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THROUGH THE GATES OF DEATH (1)

Sleep and death

The Christian dogmatic view of life after death

We all know that we are born into this world and that one day we shall die. Usually this is not something we go around thinking about, but, now and again, the thought crops up, mostly when we experience the death of others, but more especially when the dead person was someone we were attached to, and whom we will miss in our daily life. In most cases it is with fear and sorrow that people then think about death. The thought of utter extinction, and perhaps also the thought that possibly one day one may have to answer for sinful actions committed in one's life, actions one has long regretted, contribute to make the thought of death a gloomy, sad and unpleasant one. Through the materialistic view of life one is led to believe that there is no life after death, for, according to the materialistic view, consciousness is just a result of combinations of matter. But as nobody wishes to cease to exist - even if there may be certain types of life on earth that might well be dispensed with - the idea of complete extinction makes one feel ill at ease, indeed it fills one's mind with fear and horror. Through religion we are told that, after death, we are to remain in our graves "till the last day" when Christ will come to judge between "the quick and the dead", and to separate "the sheep from the goats". The "sheep", or those Christian believers who have blindly believed that God had redeemed their sins because Christ sacrificed himself on the cross for their sake will then enter into the eternal bliss of Paradise, while the "goats" - the unbelieving sinners - will be made to suffer the torments of an everlasting hell! There are immense numbers of people nowadays who find this dogmatic view of life-after-death difficult to accept. They find it easier to believe that death is "the end of life", and not only as regards their organism, but also as regards thought and consciousness. They talk about

entering "the eternal sleep" or "eternal rest".

During sleep one lives totally in the world of thought and imagination

There are many people, who are so tired of the hurry and worry of life that they feel a certain kind of relief at the thought of such rest and quiet. But ETERNAL rest is, however, not rest, it is annihilation and complete cessation of life. Rest is a condition we enjoy for a time as a contrast to activity and thereafter become satiated with, and once again we long to be active, to create and experience, because now we feel rested. When we have slept well at night we awake feeling refreshed and in good spirits for the duties of the coming day. After such a deep, dreamless sleep we often remark, "I have been far away", and there is far more truth in such an expression than the person uttering these words may be aware of. When asleep we are indeed out of our physical body, and are living entirely in the world of thought and imagination. This world is an electrical one consisting of rays and waves. But even if man has some knowledge about electricity and rays and waves and magnetic forces, it is but very little he knows when it comes to the question of those forces and rays that constitute his own consciousness and mentality. When we feel tired and sleepy it is because, in the course of the day, our nerve system has been exposed to so much wear and tear that it now needs repair and renewal. But such renewal cannot come about if energy is still streaming through it. The "current" must be switched off for a time, and we lie down to rest. We cease to receive impressions from the outer world through our sensory organs - we try to compose our thoughts for sleep. This last may, however, sometimes prove a little difficult. It is a good plan to recapitulate and take stock of the events of the day, and consider how one may possibly improve one's less fortunate actions, and thus in doing so gradually let go of them and drop off to sleep. When the energy of our day-consciousness for a while does not pour through the nerve system, the necessary restoration can come about, so that everything will be ready for the life-unfoldment that will take place the coming day in an interaction with the outer world. But where is our consciousness while we are asleep, when there is only just sufficient life left in the organism to keep certain automatic functions going?

Our memory is near its winter stage in the cycle, therefore we have no recollection of our experiences during sleep.

When we are asleep, our "I" finds itself still able to experience but, as all sensory impressions made by the outer physical world have been shut off, it is naturally no longer this world that we experience. In

