





With an Edgar Cayce Perspective on the Supernatural World

## JOHN VAN AUKEN



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# About Edgar Cayce

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dgar Cayce (pronounced KAY-see, the same as the English name Casey) was born on a farm near Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on March 18, 1877. As a child, he displayed unusual powers of perception. At the age of six, he told his parents that he could see and talk with "visions," sometimes of relatives who had recently died, and on occasion he saw angels. He could also sleep with his head on his schoolbooks and awaken with a photographic recall of their contents, even citing the page number upon which the answer appeared. However, after completing seventh grade, he left school-which was not unusual for boys of his age at that time.

When he was twenty-one, he developed a paralysis of the throat muscles that caused him to lose his voice. When doctors were unable to find a physical cause for this condition, Edgar Cayce asked an acquaintance to help him re-enter the same kind of hypnotic sleep that had enabled him to memorize his schoolbooks as a child. The friend gave him the necessary suggestions, and once he was in this trance-like state, Cayce spoke clearly and directly without any difficulty. He instructed the "hypnotist" to give him a suggestion to increase the blood flow to his throat; when the suggestion was given, Cayce's throat turned blood red. Then, while still under hypnosis, Cayce recommended some specific medication and manipulative therapy that would aid in restoring his voice completely.

On subsequent occasions, Cayce would go into the hypnotic state to diagnose bodily conditions and prescribe a course of action to restore health. Doctors around Hopkinsville and Bowling Green, Kentucky, took advantage of Cayce's unique talent to diagnose their patients. They soon discovered that all Cayce needed was the name and address of a patient to "tune in" telepathically to that individual's mind and body. The patients didn't have to be near Cayce, he could tune-in to them wherever they were.

When one of the young MDs working with Cayce submitted a report on his strange abilities to a clinical research society in Boston, the reactions were ones of astonishment. On October 9, 1910, *The New York Times* carried two pages of headlines and pictures. From then on, people from all over the country sought the so-called "Sleeping Prophet," a nickname that came from one of the many books written about him.

The routine he used for conducting a trance-diagnosis was to recline on a couch with his hands over his "third eye" region on his forehead. When he saw a white light, he moved his hands to his solar-plexus. At this time, his eyelids would begin fluttering, and his breathing would become deep and rhythmic. This was the signal to the conductor (usually his wife, Gertrude) to make verbal contact with Cayce's subconscious by giving a suggestion. Unless this procedure was timed to synchronize with his fluttering eyelids and the change in his breathing, Cayce would proceed beyond his trance state and simply fall fast asleep. However, once the suggestion was made, Cayce would access whatever or whoever was necessary to fulfill the suggestion. In his health cases, he would proceed to describe the patient as though he or she were sitting right next to him, and his mind was functioning much as an x-ray scanner, seeing into every organ of the inquirer's body. When he was finished, he would say, "Ready for questions." However, in many cases, his mind would have already anticipated the patient's questions, answering them during the main session. Eventually, he would say, "We are through for the present," whereupon the conductor would give the suggestion for him to return to normal consciousness and balance the energies in his body.

If this procedure were in any way violated, Cayce would be in serious personal danger. On one occasion, he remained in a trance state for three days and had actually been given up for dead by the attending doctors.

At each session, a stenographer (usually Gladys Davis, his personal secretary) would record in shorthand everything Cayce said. Sometimes, during a trance session, Cayce would even correct the stenographer's spelling. It was as though his mind were in touch with everything around him and beyond.

Each client was identified with a number in an effort to keep their names private. For example, hypnotic material for Edgar Cayce is filed under the number 294. His first "reading," as they were called, would be numbered 294-1, and each subsequent reading would increase the dash number (294-2, 294-3, and so on). Whenever a reading is referenced in this book, it will be followed by the reading number. Since guotes from the readings are usually only a small part of the reading given (some readings can include several pages of material), different quotes can have the same reading number. Some numbers refer to groups of people, such as the first "Study Group," (series 262); and some numbers refer to specific research or guidance readings, such as the 254 series, containing the "Work" readings dealing with the overall work of the nonprofit organization founded by Cayce (the Association for Research and Enlightenment), and the 364 and 996 series containing the readings given on Atlantis. His psychic discourses were termed "readings," because it was believed that he was "reading" sources. Among the sources read were the minds of the questioners, the Akashic Records (also known as "The Book of Life"), the so-called *collective unconsciousness*. and even God's all-knowing mind, which he referred to as the Universal Consciousness.

