

CHAPTER VII THE SCORPION OF DEATH

1. INTRO: This was the first section of the Wisdom that interested me, because I am always interested in what happens after you die. I think PBs presentation is really logical and followable and unique in the spiritual literature in its scientific and objective coherency and lack of religious dogma and symbolism. Of course the big question is "is it true?" and what does it take to convince one on the deepest levels of doubt that it is true.
- ~~2. WHEN Kee Loo said to his teacher, "I venture to ask about death?" Kung Foo Tze replied: "While you do not comprehend life, how can you comprehend death?"~~
- ~~3. Such too is the philosophic attitude towards this matter and this is why in all our previous writing we have refrained from touching too freely upon the most melancholy of all topics. It is only now, when a modicum of light has been thrown upon the nature of existence, that the appropriate time has come for breaking this reserve. Otherwise why should anyone concern himself with the adventures of man in the dark spheres beyond death when he has not understood what has already happened to him before he arrives there? The problem of the spirit world, which men do not know, can be satisfactorily solved only after they have solved the problem of the earth world, which they do know. Those who accept any of the various accounts of life in the next sphere when they have not understood the present one, can and often do, easily delude themselves.~~
- ~~4. Now, however, when we know something of the true ancestry of this world, something of the final fate of the twinkling stars and circling planets and especially something about our own human selves, we are surely better equipped to tackle this problem with a little more intelligence and a little less blind belief than is usually shown towards it. For just as mentalism has helped to fashion a key to a correct understanding of this world so it can help us secure a correct and rational understanding of the next world.~~
5. We all know what death will do to man's body. What will it do to his thinking feeling self? Does he become a 'spirit'? The answer to this questioner is so important to all men as to demand and deserve extended treatment. Firstly, let it be said that the grim process of dying and its immediate aftermath are events upon which a little light can be thrown from the more advanced experiences of a certain yoga-path. For one of these experiences, which occurs in some cases but not in all, is an important state of death-like trance.
6. From the accounts of those who have had such experiences, from the classic descriptions contained in ancient mystic texts and from our having personally passed through some of these phases, it is possible to procure a few hints as to what happens during and after this momentous transition. For the rest we shall draw upon a definite tradition about death in the hidden teaching which can be explained in a manner appealing to reason alone.
7. One the recent confirming sources of this first section is, of course, near death experiences. I want to put forth the notion that this particular section follows the general pattern shown in the Near Death experience. The stages of death and near death are the pretty much the same as what is presented except for a couple of things. The steps in NDE are 1. Feeling of Peace, 2. Out of Body Experience, 3. Tunnel, 4. Being met by the spirits of Dead Relatives, 5. Being of Light, 6. Life Review, 7. Being told to Come Back to the Life in the body. Obviously being told to come back is one difference, since the dying person isn't coming back just yet anyway.

8. The pain which is so often associated with this event arises either from abrupt and violent physical changes or abrupt and violent mental ones or from both inter-acting together. Where, as is usually the case through ignorance, thought clings obstinately to the body and feeling clings obstinately to its desires, where there is over-strong refusal to let both and an exaggerated fear of what is coming next, the physical pain is needlessly increased through a nervous reaction. But when the dying person is sufficiently enlightened to know that the body is his idea and to have disciplined his personal desires, he will naturally be prepared for this great change.

9. After a severe head injury one man's vital signs were undetectable. As he says, "At the point of injury there was a momentary flash of pain, but then all pain vanished. I had the feeling of floating in dark space. The day was bitterly cold, yet while I was in that blackness, all I felt was warmth and the most extreme comfort I have ever experienced. I remember thinking "I must be dead". Moody pp.28-9

10. Another man recalls, I had a nice great feeling of solitude and peace....It was beautiful and I was at such peace in my mind. Moody p.29

11. Just as a fully-ripened fruit falls easiest from a tree so such a man will part easiest from his body.

12. "A seventy-year-old patient had seen her deceased husband several times and then predicted her own death. She said that her husband had appeared in the window and motioned her to come out of the house. The reason for his visits was to have her join him. Her daughter and other relatives were present when she predicted her death, laid out her burial clothes, laid down in bed for a nap, and died about one hour later. She seemed calm, resigned to death, in fact, wanted to die. Before she saw her husband she didn't speak about imminent death. Her doctor was so surprised by her sudden death, for which there was no sufficient medical reason, that he checked if she had poisoned herself. He found no signs of poisoning or any such drugs in the house." Osis p.4

~~13. In the case of a highly expert yogi who has made meditation a part of his life, and certainly in the case of a sage who knows his real self apart from the body, the passing out should be quite peaceful.~~

~~14. Dying itself—and we do not speak here of accidental or violent death—may fitly be compared with the squeezing of a saturated fruit for its juice. The dying person feels an intense pressure which begins in both feet and moves slowly up the whole body, leaving the limbs heavy cold and numb. This in turn affects the activity of breathing, the flow of blood and the senses of sight and hearing. When, in the final crisis, the pressing process is completed the heart cannot expand properly. The sensation of being intimately identified with most of the body then disappears and centers within the heart itself.~~

15. If a strong emotional thought of some other person dominates the mind at this moment, as often happens when the dying person is far away from someone who is dearly beloved, this will be telepathically and automatically communicated. The latter may then experience a sense of great uneasiness, a feeling of something being wrong. If sufficiently receptive in temperament he may understand intuitively that the other person is dying. If sufficiently impressible in imagination, he may even clairvoyantly see an apparition of the dying person standing in front of him. When this happens the dying person himself also sees the living one at the same time. In other cases the voice of the one will be heard calling out to the other although nobody else present will be able to hear it. All these phenomena are really mental and indicate that the dying person has his mind fixed upon the living one and that his anguish, love or wish are capable when

sufficiently strong of transferring themselves telepathically to a sufficiently intimate or receptive mind, which receives the stimulus and calls up within itself the image or voice of the other. It is the intense concentration dynamising the original thought or emotion which acts upon and evokes an image within the second person, that is to say, the vision or voice is ultimately the result of the latter's own unconscious mental activity. This is just as wonderful a mental power as that which clairvoyance is commonly supposed to be.

16. I had an experience once when I was driving out to the center, I was going to fast and went into a skid and at that moment I had a vision of my wife and son.

Although this is true, and may happen at death much more common is seeing and conversing with people close to you who are diseased already, usually spouse or parents, relatives.

“look into the distance, these things would appear to him and seemed real to him. He would look up to a wall, eyes and face would brighten up as if he saw a person. He’s speak of the light, the brightness, saw people who seemed real to him. He would say, “Hello” and “there’s my mother.” After it was over he closed his eyes and seemed very peaceful. He gestured with outstretched arms. Before the hallucination he was very ill and nauseous; afterwards he was serene and peaceful.” Osis

17. A sense of utter helplessness next overwhelms the dying man. He may have been one of the most powerful potentates on earth during his life-time. Now however he feels as powerless as an infant lying on its back. He senses that irresistible natural forces have taken hold of him and are drawing him, as through a long tenebrous and narrowing tunnel, he knows not whither, away from all that is familiar and friendly into a dark unknown territory or perhaps into self-annihilation.

18. This refers to the tunnel phase of the dying process.

“I was in an utterly black, dark void. It is very difficult to explain, but I felt as if I were moving in a vacuum, just through blackness. Yet I was quite conscious. It was like being in a cylinder which has no air in it. It was a feeling of a kind limbo, of being half-way here, and half-way there.” Moody p 32

19. ~~He yearns to express his feelings to those around the body which is now being vacated but he finds that the power of speech is paralyzed. A terrible loneliness creeps painfully over him. This part of death descends on his desire filled, possession-grasping nature like a shower of ice-cold water. But the man who has learnt the art of letting go, who understands the inner significance of Jesus' words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, "— with him all is well.~~ At this fateful hour too the disciple of an adept in yoga or of a sage in wisdom will vividly behold the familiar form and feel the consoling presence of his teacher, whose image always appears at this moment to assist the passing over. The last thoughts of a dying man contribute to the complex group of factors which determine what form his next incarnation will take.

20. This can be seen in the newly emerging reincarnation therapy movement. Here neurotic behavior patterns and physical problems in this life can be traced to the moment of death in a previous life.

21. A young woman who had suffered from ulcerative colitis relived the life of an eight year old Dutch girl round up and shot at a mass grave by Nazi soldiers. The colitis was an expression of the residual terror during the girl’s last moments awaiting execution.

22. A man with chronic back pain relived an agonizing death pinned under a wagon with a broken back; the pain substantially lessened after the session. Woolger p.167

23. Here's an interesting question, why should someone who had to suffer a horrible death in a previous life have to suffer the aftershocks of it their next life? Where is the justice in that? Possible answer, general law of Karma, or Nature here supplies continuity so in a sense it is this aspect which accounts for the aftershocks. The special law of karma, covering moral lessons and grace may supply the freeing remembrance of the initial trauma. Both must work together.

24. Interject my own experience: Along time ago when I was in college I was going through a traumatic breakup with my girlfriend. At the critical moment when she was leaving me and moving in with someone else I had this vision. I saw myself as an old man, like Scrooge in a 4-poster bed in white bed clothes of the era and I was dying. My family and acquaintances, some of whom I recognize in this life were around me. I was overwhelmed by this tremendous fear that I would lose all my possessions at death. And so this psychological imprint carried over into some psychological problems in this life. i.e. possessiveness and inability to make transitions gracefully.

25. The ebbing away of consciousness which culminates in the death paroxysm provides the man with an opportunity he may not have had during his earthly lifetime to perceive what he has not hitherto been able to perceive. For from the moment when the pangs are over and especially after the final beating of the heart, the 'dead' man passes into a state of clairvoyant vision which to him may seem to extend over a few days but is really much less than that by the different standard of our earth-time. There now begins for him the discovery that a mysterious and deeper layer of his mind has kept a secret record of all the multitude of his experiences from prattling childhood to crabbed old age. