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WOLF: AN ACCOUNT OF NEW AGE SPIRIT ANIMAL GUIDANCE¹

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INTRODUCTION

This dossier is the result of an interview conducted by the author in February of 2019. It documents a series of incidents that occurred in the 1970's, predominantly at a college campus in the northeastern United States. A handful of related events occurred around the same time at off-campus apartments and at the interviewee's vacation home in rural New Jersey. Personal identifiable information has been omitted out of respect for the interviewee's privacy.

The interviewee is a Caucasian male of Italian-American descent, approximately seventy years of age at the time of the interview. He self-reported the following information as to the reliability of this account. He has a history of on-again, off-again drug use, predominantly heroin and marijuana, but has never used hallucinogens. He has never been diagnosed with a mental condition, nor has he been prescribed medication for any. He is a heavy smoker (two or more packs daily) and was once an alcoholic. He has been sober of alcohol and drugs for at least the preceding five years. The medications he takes regularly are not anticipated to have any influence on his lucidity or his ability to accurately recall events from memory.

Notwithstanding any effects the preceding factors may have had on his memory or ability to express himself, he provided complete, coherent responses to the questions posed. He appeared lucid before, during, and after the interview. He was not paid, offered, or promised anything in return for relating this account. He requested his personal information remain confidential.

* * *

I grew up in a household that took baseball very seriously. As a kid, my pop put me in little league. Even at a young age, everyone said I had potential. They were right. I played throughout middle school into junior high. I would never be professional league material, but my prowess got me a college scholarship.

I was twenty years old, in my junior year when I hooked up with this girl who was into the New Age. I had never given the subject of religion much thought before then.

¹ The events reported in this dossier are presented as true; however, no guarantee is made as to their veracity. To the extent the facts appear to take on a supernatural nature, the reader is advised that supreme authority to discern facts of this kind rests with the Catholic Church.

I was raised in a family that was Catholic only because the religion was a holdover from our Italian roots. I didn't attend church service with any regularity, except when there were weddings or funerals. Prayer was something the old people did to pass the time. My grandma, when she was still alive, would spend hours in her rocker thumbing her rosary beads, silently mouthing Hail Mary's and Our Father's. I'd attended Sunday school, so I thought I knew all I needed to know about Jesus, but none of that was relevant to me. It's not like I wanted to become a priest or anything.

So this girl and I, we started seeing each other, and we got to know each other pretty well. Then she starts talking to me about spirit animals. She must have felt comfortable around me by then because she had never mentioned the topic before. It didn't seem like something she'd tell just anybody. She said that everyone had a spirit animal, but few people knew it. I'll never forget—I laughed in her face when she told me hers was an invisible spider monkey that sits on her shoulder and whispers things in her ear.

She must have taken my laughter to mean I didn't believe her. And she was right—I really wasn't buying any of it, but I heard her out regardless. Some days, when we'd be out on dates, it was all she ever talked about. I played along, acting like I was interested, when really I was more interested in her than what she had to say. She went on to explain how everyone has a spirit animal, but that you have to become awakened to its presence before it can do you any good. She found hers after embarking on a spirit journey. Basically, how you find your spirit animal depends on the type of animal it is. The monkey is a clever trickster. It appeared to her in a dream and presented her with a riddle, adding that she would find the answer to the riddle the following day. This would serve as proof that her spirit animal was real and desired to work with her.

The day after she'd had that dream, she was in her afternoon class. Suddenly, a strange feeling came over her. She felt as though hands had taken hold of her head and turned it to one side so she could look out the window into the college green. It was the fall semester. The leaves had started to turn. The wind picked up, blowing a big brown leaf off a tree. That leaf didn't fall. It twirled and fluttered for a solid minute before a bird swooped down and snatched it up in midair.

That was the sign she'd been told to watch for. As she told me this, the little blonde hairs on her forearms stood on end. She got goosebumps.

So now my curiosity was just a little piqued, if only from how deep into this she was. I started asking her questions, at first just to make conversation, but before long I began to take an interest in spirit animals. Inwardly, I hoped I had a cool spirit animal, like a bear or an eagle, not something lame like a tortoise.

She took me back to her apartment, a half hour's bus ride from campus. She'd converted one of the two bedrooms into her meditation room, set apart from the rest of her home by a beaded curtain. Inside, an intricate pattern rug lay on the floor. There were candles everywhere—some burnt down to nubs. A bunch of polished stones lay on a white handkerchief spread over a corner table. In the opposite corner was a three-legged wooden stool supporting a brass incense burner. None of the furniture matched. The room looked like it had been cobbled together with things she'd picked up from thrift stores.

