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For Immediate Release
A NEW BOOK
By Alan Clements

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FACING DEATH

A Conversation With Reverend Bodhi Be

ALAN E. CLEMENTS

With a Foreword by Mitch Davidowitz, MSW, M.Ed., Ed.S.

“A rare and beautiful dialogue on liberating death. Through the wisdom of our grief, we enter into an existential sense door, where death itself becomes a festival of wonder, a heightened radical ride into the heart of the ever-present future, and beyond. This is a must read for every person on earth who cares about the future of life and death.”

— Jeannine Davies, PhD, Psychologist, author, Relational Dharma

Pre-order NOW on Amazon and other online retailers with a worldwide release 5.29.2022

(Please use anything in this press release for your own review or announcement of the book, and reach out for an exclusive interview with Reverend Bodhi Be and or Alan Clements for print, radio, podcast or TV). (For a PDF review copy and promo images please email us).

“To change our culture, to change our lives, requires the transformation of consciousness, and few things shift consciousness as quickly as an awareness of death.” — Reverend Bodhi Be

“There are two ways to live: you can live as if nothing is a miracle; you can live as if everything is a miracle.” — Albert Einstein

This conversation with Alan Clements and Reverend Bodhi Be is a gem and especially timely. Alan, a former Buddhist monk, artist and activist, is open about being in hospice, a place few dare to go much less record, and Reverend Bodhi Be, a Sufi minister, funeral director, trainer of death doulas and off-the-grid homesteader, who, along with Ram Dass, a friend, mentor and collaborator, founded Doorway Into Light. From this place, we can all learn much about a fact of life that assures us that we, at some point, will die. Some may be faced with a terminal illness, others from the natural causes of old age, and some die suddenly, but clearly this life will end for all of us. And now, more and more, the awareness of death has never been more pervasive on a global level, as we are now forced to consider the possibilities of nuclear war, bioweapons, environmental collapse, even extinction, and topics that are staggering in their implications. Facing death, to those who acknowledge the complexities of what is unfolding in our world, is an important topic for discussion. Having such conversations can now be a part of our own expansion of consciousness, and if fortunate, we will be gently mirrored back by those who accept the vulnerability in dying, and the subtleties of this delicate topic. May we all have the courage to be, feel, awaken, then act in any capacity and with kindness to all, as the great, beautiful minds in this rare and precious book inspire us to do, while we still have the chance.

Foreword to Facing Death by Mitch Davidowitz, MSW, M.Ed., Ed.S.

It is a great honor to write the foreword to this rare and precious book, 'Facing Death' for my beloved friend and dear Dharma brother, Alan Clements. I first met Alan forty years ago while I was serving on the staff of the Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts. At the time he was one of the teachers at the annual three-month retreat, having recently returned from Burma (also known as Myanmar) where he had been living for some years as a Buddhist monk at the Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha Meditation Center, in Yangon. Alan has the unique distinction of having been one of the first Westerners to ordain and train in that ancient (predominantly) Buddhist culture.

Our friendship was both immediate and visceral as I felt the extraordinary presence of Alan's beautiful heart along with his tenacious commitment to truth, compassion and freedom. This was evident in his first book, 'Burma: The Next Killing Fields?' (with a foreword by the Dalai Lama). Alan has gone on to write more than a dozen additional books and films with the same uniquely empowered, nuanced and ethically rooted clarity.

My own work in the area of death, dying and bereavement began with my training as a hospice volunteer in 1978. After my mother died in 1981, I became acutely aware of the lack of understanding around grief and loss. While completing my first postgraduate training in counseling, I published an article with Dr. Robert Myrick titled "Responding to the bereaved: An analysis of 'helping' statements". While serving as the Bereavement Coordinator of a local hospice I developed a program for health care and mental health professionals titled, 'Responding to the Bereaved: Breaking the Myth'. I have presented this training at national and regional conferences around the United States for the past 37 years. In addition to my work as a grief therapist and educator, I utilize my decades-long experience of intensive training in Vipassana (Insight) meditation which began in 1974.

For generations, death has been a taboo topic in our culture. In some families, the name of the deceased could not be mentioned. Unlike other cultures where death is honored and celebrated in the light of day, we have often kept it hidden in the darkest of shadows. Doctors viewed death as a failure. Patients were not told of their terminal diagnosis, while others requested that they not be told. Many adults feel resentful that they were not permitted as children to see a beloved grandparent or parent in the hospital prior to their death, or at the funeral. The ability to integrate a death into one's heart and soul is greatly aided by seeing the body of the deceased. The conspiracy of denial surrounding death has deprived those with terminal illnesses and their families of the opportunity to say goodbye. Dying is an extraordinary time to bring the lights of love and forgiveness to relationships that have been challenging or estranged.

