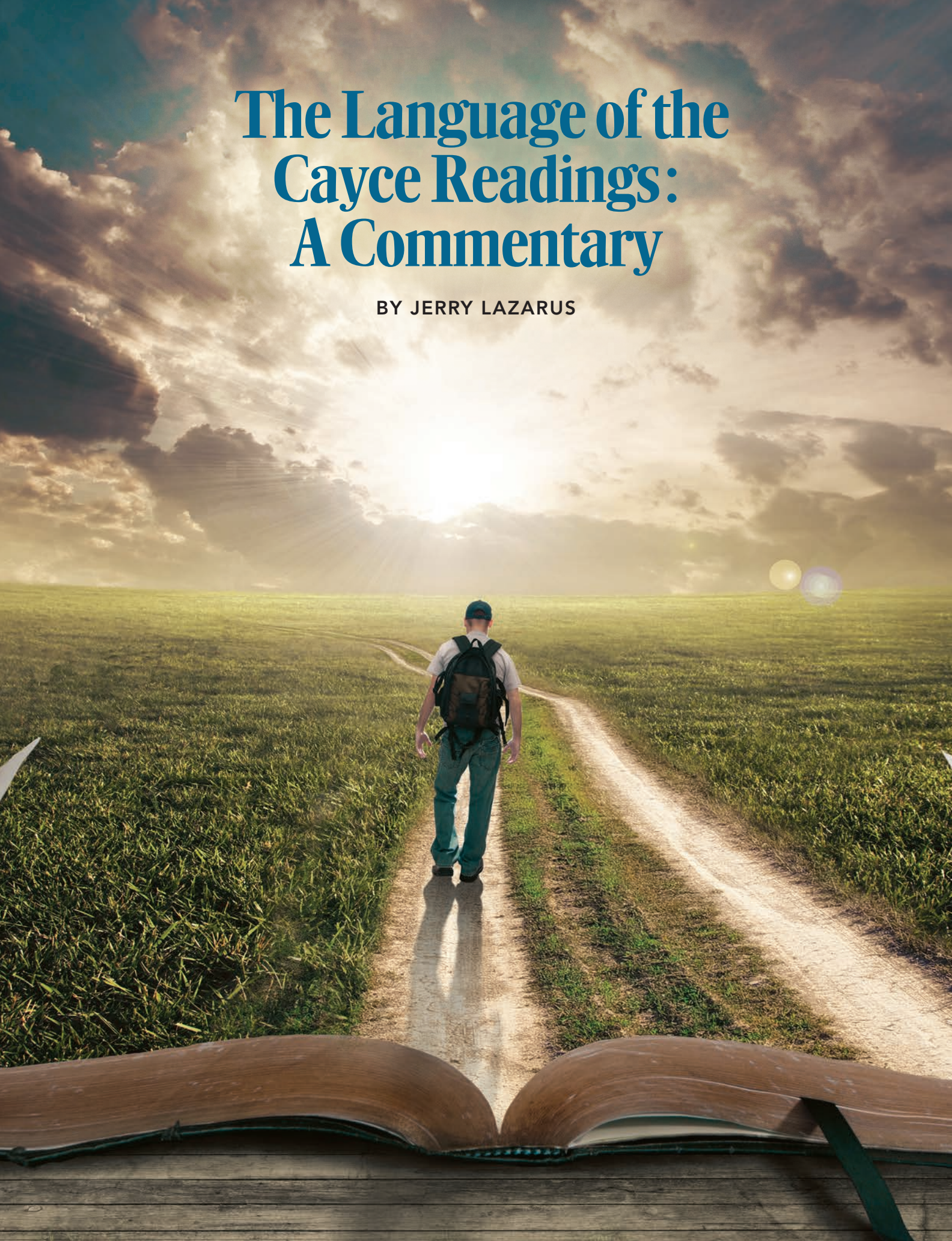


The Language of the Cayce Readings: A Commentary

BY JERRY LAZARUS



“How can the infinite be communicated with a finite language?”

