

# Understanding of Life

A069 Sunday Address 3rd February 1940 Pembroke Hall Unknown; not a Sunday service if the date is right.

*The text of this address is as originally issued in printed form (see below), apart from correction of errors*

*Text:* initially typed for this archive from the printed leaflet which bears the title 'Towards an Understanding of Life' but edited back to the printed version in *Angelus*, March 1940, which seems to be earlier – although neither is an original typescript. The *Angelus* version gives the simpler title above. The first sentence of the second paragraph was omitted in the leaflet version, but the sentence 'You must live on' at the end of the sixth paragraph does not appear in the *Angelus* version.

*Context:* the *Angelus* version labels this an 'address' and both versions give the date as 3<sup>rd</sup> February, but that was a Saturday. It might have been given on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>, except for the Saturday date occurring in both versions. It is also unusually long: just short of 3000 words, giving the impression it might have been more like a lecture. To give a comparison, the address of 7<sup>th</sup> July the same year, also made into a leaflet, was just 1700 words. It ends a trifle abruptly, and it's likely some words of blessing at the end have been cut. It is here included as an Address, but might more fairly be included with White Eagle's talks. *Angelus* for April 1940 announces the issue of the leaflet.

*Historical notes:* despite the declaration of war the previous September, this day marked the first German plane to be shot down over England; it is likely that White Eagle's listeners had so far been impacted less than they expected by the war.

## White Eagle's Address:

We bring Love and Blessing to you all.

With your singing you have created a particularly high vibration, or spiritual atmosphere. Perhaps you little recognise the powers attracted by singing from the heart – as well from throat and lips – of words vibrant with love and brotherhood. Such singing and the atmosphere it creates draws those in the Unseen who still bear love to you, close; so that a great company now encompasses you about, and not all of your own nationality.

After all, what is this nationality? You are Europeans today, in this your particular span of life. Yet you have visited the earth many times before, your soul – which is the enduring portion of you – wearing the body of this race or that. Perhaps a short space elapsed between each visit, perhaps many centuries. Sometimes you have come back to earth as a man or as a woman, perhaps yellow, red, or black in skin; you have known extreme poverty and great riches, obscurity or position and power. A vast range of experience of life has been yours. And now you are come to this particular life-episode or incarnation to learn what you may, to add yet another contribution of experience to your store. May our words bring help to you!

Who are we who bring this message? With what authority do we speak? We are spiritual beings, even as you are also spirit – you manifest through the flesh, we are of the unseen, yet lent the power to make ourselves manifest and audible to you. What is my nationality? I have none! You may go to your wardrobe and select the dress or clothes thought suitable to some particular occasion. So can I also; for in my "wardrobe" there hangs the raiment – the personality, the mentality, the nationality – which I have worn during my past lives or incarnations. One or other of these I don, according to the occasion, and therefore I may

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return as a North American Indian, an Englishman, a Tibetan, an Egyptian; but always it is the same spirit speaking, a spirit which has passed through many experiences. If what I say has any worth it is only because of the wider experience which has been mine. Because I am now free from earthly bonds, I am able to recognise the greater life, to recollect the store of memories of my many lives. True, you all possess similar memories; but whilst confined in the flesh, whilst functioning through the outer self and mind you recall only those events which have passed through that daily self and mind; and all this vaster, deeper self lies outside the threshold of your consciousness. Once you have learnt to step outside the limitations of that mind, you will see incorporated within yourself the life-episodes of the many and interesting lives you have lived in the past.

These impressions you contain within your soul. When you think over this, you will realise that you must be considerably greater than your present self seems to indicate. Stored away in the unseen must be something more vital, enduring, and worthy than the transient being you and your friends acknowledge. It is this same fact which will bring you survival, victory over death. [You *must* live on!]

You may or may not accept the truth that each soul comes many times to this earth, and experiences many successive life-episodes or incarnations. Nevertheless, your denial cannot change a fact of nature and of life; and human life, its plan and purpose, becomes unintelligible without the fact of reincarnation. As we shall endeavour to show.

Man's life on earth is governed, from its beginning to its end, in matters trivial and great, by a law perfect and precise in its outworking, leaving no room for error or chance. Each human life and the collective or national life of man falls under this law. Else how could there be justice on earth? By life we mean not the one span or incarnation, where injustice would sometimes seem to prevail, but the aggregate or whole, the product of many life-episodes – commencing from the *outbreathing* or creation by God of each 'seed' or ego destined to become a man or woman.

Why not a lawful universe? On the physical plane all life is controlled by natural or physical laws. Social and national life is governed by certain rules or laws found essential for the well-being of citizens. So also is the inner or spiritual life (that which is paramount in importance, did you realise) controlled by spiritual law. Of the three great spiritual Laws which govern life, I am now going to speak.

