

# **A Glimpse of Paradise**

## *Part I*

### *Introduction to “A Glimpse of Paradise”*

#### *The Near Death Vision of Reinee Pasarow*

Few subjects cause as much curiosity as what happens to us after death. In the United States alone some eight million people claim that they know. Unfortunately, the price of knowing is quite high. One must come very close to death, just short of actually dying. One must lose all vital signs of life, such as breathing and a heartbeat.

Until recently death was a total mystery. The study of near-death visions has lifted the veil of this mystery and given us a glimpse of the beyond. People who have been supposedly dead claim to have been as alive as ever, if not more. They say that during their visions they acquired even more power and perception than they had before. Some of them report with full accuracy events they had no way of knowing. They met and talked with a dead brother or sister they did not know they had.

During near-death visions, physical disabilities disappear. The blind suddenly see, the deaf begin to hear. They see and hear loved ones who had died before. Could all these be illusions? Illusions do not correspond to reality; near-death visions do. Their accuracy is remarkable, far beyond coincidence.

What can we learn from these visions? A positive attitude and a purpose for life. Most of those who have had near-death vision experience a remarkable transformation. Life suddenly becomes meaningful to them. They stop worrying about little things and concentrate on the big things: learning and loving. They develop a thirst for knowledge and a keen desire to love and serve. We can all learn from their example. Two excellent examples of such books are *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander, a brain surgeon who himself experienced near-death vision, and *Hello From Heaven*, by Bill and Judy Guggenheim.

This video is the story of an individual who had such an experience not once but three times. She is Reinee Pasarow who broke through the mysterious veil of death and came back to tell us about it. What makes her third vision unique is the details it contains. Hers is one of the longest and richest visions on record.

Because of this, Reinee has been interviewed repeatedly by news media including major networks, such as ABC, NBC, and CNN. Her third vision has also been studied and written about by a number of researchers, such as noted psychologist Dr. Kenneth Ring, the author of several books on near death vision. Her story has been heard by people in about 45 countries.

Reinee is a graduate of the University of California with a degree in economics. She is a successful business woman, the founder and director of a corporation in California. She is listed in Who's Who in Finance and Industry, and Who's Who of American Women.

For many years Reinee has suffered from Multiple Sclerosis. In spite of her disability, she has been very active. She has founded or directed several charitable organizations and projects. In addition, she travels and lectures extensively to make life on earth more like the one she has seen in heaven.

Why was Reinee chosen for this honor? We do not know for sure. But it may be helpful to mention three qualities that make her special:

- All her life Reinee has been afflicted with disease and suffering, yet she has kept a most positive attitude.
- She is very open minded. From childhood she has searched for knowledge and truth and prayed to God to guide her.
- She is very practical, and yet extremely spiritual.

The purpose of this video is not to encourage dying but to inspire living. This world has a fundamental purpose: it is a place of preparation for the next one. To try to make the journey short is to miss the very purpose of coming into this world. For everything that happens there is a reason. Scientific studies of near death visions give us hope that the promise of immortality given to us by all great religions has a rational and scientific basis.

Such visions also serve another purpose: they lead to dramatic changes in the lives of those who experience them. Reinee's visions were no exception. They transformed her life completely. At the end, Reinee will talk about some of those changes.

***Some Comments from Dr. Motlagh  
About Mrs. Pasarow's Dreams  
and Near Death Visions that  
Guided Her to Bahá'u'lláh***

It may be helpful to review and clarify the three clues Reinee received in her childhood dreams and the five clues she received in her last near-death vision. As a child, Reinee was very spiritual. She prayed constantly for guidance. A clue to her spiritual destiny was given to her at age 3, when she began to have recurring dreams of her deceased grandfather, who told her that someday she would become a member of ***a new race of men***. When Reinee woke up and asked her mother what the word "race" meant, she said, "Well, a race is when you run down the street." Instinctively Reinee knew that the answer was not right.

Reinee's unusual dreams went on for years. The prediction made by Reinee's grandfather, that she would become a member of a new race of men, was ***the first clue*** about her becoming a Bahá'í. For Bahá'u'lláh uses that very expression in His writings. He states that He has come to raise a new race of men.

During her childhood, Reinee also had recurring dreams of *twin stars* rising from the East, which she believes, symbolize the advent of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. The Báb, like John the Baptist predicted the coming of One greater than Himself. Bahá'u'lláh declared to be not only the One promised by the Báb but by all great Messengers of the past.