The pandemic has certainly raised our awareness of death as we saw trailers storing bodies that morgues could no longer hold. Death has knocked on many doors in sudden and unexpected ways. In this very powerful book, Alan Clements takes this awareness and amplifies it with profound reflections which awaken our understanding. He brings his own experience of being diagnosed with a life-threatening heart condition, and the likelihood of dying without an immediate dangerous surgery, to this deep exploration about what truly matters in our own life and death. When Alan asked his dear friend Aung San Suu Kyi (Burma's imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate) "What does your country's 'Revolution of the Spirit' mean?", paraphrasing her answer she replied, "Having the courage to care about things larger than your own self-interest." Alan Clements brings that same treasured commitment to this book as he dialogues about the many seen and unseen deaths on this planet, including the catastrophic realities of climate change and even that of "facing extinction".

Facing Death is both a timely and timeless book (designed to be read in one sitting) that addresses and transcends the questions which focus exclusively on one's own life. As he has done his entire life, Alan seeks a sacred intimacy with a topic that frightens most of us.

To this end, Alan knocks on the door of life and death in a vibrant dialogue with Reverend Bodhi Be, a pioneer in the field of conscious dying and death. He is the Founder of Doorway Into

Light, a nonprofit educational and charitable organization in Haiku, Hawaii committed to helping others show up for life and death.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants to understand this fundamental reality of our lives. It addresses the many threads in the tapestry of a meaningful life and death. It shines light into those dark places that we are often afraid to enter. Alan Clements and Reverend Bodhi Be open a deeply transparent window into our universal struggles with living and dying. Each does this by allowing the raw vulnerability of their hearts to carry the voice of truth in the most illuminating of ways.

Preface to Facing Death by Alan Clements

Greetings, dear reader. Thank you for being with me at the beginning of this journey and allowing me to offer a short preface to my book, *Facing Death: A Conversation with the Reverend Bodhi Be*.

Many of you know this already, but for those who don't, about a year ago I was diagnosed with a potentially fatal heart condition. A routine scan, that discovered only a cracked rib, also revealed an acutely enlarged aortic aneurysm, an often-lethal swelling in the largest vessel leaving the heart. I was told in no uncertain terms that it was like a radiator pipe ready to burst, a ticking time bomb on a short fuse, and that death could and likely would come "at any second" if I did not undergo immediate open-heart surgery.

I scheduled three surgeries and canceled them all due to the shock and the adjustment, the investigation and conversations, and the tears, inevitably, of facing something so dramatic. I decided to come to Maui, my second sacred spiritual home (after Burma) to enter hospice and apply for the right to take my life.

Hawaii is one of the four states in the U.S. that allows the right to die by your own choice, and through a rigorous process I was granted the pharmaceutical substance necessary, should I make this decision. I called it "the rebirthing elixir," and, here in hospice with this elixir, I took care of all the essentials needed to transition, either through biological discontinuity or the fatality of the heart illness and/or consciously choosing my own exit.

I took care of business. I went to see my beloved daughter, Sahra Bella, in Vancouver. I wrote my will and my Five Wishes. I looked deeply into who would handle my burial and my body. Reverend Bodhi Be, here on the island, at his green funeral organization, Doorway Into Light, with its Death Store, had attracted me. I had known of him, and met him, had respect for him, and he agreed to handle my body and bury it, here on the island, whether I die by natural causes or choose to consciously, mindfully euthanize on my most sacred terms.

I've had this vision now for some months, and the only thing that was left was a heart-to-heart with the man that I entrusted, who bequeathed me with his compassion and good will, to take care of my body and bury it, just up the street, should I die here. I felt pressing questions in perhaps a little sharper detail; "Who are you? Who are we?" I wanted to get to know him.

This book, *Facing Death*, is perhaps the most sacred conversation I've ever had. It was deliberately designed to be one sitting, to be read in an hour to an hour and a half, to be felt, to be resonated with, to cry along with us. To use the cliché, "No one of us is an island", and we live in a world and time in which death is ever-present, a shadow the limits of which reach into every sphere, known and unknown, more often unacknowledged than acknowledged.