UNLIKE WRITERS WHOSE WORKS ARE OFTEN edited before publication, Cayce’s words in the readings were transcribed exactly as they were spoken by the entranced Cayce. The first version was the final draft. The language can be befuddling, grammatically incorrect, and clumsily structured, with problems of syntax, readability, and lack of clarity. A long paragraph can be one sentence propped up by commas, dashes, colons, and semicolons. Yet the words are inspirational, practical, original, moving, and holy. They are a study in contrast, oscillating between the extremes of evoking frustration on the one hand and inspiration on the other.

For three decades, I’ve been studying the readings, along with writing and speaking about many topics in them. I’ve also been in groups where we’ve studied the readings. My first group was A Search for God Study Group hosted by June and Harmon Bro. Both were friends of Edgar Cayce, and Harmon Bro wrote *A Seer Out of Season*, a biography about Cayce. During my two years of close friendship with Harmon, we discussed many aspects of the readings, including their difficult language.

Later, I participated in four different study groups and a healing group in which we discussed the 281 series of readings given for the Glad Helpers. As group members took turns reading, even the seasoned ones stumbled, pausing at the wrong places, stopping when the reading hadn’t. Some apologized, blaming themselves for reading it wrong, as though it was their fault. We’d start over again. Someone, shaking their head, would ask, “Can anyone translate that into English, please?” Another would murmur, “What the heck is Cayce saying?” Others asked, “How are we supposed to understand that?” In *A Passage to India*, E. M. Forster captured this experience: “A pause in the wrong place, an intonation misunderstood, and a whole conversation went awry.” It’s easy to get lost in a maze of words. But there are reasons why the language of the readings is the way it is.

Many Dimensions and Realms

The language of the readings is uniquely its own and the content is anything but perfunctory. Entering into a state of deep meditation, Cayce peered into the unknown, to sketch for us what he perceived, while delivering this information in the language of the world we live in. He exhausted the resources of our language, stretching it in every direction to explain the vital, complex subject matters he drew from an inexhaustible source. How can the infinite be communicated with a finite language? At times, the readings themselves acknowledged the predicament: “Judge not the infinite work of God through

the finite mind. . . .” (900-216) Elsewhere, while explaining a soul’s sojourns through other realms, Cayce said: “To give them form or shape—you have no word, you have no form in a three-dimensional world or plane of consciousness to give it to one in the seventh—have you?” (5755-1) Therefore, it is “hard to understand conditions in one plane when viewed from another plane.” (900-70)

In a reading for the A Search for God Group, Cayce said that to avoid confusion, the information must be “kept in its OWN realm.” (262-92) That is, spiritual things must be understood spiritually and material things must be applied materially, within the framework of spiritual and material laws. If we try to understand spiritual laws with material standards, the method of interpretation is at fault. For example, dreams look distorted when viewed from a material standpoint, using logic. A higher, spiritual reasoning is required to understand dreams, and so it is with the readings.

In a reading for the Board of Governors of the American Society for Psychic Research, in which he was explaining creation and how to determine if a psychic’s information is true, Cayce said: “Words are often confusing in describing terms in each of these conditions.” (5752-3)

The scope of our language is limited to explaining things of the three-dimensional realm. But language is what we have. The readings recommend meditating upon the information given to grasp its meaning, rather than only studying the readings. Both are essential for true comprehension.