While dreaming, Reinee loved the stars, but no one else in her neighborhood did. In fact, her neighbors showed fear of the twin stars and covered their houses, so that they could not see them. Reinee was astonished at her neighbors' fearful response. She was ecstatic at seeing the two beautiful stars, but others ran away from them. The "twin stars" was *the second clue* she received in her childhood dreams.

Reinee's childhood dreams were intertwined with three near death visions. The first vision happened when Reinee was six years old. At that time she was severely sick and in agonizing pain. During that vision she asked the Being of Light to allow her to stay in the beautiful paradise of peace. But her request was not granted. Her mission on earth was not yet accomplished.

At age 13 Reinee was invited to a Bahá'í fireside. She went and instantly fell in love with Bahá'í beliefs and wanted to become a Bahá'í. This is an amazing phenomenon! Just think of a thirteen year old going on her own to investigate a new religion! This act requires a wisdom and courage seldom seen in adults.

That night, Reinee came home from the Bahá'í fireside in a state of utter joy and ecstasy. She had found her heavenly Beloved! Perhaps, she thought, she could live in peace and joy everafter. But that was not to be. Someone was waiting to interrupt and temporarily spoil her dream of everlasting joy and peace. The interruption happened as soon as she arrived home and told her mother about her new and exciting discovery. The loving mother became extremely alarmed by her daughter's spiritual adventure and warned her of dire consequences.

By now Reinee's soul was on fire, and no warning could quench her burning desire for truth. That evening, after seeing her mother's deep distress and opposition, Reinee experienced an amazing pain. For the first time in her life she had found a faith she loved dearly, but was being prevented from pursuing it. In desperation, she turned to God with tearful eyes and prayed fervently for His help. That night Reinee had a dream in which she encountered a divine Being whom she recognized as *the Blessed Beauty*. At this point, she did not know who "the Blessed Beauty" was. She had never heard that title before. But the dream served its purpose. It relieved her pain and uplifted her spirit. She perceived her encounter with the Blessed Beauty, whoever He was, as God's answer to her prayers. She knew Someone was listening! This was the third and the final clue she received in her dreams.

In addition to these, Reinee received five clues in her near death vision. One of them was a repetition of a clue she had received in her dreams. Surprisingly, three years after her dream, Reinee had her deepest and last near death vision in which the *same* divine Being she had seen in her dream with the *same* title "*the Blessed Beauty*" appeared to her. This Being was still a mystery to Reinee. She had no idea who "the Blessed Beauty" was. Only years later did she discover that the Blessed Beauty is one of Bahá'u'lláh's titles. It is used frequently by His Son 'Abdu'l-Bahá and by Persian Bahá'ís in place of Bahá'u'lláh. As a rule, they shorten that title and refer to Bahá'u'lláh simply as *the Blessed*. As the

following prophecy declares, the title of "the Blessed" will eventually become a universal title for Bahá'u'lláh:

His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun:  
Psalms 72:17 and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

- Thus the first clue Reinee received in her near death vision was the same as the last clue she had received in her vision. The second clue Reinee received in her near death vision was "***the just.***" Every religion has brought love into the world, but promised that justice will later come. The Bahá'í Faith is the first religion that not only introduces justice as its goal but also provides the institutions essential for establishing it. As Isaiah declares:

He will make justice shine on the nations...on every race, never faltering, never  
Isaiah 42:1-4 breaking down, he will plant justice on earth.

- The third clue Reinee received was a view of ***the seat of the Universal House of Justice***. When she had her vision the seat of the Universal House of Justice had not yet been built. But in her vision she saw it exactly as it was built later. In her vision, Reinee saw this magnificent building in a land that she recognized as "old yet new" on the coast of the Mediterranean sea. Reinee later discovered a distinguished Jewish author called Theodor Herzl who in 1902 wrote a novel about Israel. He called it: *Old-New Land*.
- The fourth clue Reinee received was the location on which the seat of the Universal House of Justice is built. She saw the building on the Mediterranean coast. As we know it is built on Mt. Carmel, in Israel, on the Mediterranean coast exactly as she saw in her vision.
- The fifth and final clue Reinee received in her near death vision were the words: ***Here am I! Here am I!*** We find those same words in Bahá'u'lláh's writings such as:

Thy love, O my Lord, hath enriched me, and separation from Thee hath destroyed me, and remoteness from Thee hath consumed me. I entreat Thee...by the words "***Here am I. Here am I!***" which Thy chosen Ones have uttered to ordain that I may gaze on Thy beauty and observe whatsoever is in Thy Book.