We sit and talk in the context of the Ukrainian/ Russian conflict, and with it the threat of a new world war. Countries are on nuclear alert as a global meltdown unfolds and climate collapse brings with it some of the most biting questions and difficult answers. Even as we speak, multiple extinctions go on in multiple universes and multiple galaxies. Inbuilt into the system, to state the unthinkable obvious, is death.

Within it, we each have our religion, our prayer, our miracle, our hope, our mindfulness, our Dharma. This sacred conversation is meant to illuminate, in the humblest way, this epic archetypal issue of life and death. What does it mean to mindfully, consciously inhabit the inevitable? As Bodhi Be says, “We all know we’re going to die but we don’t know when.” It’s inbuilt into the system.

This book is part prayer, part scream, part hymn, part meditation; a sonnet, a love song to God, to each of us. It’s not meant to teach anything except to inspire our own humble, vulnerable, authentic, dignified way to face the inevitable. So, may I invite you to enter this portal with us, this conversation, an existential human conversation of the heart. I hope there’s something beautiful in it for you, as there was for me, and I know the Reverend Bodhi Be.

About Reverend Bodhi Be

“The Death Store is going to respect our new culture where we can bring death out of the shadows, and Bodhi is our leader. Every time you think of dying, think of this store.” R AM DASS
(at The Death Store Grand Opening on Maui October 2012)

Reverend Bodhi Be ‘Warrior of the heart, protector of the sacred’.

Reverend Bodhi Be is an ordained interfaith minister and teacher in the Sufi lineage of Samuel Lewis and Hazrat Inayat Khan. He is the founder and executive director of Doorway Into Light, a nonprofit organization on Maui, which provides conscious and compassionate care for the dying, their families, the grieving, those who work in these fields and all those ‘who may die one day’ and has been offering community presentations and trainings since 2006 in the fields of awakened living and dying, and the care of the dying.

Since 2012, Doorway Into Light has been operating Hawaii’s only nonprofit certified green funeral home. It also operates a storefront on Maui, ‘The Death Store’, an educational resource center and store providing education, support and counsel on a donation basis.

A Maui resident for 45 years, he and his wife have raised 5 children and are now helping to raise 3 grandchildren. An organic, off-the-grid homesteader in Hawaii for 26 years, he grows tropical fruit with his wife, children and grandchildren.

Bodhi is a funeral director providing before and after-death care; an end-of-life and bereavement counselor and educator; a hospice volunteer; a teacher and trainer of death doulas; a speaker and workshop leader; and a ceremonial guide. He hosts a weekly streaming radio show, ‘Death Tracks’, on a Maui station and on the web.

Bodhi guides memorials and funerals and leads grief rituals. He has facilitated grief support groups for teenagers at a local high school. He has trained hundreds of doctors, nurses, hospice staff, social workers, ministers, chaplains, therapists, artists and lay people in the spiritual, psychological, emotional and logistical care of the dying and the care of the dead, and for 4 years has taken dozens through a certification program to be death doulas. Bodhi has written a column called ‘Ask the Death Professor’ for a local Maui magazine. He is a public notary, a coffin maker and a Reiki practitioner.

Bodhi and his wife Leilah have been leading spiritual retreats in Hawaii and around the world since 2007.

Bodhi is currently teaching courses through the Esalen Institute Healing Arts program in Big Sur. The 6-week course, ‘We’re All Gonna Die’ encompasses: Cultivating a healthy relationship with our own approaching death, doing the work of preparing for death, learning skills for caring for a dying person(s) and for showing up for what’s dying in the world.

For many years Bodhi collaborated with Ram Dass, a neighbor, mentor and friend, who served on Doorway Into Light’s Board of Directors.

Bodhi is continuing the work Ram Dass helped birth in the fields of conscious dying in America. Doorway Into Light is currently raising funds to develop a new model of land stewardship that includes a natural green burial ground, sanctuary, park, ceremony hall and community gathering place.

About Alan Clements

After dropping out of the University of Virginia in his second year, despite his scholarship, Boston-born Alan Clements went overland to India and the East, to become one of the first Westerners to ordain as a Buddhist monk in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). He lived at the Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha (MSY) Mindfulness Meditation Centre for nearly four years, training in the practice and teaching of Satipatthana Vipassana (Insight) meditation and Buddhist psychology (Abhidhamma), under the guidance of his preceptor the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw and his successor, Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita.

