secret rendezvous with a flying saucer. They were never heard from again. Others in Ohio and West Virginia pulled up their roots and disappeared during the big UFO wave of 1966-67. Since those meetings fell into the category of cultist activities the so-called "scientific ufologists" paid no attention.

What really happens to the victims of this curious game? Perhaps they just

assume new identities and take up new lives in some other place. Or perhaps they sacrifice themselves in secret rites on isolated hill tops as men and women have been doing since the beginning of time. Death is the ultimate trip and brainwashed humans have frequently embraced it in the belief that dying would free their spirits and enable them to travel beyond the horizon in those soul ships.

For thousands of years willing young men and women were publicly sacrificed to the gods in elaborate ceremonies. These practices continued into the 20th Century in many parts of the world. The victims believed they could join their gods through death. Human sacrifices were discontinued in some cultures and animals were substituted. Even the Old Testament offers detailed instructions on how to prepare animals for sacrificial burnings. Esoteric cults still practice human sacrifices secretly throughout the world. The victims are usually small children who have been kidnapped for this purpose. Occasionally, New York's Central Park is littered with the bodies of chickens, dogs, and cats that have been slaughtered in nocturnal voodoo rites. In recent years thousands of cows, bulls, and horses have died very mysteriously throughout the U.S. their carcasses expertly mutilated and all their blood somehow extracted from their veins. The bizarre practices of mankind's darkest ages still survive.

MEN LIKE GODS

The writers who have revived interest in the long lost "Age of the Gods" have carefully omitted the ugly truths about that superstition-wracked era. It was a time of enslavement when the mysterious gods wielded the power of life and death over their human subjects. Men were forced to build great pyramids and monuments in tribute to their masters. Periodically, thousands of people were obliged to lay down

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their lives during the sacrificial ceremonies held on special holy days. Others willingly submitted to horrifying mutilations. Women surrendered one or both breasts to their priest's ceremonial knife. Men actually allowed holes to be bored into their skulls (thousands of these perforated skulls have been dug up in Europe and the Americas). It was also believed that emasculation could lead to a closer unity with the gods and millions of men voluntarily submitted to castration; this cult still exists in parts of Asia.

Mutilation and death have always been regarded as certain means for joining the gods. In the Orient, extreme forms of these beliefs have always been dominant. The western interpretation is that the Orientals hold that "life is cheap." Actually, they do not fear death because they believe life is eternal. Death is followed by rebirth in another body (reincarnation), or transference to a cosmic intelligence, according to the Eastern theology. The same beliefs have been advocated by the contactees of the New Age, though slightly warped by the materialistic scientism that is also part of ufology.

In the past, those who left their homes, families, and friends, behind to march to the beat of some otherworldly drummer probably faced death under a ceremonial blade as the first requirement in attaining godly status. A few gifted with the ability to perform astral projection may have shrugged off the mortal coil painlessly by permitting their consciousness to wander away from their body and snap the legendary "silver cord" that binds the soul to the human shell.

It has always been promised that men would one day be like gods as the final step of evolution. But this attractive promise would really mean entering a nonmaterialistic world as bodiless free-floating masses of energy. The gods are thus without souls just as they are without bodies. Freed from this physical reality, they drift into another dimension of space-time; a dimension closely related to that sector of the universe which produces the manifestations seen in our world as UFOs and ghosts. A different set of laws governs this eerie twilight zone, and physical matter—which is merely a form of energy in our reality—is flexible and effusive. So it is not extraordinary for items spilling over from that dimension to this one to take up new forms and defy our natural laws. In a sense,

that other world is no more stable than the world we create in our dreams. It is populated with monsters and demons as well as with gods. And it is lit not with the rays of some distant sun but with the sweeping energy of the cosmos itself, dazzling in colors that do not even register in the narrow field of human eyesight.

Since the flying saucer mystery was revived in the 1960s there has been an explosion of new religions. Many of them are based on the proven brainwashing techniques of repetitious chants and mantras, and millions of people have forsaken our materialistic world for the vague spiritual comforts of that extradimensional place. They have surrendered their minds and bodies to the control of those mysterious forces which once led us to the bloodied altars on the summits of pyramids. At the same time, the feeble threads that hold our materialistic world together have been weakening. Scientists grumble that we may even be facing extinction, but all the signs and portents suggest that we face extermination instead. We are not in the process of becoming gods but, perhaps we are in the process of melting into that other space-time continuum which lies beyond survival, beyond existence, beyond death. ★