Let that which is given here and now NOT become confusing. For, it will require deep meditation upon such, that ye may get the correct insight; which ye will not be able to put into words at first, and will KNOW when ye know . . . (281-51) [Bold font is mine]

A Host of Reasons for the Puzzling Language

Complexity. Cayce attuned to the “great storehouse of Universal force and knowledge,” (254-65) also called “universal consciousness or cosmic consciousness” (254-67)—the same source as our dreams. Dreams utilize imagery, sounds, feelings, sensations, emotions, colors, and conversations to convey messages. And though dreams can be bizarre, they have meaning. Cayce had only language to use when interpreting and conveying similar information. He made use of figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, and analogies. Is it any wonder he broke the norms of syntax, punctuation, and prose to convey the message? The readings aren’t polished articulations, edited prose, but a stream of dynamic consciousness presented as such. Remarkably, there were no instances where

Despite the lack of literary flair in many of the readings, there are parts that are sublime and poetic, which must be considered amongst the most lyrical passages to be found in mystical literature. Here are some of my favorites:

As an artist, ye may make the color so beautiful that those who behold will take hope, that because it is put upon paper the sunset has not lost its beauty, nor has the gray-green of the sea lost its ominousness, nor has the dark clouds nor the flash of the thunder lost the voice of knowledge that God speaks to man, even as man seeks to commune with Him. (3578-1)

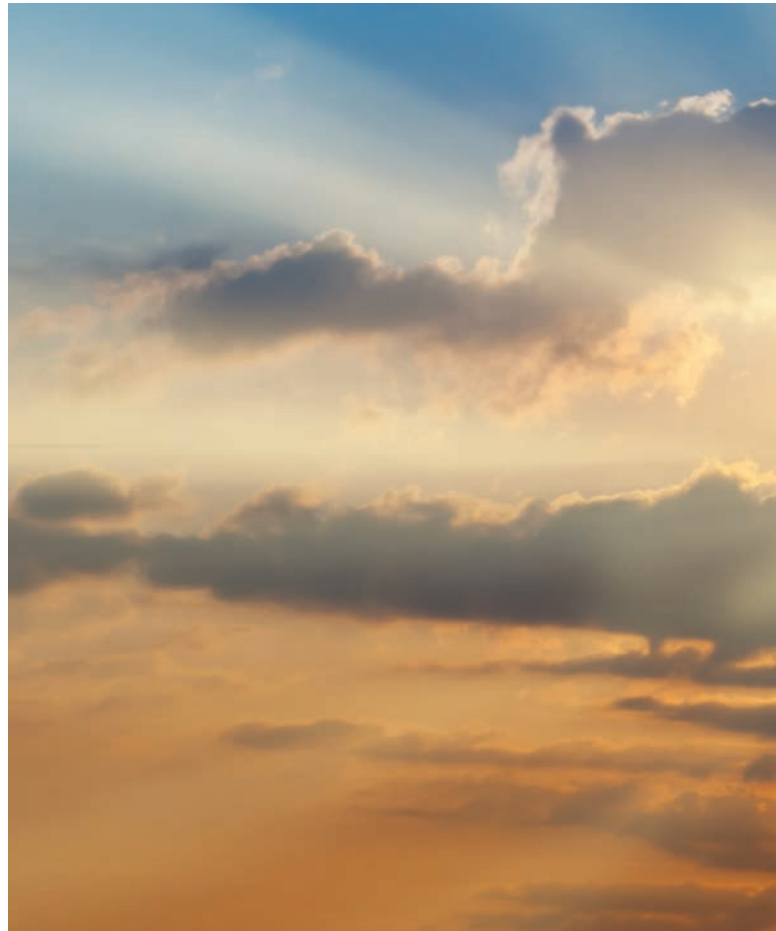
All nature—the face in the water, the dew upon the grass, the tint and the beauty of the rose, the song of the stars, the mourn of the wind, all proclaim—now—the mighty words of a merciful, a loving God. (2562-1)

Then, to be able to remember the sunset, to be able to remember a beautiful conversation, a beautiful deed done where hope and faith were created, to remember the smile of a babe, the blush of a rose, the harmony of a song—a bird's call; THESE are creative. For if they are a part of thyself, they bring you closer and closer to God. (1431-1)

Who may tell a poem to give censure or praise? Who may tell a rose to be sweet, or the music of the spheres to harmonize with God? (2408-1)

Flowers should be the companionship of those who are lonely. For they may speak to the “shut in.” They may bring color again to the cheeks of those who are ill. They may bring to the bride the hope of love, of beauty, of a home. For flowers love the places where there is peace and rest. Sunshine and shadows, yes. There are the varied variety from those open fields to those which grow in the bog, but they grow.