**The book of Revelation, which is mostly about the second advent, contains the same prophetic expression:**

***Here I am!*** I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens  
Revelation 3:20 the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me.

**Our Creator is saying to us: I am your Lord and Creator. *Here am I* ready to receive you and embrace you. Accept my invitation; come forward. We too should respond by saying: You are the source of my being and the hope and joy of my heart. *Here am I* ready to receive you and embrace you. He stands at the door of our hearts and knocks. We must open our hearts and invite Him with exceeding joy and gratitude.**

Reinee believes that the expression "***Here am I!***" was the most significant clue she received. Over the years, Reinee has discovered the same expression in both biblical and Bahá'í scriptures. Here are a few examples from her collection of quotations. In His Epistle to Napoleon the third Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

It behooveth thee when thou hearest His Voice calling from the seat of glory to cast away all that thou possessest, and cry out: "**Here am I, O Lord...**"

**In Genesis Chapter 22, it is announced that:**

God tested Abraham, and Abraham answered "**here am I!**"

**Exodus, Chapter 4, states that:**

God called out to Moses from the burning bush, and Moses answered "**Here am I.**" (Exodus 3:4)

**A prophecy from Isaiah points not only to the expression "Here am I" but also to the exact title of Bahá'u'lláh, which in English is the Glory of God or the Glory of the Lord:**

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: **Here am I.** (Isaiah 58:8-9)

**Isaiah's prophecy was literally fulfilled. For Reinee cried to God for help. And in her vision she heard the Glory of the Lord or the Blessed Beauty say, "Here am I, Here am I."**

**Reinee has been interviewed by several researchers. One of them is psychologist Kenneth Ring whose research on near death vision is perhaps the most sophisticated. Here is a passage about the state of the world from Reinee's interview with Dr. Ring:**

The vision of the future I received during my near-death experience was one of tremendous upheaval in the world as a result of our general ignorance of the "true" reality. I was informed that mankind was breaking the laws of the universe and as a result of this would suffer. This suffering was not due to the vengeance of an indignant God but rather like the pain one might suffer as a result of arrogantly defying the law of gravity. It was to be an inevitable educational cleansing of the earth that would creep up upon its inhabitants, who would try to hide blindly in the institutions of law, science, and religion. Mankind, I was told, was being consumed by the cancers of arrogance, materialism, racism, chauvinism, and separatist thinking. I saw sense turning to nonsense, and calamity, in the end, turning to providence.

At the end of this general period of transition, mankind was to be "born anew," with a new sense of his place in the universe. The birth process, however, as in all the kingdoms, was exquisitely painful. Mankind would emerge humbled yet educated, peaceful, and, at last, unified.

**Let us conclude this commentary with the words of Bahá'u'lláh:**

Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God...The movement of My Pen is stilled when it attempteth to befittingly describe the loftiness and glory of so exalted a station. The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe...If any man be told that which hath been ordained for such a soul in the worlds of God, the Lord of the throne on high and of earth below, his

whole being will instantly blaze out in his great longing to attain that most exalted, that sanctified and resplendent station.\*

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\* *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 155-156

*Part II*  
*Near Death Vision of Reinee Pasarow*  
*“A Glimpse of Paradise” Transcript*  
*from a Talk by Reinee Pasarow*  
*A Summary*

I ask you today, as I begin to speak about my most intense near-death experience, to listen with your hearts, because what’s important about the experience is not that I had it, but rather that if we, humans, were to accept the implication of such experiences it could touch our hearts and transform our lives.

The insights we gain from such experiences can help us face the trials and traumas that we’re facing now as well as those even greater ones that we may have to face in the future. So please listen with your hearts because the near-death experience is essentially indescribable, it’s beyond words. Our words reflect our experience in the material world. The most important part of a near-death experience is the transcendental aspect of the experience. And that has nothing to do with time, space, and material reality; nor with material perception and sensation.

My first near-death experience came about as a result of multiple sclerosis but we didn’t know that I was suffering from this disease at the time. This happened when I was 6 years old.