the same way that our physical body is surrounded by a physical world where the physical bodies of other living beings are present, so that an interaction between the beings is made possible by means of their physical organisms, so too our world of consciousness is surrounded by a larger world consisting of radiant matter. In this radiant world surrounding us we are also able to meet the worlds of consciousness of other living beings, if we are on the same wavelengths as the thoughts and views they contain. But is it not then necessary to have a body to be able to experience? Most decidedly it is. But a body need not consist of coarse, physical matter. There are bodies that are built up of far finer matter or energies - the so-called spiritual bodies. These are purely electrical in character, and we all have such bodies in addition to our physical body. Through the process we call sleep our consciousness and thus our ability to experience is transferred from the physical body to the spiritual bodies, so it is thus true when one says that while asleep one was "far away", for the ability to experience while in this condition is not limited by time and space in the same way as when experiencing through the physical body. But why is it then that we are usually unable to remember what we have experienced while our physical body was asleep? It is because our faculty of memory is a very degenerated faculty, which is very near its latent stage in its cycle. There are quite other energies and abilities that are at present dominant in terrestrial man's consciousness. As a rule you cannot remember your former incarnations, indeed, you cannot even remember everything you have experienced in your present incarnation. Can you remember what happened on a certain day only a fortnight ago at half past two in the afternoon? It is an exception if you can. Our memory is at its "winter stage" in the cycle. Considered from the point of memory, terrestrial man is like a leafless tree in winter time. But after winter come spring and summer. There will even come a day when this same being, by means of his memory, will be able to move thousands, even millions of years back in time and see what he then experienced. But by then he will naturally no longer be a terrestrial human being. Then he will be conscious of his cosmic origin as being one with the Godhead, and thus identical with Eternity, and will recognize himself as a master of time and space. By then the primitive replacement of organisms through the process we call "death" is a stage long over and done with in the course of evolution, for a being at the stage of development he will have reached by then will be able to rule all-powerfully over all matter in the universe, indeed, he will need but a thought to change the form of matter by his mere word of command.

Over and above a certain limit the living beings cannot grow in knowledge and ability without growing simultaneously in morals and love

But for a living being one day to be able to experience such a wonderful existence it will, of course, first have to learn to think in a hundred percent conformity with the Laws of Life. Imagine what would happen if present-day terrestrial man had the same sovereign power over matter as the aforesaid being! What a terrifying Armageddon could not be the result? Fortunately such a thing is totally impossible. Over and above a certain limit living beings cannot grow in knowledge and ability without growing simultaneously in morals and love. Terrestrial man's repeated incarnations into the physical world may be likened to attendance at a school where he will be trained to be able, one day, to fully experience and create in spiritual matter. But cannot, then, the being learn all this in the spiritual worlds? No, he cannot, he must experience a world where it hurts to think wrong, to really learn to think. He must experience a world where matter offers resistance and must therefore be conquered, in order to develop his thought capacity, and he must learn to meet and associate with beings to whom he does not feel attuned with tolerance, understanding and with neighbourly love. All this can be experienced only in a physical world, and as all physical energies are subservient to the law of circuit, the living being must attend the "school" of the physical world in the way that, through alternating periods, he creates a physical organism for himself which, in a way, may be likened to "a cosmic school uniform" through which he can create and experience on the physical plane. This "school uniform" can last a certain time - the period we know as terrestrial man's average lifetime - if not laid open to too many, or too severe injuries. In such case, it will be worn out before its allotted time, and its usefulness will be reduced, sometimes so much so that it must be completely discarded. Accidents and illness may cause the death of terrestrial man long before he has reached the "Threescore and ten" when he would normally leave this physical world, ripe in years and well satisfied to abandon an organism which is now so worn out that a proper manifestation and experience of life in it can no longer be enjoyed.

Insufficient sleep gives bad nerves and reduced ability to experience and work

One of the contributory factors enabling our organism to be kept going and to remain not only a useful but an ingenious instrument for our living spirit is that we get the necessary and needful amount of sleep. As mentioned above, the nervous system is exposed to wear and tear

every single day, and as it constitutes the "wiring system" forming the connecting link between our spiritual, or electrical structure, and our physical structure, it is very important as regards our ability to experience, as well as to create in the physical world, that this wiring system is in order. Without sufficient sleep we soon develop "bad nerves", we lose our good form, and both our ability to experience as well as our working capacity will be reduced. It may be some physical illness, e.g. indigestion that is the reason for our getting too little sleep, but there may also be mental reasons. When we lay down to sleep we shut out the impressions from the outer world. But it is not always possible to shut out impressions we have already received. Our thought circle round the events of the past day, among which there may be annoyances and unpleasant occurrences, or people who have irritated us. Or it may be something we have done or said that we now regret or are annoyed at. Many people can lie worrying for hours on end with such thoughts in their consciousness, thus preventing themselves from relaxing and giving their nervous system a chance of being reorganized. They doze intermittently only to re-awake every moment, and continue sliding back and forth between sleep and wakefulness in such a way that, in very truth, they ruin both their physical, as well as their spiritual state. They ruin their physical state by laying their nervous system open to further wear and tear, instead of giving it peace to repair the previously incurred deterioration. And they ruin their spiritual existence, i.e. the experiences they might otherwise have enjoyed on the psychic plane while their organism was resting, by continually disturbing or suspending its enjoyment. as they glide back into the half-awake condition. It is under such abnormal conditions that we experience dreams which are either pure nightmares, or some terrible mess. The reason for this is that certain glimpses of the experiences gained on the spiritual plane have become mixed up with the worries and annoyances, or that agony or irritation with which our consciousness was filled at the moment just before falling asleep. What then, can we do to avoid this? Here it applies, as in so many other cases, that if, just before going to rest, we concentrate on the God-head in prayers, we may regain our peace of mind. We may for instance, pray for help in meeting and overcoming in coming days the difficulties which have been the cause of our worries and annoyances.

