

The Afterlife

T191 The Inner Teachings 1st March 1949 St Mary Abbots Place, London

Invocation:

Let us turn our faces towards the eternal light, the eternal truth. O Infinite Spirit, Father-Mother, the Source of our being, we worship Thee, and with all our longing we seek Thy truth, wisdom and love. May Thy rays of light penetrate the mists surrounding the earth and humanity so that mankind will look up and recognise Thee as God, all-good, all-love. We pray that the power will enable the great masters of this age and past ages to draw near to bless us with their love.

Amen.

Let us be still in body and mind and seek the place of silence where the voice of God can be heard. This, beloved ones, is the way, the truth. So much activity abounds in the physical world, the astral world and the mental world that the true place of happiness is scarcely entered.

We want to speak to you tonight about what you call the afterlife. In speaking of this we shall not refer only to the state of life immediately following physical death. When we speak of the afterlife we really mean the life which comes after man's experiences in the physical body, after man has learned a certain amount of wisdom, after man has received a certain illumination from his spirit. We have heard references to eternal progress, but this seems beyond the comprehension of man while imprisoned in the physical body. We want to speak about this truth and try if we can to give you an idea of the immense vista that lies before you all.

We spoke at our last gathering about the master soul, and placed before you a mental picture of a flashing jewel, in the centre of which is to be seen the perfect form of the Son of God, the Christ form. We explained that every human being contains within itself potentialities towards growth into that perfect jewel. But how to get started—how to receive that inspiration and illumination which appear to be necessary before the soul can see clearly his goal?—that is your problem. We can only tell you that the first essential is a drawing closer every day to communion with God. So few understand this great blessing of communion with the Infinite Spirit. The soul who would set forth and make progress on the journey towards the supreme goal must maintain conscious companionship with God. Such companionship cannot come about through prayers that are no more than words, but only through simple, trusting communion with the Great Spirit. This Infinite Spirit is everywhere. Man has to realise that he lives and moves and has his being within the arms of the Infinite. Man lives and is within God. God is continually present. God is omnipresent, omniscient, all-wise, omnipotent, all-powerful. These will seem only words. It is for you to discover for yourselves the living reality of such words as these.

How true is the saying, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms,'* but how many people spring away from these everlasting arms! The reality of infinite love, all-enfolding love—this is important, nay essential for the soul to realise.

*[*White Eagle often used this phrase, which is actually from Deuteronomy 33 : 27]*

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You will be asking what all this has to do with the afterlife. This afterlife, as already explained, is not merely that life immediately following death, but the life of the spirit which is eternal, which continues through aeons of time without end, the life which becomes ever more beautiful, grander and more powerful as it stretches into infinity. Why do you fear, my children? You have nothing to fear except your own fear. What is death but a sleeping and very often a forgetting of earthly life, an awakening to a life more radiant and more harmonious?

We shall not dwell in detail upon the lower states of life immediately following death. Of course they exist. What we want you to realise is that even in the earth life, the physical life, there are many hells. You do not have to lose your body to enter what is called hell, which is a condition created by yourselves. For as heaven lies within, so also does the state of hell lie within.

When a soul passes out of the body it is in reality passing inward to an inner state of being. You may think of the physical life as an outward life, in which you are contacting matter of a coarse condition. Away from your body you will contact matter which is finer and more malleable, more easily responsive to thought and emotion. Such matter is moulded by the soul, so whatever the soul is, whatever its habitual thoughts and life, it will externalise itself in this inner world.

For this reason souls who habitually give way to coarse and violent vibrations and desires will find themselves in a similar state of life in the spirit world, only their new world will be more intensified and almost a caricature of the old. In places which exist on the lower astral plane you will find what you might call night clubs and places of that nature, where people seek sensation and crude experience. You will find these places not only intensify conditions as they are on the physical plane, but that the soul soon wears out its desires by finding no satisfaction obtainable. So the desires gradually abate, being worn out. Then at last the soul is ready to move onward and upward. So soon as the soul can abandon these lower attractions, it is immediately befriended. The guide of the soul takes it in charge. From the lower astral it passes into the mental plane, and there learns as much as it can absorb, and finally it enters into a state of dreaminess and sleep, absorbing what it can of truth. Then, in due time the soul returns to the earth a little purified, a little progressed towards the goal of spiritual realisation.

The ordinary souls of ordinary people, the dear humanity we love for their kindness, may not know much about spiritual law. They are, however, kind to one another. The masses* are like that. When they come into contact with their fellow creatures they are always ready to do a kindness. Such ordinary people after death pass quickly through the lower astral in a kind of dreamlike state, sometimes without awakening, until they reach the higher astral plane. There they again meet their friends, not only of the incarnation they have just finished but sometimes companions of former incarnations.