The first we have already touched upon: the Law of Reincarnation. The Second can be called the Law of Cause and Effect – and, coupled with this, the Law of Opportunity (in the East these laws have their own appropriate names). The Third Law is that of Transmutation.

To recommence at the beginning: the human spirit leaves the home of that Power which is both Father and Mother, from which it takes both birth and being, to undergo a process of many lives or incarnations of the one continuous soul life, which is its true self. Some are lived on earth, interspersed by periods of rest and refreshment in a place beyond the earth. At

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first, so crude is the soul's manifestation in the flesh, that it is almost earthbound, interested only in that which is palpable to its five senses, chained by desires to the earth; therefore its periods on earth are long and frequent, its period of release in the place beyond brief. At length the soul grows satiated with earthly matters, begins to long for something better. By degrees a consciousness of spiritual things awakens. The soul is growing in experience and thus gaining in freedom. Within itself awakes a greater measure of God- or Christ-Consciousness. At its birth the soul came forth much as a babe is born to earth, lacking consciousness of God, of its innate divinity; by slowly accumulating experience it gains God consciousness, becomes ultimately godlike or Christlike, and ultimately returns to God as perfected spirit – a true son, liberated because it has freed itself from earthly bonds and limitations. In other words, because the soul has put aside egotism, greed and possessiveness, the 'old Adam' of Orthodoxy, and become initiate or Master.

In the process of these earth lives man contracts certain debts. It must be so. The ego, the seed man, as it were, unconscious of its powers and potentialities, encased in earthliness and ignorant of the spiritual life, breaks again, again, and yet again the spiritual law of God ... which Law is that of Brotherhood.... How simple and yet how profound a statement! We might put forth these simple truths of man's being in far greater elaboration and complexity, yet it is well for us to become as little children, and seek truth in its simplest form.

The law that man is continually in process of breaking is that of Brotherhood; he sins against his neighbour, his friend, his associate in business or social life; he sins collectively and nationally, and so wars come about. Ever he is seeking to gain something for himself, usually at the expense of others. The law – no, we will not call it law – the ignorance of selfishness possesses him. We do not condemn; we understand that the man's inner self is trying to find expression and that this striving manifests as selfishness and egotism. Later he will evolve to self-less-ness. For the moment the man, young in God-Consciousness, has need to learn that selfishness brings to itself suffering as a natural and logical outcome, once by his acts the man becomes caught up in the web of Cause and Effect.

The ignorant do not, cannot, realise the certainty of the Law's outworking, its infallibility. Any violation of brotherhood is ever followed by suffering as a natural result, a fact not confined to one incarnation only. The debts contracted may pile up for life after life, wait long for their purging. Then the sufferer – and a sufferer is always a sinner, a sinner always a sufferer – finds himself against circumstances he can neither escape from or alter. He rebels, naturally believing the whole thing is purposeless, irrational. What has he done to deserve this heavy burden? How can one believe in God when this sort of injustice happens? Even if aware of the things of which we speak, the man declares that it is not fair that he should suffer from something done in a previous life. Why should forgotten sins of the past bring suffering in the present?

True. Why should this be? Naturally, these shortcomings have been forgotten ... as yet. But by the fact of suffering you are progressing along the spiritual path which will bring you to the day when you will remember, understand, and accept the justice of what has happened.

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The main thing is to recognise a perfect law of wisdom and justice at work. Look about you; in your own life and the lives of those about you, you will speedily find evidence of this law. Observation will bring speedy proof, and once [this is] found life gains in understanding and worth. Man creates suffering from others, and in turn suffers – a plain sequence of cause and effect. Let him but give forth kindness, and another aspect of the same Law reveals itself; for God is love, continually bringing forth good out of evil; and even the lives of sinners (another name for sufferers) are permeated with love. Do you not feel sometimes that your own lives are filled with a joy and blessing far beyond your deserts? God is a God of love, continually assisting man along his very difficult path of spiritual evolution. God is neither indifferent, vengeful, nor callous, but passionately interested, and assists man every step of the way. God loves with a love beyond all human comprehension, yet with a love which will not withhold those lessons which alone can bring freedom from ignorance and sin.

Therefore a plan which subjects all human circumstance to justice and law, which causes effect to follow cause, yet tempers suffering with mercy and love, is worthy of your deepest and most earnest attention. Suffering gives opportunity to learn the lesson of suffering, to assimilate spiritual truth ... a fact and knowledge which may well help the sufferers.

Nevertheless we deprecate the attitude of mind which sits down in a heap and declares ‘Well, having brought this thing upon myself, there is nothing but to put up with it. What else can I do?’ Beloved brother, if you think thus you are missing the crux of the whole matter. Do not accept suffering, limitation, hardship, difficulty as something ordained, inescapable, for another law operates side by side with that of Cause and Effect.