However, my most intense near-death experience occurred at the age of 16. I woke up one morning with hives. My mother took me to the doctor to get a shot, after which the allergic reaction seemed to be subsiding. Later in the day the reaction began to get worse again. In the late afternoon, my mother and I sat down at the dinner table with a friend who had come to visit – this was one of my high school friends. It was then that I felt a wonderful sensation of being pulled or attracted away from my body. I was very much at peace with the experience. In fact, I was very much enjoying that sensation, but I realized that I was probably going to pass out.

I wanted to let my mother and friend know. I stood up quickly to warn them and immediately I was on the floor unconscious. My mother, having dealt with several extremely allergic children, was aware that I needed to go straight to the hospital. My friend and mother loaded me into the car and drove to the bottom of the driveway. By the time they got to the bottom of our driveway, which was a steep hill, they realized that I was not breathing and that neither of them could administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. At this point, I was totally unconscious, yet I was able to observe what was happening.

My parents flagged down a passing policeman, who called for an ambulance. They took my body out of the back of the station wagon and laid it on the sidewalk and a crowd of people began to gather.

The next thing that I recall was the feeling of gritty concrete pressing against my cheek and the wailing of the fire engine and the shuffle of firemen’s boots.

I was unconscious, yet I was hearing all the commotion around me. The fireman began to work on me, and then I heard my best friend calling me, saying: “Reinee, Reinee! Come back! We need you! Don’t die! Renee, don’t die!” All this time, I was being pulled away into a dimension that was very peaceful, very calm, without struggle or conflict.

But I realized that because I loved my friend, my mother, and those around me, I had an obligation to fight for my life. I then began to try to will my heart to beat. However, I could feel my life-force pulling up from my extremities to an area around the heart. I felt the life-force was being drawn out of me. It felt as if the blood was no longer moving through my veins. I was very conscious of this and felt that I could no longer endure the struggle of the fight for physical life. At that point I simply surrendered to the force that had brought me into existence, to God, to the Source of all sources, to the Source of all life. And with that surrender, there was a luxuriant sense of peace. There was no sense of panic at all in any of this, other than my awareness of other people’s sense of panic. Personally, I had none.

I surrendered and entered the first stage of the near-death experience—a sense of peace. It was just a dark, peaceful, comforting, merciful kind of state of rest after this tremendous struggle. The next thing I recall was a new sense of consciousness. It was as if I had never been conscious before. It was a rapid transition, like a slap on the face. I found myself as if about the height of a small child in the midst of the circle of friends and neighbors who had gathered around my body. I was feeling everything that they were feeling and I was aware of everything they were thinking—it was as if there was no separation between myself and them. Although I was myself, I was also each one of them because there was this loving connection between us. And the cacophony of this tremendous input of thought and feeling in people’s minds was astounding and overwhelming to me. I followed their attention to my body on the sidewalk and suddenly it jarred me very harshly when I looked at the curve of my wrist. That’s all I could see because my legs were covered with a blanket. There was a fireman straddling me, another was on the other side, and my wrist was laying on the sidewalk. I realized then that, my God, that bloated, deformed form without life was what I had considered to be my true essence.

My true essence or my true reality was now extremely conscious. It was as if I had never before experienced a moment of consciousness. This caused me to recoil from my body, this, and a sense of the grief and panic of my mother and my friends, was more than I could endure, and with that [snap of fingers] my consciousness was bumped up above some wires.

Interestingly enough, people in this condition seem to have an affinity for corners and wires. I don’t know why, but when I did a television show for ABC, 20-20, they used a crane to go up and see what it was like from that vantage point. I had described while up in the wires of being aware of a young neighbor’s boy whom I was very fond of, coming out of his house. He was only three. I knew that he was going to walk down to the bottom of our driveway and he was going to see this gruesome thing on the sidewalk—my body—which had now been terribly disfigured. I knew he would think that I was dead and that it was the real me. I didn’t want him to have that thought. I was horrified. So I called out to my neighbor—the child’s mother—and my mother, telling them that everything was perfect and everything was as it should be.

This was really a great moment of transition—it was a great awakening for me. I wanted to comfort them and let them know not to panic. I wanted to reach out to the fireman who refused to stop working on my body because he couldn't face my mother. I was aware that he had a young daughter about a year younger than me, and that he couldn't let my mother know that there was nothing that he could do. I was aware that there was no heartbeat, I heard him say that several times.