Why won't people learn the lesson from them and grow, in love and in beauty, in whatever may be their environ? Learn also from the flower that where thou art, ye, too, may make that place more beautiful for your being there, whether it is in this or that or whatever place. Whether in the hovel or in the home of the mighty, make it beautiful as do the flowers. (5122-1)



Cayce had to correct himself, though clarifications were volunteered. If a good tree is known by its good fruit, then the readings were good because they affected good (Matt. 7:17).

Cayce demonstrated what he stated in a reading: “Ye cannot ask a question that ye cannot answer within thine own self, if or when ye attune thyself to the infinite.” (4083-1) Whether it had to do with machinery or music, scientific endeavors or social causes, inventions or incarnations, Cayce could do it all. He displayed a greater knowledge and expertise than the expert, no matter the profession—doctor, chemist, historian, mechanic, inventor, minister, writer, manufacturer, stock broker, archeologist, artist, or healer. In all, Cayce discussed an astonishing ten thousand different topics!

Even within the same reading, Cayce wore many hats, revealing past-life patterns, diagnosing, prescribing original compounding formulas, reporting blood count or body temperature, counseling, and much more. Incredibly, nothing was given based on conjecture but with an exact knowledge of each person's specific circumstances, capacities, and needs. This was groundbreaking work and unfamiliar territory. The fusion of complex information lent itself to unusual sentence structures, which may lead to confusion. It isn't surprising that Cayce's stenographer, Gladys Davis, paused at times wondering what punctuation to use while transcribing the readings. Cayce, too, paused and sometimes instructed



Gladys, “Comma between these,” or “New paragraph,” and then continued with the reading. (531-2)

Thought-Forms. In another instance, when Cayce gave information to a woman from her past-life in Atlantis, he said: “Words here fail to express just what is intended to give,” because the Atlanteans were thought-forms unlike the hardened bodies of today. (255-12) This difference must be kept in mind to grasp what’s being shared in the readings.

Thoughts vs. Deeds. The Akashic Records do not differentiate between a person’s thoughts and deeds, for “thoughts are things” or “thoughts are deeds.” (1152-4) (505-4) Best results ensued if Cayce and the seeker were sincere and spiritually prepared, lest confusion arise in the interpretation of the Akashic Records. The lack of preparation seems to be the cause for strange wording in some readings.

Conflicting Ideals and Desires. Cayce was once asked why a reading given for an individual was so hard to understand. He answered that it was “because of the forces and influences that existed in the body-mind of the individual, and those that influenced the environment about the body [Cayce] through which information came.” (253-2) The wording of a reading depended upon the attitude of the person seeking the reading,

as well as the nature of information sought. Those who seek guidance, whether “saint or sinner, rich or poor, stranger or closest in association,” should hold to “the affirmation that only the highest may guide in all experiences” for Cayce to have a “more perfect attunement.” This will enable Cayce “to enter in communication with the highest. . . . And those who cannot conform should NOT be present.” (254-73)

The conformity to ideals and desires impacts outcomes. When Jesus came to heal a girl at her father’s request, she was already dead, and people were weeping and wailing. Jesus said: “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.’ And they ridiculed Him.” Jesus put everyone out of the room except the girl’s parents and his disciples because they did not ridicule or doubt him (Mark 5:22–32, 35–43). Those who didn’t conform to the law of faith had to vacate the room before Jesus could bring the girl back to life. Elsewhere in the scripture, we read that Jesus couldn’t do “mighty works” in his hometown because of the people’s “unbelief” (Mark 6:5–6).

