

InPresence 0072: The Necromanteion and The Psychomanteum with Jeffrey Mishlove

Video Transcript - *New Thinking Allowed* with Jeffrey Mishlove

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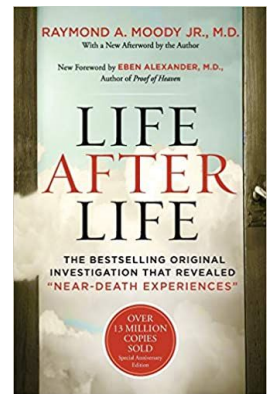
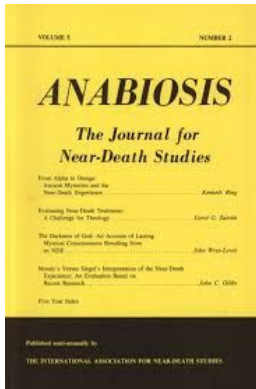


Recorded on May 2, 2018

Published to YouTube on May 12, 2018

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(00:18) Hello, I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today, I'd like to talk about the Necromanteion and the Psychomanteum. These are terms relative to the work of Raymond Moody, my friend who is the author of a famous book, I think 20 million copies have been sold by now, *Life After Life*, in which he really introduced to the medical world and the scientific world in general, the concept of the Near Death Experience (NDE). Subsequently, it's enfolded - enfolded isn't the right word - subsequently, it has unfolded into a major movement, including an international association and a journal and many, many scholars now interested in the question of Near Death Experiences from spiritual perspectives, and from biological perspectives, and parapsychological perspectives.



(01:22) Well, Moody went on - and he's also a philosopher and a scholar of ancient cultures - and he noted for example in Homer's *Odyssey* that there's a section in which Odysseus, who is eager to get back home, participates in a ritual that enables him to contact the spirits, the Shades as I think they may have been referred to, of the Greek warriors. Achilles and the other warriors come to him and give him various advice about how he will eventually return home and what obstacles he will have to face. And then, at the end of this scene in Homer, so many Shades are eager to talk to the living that Odysseus becomes overwhelmed and has to flee from the experience.

(02:13) Now, Moody was also aware of the fact that, in the ancient Greek culture, there were said to be temples, underground temples, in fact even like villages where everyone lived underground. These were places that have now been excavated where people would come, aspirants who wished to communicate with the deceased. They went through various rituals, purifications, sacrifices, and eventually they were taken to an underground chamber where there was a big basin and it was highly polished, or in some instances, perhaps filled with water so that the surface was a reflecting surface, in either case, like crystal gazing perhaps. It was in a dark underground cavern, dimly lit, and people would gaze into this basin and experience communication, presumably with their deceased loved ones, who would appear to them in the shiny surface of the basin.

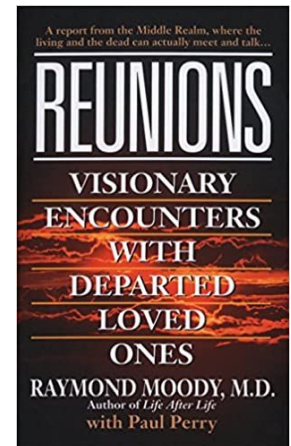
(03:22) Based on this knowledge, Moody began experimenting with a device that he called the Psychomanteum. Now, I say a device, but actually, the room that I'm in right now, this studio could function as a Psychomanteum. It's really a room or a small enclosed chamber. It needs to be almost completely dark, ideally perhaps completely dark, but a tiny little amount of light would be okay. And then in the room is placed a mirror. So, the process works like this: now let me explain. Moody called it a Psychomanteum, not a Necromanteion. In other words, from his point of view as a psychiatrist, this is not necessarily or for any reason in his mind, evidential of survival after death. He regarded it largely as a vehicle for grief counseling.

(04:23) The way he would approach the Psychomanteum is that people would come for counseling. They would have at least one lengthy counseling session, perhaps several, maybe two to four hours of counseling - two two-hour sessions let us say, or at least one two-hour session - in which they would talk about why they wished to have communication with a departed loved one. Now, presumably a loved one, I mean, I suppose it might be like a police detective wishing to speak with a deceased victim in order to learn who committed a murder, but that's really not the purpose, to my knowledge, to which it has ever been put.

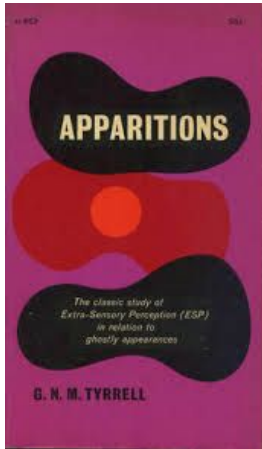
(05:09) So, there's counseling involved in which a person talks in detail about the deceased loved one and incomplete communications that may exist. It's a form of preparation for entering into this darkened room. Then people go into the room and sit there, and usually for at least two hours, in the dark room with the mirror. Studies have been done now - I think there are probably half a dozen or more research papers that have been published on this approach. In one study with seven participants, all seven of them experienced some level of what they thought to be an altered state of consciousness involving, for them, a communication with their deceased loved one.

(06:01) In another study that I'm aware of, there were 100 participants and 63 percent of them reported some level of communication. Now, sometimes that communication is incredibly vivid. Raymond Moody himself reported on an instance - and this is quite unusual I think - he spent a few hours in the Psychomanteum, nothing happened. Then, he came out. As I recall, it was a few hours later or perhaps even the next day, he walked into his living room in his house in broad daylight, and there, sitting on the sofa was a deceased aunt of his. He came and he sat down with her and they had a conversation that went on for about an hour and a half. He felt that she was solid, physically present, although he didn't touch her, to my recollection. But, they had this very intense communication. Then, he got up to leave and he turned around to look and she was gone - very, very vivid apparition.

(07:14) Now, when you ask him about it, he will say, he regards this experience as completely psychological, that it offers no evidence whatsoever of survival, but in the history of psychical research,



there are many studies having to do with apparitions, and many of them are quite suggestive of survival and/or also suggestive that living individuals are also capable of projecting an apparition of themselves.



(07:46) Now, what is the lesson for you in all of this? Do you have a deceased loved one where you feel like there might be incomplete communication? How difficult would it be for you to create a Psychomanteum, a darkened room that you could sit in with or without a mirror. I don't know how important the mirror really is since the room is dark anyway for two hours. Would it be a good thing for you to do? Would it be good for you to have some counseling or a friend to talk to, to help you go through the experience and also, I should say, to process afterwards. Because the psychological digestion and integration of these experiences are probably just as important as the experience itself. I believe that

we don't know for sure whether the Psychomanteum can produce actual veridical evidence of survival or not. I think more research needs to be done above and beyond the handful of published papers. But, I'm sharing this with you now because I think it's not at all difficult to create the Psychomanteum, and some of you may indeed wish to do so. Thank you for being with me. (09:11)

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