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['The masses' today carries a disdain which was quite unintended by White Eagle, as the passage demonstrates. 'Ordinary people' are simply those to whom an awakening to the spirit has yet to come.]*

It is really a plane of reunion where the soul enjoys an enhanced life, continuing the many different interests such as music and art, literature and perhaps science which it enjoyed when on earth. It will be drawn to its particular interest in this higher astral world and will enjoy new freedom and opportunity of learning more of the particular subject which attracts it. Intense joy can come to the musician as the soul experiences without limitation the joys of music, and the same applies to art.

We will try to show what we mean. You may love music and yet be unable to express yourself in your present life. On the astral plane that desire will be granted. You will stand before an instrument and find that you can play that instrument without limitation. The music that was longing for expression in your soul would find expression and through whatever instrument you like best—a piano, a stringed instrument or whatever you chose. Or, if you longed to take part in an orchestra or in a choir, you would find yourself a member and that you were as good a musician as anyone else there. The same thing applies with pictures. You long to paint; you long to create beauty; on the astral plane all limitations fall away and the soul expresses itself in colour, form or music exactly, perfectly. These things bring intense happiness.

The boys who gave their lives in battle or who were killed in a flying accident would not suffer in their passing. A momentary fear might assail them if they knew what was happening, but at death the actual physical body would just fall away. The moment of death might seem like a blow and then no more. Afterwards they would wake in beautiful and happy conditions in the astral plane. Many might desire immediately to fly again. They might want an aeroplane in which to fly. It will be there, and they will fly. True, there is another and more attractive way of flying without a machine in the afterlife. Nevertheless the mechanic who likes an engine will certainly have his engine, which is part of his soul, for the perfect rhythm of an engine means happiness to some men. What we are trying to tell you is that the dearest desire of the soul for experience is put into expression in the life beyond.

After this astral plane has been worked through, the soul passes onward into the mental state, to the mental plane. There are as many differing aspects of the mental plane as there are differing mentalities. The soul goes to a mental state in accord with its own mentality, and there enjoys a condition of bliss. We cannot describe it by any other word. Here and now we say that every soul discovers in the course of its journey that God is no harsh judge but merciful and loving. The soul has only to turn towards God to receive help and all that it needs, much as a child runs to its parents for comfort and love. As the Master Jesus said, is there a parent who would give a stone if its child were crying for bread? When the soul cries to God for help, God proves merciful and loving. Every soul receives its due in the afterlife, and what it receives is administered with mercy and love.

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Usually, when the soul has passed through a period of bliss and quietude, absorbing the truth that it needs to enable it to grow, it will again commence its downward journey into incarnation. There is a plane, however, beyond that which we have just described, and this is the plane of pure spirit, sometimes described as the celestial. We cannot really outline the glory of that state. It waits for you to discover for yourselves.

This process of life, this process of passing away from the physical body, of traversing the planes of life and then at the right time returning, continues for a long time usually, but it is not always necessary. It is possible for the soul to make rapid progress through the planes and afterwards gain eternal freedom. Nevertheless, until the soul has worn out its lower nature and the lower desires, it must continue its earthly lives. When the soul has outworn these experiences it becomes freed—eternally free.

Yet there are souls who by reason of their own freewill and desire to serve their fellows return voluntarily to earth. They choose to reincarnate and live to help humanity. Beyond the celestial is yet another state, even higher, which we will speak of but doubt if you will believe. We shall not blame you for not believing. We speak of it because it is your goal. This is a state which can be reached when the soul has gained complete mastery over life. Such a soul can retain a physical body—or, we will put it like this, such a soul can function in a physical body when it wills, in an astral body at will, in a mental body at will, and it can yet rise into the highest heights of spiritual life and glory at will. That soul will not be cut off from manifesting on any plane, for it is complete master of all planes.

To help you to understand more clearly this state of mastership, we will give two illustrations—one, Jesus of Nazareth, and the other we will tell you later. These are two different states and yet analogous one to the other. We will explain what we mean. After the Master Jesus was crucified, his body to all appearances seemed dead. That body was laid in the tomb, and during that time it is said that Jesus went to visit the spirits in hell. Jesus was the Perfected One, with power to descend into the lower astral spheres at will. This will seem beyond your comprehension. This most wonderful ministration is a mystery and yet a truth. Jesus in full consciousness visited the souls in hell. He went through that plane in order to help them.

After three days he arose from the dead. He not only arose from the dead in the way those who are spiritualists believe—that is, he passed to the astral plane as do other people. No, Jesus raised his body from the dead. His life had been such that the very physical atoms of his body were become spiritualised. In that state of purification of the physical form he vanished, when the time came, from the sight of his disciples. To Christians this seems a miracle, which could only happen to the Son of God. Those who know will tell you that this can be done by all who have attained the required degree of initiation into spiritual life. For there are other instances of the body of a master disappearing into thin air. If you will study the life and death of the great Indian sage Milarepa you will find there a description of the vanishing of the body. The body of Jesus did exactly the same. Your Bible story says he was caught up into heaven. He disappeared, became invisible. He was able so to raise the vibrations of the physical atoms that they went out of sight. This act of ascension was most clearly

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demonstrated. We are quoting his own words when he said, 'What I do ye can do also'. You already possess the whole of this teaching in your New Testament.