I tried to intervene, to comfort them, to reach out to them, to let them know that everything was as it should be, that everything was perfect, that there really was no need for concern and that they should really be concerned for the child who is going to come down and see what was happening. I became aware that I had no voice and no physical body, I had no role to play, and I was unable to reach out and communicate with them or intervene. Therefore, I realized I had no place here on this physical plane of existence anymore because I was not bound by time and place as we are in our everyday existence.

With that awareness, I called upon God to guide me, to bring me home, to show me where I should go. It was as if my consciousness turned into a ball of light and I began to pull up and away from this frantic little scene, this tiny little street, this tiny little town, until I could see the entire earth. When I say 'see' I don't mean physical sight. When we see physically, there's an inherent separation between the person who's perceiving and the object that is being perceived. Now, suddenly, there was no longer this separation and I could see—by that I mean that I could feel and beat with the same heart as the entire earth, from a macroscopic viewpoint. I could also see at a microscopic level, such as seeing an amoeba swimming in the ocean.

I could see how everything was intimately connected and how all life contributed to a tremendous song of life that was issuing forth from all creation, all of the planet, but especially from the hearts of human beings. This is because the hearts of human beings have the capacity to reflect the creative light, to participate in the song, more so than all other forms of creation.

I began to feel overjoyed with this glorious symphony of life that I was hearing and I began to sing my little tiny note in this grand symphony. The only way I can describe my note is to say, "I am", not in the sense of being a self, but in the sense of being an expression of a unique aspect of creation, a unique expression of love that is participating in this song.

It was clear to me that because the heart of humankind had the capacity to reflect the creative light, it also had the capacity to reflect the creative force. This force connects all of existence—humankind is one throughout the entire planet. All of humankind from the past to the present, are all intimately connected, even though we are totally unaware of it. In other words, the leaf falling in the forest affected the heart of a man in China, which affected the heart of a woman in Taiwan, which affected the heart of a person on a Pacific Island. Everything was intimately connected. There was not a heartbeat that did not affect every other heartbeat on the planet.

So I could see that we were one and this was like a revelation to me. We spend our lives in the physical world thinking that we're separate from one another. We're very busy doing ever more things that separate us even more from one another. Yet, in reality, I

could see that there is no separation between us, and that the human heart is the most powerful instrument of unity.

It seemed, then, that my cup was filled at that point. I then entered what's has been described as a place of darkness or "the tunnel". To me it was simply a point of transition. It was a place in which one gains one's bearings in a new and unfamiliar world. It was as if I were a diver that had been thrown into a churning sea and there was no way for me to find my direction—which way was up and which way was down—to move through this place of transition, this tunnel, because physical senses were meaningless and I had no body. What enabled me to gain my bearings and to move through this dimension was love. This was not love in the sense that we have for one another, in the sense of an attachment to another human being. This was a pure love deep in my heart that enabled me to move very quickly through this dimension, even though I was aware that there were other human beings who were struggling, who were unaware of their true reality, who were lost in loneliness. That is the best way I can describe it, in this gray, watery plane of existence.

Therefore, it was love that moved me through to my ultimate home. As soon as I realized this, and magnified that love, the love of God, the love of all loves, I found myself on the other side of the tunnel where I immediately merged with my uncle because I thought, "Am I to be alone?" My thought and the answer were instantaneously intertwined and, with that, I found myself merging with the essence of my uncle. This was his spiritual essence, not his physical essence. All that he knew and all that he was, all that he had contained in his being, were suddenly a part of me. And all that I was, and all my being, suddenly was a part of him. We were just completely merged and there was a very joyous kind of reunion, because I adored my uncle, even though I had had very little opportunity to see him. This was a very joyful sort of dancing together, and yet I could feel a greater attraction from beyond.

Next I began to move toward what I perceived to be a sea of light. This was as if the power of love had transformed every molecule into a sun. This sea contained every color; every sound; and every good, wonderful and beautiful sentiment that we can think of, such as mercy and compassion. As I moved through this sea on waves of rapture and attraction, to my ultimate home, I began to be aware that in the midst of this sea of suns, it seemed there was one sun that was the source of all light, all love, all goodness, all beauty, all justice, all mercy and compassion. It was the source of all sources.