Every time we fall asleep at night we "die", even if it is only for a single night that we are to be away from the physical world. Our physical body is kept going by means of certain automatic forces and functions, but our consciousness should have nothing to do with the

body at night, and the only real difference between sleep and death is that the automatic maintainance and renewal process which is carried out during sleep from the spiritual plane, ceases when it is death that occurs. By learning to fall asleep in the right way we learn, in fact, how to die in the right way, for, just as we may have nightmares and evil dreams at night, if we allow our thoughts to run around in a vicious circle from which it seems impossible to extricate oneself we may also when we fall asleep never to wake again in this physical world in the same physical body, be plagued by such unpleasant mental tortu-ousities that, for a time, they will create a kind of "hellish" experience, or "purgatory" for us.

"Death" is a sleep which lasts somewhat longer than the ordinary sleep

In the process which we here in the physical world call "death" then, we also sleep away from the experiences of the physical world, and this sleep lasts somewhat longer than that which we are accustomed to understand as "sleep". But just as it is only our physical body that must rest when we sleep "the little sleep" - while our consciousness is fully active in the spiritual world - so too there are just certain faculties and talents that must rest for a time while we are "dead" from the physical world, to which we are to wake again later, though this time in a completely new physical body, through which we obtain new possibilities of experiencing and creating things which, in our previous incarnation, we only got so far as to dream of.

What we call death can be like a glorious sunset from the physical world and a wonderful sunrise in the spiritual world.

Irritation, disappointment, resentment, fear, guilt, and similar mental climates may give rise to evil dreams and nightmares during sleep if one has not previously overcome such thoughts and feelings in one's mind. Here prayer is an immense power, because by learning to fall asleep in the right way, we actually teach ourselves how to die in the right way, that is to say, without any "vicious circle" of negative thoughts. If we honestly try to cast out all dark thoughts from our mind, and pray for help to go through our difficulties, we shall not only come to realize that our daily life will feel far easier and brighter, but, when the time comes to leave our physical organism entirely, the process of doing so will be like a glorious sunset from the physical world and a radiant sunrise in the spiritual world.

Every human being can do a lot to make his departure from this world both harmonious and beautiful

We know how a sunset may be so completely enveloped in dark clouds that one cannot see the glorious scenery of golden colours which, to many people, constitutes the most lovely sight that can be experienced in Nature. In the same way, the mental sunset we call death may be so darkly obscured that it lacks all pretention to beauty, peace or harmony. I do not say this to frighten anyone, I would rather emphasize that everyone can do quite a lot to make his departure from this world both harmonious and beautiful, and to make his "birth" into the spiritual world a happy welcome, where the being is received by relations and friends he was fond of and who have previously passed through the Gates of Death. But to be able to prevent death from being a dark and gloomy occurrence it is important to know what kind of thought combinations might be the cause of a possible "purgatory" or a "hellish experience" during the initial period after one has abandoned one's physical body, and before one passes through the cycle of the spiritual worlds which every living being - even the worst of criminals - will come to pass through before he is once again to incarnate into the physical world. Naturally, I am not able to say what each individual being will experience in detail. That will depend completely upon the kind of thoughts and feelings that occupy his mind, upon the level of development his intuition has reached, and upon the special faculties and talents he has particularly developed during his life in the physical world. But I can tell something about the laws governing these experiences, and can roughly describe some of the possibilities awaiting various categories of human beings after death, depending on whether they leave the physical world while they are still children, or die in early youth, or whether they pass over in the prime of life, or as elderly people ripe in years.