The second illustration is that of the saint, of one who lives such a saintly life that after the soul is withdrawn the physical body does not decay, but retains its wholeness. This indicates that the saint has not quite reached the degree of ascension. It has been proven that saintly persons do not die of disease, and that their bodies do not suffer corruption. The body will be preserved for long periods. This will serve as an illustration of what we mean by the power of the spirit over physical atoms. The Master who has power to ascend has attained complete mastery over all life.

This is the goal. It is true that for most ordinary people such as yourselves the attainment of the final degree is a long way off, but do not think, 'Oh, it is so distant that I will not think about it!' You must think! Keep it ever before you as your goal and know that as you are living you are advancing towards glorious freedom and emancipation. What we tell you is truth.

A question was asked at our last meeting which we now think fitting to answer. The question was: is it right in certain circumstances of a very painful character for a doctor to end the life of a suffering patient? There would seem to be many pros and cons to this problem. We do not ask you to accept our answer but we must answer because for us it is true. No. There is no condition in which we could say, 'Yes, end the life'. God alone can do that. God gives life. God recalls the soul. From the spiritual aspect the soul will remain attached to the body until the time decreed by God for it to leave. We doubt if any good purpose is served by the artificial release of the soul from a painful body. By all means do all you can to alleviate pain, do all you can to help your brother or sister to endure his lot, but do not interfere with the divine will. God is omniscient, all-wise. There are spiritual laws at work throughout life. It is man's duty to learn about these laws and to endeavour to live in conformity with divine truth. Pain is a great teacher. Pain is something that the soul draws to itself. Courageous endurance of pain brings its blessing, and you would not wish to be the means of robbing a loved soul of its reward.*

*[*Since 1949, when this teaching was given, society has become much more accepting of what has become known as 'assisted dying'. White Eagle's comment stands, but we are absolutely certain he would have nothing but love and understanding for anyone in the position of seeking to leave physical life in the ways that are now available, and for their relatives. This is part of the freewill given for the soul's learning and is very much an individual choice.]*

We have only briefly touched on the life of the soul after death of the body. We would open before you a vista of infinite joy when the soul is completely free from contact with the earth. Look up, my children, into your own night sky and see the myriad stars. Pause and wonder what these stars are. Think of yourself and your companions, brethren of the light, having the power, the freedom to fly from planet to planet—which is what can happen. Think of shining, apparently winged beings, moving in the heavens into light and more light, with greater

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freedom and greater and greater comprehension of this universe and of universes beyond this small universe. There are planets of light and spiritual glory to which souls go beyond your understanding. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard the glory of the heavenly life, the God-life to which all God's children are heirs. Onward, onward, my children, onward into the life more abundant and glorious than your little earth-mind can conceive!

- Q. Would people who have suffered a great disability such as blindness necessarily lose their handicap when they pass into the other sphere?
- A. Always. They always lose their handicap when they pass from the physical body. They shed a limitation that has been placed upon them for a certain purpose and was the result of karma. It is also an opportunity for the soul to progress in spite of a handicap. Most certainly when the soul is brought from the body the full sight or the full power of the limbs returns. Some souls of course are very sick when they come over, not necessarily with sickness of the body but of the soul. When there is great soul-sickness certain limitations such as dim vision or apparent loss of a limb may continue. Soon they learn that they are perfect in form. There are helpers, shall we call them nurses, in the spirit world whose special work it is to take care of the many sick souls who come over and who need to be treated as sick souls. Everything exists in their mind.

People like yourselves who have a certain amount of knowledge when they pass over quickly offer themselves as workers in these receiving stations, hospitals or temples of healing. In fact, there are some former worshippers in this Lodge now engaged in the particular work of nursing. Life after death is very orderly, and so natural that quite a number of people cannot believe that they have left the body. Death is as easy as that.

We leave you feeling that we have been unable to give you all we want. We have been unable to paint the picture as we see it ourselves. We can only do our best. We assure you that all is well and you may anticipate great happiness and infinite beauty in the future life.

Seek first the kingdom of God and then all things will be made clear to you.

Benediction:

O Divine Spirit, all light, all love, all truth, we await Thy blessing which will stimulate Thy life within us. May the light shine upon all mankind!

Amen.

The search matches with either words and phrases, which appear in the text, or the following 'key' words and phrases, which are similar in meaning to those in the document:

Spiritual awareness, compensation, service, resurrection