

SELF AND UNIVERSE with ARTHUR M. YOUNG



JEFFREY MISHLOVE, Ph.D.: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove, and today we're going to be discussing a small topic -- the nature of the self and the universe. We all have a common-sense notion of ourselves being separate from the world around us, yet the mystics, and now many scientists, are saying that the universe is one, that we're all interconnected. How is it possible that we have this sense of separateness, and yet interconnection at the same time? With me today is Arthur M. Young, inventor of the Bell helicopter, the first commercially licensed helicopter; founder of the Institute for the Study of Consciousness in Berkeley, California; and developer of a theory of process which relates all of the known sciences with mythology, spirituality, and psychic experience. Arthur is also the author of many books, including *The Reflexive Universe*, *The Geometry of Meaning*, and *Which Way Out?* Welcome, Arthur. It's a pleasure to be with you again.

YOUNG: Hello, Jeff.

MISHLOVE: You know, many spiritual teachers suggest that it's the ego that limits us -- that we get locked into the small, separate self, and if we could only get rid of our egos and experience the great oneness of the universe, that we would be enlightened. Yet this seems to go against the whole grain of Western thought. I wonder what you think about it.

YOUNG: Well, I think the ego is essential, and it ultimately can flower into what you could call, what Jung calls, the personality -- you have these terrific personalities like movie stars and so on, after you've evolved sufficiently. But you first have to have a thing before you can give it up. So as I read nature, ego is our little ship or vehicle for experiencing the universe, and there's no point in giving it up until we've had the experiences it affords, and which only it affords.

MISHLOVE: When does that point occur?

YOUNG: I think it's way beyond most people today. So rather than give up their ego, they would do better to get the benefits of what the ego provides. Without the ego, all this connectedness is a confused mass. It's like having a flashlight in a cave. If you want to throw away the flashlight, you can experience the cave much better, but you won't really learn anything. Rather than get along in total darkness, you use the flashlight to examine as much as you can. Now this expands and expands if you use it; but it won't expand if you throw it away.

MISHLOVE: It's as if the universe created us humans as separate entities for a purpose.

YOUNG: That's precisely correct. And what I call the third level is the level where separation begins. This is true also in the scientific world of physics. It's only when you get atoms that you get identity. The fundamental particles don't have any identity; there's no way to tell one from another. They're really forces, so you can see how ridiculous the notion of identity is if you're dealing with forces. Is the force of gravity, when it affects you, the same as the one that affects me?

MISHLOVE: Well, we're all swimming in this sea of forces, and yet we do have our identities.

YOUNG: How do we get it, is a very interesting subject. I used to say, how can you have separation in a universe made by God? Well, that's where I like to have my little torus -- sorry I haven't got it here.

MISHLOVE: It looks like a donut, for people who may not know.

YOUNG: A donut, right. Now, suppose you had a sphere, and there was a cow on the sphere and you put a fence around him. He can't escape. It's the same as a field. If you put a fence around the cow, he couldn't escape. But if you did this on the donut, provided the fence included the hole in the donut, the cow could escape through the hole. In other words, he wouldn't have to climb over the fence, he just goes into the middle and through --

MISHLOVE: And comes around out the other side. Because the inside and the outside are the same.

YOUNG: Right. This is an image for our separation from the universe. I'm separated from you and you're separated from me, but if we were to go into our inner life, we would join up in the divine spark. That's the center of this whole thing.

MISHLOVE: That's very profound.

YOUNG: Well, it explains intuition, for instance, which is one of those centered things that comes from deep within us. The outer world is out here; everything is separate. But the inner world, in the first place, is not objective. See, you have to have objectivity to have separateness.

MISHLOVE: And the inner world is where we can experience, in other words, the wholeness, the unity of the universe -- the unity of ourselves with all other --

YOUNG: You can experience anything -- pleasure, suffering, and so on. There's a whole gamut of things. But those experiences are subjective or internal. I prefer to call them projective. But they are our memories, and they're very important, but they're not separate. What does the word telepathy mean to you?

MISHLOVE: Well, it comes from the word pathos, I suppose, which has to do with emotion.