She had me sit Indian-style on the rug as she lit the candles. After she'd lit the last one, she held the flame to the rim of the incense burner and ignited its contents. Smoke from the incense rose to the ceiling then crept down from there, filling the room with a pungent gray haze.

Next, she told me she was going to lead me through some mental exercises designed to “raise my awareness of the higher energy vibrations of the spirit guides.” That wasn’t exactly what she said but it’s close. Everybody who thought the way she did was always talking in terms of “vibrations” and “energy.” It was all the rage back then. I got nothing out of these meditation sessions. At one point, I think I fell asleep for a minute, because she prodded me in the ribs.

After an hour of attempting to contact the spirit world, we changed tack. She brought out a Ouija board and set it up on the rug. She kept the board in its original packaging for safekeeping. It was emblazoned with block letters that spelled out: Parker Brothers, Inc. The awkwardness of the moment was not lost on me—did she actually expect to summon a spirit with a tool made by the same people who printed Monopoly board games? I laughed in spite of myself.

She wasn’t laughing, though.

After we’d put our fingers on the pointer, she asked the spirits to reveal the nature of my spirit guide. One letter at a time, the pointer spelled out: wolf.

That was reassuring. If any of this was to be believed, then at least my spirit guide wasn’t something ridiculous. And while I’m fairly certain it was her moving the pointer, part of me still isn’t so sure. I just can’t shake the feeling something else was in the room with us that night. This comes only through the benefit of hindsight. At the time, I was still very much a skeptic.

She asked a few more questions, and the pointer spelled out the answers. Eventually, it grew late. I said good-bye and caught the bus back home, feeling no different than before. I take that back. I left her place feeling foolish for thinking anything might come of what we had done there.

School let out for winter break. Around this time each year, my family would take a trip to our cabin. The snowfall that winter was heavier than any other in recent memory. I spent the first four days of my break indoors. We played Monopoly for hours. My little brother landed on a hotel-laden Park Place twice in one game, and each time he had to cough up several grand he didn’t have. He looked ready to stab someone. That was when we opted for Parcheesi. The game offered better odds of us surviving winter break cooped up under the same roof.

The weather was still awful by the evening of that first night. There would be no sledding or snowball fights, so we called it a night early. We had dinner and went to sleep. A little before sunrise, I rose from my bed feeling restless. I was on pins and needles. A bizarre, nervous energy shot through me. Part of me felt ecstatic, and yet another part of me wanted to run—I don’t know why, I don’t know where, I just felt like I needed to get far away from where I was.

The rest of the house was still sleeping as I shambled down the staircase. The great room was dappled in shadows. Early morning light streaked in through the floor-to-ceiling windows. I had just reached the foot of the stairs when I saw something that made my jaw drop. Outside, standing at the crest of a tall snowdrift, was a massive gray wolf. I thought they’d all been hunted to extinction years before I was born.

The beast was huge. It stood four feet tall at the shoulder and looked taller still atop the packed snow. It stared at me with big, yellow, baleful eyes. Specks of frost clung from the tufts of fur around its face. I’d been coming out to the Pine Barrens since I was a kid. I’d heard all the stories growing up—about the Jersey devil, the abandoned settlements, witches, even alien abductions that happened there—but I’d never seen a wolf in living color out in the Barrens.

I crossed the great room, eyes fixed on the wolf outside. It did not move as I approached the window, didn't so much as stir. That's when it all clicked into place for me — this was my spirit animal. I was convinced this wolf had to be it. I gasped with the sudden realization, then covered my mouth with my hands, remembering everyone else in the house was asleep.

As if it could hear my thoughts, the wolf shook the snow off its body. It padded closer to the window, getting so close that its hot breath steamed up the pane. The beast and I locked eyes. My excitement cut to fear as ice ratcheted down my spine. As I stared into those yellow eyes the size silver dollars, all at once, I felt threatened, as though I'd forgotten there was a sheet of glass separating us. Its mouth was slightly ajar, drawing breaths that swirled in the chilly air.

It could kill me if it wanted to. We both knew it. It would be a simple thing for it to plunge its fangs into my throat and squeeze until all the blood left my body, and yet the wolf did not desire this. He was a stern teacher, with much wisdom to impart, which he would gladly share with anyone whom he felt was worthy.

