

The Three Worlds

T062 The Inner Teachings 27th October 1937 Pembroke Hall, London

Invocation:

Beloved, let us be still within, and seek the silence of the Spirit. Therein we may hold perfect communion with the angelic hosts who love to praise and glorify our God who is in heaven. God, in whom we live and have our being—God, our Father, we pray in deep humility to Thee, that Thy spirit may speak to our waiting souls. May the fire of Thy life grow in power and radiance within our breast.

Amen.

Open your souls, be at rest, be relaxed, feel no sense of strain or tension, for we come with a great and brotherly love to commune with you. We bring many with us, and pray that not one present will go away unsatisfied. May the angelic ones—not only the discarnate human brethren, but the angelic brethren—be to you real. May you be conscious of their ministry and see a light never before seen, shining in your heaven.

In continuation of our talk of two weeks ago, we come now to the three kingdoms, or the three worlds of man's* being, about which there is still much confusion. So many are the terms used in reference to the invisible, the astral, mental and spiritual planes; so much confusion exists as to soul or spirit and as to the etheric body, the astral body, the emotional body and so forth, that we would endeavour to simplify matters for you. The three worlds in which you live and have your being are simply body, soul, spirit, each bearing a relationship to the divine triangle described so often in these talks as power, wisdom and love—power, intelligence and will—body, soul and spirit. Any or all of these terms may be employed. Upon this triangle the first three principles of the life of man are suspended. There are intermediate planes of life also, but these we will pass for the moment.

*[*For editorial policy around gender, see the introduction]*

Within the physical world, the physical body, is to be found expressed the profound mystery of the universe. We are all accustomed, whilst functioning through the physical body, to regard it as all-sufficient. We find it difficult to detach ourselves from the physical body. After all, this is the vehicle through which we contact all the various experiences in life, pleasant or unpleasant, which bring sorrow or happiness, pain or joy. We register both physical pain and emotional suffering through the physical body, and many other influences.

In the great mystery schools—unfortunately of the past—the human body was chosen as the first study for the neophyte. Pictures and models of the human body were to be found in the inner temples of the mystery schools, with every part related to some sign of the zodiac. The astrological and astronomical knowledge of the wise teachers and priests enabled the neophyte to open his understanding and his consciousness to respond to the universal powers directed upon him. Through knowledge of astrological influences operating on the various parts of the body, the man obtained understanding of true healing. He recognised such influences as affecting his own life and developing that second aspect of his being, and thus opened up a world sometimes described as the 'underworld' by the Egyptians, although here we will use the term 'soul world'.

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Through contact with matter by the physical body, the ego is acquiring that aspect of his nature representative of power. He learns through many incarnations to receive and use the creative power of life, and only through such earth incarnations does this God-creative power grow within man's being. Together with the influences of the zodiac upon man's soul development, the candidate learnt of seven sacred centres in his physical body beneath which the ductless glands lie concealed, and that each centre was connected, or bore relationship to, one of the seven planets. So man responded to both planetary and zodiacal influence during physical life, both influences being concerned with his evolution and development towards perfection. The will in man is God's previous gift to him. Through action of freewill man learns, through pain and joy, through all human experience, to discriminate between that which is good or positive and that which is evil or negative.

So whilst we turn to our next theme, we take with us the idea that it is the will which enables man to discriminate, to select the material in the soul world which he will use to create his soul life. Let us not fall into the error of thinking of the soul as something separate and apart from the physical life, the soul life as that to which we shall pass when 'dead'. This is not so. You live now in your soul world! You select now through your own freewill the material or soul substance now being built into your soul home. To make this point clear: we are apt to speak far too lightly of the spirit world and of the spirit people. We ourselves are guilty of this error. Tonight let us get clear understanding: those 'spirit' people should really be termed 'soul' people, for they inhabit the soul world. In the soul world, or underworld, the world within, we find conditions made manifest which have been and which are continually being created by the thoughts and desires and emotions of the physical life. In the soul world are found not only souls of men, women and children, but of the animal, the nature and angelic kingdoms. This same soul world is all around you, here and now—not away 'up there', nor yet 'down here'. Your degree of God-consciousness marks your attainment to certain vibrations or soul substance. Disease, sickness, is born in the soul and eventually manifests in the flesh.

Many times have we told you that as you are today, so you will be after death of the body. So many think that if only they could shed the dense body, everything would be lovely. The dense body holds them down, they think. Those just awakening to the spiritual or divine spirit power often think that once quit of the body all will be well, but they make a great mistake. I am sorry to disappoint you. Pessimism, depression—whatever the emotion which causes that sense of heaviness—will not be at once discarded, and indeed may be intensified, hence the old pictures of the souls bound. Not only the physical body but the soul also can hold down the spirit. So we must learn by endeavour, through daily contact and life, to build into the soul body only pure and beautiful substance.