YOUNG: That's correct. Most people think of it as communication at a distance, you see. But it isn't communication; it's feeling at a distance. Because these feelings are internal and general to everyone, you can feel other people's feelings. And that's the basis of telepathy -- it isn't communication, like a typewriter traveling through space.

MISHLOVE: It's intriguing, though, how if one looks at the research in telepathy, the feelings often seem to be specific enough so that ideas come along with them. Information somehow is attached to them.

YOUNG: Well, the information is highly colored, and that's probably the way it should be, because we have to take the information out. To put it in textbooks, it becomes all dried out, and it loses some of the nourishment it had when it was associated with experience. Nevertheless, that's the task of the ego -- to have this stop-and-think point, this cool observation which will enable it to get the benefit of knowing all these things.

MISHLOVE: In other words, the ego sort of wanders about the fence which separates it from the rest of the universe, on the outside, through the realm of the senses, and attempts to manipulate, to grasp, to understand the universe that way.

YOUNG: If you're going to use the fence in that metaphor, then I'd prefer this one: suppose you had a million cows or something, and you wanted to count them. You'd very soon get mixed up. In fact, that's one of the reasons animals go in herds, because the pursuing animal, the lion, will get mixed up as to which one he's chasing. But in any case, you couldn't keep track of these million cows. So you put a fence around the whole thing and let them out one at a time and count them. That's in a way the function of the ego; it can't deal with the whole mass of reality at once, so it does it by this trickle method, and it takes many lifetimes to do it, but eventually it gets what it needs. And that's the time to give up the ego, not before.

MISHLOVE: So what you're saying is that the ego seems to function in time. When you talk about the trickle method, it's like a counter, time.

YOUNG: Well, you might not have the same sex or the same ego in different lifetimes, but you have an ego, just the way you get a new automobile, etcetera.

MISHLOVE: You sometimes use the term monad, Arthur, to refer not to the ego, but to the deeper self.

YOUNG: That's the classic word for the deeper self. But then we have to go into the question of the distinction between soul and spirit. I always remember the philosophy class that I was allowed to address in Colorado. They all sat there like bumps on a log, couldn't be less interested. So I asked them, "What's the difference between soul and spirit?" They all perked up right away; they'd never heard that one. I won't ask you; but it's very important to distinguish soul and spirit. They may actually interchange meanings. We talk of Hamlet; his father's spirit was the ghost. But that's more in the sense of soul. In any case, the distinction between the monad, which is not in time or space -- it's sort of the higher self --

MISHLOVE: That would be the spirit.

YOUNG: I would prefer to call that the spirit. Whereas the soul is the vehicle of experience -- that which goes into matter and suffers.

MISHLOVE: In other words, when we think of someone being soulful, we're referring to their emotions -- their longings, their ambitions, their desires, their suffering, and so on. And yet the spirit at some level may be detached from all of that.

YOUNG: Yes, right. People use the words interchangeably, as they do with all words; but as long as you make the basic distinction. Of course, to go on with the philosophy class, as soon as I made it clear that the soul was the vehicle for going into different lifetimes, then they wanted to know, how did I demonstrate or prove the survival of the soul after death? I did what I hadn't done before, except once. The only thing I had available was a piece of chalk, and I showed how nice and round the chalk was, and it was so long, and it had such and such a shape. And I said, "I'm going to destroy this piece of chalk." I put it in my mouth and ate it. Of course, then the chalk kept coming out of my mouth. "Now, the form is gone," I said, "but the substance lingers on." And this is true in physics itself. You can destroy the form of things, but you can't destroy the matter-energy-substance content. And it's that matter-energy-substance content that is the soul. When I say matter, I'm saying it in the sense that it's without form. The ancients used the term water, because water takes on whatever shape you pour it into. You pour the wine into the glass, and it's glass shaped. The intellect can focus on the shape, but it can't deal with the substance. You have to drink the wine and experience it to get the substance.

MISHLOVE: Well, is there a sense to you that at death, as the body decays -- and I suppose even the soul and all its longings dissipate --

YOUNG: No, because that longing persists. It's like an energy, and it makes you find another body in order to satisfy that longing.