At that moment, I felt as though a connection between us was forged. I blinked, and like a man rousing from a dream, I backed away from the glass. The wolf turned and looked over its shoulder, then shot me a final glance before trotting off into woods along the edge of the property.

The air was crushed from my lungs from the magnitude of this experience. My knees gave out and I dropped onto my backside. I gave a breathless little laugh, then a chuckle that bobbed my shoulders. Before I knew it I was giggling like I was possessed. This soon gave way to full-on belly laughs that woke the whole house. When my parents found me laughing all by myself, they thought I'd gone mad. I gave a lame excuse I hardly remember today, and they dropped the matter entirely.

I returned to school after winter break and took to the New Age head-first, under the tutelage of my girlfriend. Several times a week, I'd visit her apartment and we'd engage in tandem meditation. I was becoming less interested in her and more interested in what she could teach me. Looking back on that, I feel guilty for having used her. I no longer wanted her for who she was, but what she could offer. Neither of us said so, but we started to lose interest in each other as a couple. That didn't keep us from having relations during our visits, though. It didn't stop us from seeing other people either.

I never got the impression my spirit guide was trying to speak to me, but by this time I was so invested in fostering a relationship with the spirit that I took my girlfriend's advice without a second thought. Anything she recommended, I did. To show gratitude to the wolf spirit, or when I needed something badly, I offered a sacrifice. Typically, this was a raw steak that we would cut into small pieces and ceremonially burn. Burning a piece of meat to char left her apartment smelling rank, but I stomached it, knowing that the rewards merited the efforts.

And rewards there were. As we geared up for the start of baseball season, I started playing harder than ever. I'd always been naturally competitive, but now there was a fire in my belly to push myself to my limits. I wanted to show my worthiness to my newfound guardian spirit, and I wanted more of what it had to offer. People started taking notice. There was talk of putting me in the starting lineup for the season opener. With the wolf spirit's help, I might even make the majors after all.

This newfound prowess at the game coincided with a change in how my fellow students perceived me. To this day, I don't grasp how the two are interconnected, but they occurred at around the same time. No longer was I the skinny kid who mostly rode the pine and only occasionally got to play ball. I had become a big man on campus practically overnight. All the popular guys wanted me at their house parties. A semester ago these fellas would not so much as given me the time of day, let alone have walked all over each other to get me to go to their events.

I went stag to my first party. It was at an upperclassman's house. He and three other students split the rent on a two-story home set into a block of single-family residences. The entire first story had been gutted of its furniture to accommodate a sound system, a stack of beer kegs, and college students packed shoulder to shoulder. It was a place of orgiastic excess.

A colony of smelly beatniks too old to be students huddled in a corner. One of them tapped on his bongo drums while a blonde girl in bellbottoms danced. They all were baked out of their skulls. Elsewhere, the boys in varsity jackets shotgunned their beers.

The upstairs rooms might as well have had revolving doors for all the couples who came and went, intent on fornicating. The line for the upstairs rooms stretched across the mezzanine and down the staircase. On the main floor, I could hardly move through the crowd without bumping my toes against people who were passed-out drunk on the floor or rutting in plain view like animals.

It was too much, even for me. I headed for home, resolved on not telling my girlfriend what I'd done there. I did, however, tell her how people's opinion of me had changed of late. She wasn't surprised. She explained that protégés of the wolf share in its confidence, and that this confidence produces an animal magnetism in others. What is more, the reason I'd gotten better at baseball was because I also partook of the wolf's natural speed, strength, and cunning. None of this made much sense (it still doesn't), but it sure sounded like it did, and that was good enough for me at the time.

I was a month into enjoying these newfound gifts when suddenly they were taken away. People who had befriended me in those few weeks started avoiding me like I stank. They stopped inviting me to their parties. When I suggested we meet up for a beer, just me and the guys, they always had an excuse not to go.

My grades tumbled. I was never a straight-A student, but what I did have going for me was that I caught on quick. Studying never came easy for me, but I paid attention during lectures and skimmed the required reading, so rarely would I have to cram for finals. The material just stuck. Now, I was finding it hard to concentrate. The words printed on the page no longer made sense. I mean, I could read the words, I understood each word separately, but the greater meaning was lost. Some nights I'd stay up late, reading and re-reading the lesson, and have no better understanding of it than when I started.

Making matters worse, no longer was I at the top of my ball game. The coach was scratching his head over how I'd gone from exceptional to mediocre in so short a time. One afternoon, he pulled me into his office for a candid discussion. Throughout my college career, I'd gotten along great with my coach, all the more so once my game had improved. I could tell by his face he was genuinely concerned. He shut the door to his office and sat at his desk, then promised me that he would keep in confidence anything I said.