Some people might call this ‘Freewill’, the right of Man to select his path. We prefer ‘The Law of Opportunity’, another aspect of the Law of Cause and Effect. Thus, although you may and probably have incurred debts in the past, these debts are not inexorable. Liabilities can be outweighed by credits, remember. Opportunities come your way, chances offer themselves to do a kindness, to give service to others, or to attempt something for yourself calling for high courage and steadfastness. By seizing such opportunities, far more rapid spiritual progress can be made than by resigned acceptance of discomfort. We know that certain schools of thought insist that bad karma (or debts) are inescapable. This is largely a teaching of the East. But in this western life in which you now find yourselves you should bring forth into action that which you have absorbed in previous eastern incarnations. We note how often opportunities of helpfulness to others or progress for oneself are rejected (these laws apply with the same certitude to nations as to individuals). Nevertheless, they will eventually be taken, and man finds that he can learn through joy and achievement and with greater speed and certitude than by the suffering he thought to be inescapable. There comes a time which will bring such opportunities to many souls.

So do not complacently accept suffering. Look about you for opportunities for transmuting suffering into achievement. They will present themselves; for this is how the Law of Transmutation operates.

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You will ask, 'What do you mean? How can sorrows and suffering, the result of one's own shortcomings and sin become forgiven, transmuted into hope and joy?'

Let us try to put it very simply. Transmutation is not some process of obscure spiritual gymnastics. It does not mean that you have to gain extensive understanding of occult laws, or practice the 'working' of the seven 'lights' or spiritual centres of the human body, or undergo some drastic 'yoga' or discipline. You need know nothing of these. The Master Jesus (whose teaching has yet to be understood by Christians) showed you the way, taught how to transmute the base metal of man's being into gold. Any earnest and painstaking man or woman can do this, but the effort certainly calls for application and hard work, coupled with a constant watchfulness over oneself. Otherwise there can come disillusion, frustration, and even danger. For the man who has been self-centred materially can prove just as self-centred materially for himself, ambitiously seeking knowledge and power for himself, or to gain place and position in heaven.

The path of transmutation of the base in oneself into pure and selfless spiritual treasure held at the service of all men is a narrow one. The simplest and surest way we know is to set the lower self, egotism and desires behind one. Daily wake to think "God, all love, my Father-Mother, knowing my needs and my weakness, guide me throughout this day. May Thy Spirit establish within my breast tranquillity and peace. May it bring to me a deeper sympathy with the sorrows – so often trivialities – which perplex and sadden the lives of others. Without Thee I must suffer, even as do they. I must so live that I give forth sympathy and love. I must today smile rather than be glum or frown; speak rightly, truly, kindly. While it is yet day, my Father, teach me to labour as did my Master, and in His Name and spirit."

Beloved Brother, this is no new way we teach; there is nothing fresh from the source of all truth here, and yet truth has ever a divine freshness. The Master said these things, long, long ago. Had they been tried, Christianity would never be charged with failure. This is the true way, the simple sure way, to transmute base metal into pure gold. Be not weary in well-doing, my Brother.... Oh, the sharp and irritable words which surge upward to our lips, so often, so uselessly, so wantonly! Grieve, dear one, for these things, such wholesome grief as this you came here to learn; think of the Master, and of His gentle lips and heart.... Did He not pray "Forgive us our trespasses...."

Think often of the gentle spirit of the Master – strive to think as He would have you think, to speak as He. He is not alone, for many of the Elder Brethren such as He are helping mankind, who have also gained mastery over the lower and the baser self, and are no longer enmeshed by the frailties of the flesh. Such as these are masters over every happening, small or great; tranquil and serene, they radiate the Light of the eternal Christ. In them no darkness lingers; they are transparent, no longer base metal but gold without dross. Their light reaches to, helps, sustains and comforts every lesser brother striving on the path.



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Therefore why set your will and purpose against laws eternal and absolute? Why battle against the tides of eternity? Why not so live in harmony with your inner self, your higher self, that you attain liberation, freedom, health and joy, for all these await the faithful seeker of the light? And while you thus strive, you strive not for yourself alone; for your influence, your outer life, makes happier, makes better, the world of men; and your inner life of prayer and striving, contacts and affects the thoughts and souls of many others. To live thus is to live no longer for self.

These things are true; although the worldly mind arraigns and denies them, still they are true. Christ is the Saviour of Man – the Spirit of Christ, by which we mean the spark of God which dwelleth in every man. This same light is your personal saviour, the Christ light in others their saviour of all. This, Brethren, is the saving grace of Christ. When this same spark grows to become a flame, then Christ has entered in to abide, to comfort and to save a man from his baser self. And only thus can man dwell within that heavenly consciousness wherein life becomes irradiated with a love and peace the world can neither give nor take away – a peace so deep and true that the restlessness and sorrow of the world beside it seem as the substance of a troubled dream.

*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:*

*Races, nationalities, immortality, outbreath, Jacob's Ladder, dharmā, spiritual law*