

BOOK REVIEW

Bava's Gift: Awakening to the Impossible by Michael Urheber. Princeton, New Jersey: ICRL Press, 2014. 158 pp. \$12.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-1936033102.

I must admit that I had some reservations about reading this book, as all I was told was that it chronicled the author's signs received from a discarnate friend. The prospect of wading through yet another book about pennies sent from deceased loved ones seemed onerous and a task to which I did not look forward. Not that I am averse to such manifestations and after-death communication, quite the contrary. I just prefer the evidence to be more convincing. Finding a coin that has become so devalued in our currency that half the people who drop them no longer bother to pick them up doesn't do it for me. However, to my great delight, Michael's message is no more about the signs than calligraphy is about the paper.

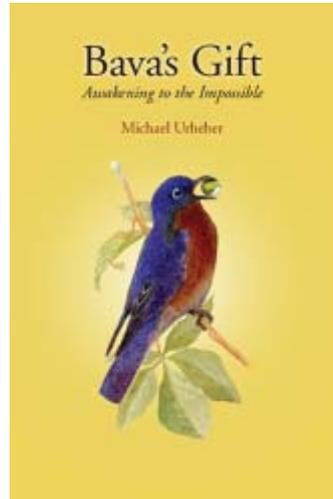
The death of a loved one is often a trigger for exploration and a search for meaning, and it certainly was for the author. Following the death of a close friend, he was witness to an unfolding symphony of communications, first dismissed as coincidences, but eventually embraced and treasured in an awakened consciousness. In this case, a journey began as the result of the appearance of a simple marble that was owned by the deceased. After Michael's friend Frank had passed, he decided to engage in an experiment by placing the marble with Frank in his coffin, specifically in his suit pocket. His initial motivation was simply to return the treasured item to its owner, but in the recesses of his mind Michael also contemplated a possible confirmation from his friend that he still survived in some fashion. He wrapped the marble in the paper on which Frank's eulogy was written, and on the top of the paper wrote "If you are ever around, toss this back."

The author was familiar with the work of physicist David Bohm and his theory of a multidimensional universe, and Michael saw his marble experiment in the same context. He writes,

Later, I would think of Frank's marble, folded in his pocket, and all of it, including Frank, folded into the ground from where, reaching its source, and directed by a greater consciousness, it would unfold again, and again, as needed, delivering the requested information. (p. 30)

And unfold the marble did. In a continuous and somewhat playful dance with Frank and the universe, marbles starting appearing to Michael, his friends, acquaintances, co-workers, and strangers. However, it was not the appearances themselves that were significant, but the effect that these marbles and stones had on their finders. Invariably each marble discovery occurred at significant times and brought great comfort to the new owners, as if each marble possessed an ethereal luminosity, something that transcended the known senses.

Initially, Michael was not content to simply accept each marble discovery as a gift from beyond. He felt obligated and compelled to investigate each circumstance and consider material explanations. He evidently felt like many who doubt things that make no apparent sense, as one must try to discern fact from fiction if they are ever to reach any type of knowing. When the evidence reached a point where Michael finally relented, he describes



. . . . A place where coincidence abandons any obligation to probability and becomes the partner of another reality, one that only the heart can fathom. Skeptics and quants can attribute such claims to 'magical thinking,' to the 'power of suggestion' or to the 'statistics of large numbers.' But who cares? Let them adjust their tables and interpret them however they choose. (pp. 60–61)

Michael was able to marvel at the “fun” of it all as he stepped back and observed all of the seemingly separate and unrelated events, each one individually able to be explained as coincidence, emerge into a collective transpersonal pattern orchestrated by an entity that resided outside the physical realm. He now saw Einstein as being mistaken, as God or some guiding force not only does play dice with the universe but revels in the game as we catch on and become part of the dance.

What made the evidence extraordinary for Michael was the fact that he controlled the experiment. He made a request and received a direct and swift response, as the marble was tossed back as requested. The effect that this had on Michael was not unlike those described by near-death experiencers and others who report being forever changed by glimpses of

unseen forces at work. However, despite the fact that he now felt imbued with a new vitality and deep knowledge of an interconnected universe, the nagging question of what to do about his shift of consciousness persisted. It's a question that has also been faced for centuries by experiencers of all types, whether the epiphany comes from a near-death experience, out-of-body experience, deathbed or shared vision, electronic voice phenomena, mediumship communication, meditation, afterlife encounter, or altered state of consciousness. In this case, Michael became convinced that the right course of action would be to openly share what he now knew. His decision was not an easy one, but it was the sense of it being something that he had to do, as if guided by a higher purpose that now took control. This meant giving up a productive and lucrative career in the corporate world as he ventured into a new life guided by heart and inner knowledge as opposed to brain and materialistic philosophy.

Bava's Gift is not a book simply about pennies and marbles, as it contemplates our role in the universe and at the same time probes the answer to why more of us are blind to things we cannot perceive with our physical senses. Michael writes that after Frank's passing,

I had to agree that in his passing he created an opportunity for us to embrace a much larger dimension by making it visible, by reaching out across the veils of space and time and thereby revealing the shabbiness of our commonly held notions, and why our obstinacy in accepting greater truths is often an expression of fear. (p. 132)

It is a well-written and insightful work, and one that urges us to begin to see between the dots and recognize the miracles at play. I found it interesting that after the author's life change, he wound up befriending Bob Jahn and Brenda Dunne as he learned about their work at the PEAR (Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research) lab at Princeton University. One could imagine Michael's reaction when he learned that their consciousness experiments involved the use of 9,000 marbles. The universe at play once again.

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