Death is not something the human being should fear

When a human being has experienced cosmic consciousness, and has thus extended his ability to experience to such a degree that he is able not only to experience day-consciously on the physical plane, but also - while still occupying his physical organism - to experience day-consciously on the spiritual plane, he will also be able to experience death in such a way that he is fully aware of its structure, as well as its object. Considered from this cosmic experience of death, the process may be defined as a great gateway leading into

a new form of life or experience. All physical beings must pass through this gateway - something everybody knows with certainty even if it is not something one bothers much about in everyday life. As long as death remains something human beings think of with nothing but awe and terror, it is, of course, only good that most people can put the thought of it so lightly away from them. But the consequence of this unconcern is that when the same being is confronted by the irrevocable fact that one of his immediate circle - or he himself, perhaps - is about to die, he is quite unprepared for death, which may make it all the harder for him to get through this process. Yet, in actual fact, death is not anything we should fear. If we try to accustom ourselves to the thought that one day it will be our turn to leave the physical world - a process which, incidentally, we have been through numberless times before, even if we cannot day-consciously remember it - and if, at the same time, we try day by day to cleanse our consciousness of dark thoughts, then death cannot be anything but one of the most beautiful experiences we can meet with.

In the Main Entrance to the spiritual worlds there are four smaller gateways

Through the Gates of Death we are able to reach many greatly varying world or spheres. They are not localities in the same way as those we know here in the physical world, they are conditions or wavelengths, for the spiritual world is an entirely electrical world. This is why it is that we shall all meet the kind of conditions in the spiritual world to which each of us, according to his or her state of consciousness, can attune. Neither more nor less. Christ's words "In my Father's House are many mansions" are thus an exact expression of all the possibilities there are in life after death in agreement with the longings, wishes, beliefs, thoughts, imagination and creative ability of every individual being. One could say that, in the great Main Entrance leading in to life in the spiritual worlds, there are four smaller gateways: one for beings who die in childhood, one for those who die in early youth, one for those dying in the prime of life, and one for old people who die a natural death, ripe in years in the physical world. From each of these four gateways the living beings can pass on to the various zones or spheres to which, by virtue of their individual mental state, their character, talents and faculty of love they are attuned.

The laws and principles which become effective in case of the death of a child and its life in the spiritual world

The reason why a human being leaves his physical organism already in early childhood may be many, and here I will mention only a few. In some of his former incarnations he may have destroyed his ability to build up a new healthy and normal physical organism, so that the body he now manages to evolve in his mother's womb is rapidly impaired by illness, if indeed the child is not actually stillborn. He may also have created a fate for himself which entails that he is not protected against accidents, and thus loses his life in this way, or he may himself once have been the cause of other children's deaths. There are many possibilities. But whatever the fateful cause of someone's death in early childhood, the unpleasantness he has created for himself is not to be found in the actual process of death. Naturally, there may be fear in a child's mind if it suddenly gets killed, but any such fear will instantly be suggestionized away by beings on the spiritual plane. No, the unpleasantness is to be found in the fact that the person in question, who had recently created a physical organism for himself through which he was to experience, create and make new experiences for the benefit of his further development, suddenly has all such possibilities cut off, and after a comparatively brief stay in the spiritual worlds, must again burden his talent kernels by creating a new physical organism in order to make the necessary experiences in the physical world where the beings must incarnate again and again, as it is here they must all learn how to think. But the actual process of death, when in connection with the death of a child is not a gloomy one. It is usually free from any "purgatory", for the child has no dark thoughts in its consciousness, and if there are any such, they are usually of such an ephemeral character that the guardian spirits will immediately be able to suggestionize them away. The principle of "guardian spirits" is a universal principle. It applies both in the physical as well as in the spiritual world and, just as there are midwives or obstetricians at hand when we are born into the physical world - a process which is, in fact, a death from the spiritual world - there are also "birth assistants" present when we die from the physical world and are born into the spiritual world. These assistants, guardian spirits or guardian angels - or whatever you prefer to call them - are beings who particularly have talents and desire to help others, and, in conformity with the universal principle of attraction

