

Assen Alladin: a personal note

It is with saddened heart that I write this short, personal reflection on Assen Alladin, a well-respected scholar, author and clinical psychologist. On Friday 24th of November, 2017, Assen passed away at the age of sixty-nine. He will be sadly missed by his wife, Naseem, family and friends.

Assen was born in Mauritius and, as a young man, witnessed rituals in which tribesmen walked across fires and pierced their bodies without experiencing any pain. Fascinated with this concept, Assen kept these memories alive when he began to formalise his training in the UK. When I met Assen, he would often speak of the fact that he was penniless as a student and how difficult life was in the early days. He moved to the UK in 1967 and originally trained as a psychiatric nurse, and then as a social worker. Shortly after this, he trained as a psychologist and attended a meeting at Birkbeck College in 1974—this must have been a meeting run by BSMDH just before BSECH was formed in 1977. Assen subsequently completed the foundation training in hypnosis shortly after this. He often spoke fondly of his psychology training in London and smiled when he mentioned some of his colleagues at the time. He was very close to my father, Tom Kraft, and spoke very fondly of John Gruzelier. Other early mentors, who influenced him and, in many instances, became long-lasting friends, included some names from the UK as well as from the United States, and these included: Helen Crawford, John Hartland, William Kroger, Leon Chertock, Herbert Spiegel, Ernest Hilgard, Martin Orne, David Waxman, Graham Wicks and Milton Erickson.

Assen went on to become a fine academic and internationally-recognised clinical psychologist integrating cognitive behavioural therapy with hypnosis in a style which was unique to him. Whenever I met him, Assen would always talk about Mauritius and how his early learnings affected his life; however, he would always come back to the early days during his initial training in the UK, and his dear friends and colleagues. Assen always looked forward into the future. I remember a time when we had dinner together fairly recently. He was excited about becoming the next president of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH). He spoke of his writings and future developments; but, what was so striking, was his passion for taking care of others and learning about other people's motivations and aspirations. We drank a lot of beer. Actually, I drank a lot of beer and introduced him to various British ales of varying quality, and Assen, graciously, took on the role of being an interviewer. Whenever we corresponded on the net, Assen encouraged me with my research and asked me about future publications and interests.

I will miss Assen's comments on Facebook, his reflective e-mails and kind observations. And, I say good bye to a kind man who educated the world and cared for hundreds of patients.

David Kraft