MISHLOVE: And yet that soul, that energy, that longing, it is somehow distinct. I mean, my longing is different than your longing.

YOUNG: Right. Well, I'm not saying that there's a loss of one's monad, one's individuality. But you lose the ego, like you might lose your identity card.

MISHLOVE: Well, the ego being separate, the body being separate, that's something that's easy to understand. But when we talk about the spirit, in many traditions there's a sense that we don't have many spirits; there is only one spirit.

YOUNG: You mean one spirit for all persons?

MISHLOVE: Yes. The collective unconscious would be the Jungian reflection of that.

YOUNG: No, that isn't spirit, that's the collective soul. Excuse me for differing with you. But if you want to insist on a collective spirit, it's the unity from which all things came. It's your spark of God. We're all sparks of God, but we have our own journeys. These sparks are separated in the sense that they're making their own journey, but they're not separate substance or separate essence. There's no word for spirit, you see.

MISHLOVE: So you would disagree with those who would maintain that even at death we return back to God, or back to spirit totally. We have a longer path, and the separation even transcends death itself.

YOUNG: I don't think I have an opinion there. I think you might go to God. But what is God? We're in difficulties right away. To me God is the highest state of evolution. You can only go to it by evolving yourself. If you rush back, like to Mummy's lap or something, you're retreating.

MISHLOVE: Sort of the Freudian notion of regression to the universal ocean of consciousness being an infantile stage.

YOUNG: Well, all right; I don't like to talk about Freud. It is conceivable to regress; I don't think we actually do. But to make a plea for giving up your ego, you could easily forfeit the gains that you get the ego to acquire.

MISHLOVE: The various spiritual traditions, particularly of the Orient, suggest that the notion of separation is an illusion.

YOUNG: The whole thing is an illusion in that sense, including the pleasure and pain. But you have to choose which illusion you like better than the other. Let me try to help on that. Suppose you went into a movie in the middle, and it didn't mean anything to you; they would just be Hollywood actors throwing things at each other. That's

because you haven't got the illusion of the story. You see, the illusion is a necessary factor for anything -- you have to look at it as though it was real. Now, that itself is a veil, but it takes a lot of doing to transcend that veil.

MISHLOVE: That's very interesting. It reminds me of the phrase that people in literature often talk about -- the willing suspension of disbelief. It's as if maybe it is an illusion; we really aren't separate at all, but we have agreed to suspend our disbelief in that so we can experience this movie, have this process.

YOUNG: We have to have the exercise. I remember that Magritte painting which shows a window with a painted image on it, and the window is shattered. The pieces are lying on the floor. But the same image is in reality on the other side of the window. We have to keep shattering these illusions; but there's a greater one beyond, and this exercise carries us on our path. Now take perfect beauty; the artist is trying to make the perfect painting, and he may burn up his paintings and throw them away because they're not good enough. Where is that ideal painting that he's trying to make? It's not so much that it's real, because it could be a figment of his imagination; it's that it induces great effort on his part, to capture this elusive thing.

MISHLOVE: And it seems as if, I suppose, here we are thrust in these bodies. One thing we certainly seem to be capable of is effort. And to what end are we to make these efforts, I guess is ultimately the question you pose.

YOUNG: Well, the image of the soul is the beautiful woman. We're always looking for that perfect, beautiful woman. Even women, I think, image the soul in terms of a feminine figure, because the woman is the epitome of beauty. Again, division -- God created Adam, remember, and that didn't work, so he split him in two, making Eve. He needed that thing to long for, and Eve became the mother of all living, it says in the Bible. Well, it means that -- I would say figuratively, as well as literally -- the mother of all living is this same illusion that you spoke of. The philosophers in the East say it's all illusion. Well, that illusion is our mother -- the mother of our experience.

MISHLOVE: To what end do you think all of this is for? Obviously you take some issue with the notion that we're going to return to the great mother. You don't think we should just sort of allow ourselves to be embraced by this ocean of oneness.

YOUNG: Well, I think it's the omega point. Whatever you think of that's good, it's beyond that. Because -- well, it's just even better than what's perfect.