"Is it drugs, son?" were the next words out of his mouth.

The suddenness of his question took me aback. "No," I sputtered.

“Is it the drink? Or a girl? Did you get a girl pregnant?”

“No, it’s none of those, sir,” I said, shaking my head.

He pressed his lips into a line and then, with a bob of his eyebrows, sighed and leaned back in his chair. “What’s bugging you, kid?”

I gave him a lame story. He saw through it, but made efforts to look as though he hadn’t to save me the embarrassment. What he said next made my stomach drop. If I didn’t improve, I would be booted from the team. So close to graduating, my scholarship would be gone, and so too would my future evaporate before my eyes.

I tried to speak, but found no words to offer in reply. The best I could do was nod that I understood. He then escorted me outside.

There I was—four in the afternoon and standing in the otherwise empty hallway of the college’s administration building—completely at a loss for what to do. And then a thought occurred to me, so sudden and out of the blue that I felt like I’d been smacked in the face with the flat of a snow shovel. My girlfriend would be able to shed some light on all this.

I caught the bus to her apartment and ran up the steps to her door two at a time, practically flinging myself at her when she opened up. To my relief, she knew exactly what was going on. Her tone darkened when she offered her explanation.

The wolf spirit, though powerful, was demanding. It had given me several great boons, but I had failed in offering it worthy sacrifices. Here, I spoke in my defense, citing my regular offerings of raw meat. She gave a knowing look. Those had indeed been sacrifices, but they were not *worthy*. The spirit wanted something more. And to get at what it was the spirit desired, she set up her Ouija board. The pointer spelled out a single word: blood.

It made perfect sense that the spirit should want blood. Wolves were carnivores after all, and they relished blood as much as meat. I’d taken my eyes off my girlfriend as I considered this, but when next I set my gaze on her she had a knife in one hand and a syringe in the other.

“Your blood,” she clarified.

I swallowed hard in a dry throat.

Her eyes drilled a cold, impassionate stare into mine. Posing as she was, the knife in icepick grip, point down, and the syringe point up, she could not have looked more like Baphomet than if she’d had *solve* and *coagula* tattooed on her forearms.

The wolf was my spirit guide, and I was its pupil. If I was to have any hope of continuing my relationship with this spirit, I would have to slake its thirst with an offering of my blood. Otherwise, the spirit would take back its gifts and then some, leaving me worse off than before for having spurned its patronage. Thankfully, she had done this ritual many times before, and was well versed in how to conduct it safely. Still, I was hesitant.

“How much blood will you need?” I had to ask.

Her reply was not comforting. “Enough.”

My heart eased when at last she put the knife down on the rug. She left the room momentarily, returning with a spoon and a tiny bag. It wasn’t until she’d emptied the bag into the spoon and then held the back of the spoon to a lit candle that I realized she was cooking heroin. Once she’d filled the syringe with the spoon’s contents, she handed it to me. Never having done drugs before, I froze, unsure of what to do next.

The heroin was the means by which I would astral project to the gate separating the material world and the world of spirits. The gate itself was like a chain-link fence—if you got close enough, you could see and interact with things on the other side without actually having to cross over.

The wolf spirit had made its presence known by communicating with us via the Ouija board. It was already as close to its side of the gate as it could get. All I had to do was approach it from my side. To do that, I'd have to shoot up enough heroin to put me in a near-death state. While I was there, my girlfriend would take some of my blood for the offering. As an added plus, I'd be so doped up I'd hardly feel any pain.

I took the needle and stuck it into the vein of my other arm—a rookie mistake, as any longtime junkie might tell you, but I didn't know any better at the time. The drug took effect almost instantly. I felt asleep with my eyes open. I could not move, I could not speak, but I could see with bleary eyes my girlfriend as she closed on me. She took my wrist and with even passes of her knife cut a zig-zag pattern from my elbow to my palm, like the grill marks on a barbecued steak. I felt none of the pain, only pressure and an icy feeling where the blade split my skin. The blood came readily.

She held my arm over the tall candle between us. The fire popped and sizzled as my blood lapped onto it in solid streams. The candle sat in a porcelain bowl to catch any excess blood. This blood would be kept for future sacrifices. Somewhere into the ritual she lowered my injured arm into the fire. Even in my drugged-up state, the pain registered albeit weakly, but I was already too far gone to do anything to stop it.