It was August 10, 1923, before anyone thought to ask the "sleeping" Cayce for insights beyond physical health—questions about life, death, and human destiny and origins. In a small hotel room in Dayton, Ohio, Arthur Lammers asked the first set of philosophical questions that were to lead to an entirely new way of using Cayce's strange

abilities. It was during this line of questioning that Cayce first began to talk about reincarnation as though it were as real and natural as the functioning of a physical body. This shocked and challenged Cayce and his family. They were deeply religious people, doing this work to help others, because that's what their Christian faith taught. As a child, Cavce began to read the Bible from front to back, and did so every year of his adult life. Reincarnation was not part of the Cayce family's reality. Yet, the healings and help continued to come, so the Cayce family continued with the physical material, but cautiously reflected on the strange philosophical material. Ultimately, the Cavce's began to accept the ideas, though not as "reincarnation" per se. Edgar Cayce preferred to call it, "The Continuity of Life." He felt that the Bible did contain much evidence that life, the true life in the Spirit, is continual. And if there is life after death—the life of the soul—well, then it's just a short step for the soul to also have life before birth. In fact, he found that deep in the lore of Christianity, the "preexistence of the soul" was an accepted truth, one that explained how free-willed souls incarnate into such varying circumstances. If God created all souls equally, then it stands to reason that each soul had previously used their free will, which in turn brought about their present circumstances. He read in the Bible where Jesus' disciples revealed their belief in preexistence when they asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2, King James Version [KJV]) The only way the blind man could have sinned and been born blind was if his soul had existed prior to his birth. This helped Cayce and his family tolerate the strange idea of reincarnation and karma.

Eventually, Edgar Cayce, following advice from his own readings, moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia, and set up a hospital where he continued to conduct his "Physical Readings" for the health of others. But he also continued this new line of readings called "Life Readings." From 1925 through 1944, he conducted some 2,500 Life Readings, describing the past lives of individuals as casually as if everyone understood that reincarnation was a fact. Such subjects as deep-seated fears, mental blocks, vocational talents, innate urges and abilities, marriage difficulties, child training, etc., were examined in the light of what the readings called the "karmic patterns" resulting from previous lives experienced by the individual's soul. When he died on January 3, 1945, in Virginia Beach, he left 14,306 documented stenographic records of the telepathic-clairvoyant readings he had given for more than 6,000 different people over a period of forty-three years, consisting of 49,135 pages, and more than 24 million words. Of the 14,306 readings, 9,603 were health readings.

The readings constitute one of the largest and most impressive records of psychic perception. Together with their relevant records, correspondence, and reports, they have been cross-indexed into thousands of subject headings and placed at the disposal of doctors, psychologists, students, writers, and investigators who still come to examine them. Of course, they are also available to the general public in books or the complete volume of the readings on DVD-Rom, as well as in an online database (see EdgarCayce.org/membership).

The nonprofit known as the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) was founded by Cayce in 1931 to preserve, research, and share these readings. As an open-membership organization, it continues to index and catalog the information, initiate investigation and experiments, and conduct conferences, seminars, and lectures, and operate online courses and study groups. The association also conducts tours each year to various sacred sites around the world. The Virginia Beach headquarters is host to thousands of visitors each year from all around the world who come to tour the campus, attend conferences, visit the bookstore, or explore the library—one of the largest metaphysical libraries in the world with more than 65,000 volumes.

The Cayce work has grown to include the Edgar Cayce Foundation (the readings preservation and archiving arm of the organization), Atlantic University (a graduate-level, online university), and the Cayce/Reilly<sup>®</sup> School of Massage. There is also an A.R.E. summer camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. The A.R.E. has a large website with an enormous amount of free information at EdgarCayce.org. The address of the headquarters is Edgar Cayce's A.R.E., 215 67th Street, Virginia Beach, VA 23451 USA, and they can be reached via telephone at 757-428-3588, or 800-333-4499 (toll-free in the U.S. and Canada).