MISHLOVE: And I suppose in your view of things, then, perhaps we can look at the great teachers of humanity -- the Buddhas, the Christs, and so on -- and suggest that ultimately we're all evolving in that direction.

YOUNG: Someone said of Christ's teachings, when he said, "Follow me," he meant follow the inner me that is your own godlike potential. I think that's what being reborn in Christ means. You see, the teaching of Christ, if I can venture my own interpretation of it, was the son-ness -- the son of the virgin, or the son of God -- looking toward the future. Whereas the God with the great beard and so on is looking toward the past. But the present moment is the third one -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost is the third one. That's the present moment. It's the potential of the present to become new, become transformed, become the son of God. That is our great task and our great challenge, because in doing so we shall eventually ascend, sit on the right hand, and so on. But we have to go through that birth process first, that virgin birth.

MISHLOVE: There's a sense in which, when we talk about growth and we talk about unity and Christ, the term love comes up very often as a force that impels us -- love different than longing.

YOUNG: Well, that's a long, very interesting subject. But the trouble is that love makes everything. See, longing has its dislike -- like and dislike. But you can love anything, or love is behind all forms of attachment. I mean, cupidity is stinginess, but it comes from the same root, Cupid, who was the god of love.

MISHLOVE: That's very interesting.

YOUNG: And he was the father of all the gods, the other gods being other principles besides love -- like Venus is beauty.

MISHLOVE: These gods of the ancient traditions -- we've talked about Zeus and Christ and Venus -- represent some deep structure in our own mind, perhaps some mediating factor between our own ego, our own monad --

YOUNG: Well, if there were any way to differentiate the divine essence, it would fall under these separate gods. Like Cupid, the father of the gods, is love, of course. But the one that comes immediately after Cupid -- there are varying accounts, and some have her as the sister -- is Gaia, Mother Earth, which is not the physical matter only, but the whole motherhood thing, like Eve is the mother of all living.

MISHLOVE: The Gaia image is now being used so much to refer to the biosphere, the environment in which we live.

YOUNG: Right. But then there were other gods. Uranus was the god of separateness. He was the god that circled around. You think of yourself in the center of this circle, you see; otherwise there wouldn't be any sky, because if it had no center there would be no sky. So Uranus is centeredness, and becomes the principle of the ego. But he's also the one that's castrated. He has no potency, and that's because he is an intellectual. He's the one that gives things an identity.

MISHLOVE: Do you feel that these gods of mythology represent real forces within us?

YOUNG: They're real forces in everything, not just people. For instance, take the determinism in physics; they use to be very fond of determinism in classical physics, everything exactly according to law. Well, Cronos, or Saturn, is the god of law. He also does things like boundaries and legal disputes and anything to do with possession. Because if you didn't have any possession, a lot of laws wouldn't be necessary.

MISHLOVE: How do these forces, represented by the deities or gods of ancient traditions, affect us at the level we described earlier -- the monad, or the soul?

YOUNG: Well, I think they write the script, if you really want to know, but that's a long story. Our interactions with our fellow man don't depend solely on chance. There's a definite script involved, and that's covered by these forces.

MISHLOVE: I suppose part of the illusion, part of the movie that we were talking about earlier.

YOUNG: Right. But I never would use the word illusion in a negative sense. If I had to use it in a negative sense, I would say delusion. Most of our illusions are delusions, and we have to separate them. And this process goes on and on. That's how we refine our sensitivity, is distinguishing the true from the false. Suppose you said a painting was an illusion. Let's say you have a Monet painting. You say, well, all paintings are illusions. There's a difference between a real Monet and one that's been faked.

MISHLOVE: That would be the delusion.

YOUNG: That would be the delusion, you see. So we have to judge our illusions and find the right ones.

MISHLOVE: So in a way this wonderful illusion in which we find ourselves, this conversation -- and for those who are with us, this viewing of a video or a television program -- is all part of the grander scheme of the universe itself as it unfolds.

YOUNG: Yes, yes.

MISHLOVE: Well, Arthur M. Young, we're out of time. It's been a real pleasure sharing this half hour with you.

YOUNG: Thank you very much, Jeff. I enjoyed it very much.

MISHLOVE: Thank you for being with me.