and repulsion, they come to help just those beings who they are specially suited to help. In other words, the spiritual beings who, immediately after the process of death, take care of a child that has left its physical organism, are beings radiating an intense love of children, and who exhibit a special ability in guiding and helping such beings. The child's world is a world of games and fairy-tales, and that will also characterize the child's first experiences after it has left its physical body. It will arrive at a kind of kindergarten where loving beings will care for it, and where games and fairytales will dominate its existence. But while the child in the physical world had to have fairy-tales read to it from a book, the experience of fairy-tales in the spiritual world is far more alive and realistic. In the spiritual world conditions are such that matter obeys the power of thought or will. The story-teller need only imagine his fairy-tales, and there they are as large as life before the children, and not merely as pictures, but in mobile and plastic states surrounded by the most wondrous landscapes and scenery. Among these guardian spirits who care for the children there may be some who have been great authors or narrators of fairy-tales in the physical world. While they "tell" their fairy-tales their thought-concentrations may sometimes be so powerful that they themselves vanish behind their own thought energies, and all that can be seen are the changing mental images in the narrator's imagination. This sphere of fairy-tales is naturally not only for children, but for all beings on the spiritual plane who are freed from darkness and "purgatory", and whose thoughts, feelings and interests are in tune with such a world. And this sphere abuts so closely on the physical plane that its energies may well affect receptive people here e.g. poets and creators of animated cartoons who are thus often inspired from this mental world, which certainly is anything but dull. To the child, however, there will come a time when it becomes satiated with the experiences in this playground and fairy-tale world, and then, with the assistance of its guardian spirits, it will be guided through the intellectual spheres where it does not have so much to experience, but where everything experienced will be bright and radiant. Thus the child will soon come to experience the Sphere of Memory or the Kingdom of Bliss, from where it will once again incarnate into the physical world. Memories of its former physical lives will fill its consciousness with bliss and its "longing energy" will be more and more concentrated on the

physical existence. These energies of longing and Bliss will then join up the radiance of bliss emanating from two physical beings experiencing the culmination of their mutual love. It is of course not decided by mere chance what man and woman will be the being's parents in a new physical incarnation, for here also the universal law of attraction and repulsion applies between the energies radiated by living beings, deciding the fate of both parents as well as that of the being they are now to be guardian spirits for in the physical world, until such time that said being will be able to fend for itself.

How the process of death will shape itself for the being, who dies in the middle of his youth

If a human being dies in the middle of youth, what he comes to experience during the initial period immediately after his death will, of course, be somewhat different from what would have been the case if he had left his physical body in early childhood. A young person's consciousness is filled with quite other kinds of thoughts and feelings than those of a child, and this will also influence his or her experiences on the spiritual plane. As youth can often be a difficult age when one's consciousness is filled with opposition and criticism, and, at the same time, strongly concentrated on the physical world, making a career, being in love with the opposite sex, etc. a breaking off of the physical existence at that early age may well entail some difficulties, especially if death comes suddenly. If this death is caused by illness the young person will have time to be prepared for it. Even though one may not notice it directly through the person's day-consciousness, it will take place at night on the spiritual plane. But in cases of sudden death, e.g. through a traffic accident or some similar cause, quite some time may elapse before the person in question realizes that he or she has died. What happens in detail in each individual case is naturally specific, but the same laws and principles will hold for every single person's passage through the Gates of Death. Young people can often differ greatly in spiritual maturity, and there may be young people who are far more advanced in spiritual matters than many much older people, and to such young persons the passing over to the other world will not prove very difficult, for they will quickly pray for help, and the helpers will at once come to their aid. But in the case of young people whose entire consciousness is occupied with physical matters, without the smallest belief in a

life after death, their thoughts may continue to circle for some time round the latest events that took place before they died, just as may often be the case in an unpleasant dream. They are surrounded by their own world of thought, like a mental prison from which they are unable to escape. Possibly, for instance, in their concentration of thought, they drive along the road towards the site of their accident over and over again, in order, as it were, to attempt to reconstruct events, and determine what has happened. On the physical plane persons with power of clairvoyance will be able to see the victim of the accident driving towards the site of his accident, where he suddenly vanished from sight because his concentration of thought comes to an end just there. This is what people normally call a "ghostly vision", which is based on special laws and principles, which science will one day come to understand. The young person in question will finally come to realize that something has happened which he cannot understand. A succession of thoughts from his physical life will pass through his consciousness, not as something within himself, but as surrounding him. And however materialistic or atheistic the young fellow may imagine he was, he will pray for help in his distress - and help will be there instantaneously. The guardian spirits have been waiting all the time, only too ready to help and aid him, but he must himself attune his own mind to their wave-length. Only then can the desired help be released. Now, how do these guardian spirits reveal themselves to those they are about to help?

(To be continued)

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