As I moved closer and closer to what I knew to be my ultimate home, I entered it in an instant. This is contrary to our physical experience. I experienced the state of nothingness. . It was the destruction of the phoenix. It was as if I felt myself to be nothing, and that this light was the source of all goodness, all beauty, all mercy and all compassion which we could ever imagine in our lives here on earth. So this destruction of the self was the most wonderful feeling. It was as if I was just spider silk, shredded by the solar wind.

Here I was called to account for my deeds, not so much in the sense of judgment, but in the sense of suddenly becoming a candle. I could use that candle, and could hold it against the sun. Suddenly I had a standard of measurement. I became aware that this incredible beauty, this sense of compassionate, merciful love, is being showered upon

each and every one of us, every moment of our lives, even though we're unaware of it, even though we think we may not be worthy. It is showered upon all of us, just like the sunlight is showered upon the earth, upon everyone.

Suddenly, I had a standard by which to judge the days of my life. It was not just a reliving of my life, it was a reliving of my life from a whole new perspective and, a reliving of the lives of everyone whom I had touched in all the days of my life. There was no sense of separation. It was as if I were every person whom I had touched in my life and yet I was also myself. I could see the important things were not what we deemed to be important. The important things had nothing to do with titles, what we owned, who we knew or worldly accomplishments. The important things had to do with spiritual qualities, with how we manifest love on this plane of existence, during the days of our lives. Suddenly everything that I thought, every standard I might have used to measure my life—maybe my grades or the awards I had won in school or the people that I knew—these meant nothing whatsoever.

What was significant were the choices I had made, every choice that had the slightest inkling of selfless love. So the most significant thing that I had done in my life was that as a teenager, I had worked with retarded children every summer. There was one particular child who was rather difficult. He became alienated from all of the teachers and counselors in our camp. I realized this child was receiving no love. So one day I took him aside and gave him something to drink, sang him a song, and rocked him back and forth. I had forgotten this incident in my life, and certainly it was something that no one would consider significant.

However, to have taken a moment to show another human being selfless and unconditional love was more important than becoming the President of the United States, winning a Nobel Peace Prize, or inventing something incredibly great. To have had one moment of selfless love without thought of reward and recognition, that one moment, gave incredible meaning to my life, and great joy to me. Likewise, moments that were simply spent on myself, without a thought of service to another or without a thought of bringing something good into the world, without love; those moments were as if they never existed. If those moments involved cruelty, then the very thought of it would cause me to recoil in horror. The very thought of causing harm to another, even in a most minor way—maybe just a minor competition—was appalling.

Suddenly, I had a new standard by which to judge my life. I could see that every action and choice that I had made affected every other human being on the planet, even though I was unaware of it. It's like a stone thrown into a pool. That choice sets off a series of reverberations throughout the hearts of all of mankind. That one action affects us all, even though we remain unaware of it. So every action and every choice becomes incredibly powerful and significant.

I was only 16 at the time when this occurred, but my childhood had not been normal. Up to now, my great foray into the world was to read newspapers because I had been relatively disabled for many years. I had thought that humankind was ready, willing and able to destroy itself. This had been very frightening to me and I had wondered where we were going. It seemed to me that God would not leave His people alone, and yet it seemed to me that there were no answers.

But what I saw now seemed like a holographic reliving of human history—as if I *was* humankind, the archetype of humankind at every stage in human development. In other words, I felt the brutishness and the pure animal stage of human life, the conniving politics of the Roman era, and the scientific and rational era of the Renaissance. All of these things passed through me very quickly and in great detail—detail that astounded me. Then I was given a reference point of my body on the sidewalk. I looked from that point into the future.

I saw that we had begun to enter an age in which chaos would reign. We had entered an age in which polarization became more and more a reality in human life, so that people would begin to separate, based on race, politics, religion, and in any other possible way they could separate. People began to polarize, to fight and wage wars all over the world and to be filled with hatred. There was a great destruction of our moral fiber and our love for one another. With this destruction came the destruction of our physical environment, because we were totally unaware of our impact upon physical reality.

First a hole appeared in the sky, and then the sky broke. That is how I can best describe it—perhaps this is the ozone layer. Then the earth began to fracture, to break apart, to really reflect the polarization and the breaking apart of human society. I could see that we were on the precipice of the greatest choice that we would ever make in all history, in all of our existence. That choice involved people whom I could only identify as “the just”. As the world descended into greater and greater chaos, disorder, hatred, division and polarization, there was this relatively powerless and small, supposedly insignificant, group of people called ‘the just’ who were busy doing little acts of kindness, and in doing so, they were building a new society, a new civilization for the future of humankind.