The readings, too, responded to laws. We might say, there’s a law of conformity: “oneness of purpose with the spirit of Truth” (3902-2) and “the union of purposes of individuals” (262-85). Every seed brings forth its own kind. Ridicule, doubt, insincerity, self-importance, suspicion, and impatience are seeds of confusion. We cannot expect to “gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles” (Matt. 7:16).

For the Recipient. When giving readings, Cayce spoke directly to the recipients of the readings using the vocabulary and language that suited each individual. There was one occasion when Cayce spoke a sentence in German for a man born in Germany. (373-1) An entire reading was given in Italian for a woman living in Palermo, Sicily, who wrote a letter in Italian requesting a reading. (4591-1) But in his waking state, Cayce spoke neither languages!

When a man asked about his vision for inventing a motor he was working on, Cayce answered: “These are all sufficient in themselves. Further suggestions would be rather along the lines of how the application of the information as is gained through the conditions as are brought about by the vision as seen, and the study as is given by [195].” The ambiguity in the language was immediately acknowledged by Cayce, saying: “Does that mean anything? Badly explained. . . .” and Cayce gave an explanation. (195-59) In some cases, the information in the readings may have been meant to resonate only with the persons who sought it. In the instance above, the details of the invention were probably known only to the individual seeking it and may sound ambiguous to others.

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In a reading for a 56-year-old man who wanted to know more about his incarnation in Egypt, Cayce said, “Let’s—then—for the moment put this in the language of that in which the entity is engaged: (This aside. Don’t think that you present will know very much more than you did before. He will!)” Then Cayce drew an analogy between the process of interpreting the Akashic Records and die casting! The recipient of the reading was the president of a paper-staining and manufacturing plant.

Phrasing Questions. Ambiguous questions yield ambiguous answers, which was the case in some readings. After asking a particular question in a reading, the Glad Helpers were told:

“These questions or statements are such that they will be confusing to some; but if they are asked properly there will not be confusion.” (281-53) The sincerity of the seekers and the proper phrasing of questions were important to receive clear answers, for in the spirit and manner in which questions were asked, “There may be produced a oneness—and response in its own kind.” (1472-14) Again, there is a law at work here: like begets like.

Getting Ahead of Ourselves. Some readings may be confusing to us because we aren’t ready to understand a concept. A Search For God Group asked Cayce to explain a spiritual concept while receiving a reading for the lesson on “Knowledge.” While giving an explanation, Cayce said, “The explanation to some becomes worse than the first! This has nothing to do with Knowledge, or it is too much knowledge for some of you, for you’ll stumble over it; but you asked for it and here it is!” (262-99) If we stumble over some readings, we might be getting ahead of ourselves. We shouldn’t blame the language then but instead recognize our inability to comprehend. Application of what we already know leads to greater comprehension.

Patience. Some parts of the readings produce more than a few head-scratchers, leaving us wondering if the readings are challenging for some greater purpose. This was once answered for me in a dream: “It was so to develop patience!” If the seeker’s path is arduous, then studying the seemingly inscrutable readings prepares one for the journey. Those who study the readings with patience, despite the challenges, will discover nuggets of wisdom strewn across thousands of pages of transcripts. And then there are epiphanies to be had as well.

Perplexed by the language, impatient, and quick to judge, some may reject the readings as unsophisticated ramblings. Yet the readings are complex and dynamic, and the concepts and discussions quite sophisticated. Those who refuse to walk away from the strangeness of the language and persevere in study will find the readings to be staggering in depth, breadth, and scope, and personally illuminating. The readings are a “glorious article of work,” as Jesus himself said in a reading. (254-50) And glorious I’ve found them to be! 🌐



JERRY LAZARUS is a spiritual teacher and counselor with a master’s in religion and meditation. A longtime contributor to Venture Inward, he is also the author of two books, *Dreams: Listening to the Voice of God* and *Saint John Bosco—Dreams: The Guiding Voice*. You can learn more about the webinars he offers at JerryLazarus.com.