In 1984, forced by the dictator Ne Win to leave the country with no reason given, Clements returned to the West and, through invitation, lectured widely on ‘The Wisdom of Mindfulness’ and led mindfulness-based meditation retreats and trainings throughout the US, Australia, and Canada, including assisting at a three-month Mindfulness Teacher Training with the Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita at the Insight Meditation Society (IMS), in Massachusetts.

In 1988, Alan integrated into his Buddhist training an awareness that included universal human rights, social injustice, environmental sanity, political activism, the study of propaganda and mind control in both democratic and totalitarian societies, and the preciousness of everyday freedom. His efforts working on behalf of oppressed peoples led Jack Healey, a former director of Amnesty International, to call Alan “one of the most important and compelling voices of our times.”

As an investigative journalist Alan has lived in some of the most highly volatile areas of the world. In the jungles of Burma, in 1990, he was one of the first eyewitnesses to document the mass murder and oppression of ethnic minorities by Burma’s military dictatorship, which resulted in his first book, ‘Burma: The Next Killing Fields?’ (Graced with a foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama).

Shortly thereafter, Alan was invited to the former Yugoslavia by Marcia Jacobs, a senior officer for the United Nations, where, based in Zagreb during the final year of the war, he wrote the film ‘Burning’ (for Chartoff Productions) while consulting with NGOs and the United Nations on ‘The vital role of consciousness in understanding human rights, freedom, and peace’.

In 1995 a French publisher asked Alan to attempt re-entering Burma with the purpose of meeting Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of her country’s pro-democracy movement and 1991 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. He met with Aung San Suu Kyi, who had just been released from six years of incarceration, and invited her to share her country’s courageous story with the world, together recording and illuminating the philosophical and spiritual underpinnings of Burma’s nonviolent struggle for freedom, known as a ‘Revolution of the Spirit’.

The transcripts of their five months of conversations were smuggled out of the country and became the book ‘The Voice of Hope’. Translated into numerous languages, ‘The Voice of Hope’ offered insight into totalitarianism, mind control, freedom and nonviolent revolution. A London Observer reviewer stated: “Clements is the perfect interlocutor...Whatever the future of Burma, a possible future for politics itself is illuminated by these conversations.”

Clements also co-authored (with the New York Times bestselling author Leslie Kean and a contributing photographer) ‘Burma’s Revolution of the Spirit’, Aperture, NY, a large format photographic tribute to Burma’s nonviolent struggle for democracy, again with a foreword by the Dalai Lama and essays by eight Nobel Peace laureates. In addition, Clements was the script revisionist and principal adviser for Beyond Rangoon (Castle Rock Entertainment), a feature film depicting Burma’s struggle for freedom, directed by John Boorman.

In 1999 Alan founded World Dharma, a nonsectarian organization of self-styled seekers, artists, rebels, writers, scholars, journalists, and activists dedicated to a trans-religious, independent approach to personal and planetary transformation (through the integration of global human rights, meditation, and the experiential study of consciousness) with a life of expression through the arts, media, activism and service.

In 2002 Alan wrote ‘Instinct for Freedom — Finding Liberation Through Living’ (New World Library and World Dharma Publications), a memoir about his years in Burma which chronicles his pursuit of truth and freedom while illuminating the framework of the World Dharma vision that also forms the basis for the newly released ten-hour, 37-chapter video book, ‘A Guide to the Practice of World Dharma — the Dharma Art of Mindful Intelligence, that of Finding Liberation Through Living’. The World Dharma Video Book is offered through Vimeo On Demand and through the World Dharma Online Institute (WDOI) that he co-founded with his colleague, Dr Jeannine Davies.

‘Instinct for Freedom’ was nominated for the Best Spiritual Teaching/Memoir by the National Spiritual Booksellers Association in 2003 and has been translated into numerous languages.

Alan’s most recent books include: ‘Wisdom for the World — The Requisites of Reconciliation: Alan Clements in Conversation with Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita of Burma’; ‘Burma’s Voices of Freedom: An Ongoing Struggle for Democracy’ (a four volume set of books co-authored with Fergus Harlow); a spoken word album on SoundCloud titled ‘Freedom: Acts of Conscience, with music by Intext; ‘Extinction X-Rated — An Auto-fictional Dark Satire On Good and Evil’; and ‘A Future to Believe In — 108 Reflections on the Art and Activism of Freedom’, inspired by and dedicated to his daughter Sahra Bella. The latter work has received distinguished praise from numerous leaders and activists, including Dr Helen Caldicott, Joanna Macy, Dr Vandana Shiva, Bill McKibben, Paul Hawken, and Derrick Jensen (environmental poet laureate) who wrote:

“This culture is killing the planet. If we are to have any future at all, we must unlearn everything the culture has taught us and begin to listen to the planet, to listen to life — the core intelligence of nature and the human heart. This book not only helps us with the unlearning process — the greatest challenge humankind has ever faced — it provides the essential wisdom, the spiritual intelligence, to open ourselves to finally start to hear.”