The people I recognized as “the just” were associated with a wonderful building that was the hope of the world. That’s how I recall it. It was the hope of the world because, from this beautiful white marble building, set high upon a sacred mountain, guidance, assistance and direction would be given to the world. Their mission was to bring us together, to unite us, to help us live in peace with one another, within our families, and within our nations. This building was in a land that was golden and beautiful. It sat on the Mediterranean. It was a land that was both old and new. It was a sacred land, but I didn’t know where it was. I saw that one of the teachings that issued forth from this sacred mountain was the equality of men and women, that women were equal spiritually and socially and in every way with men. And that prejudice, hatred and chaos—this polarization that was going on—needed to be assuaged with a sense of love.

I became aware of the presence of a divine Being and He began to take on a recognizable form. I was astounded because I had seen Him before. I had seen him three years before. I identified him as *the Being* I had known earlier in my visions as *the Ancient Beauty or the Blessed Beauty*. That was a name that stuck in my mind. He was an individual. Just as he had done some three years before, on a night when I had returned from my first Bahá’í fireside, He stood and extended His arm to me in a very regal, loving and magnanimous gesture, a gesture that was so humble and yet so powerful, so accepting and so awesome, that I was without any power to respond in any way. Again He said to me: *Here am I. Here am I*. It seemed that all I wanted to do in His presence was to die. There was humor in that, because I realized I had already done that. It was a bit redundant! [laughter]

All I wanted was to be in His presence. Any thought of self or of being an individual seemed blasphemous. Just to be in His presence was the apex of all that I could ever want—the desire of all my desires, the hope of all my hopes. It seemed I was there for time beyond time and, then again, only for an instant. It was as if my cup had been filled, my capacity had been reached, and there was only so much beauty, love, compassion, mercy, joy and rapture that I could take. I found myself on the other side of the light and I began to move towards a kingdom of people that I seemed to know intimately—better than I had ever known anyone before. As I moved toward this kingdom, I could see that there was a river of light, it was really a metaphoric river, but there was some kind of barrier, a sense of separation. As I moved towards these people I saw they were welcoming me into this kingdom. They were all very busy, very happy and they all loved each other tremendously with a love beyond that I had ever known in this world. I was very happy to be going to my ultimate home.

However, at that point, the Light spoke. He said, “It is not time.” My being froze, you might say, and I understood this to be a mercy to me. What was to occur next would be such a horrific shock to me. That was a buffering moment, you might say. Once again He said: “It is not time.” With the second pronouncement I was cast away down a rainbow tunnel of light. This was a tunnel of light, not in the sense of physical light, but in the sense of decreasing tones of frequency; of spiritual intensity, beauty, harmony, goodness and compassion, and all those spiritual qualities that endure. I felt as if my heart was being physically ripped out of me. I felt the pain was greater than anyone could possibly endure. It was as if I were Eve, I was an archetype being cast out of the Garden of Eden.

I begged, as I went down this tunnel, knowing the inevitable end, that I would return to this physical plane of existence. As I was being catapulted down, my heart was reaching out to the light into the kingdom that I had seen. Then suddenly, with a great crash, I crashed through what seemed to be a brown steely harsh barrier that separated that world of light from this world. I found myself perhaps 75 or 100 feet above the scene. An ambulance had now arrived. They were loading my body into the back of the ambulance. My mother was getting into the front seat and my friends were talking to her. Then they followed the ambulance. All I felt was a tremendous sense of loss, horror and dread at having found myself back in this realm of existence that I thought I could never identify with. I literally felt like a fish out of water. I suddenly felt that this realm of time and space, this human realm we take for granted, was such a tremendous loss, such a realm of limitation. I felt I could never function here.

I also felt the presence of other beings, and even though I couldn't identify them as I could in the kingdom I saw before, I can only describe them as spiritual sheepdogs that kept herding me, pushing me. [laughter] They were very funny, and they were very delightful. They knew that what was occurring was a great irony as they sort of pushed me down towards the body and informed me that it is not time, and that I have to go back now. Then I crashed against my body, which felt totally foreign to me and bounced back.

