

George Sopasakis, **The Thread of Ariadne: The sword of consciousness**, 2007. Coral Springs, FL, Llumina Press,

Consciousness has always been, and continues to be, one of the greatest mysteries of existence. So, all through history and in all cultures there has been a quest to understand what consciousness is. In our own times, both science and scientifically inclined philosophers have been giving their explanations of this extraordinary phenomenon in cold cosmos. But not many have sought to interpret it in terms of ancient myths.

In this fascinating little book George Sopasakis offers his interpretation of consciousness through the myth of Ariadne. Ariadne is said to have fallen in love with Theseus who had offered to kill the Minotaur, and to whom she gave a sword and a ball of thread made of red fleece, a thread which she herself was spinning. Theseus did the right thing by accepting the gift, and that is what enabled him to achieve his goal. The right choice is often the key to success.

The author of this book went back to the original place from where the myth originated and he was more than inspired by what he saw and experienced. He felt he had suddenly become aware of a deeper truth enshrined in the legend of Ariadne. Moreover, he felt there was a parallel with another great myth: that of Gilgamesh of the Babylonian people, and other ancient worldview also. Indeed one message of the book is that the legend of Ariadne is a recurring theme in different garbs in all cultures.

With the metaphor of the Minotaur and the thread of Ariadne, the author cruises through a whole range of issues of profound significance to the human condition. Ariadne's ball of thread, and the labyrinth that led Theseus to the abode of Minotaur where the beast was sleeping, and how Theseus, after quickly slaying the monster, found his way back with the aid of the thread: all these were symbolic of how we leave our anchor upon birth, unfurl the sail that takes us along life's course until we reach the goal, and then retract our path to where we came from.

The book differentiates the self from consciousness: If the self is a flow, consciousness is what directs the flow. Challenging William James, he looks upon consciousness as "the process that converts fragmented, incoming data into a non-unified scattered information flow..." He argues that there is more to consciousness than the physical body in which it is encased.

Sopasakis' book offers new insights and interpretations of an ancient and little known myth, and links it to others. It reminds us that nuggets of wisdom are embedded in legends that may, at best, seem to be fantasy tales to the modern mind. Hindu scholars have held similar views about the Puranas of Hindu lore. The book also presents in brief the legends of Theseus and Minotaur, and well as the epic of Gilgamesh.

Even ignoring the references to Einstein and Gödel which don't quite conform to how professional physicists and mathematicians understand these, the book is fascinating reading. It will certainly make the reader wonder and reflect even more about life and existence.

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May 22, 2008