In addition, Alan has presented to such organizations as Mikhail Gorbachev’s State of The World Forum, The Soros Foundation, United Nations Association of San Francisco, the universities of California, Toronto, Sydney, and many others, including a keynote address at the John Ford Theater for Amnesty International’s 30th year anniversary. Alan was also a presenter at the Touche Global Consciousness Conference 2019 in Bali.

Alan has been interviewed for Time and Newsweek magazines, CBC TV Canada, ABC Australia, the New York Times, Sydney Morning Herald, Radio Free Asia, Democracy Now, Talk to America, Mother Jones, Yoga Journal, The Village Voice, and scores of other print, radio and television media throughout the world.

In conjunction with the BSNO at the Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Yangon, Myanmar, along with their Senior Nayaka Sayadaws Alan, along with his colleagues at the Buddha Sasana Foundation of America/Canada, Dr Ingrid Jordt and Dr Jeannine Davies, conduct an annual Ten Day International Wisdom of Mindfulness Meditation Retreat for English speaking participants at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha Yangon (MSY), Myanmar.

For more information, visit: AlanClements.com or WorldDharma.com

To be released soon (2022): Additional books by Alan
Tonight I Met A Deva, An Angel of Love, a children’s’ book
endorsed by the Dalai Lama, 2022

“This book by Alan Clements inspires people, young and old. He addresses that the reality of life can be fraught with difficulties and yet full of joy. If you have the compassion and wisdom, it’s always possible to overcome whatever challenges you face. I admire Alan’s determination to pass this important message onto the next generation — keeping his daughter especially in mind.”

With my prayers, the Dalai Lama

“How to describe Alan’s presentations? A tall order. Love poems/riffs/odes/chants to the goddesses of compassion, deeply inscribed with the blood of Burmese slaves, soldiers in Iraq, Palestinian children, freedom fighters anywhere. A momentary entry into an internal tête-à-tête, ad infinitum; a glimpse at all that inner discursive dialogue which marks us unequivocally as members of the human race. Just in case we get too spiritual, let’s not forget that we are required, by nature, to include everything. To paraphrase the late Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hahn’s poem, ‘Please Call Me by My True Names’, I am both the 12-year-old raped girl and the pirate who raped her. It is difficult to reconcile seeming opposites, and it takes the heart of a poet. Thich Nhat Hahn is a poet; Alan is one as well.” — Marcia Jacobs, a psychotherapist specializing in victims of war, rape, and trauma; a senior U.N. representative for refugees in Bosnia and Croatia, 1993– 1997; and a former officer of the International War Crimes Tribunal

“Alan’s life is material for a legend. An intellectual artist, freedom fighter and former Buddhist monk, he shares his insights and experience with a passion rarely seen and even more rarely lived. He’ll make you think and feel in ways that challenge your entire way of being.” — Catherine Ingram, Author of *In the Footsteps of Gandhi and Passionate Presence*

“I have known Alan for well over three decades. He is my first call when I seek insight and candor concerning personal and professional advice. As a speaker, his eloquence moves audiences to ask the questions behind questions about how we live, why we work, and how it fits together. Alan’s presence — his remarkable ability to engage an audience and connect with their heart — stands alongside the best talent I have seen in the world.” — Robert Chartoff, Producer of *Rocky*, *The Right Stuff*, and *Raging Bull*

“One of the most important and compelling voices of our times... Alan Clements is a riveting communicator — challenging and inspiring. He articulates the essentials of courage and leadership in a way that can stir people from all sectors of society into action; his voice is not only a great contribution during these changeable times, it is a needed one.” — Jack Healey, former director of Amnesty International, and founder of the Human Rights Action Center

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“Like a tiny drop of dew, or a bubble floating in a stream; Like a flash of lightning in a summer cloud, Or a flickering lamp, an illusion, a phantom, or a dream. So is all conditioned existence to be seen.” – Buddha