They placed my body in the ambulance and began the 20 to 25 minute drive to the hospital. I know that because when I did the episode for the television documentary *20-20*, every bit of the story was documented in terms of fire department records: how long the drive was, etc. I followed the ambulance to the hospital and hoped that the attendants would be inept and allow me to leave this life. I was ever hopeful. [laughter]

The first doctor in the emergency room was exhausted and rather callous. He had dealt with a gruesome motorcycle accident earlier in the day. They wheeled me into the Emergency Room and he said, “Well, she is DOA”—dead on arrival. The ambulance attendants explained that I had no heartbeat on the sidewalk and it didn’t look at all good. I was transferred to the Emergency Room table and the doctor began to work on me rather like you would work on a pair of shoes, with no emotion or sentiment at all.

This lack of care meant I had absolutely no interest nor attraction in being with my body. It was as if only love and affection could in any way hold me. Since there was no love there, I left to be with my friends and to tell them how wonderful it was that I was going to die [laughter] and that they shouldn’t worry. It was funny that they responded in a way that we might expect. They got a little silly, a little giddy and started laughing; then they felt guilty because they shouldn’t be laughing if their friend is dying. Then I was above my mother. I did everything I possibly could, without arms and without a body, to reach out to her, to hold her, to comfort her and to let her know that I was fine, that I loved her and she loved me, and that there was a bond that no changes or chances of the physical world could ever destroy or lessen in any way.

Next my personal doctor appeared on the scene. He came storming down the emergency hall. He was a feisty little country bumpkin kind of a doctor. He burst through the emergency room door, looked at my body on the table, looked at the nurse who was on the phone to the morgue, at the doctor who was washing his hands, and said: “Well, where the hell is she?” I was taking this all in as a humongous joke with all of those around me—these spiritual beings who were accompanying me back into the physical realm of existence. The other doctor turned around and explained that I had been dead on arrival, that I had been without a heartbeat for an extended period of time, and that I was just a hopeless case. He then turned around to continue washing his hands.

My family doctor immediately started screaming at the young nurse in the Emergency Room, telling her to bring some adrenalin and immediately went to work on my body. Because he cared, because he held affection for me, I was not able to leave that emergency room. So he, with great passion and determination began to work on me. The other doctor who had washed his hands, came over and started to argue with my family doctor. He said, “What are you doing? She’s going to be brain dead! She’s not going to be able to move a toe. She’s been without a heartbeat for at least 25 minutes. You can’t do this. Can you imagine what you’re doing to this person?” My doctor, in the midst of beating on my heart—it’s a very violent process—looked up, put his hands on his hip, and said, “Well, what the hell? The patient can’t be in much worse shape than she already is!” [laughter] He then continued with the resuscitation process. The other doctor eventually joined him and, as you can see, they were successful. [laughter].

I woke up some hours later and the first thing I did was try to move my toe because I remembered what the first doctor had said! When I realized that I could indeed move my toe, I knew that I was here, that I was in this physical life, that I was in the realm where light is always followed by darkness, in a realm in which love is always accompanied by hate, in a realm in which joy is present along with pain. I realized that I couldn’t kill myself, a thought I had entertained. However, I rejected that thought as do most people who have had near-death experiences, because I had now experienced a sense of the great

sacredness of life, of all life, whether it be a leaf or a person in a vegetative state, but especially human life. Therefore, I couldn't entertain the thought of suicide.

I was quite angry at my doctor for resuscitating me. He arranged for a psychologist to talk to me, because he thought I was crazy. After spending many hours talking with this psychologist in great detail about my near-death experience, the details of which she sent off to verify, against what had happened in the emergency room. Then she came back to me and said, "Well, you're not crazy. What happened to you is very real. What you said is correct and indeed psychologists are now starting to do research on this. There's a psychiatrist, Kübler-Ross, who has documented the phenomenon of NDE." Then she said "you're just going to have to deal with it in your own way."

After hearing this, I started to cry. I had hoped that she could provide me with an answer because all I wanted was to be in contact with the Being of light. I felt I could not endure this life if I had no contact with that Being who seemed to me to be the loving God. I knew, above all, that God was loving and merciful. The psychologist said she had no answers to this mystery. The only thing that she could advise me at that point was to never, never—no matter what I did—never talk about it again! [laughter], because no one will understand.

In a way I was grateful for that advice for many years until I realized that this experience could be beneficial to others. I began to speak to university classes and on television shows. To have a near-death experience is one thing, to integrate it into one's personal life takes many, many years. It's very painful to give up the things we consider meaningful in our lives. That's a topic I'd like to share with you after the break.