You have heard descriptions of the soul world to which you hope to pass, descriptions which are often quite good, and partially true. This again must seem disappointing: there are indeed very beautiful homes in the soul world, but not always waiting and ready immediately the soul passes away from the physical body. As a man dwells in earth, in heaviness and disappointment and darkness and resentment towards life, conditions and people, so he will

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have to work through similar conditions, sustained by the guidance of his will, or the divine spirit, ever urging him onward and upward. Do you follow? The quality of soul consciousness is the aggregate or accumulation of physical experience. This same soul consciousness the incarnating spirit brings back with him into physical life, a soul quality acquired in previous physical existences. The soul is also linked to planetary and zodiacal influences. Hence the incoming ego makes its own choice of birth. Many find the science of astrology difficult to accept because it seems to indicate that destiny outweighs freewill. However, this is no accidental birth but is the result of a divine law controlling and guiding the evolution of every soul.

We would not paint too sombre a picture of the soul world, but a clear one; remember that nothing is attained in any life without work, without effort. Many think that to go through life carelessly and without thought, so long as they are reasonably 'decent', will ensure them a heaven. Kindliness and love are two attributes which draw to the soul the more beautiful substance, and therefore if that soul body is sensitive, beautiful, refined in texture, it will necessarily vibrate and respond to beauty which it alone can appreciate. If the soul substance be coarse, it cannot possibly react to the beauty of the higher degrees of the soul life. Hence our previous talk. Should the physical body live on earth in love instead of cruelty, kindliness instead of hate, refinement instead of crudity, then this same physical body helps to evolve the soul body and contributes to the soul substance through the emotions and desires.

The soul body is the temple, the 'new Jerusalem' referred to by seers and sages and prophets of old; the temple, not built with hands, but built by thought and aspiration and by the master mason—the divine spirit or ego—working upon the rough material of the physical. This is the teaching always given in the mystery schools of old, where were represented the three worlds, the three degrees—body, soul and spirit. What do we mean by spirit? Those who worship God must worship in spirit—not with lips or hands only, but with hands and heart and mind: 'With all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy spirit, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God'. No man hath seen God, nor yet spirit, but man can see both the soul and the body, which can be as a temple of the spirit. Spirit is the divine urge. It speaks through the heart. Sages have repeatedly declared that the home and seat of the divine spirit is in the heart; indeed, in the heart are seven seats, the seven angels round the throne; within the physical life, within the physical body of man is contained the whole universe. The angelic beings, the lords of creation, the planetary influences, all are represented in the physical body of man. The whole mechanism (if we can use such a word) of the life of man on earth and in the soul world is fired—the only word I can find—by the divine life spirit, which works from lowest to highest, or to the complete or master man, or master mason. The divine spirit is ever radiating through the physical and the soul, working in perfect comradeship and harmony. The master man does not crucify the body, his physical body, but enhances its beauty by harmonious living. He defiles it not by inharmonious feeding but respects body and soul and worships the divine spirit, God, within and without.

From the divine life world we come, from the divine we are born—this is our true home, and we have been given the power to create and to become that perfect son which God our Father holds eternally in His heart.

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Q. Is the underworld that condition beneath the threshold of daily consciousness?

A. Yes, it is the world beneath the ordinary outer consciousness—not a hell world. In the mystery schools it was frequently referred to as the underworld—a ‘within’ world, populated by countless millions of soul forms.

Q. Does one live in turn under every sign of the zodiac, or continue under one sign until more or less perfected?

A. Every aspect bears relationship to the soul quality to be perfected before the soul has learnt all that can be learnt through earth experience. Remember, the ultimate is not merely to be good but to become eventually a God. Therefore you must develop every attribute of Godhead. Earth life is the first step. Think in terms of eternity and you begin to realise how small the one lifespan must be.

Q. Do the numbers in the name link us with the planets?

A. Numbers, yes. Particularly of the Christian [first] name, which is the soul name.

Study all the symbolism of the physical body and find perfect relationship between it and the universe. Hence the injunction given to the candidate: ‘Man, know thyself and thou shalt know God and the Universe.’

Benediction:

Deep peace of the open prairie and the windswept sky, the flowing rivers and quiet valleys and the noble trees which raise their heads to Thee in adoration and praise, standing stalwart and true on the mountainside, steady through all the boisterous winds of life, [may] the peace of God dwell within, giving unto us a like strength, to bring us back to Thee, our Father.

Amen.

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Aura, afterlife, higher world, astrology, symbols