The room darkened. The candles were pinpricks of light against a backdrop of inky black nothingness. All I saw of my girlfriend was the outline of her features, as though she was a bas-relief on a wall. Shortly thereafter, I passed out.

When I regained consciousness, I was in perfect darkness. My head spun like I was coming off the worst hangover ever.

Then it struck me—the ritual had succeeded. I was in the spirit world. It was nothing like what I'd expected. In fact, I did not know what to expect, but the least I would have anticipated was being unable to see anything at all. The acrid smell of burnt candles hung in the air.

The wolf spirit was nowhere to be found. I tried to move and fell headlong onto my face. Apparently, I had arrived in the spirit world in the same posture I had been in when I was in my girlfriend's apartment.

My body was still numb from the heroin. It took a few tries, but I managed to get my wobbly legs under me. My foot brushed against something on the floor that skittered and crashed and shattered. I lost my balance and smashed face-first into a wall, knocking over the corner table on my way down.

All of a sudden, I knew where I was. I was in my girlfriend's meditation room. All the lights in her apartment were out. I shouted for her, but she did not respond.

With a hand braced against the wall to guide me, I made my way to the light switch and flicked it on. The room was in shambles. The candles we'd used in the ritual had all burned down and gone out. I had been in a stupor for hours. The analog clock on her kitchen wall read half past two in the morning.

My arm—the one she'd cut in the ritual—felt like death. It was an odd combination of stabbing pain and numbness, but as though these feelings belonged to someone else's arm, except I was experiencing them.

A gauze bandage had been wound around the length of my forearm. It was soaked through with blood. I don't know what drove me to look at my injury – call it morbid curiosity – but I undid a few turns of the bandage for a look. If I hadn't been so drugged up, I think I would have fainted. I was cut up pretty badly. The skin was charred black from the candle. My arm looked like a valley on the surface of some distant, hellish planet where an apocalyptic war had left everything in cinders.

I staggered out into the hall, banging on all the doors and shouting at the top of my lungs for help. Eventually, someone opened up. Whoever this was, I couldn't see him clearly, but this Good Samaritan drove me to the nearest hospital's emergency room.

I don't remember much of what happened when I got there. The next thing I know, I'm in a hospital bed. A nurse and a police officer asked me several questions. The officer took down my responses for his report, and then left.

I was in the hospital for close to a month. About halfway through my stay, my parents drove down to visit me. My mom burst into tears just at the sight of me, but my pop just shook his head. Pop was the sort who'd belted us for any misbehavior; and it didn't matter that I was a grown man of twenty – he'd have that belt off so fast I'd be smarting before I knew what hit me. This time, however, he wasn't angry – better said, he wasn't that type of angry. Those hard set eyes spoke volumes: *How could you do this? We raised you better than this!* More than watching my mother cry, it was my pop's look of disappointment that crushed me. Later, I came to learn that they had come because the school phoned them regarding my absence from class, but that was not all they were told – the district attorney wanted to prosecute me for illicit drug use. Thankfully, pops managed to work things out with the D.A.'s office and the charges were dropped.

By the time I was discharged from the hospital, the doctors had managed to save my throwing arm, but the hand was still numb. After extensive physical therapy, the best I could do with that arm was hold a coffee mug. This progress buoyed my dreams of returning to baseball, but those hopes were dashed when I realized my grip strength would never come back. Every time I tried to throw a ball, it would slip free of my limp fingers during the follow-through and go everywhere but where I intended.

I dropped out of school. I had no job, no money, and no hope that things would ever get better. I moved back in with my parents for close to two years, until my dad put me out of the house. For a while, I lived on the streets, until I met up with a college friend who let me stay at his place. Despite not having spoken with him in years, we picked right up where we left off. We started talking about people we went to school with. Then the conversation shifted to my former girlfriend, the one who got me started in the occult.

My friend knew her. He had wanted to date her, but had backed off because I was with her at the time. He stopped pursuing her when he found out she was actually seeing several guys, not just me. From one day to the next, she stopped attending classes. Later, I'd come to understand this happened around the time I was in the hospital. Rumors circulating around campus told of her having killed someone (that is, me), and that her parents withdrew her from school to evade the law. Nothing came of these rumors, however, because no charges ever were brought. No body, no murder. Eventually, she was forgotten. Just like me.

Now that I'm getting older, I think back on my life more often than ever. Mostly, I think on how things ended up the way they did, and how they could have turned out differently.

Do I still think such things as wolf spirits exist? I don't know anymore. I don't care to think about it, either. All I know is: if God exists, then the devil does too.

And I know the devil exists.

I've seen him.

He's got big, pointy teeth.

ANALYSIS

There are at least three ways of approaching the phenomena described above. Four, if you consider these events a bizarre string of unconnected coincidences, but we will set that notion aside for the sake of this discussion. The first way of looking at this is to accept that common animals have spiritual natures which persist after their bodies die. Thus, a "wolf spirit" is literally the spirit of a particular wolf in the same way as a soul is the spirit of a particular human. The second is to consider that the animals themselves do not have immortal spirits, but some spirit exists that is an archetype or a paragon for the animal in question. Hence, the "wolf spirit" is a particular spirit that embodies the state of being a perfect wolf, and it exists apart from individual instances of wolves. The third posits that neither of the above is true and that demons are responsible.

As to the first view: some faith traditions maintain that animals are closer to nature, and therefore they are more attuned to reality than mankind. In essence, they hold that man is so caught up with himself that he fails to grasp the bigger picture. This is a fanciful conceit, and a dangerous one as well. It is a backhanded way of saying animals know more than we do. This thinking downplays our ability to reason and suggests we should go about life like animals driven by base instincts.

Animals do not have spiritual natures. This becomes apparent when you consider that they do not have the powers of the soul like we have. Animals cannot reason or perform acts of introspection (i.e., thinking about one's own thinking). If an animal can be said to have anything resembling a soul, then it is that portion of its being which makes it live and which becomes absent upon its death. It is the blueprint that informs how its matter will develop and that governs its behavioral patterns while alive.

This is markedly different from a human soul, because an animal's soul (so to speak) is not immortal. When the animal dies, its being is completely extinguished. It cannot proceed to an afterlife because nothing remains of it to go anywhere. An animal spirit is therefore an impossibility.

Assuming its soul could survive death, there is no evidence to suggest that the death of an animal endows it with the capacity to reason if it did not have this capacity beforehand. Such things occur only in fiction. Therefore, the power to reason is something that persists beyond death only if the creature already possessed it in life. And so, even if animals possessed immortal spiritual existences after death, they could only be expected to behave as they did when alive.

As to the second view: other faiths put a twist on the concept above by stating it is not the spirits of the animals themselves but rational and wise spirits in the guise of animals. These faiths profess the notion that animal spirits can teach, protect, cure the body, and bestow powers beyond what is natural. This view is also problematic. The only known example of a rational, material creature is humankind. We have yet to encounter another material creature that can reason on the level that we can. With that said, mankind has borne witness on many occasions to another type of creature with an equal or superior capacity to reason, and that is the angel as described in Catholic Scripture and Tradition. Angels are not spirit animals. Thus, without evidence to demonstrate that spirit animals exist, we cannot assume their existence.

Which leads us to the third view: angels are non-material creatures. By definition, they are spirits. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the holy spirits as “angels” and the infernal spirits as “demons.” Anything that represents itself as an animal spirit is likely a demon, even if its intents are ostensibly beneficent. Were a demon to adopt an animal disguise, it would be to make its victim let down his guard, so better to establish an abusive relationship. Thus, the appearance a demon takes on can be thought of as a deceit in itself, which is part of a greater scheme to deceive. In contrast, a holy angel would have nothing to hide, and therefore would not attempt to disguise itself as an animal.

The astute reader might now be thinking: what about the biblical account of Elisha and the angels in the form of bears?² Those holy angels disguised themselves as bears; would that not contradict the foregoing?

Looking at this more closely, however, we can determine that there is no contradiction. While we can only guess at why these holy angels chose the form of animals, we know that their motive was not to deceive anyone; rather, their intent was to fend off the wicked youths that had set upon the prophet. Elisha requested the Lord’s assistance; he did not ask to speak with any particular spirit. If the bears were spirits operating under the guise of animals, neither they nor Elisha sought interaction with each other. Those spirits merely took on the form of animals because, presumably, those forms best suited the task for which the angels had been dispatched. And, importantly, those spirits were angels of God in the form of bears, not the spirits of bears.

Animals have their place in this world which we share. As fellow creatures of God, they deserve respect and to be treated humanely. But with that said, it is wrong to attribute to animals spiritual qualities they do not have and can never hope to obtain. This is self-delusion, and it sets oneself up for a fall.

END OF REPORT

² *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*, 2 Kings 2:23-25.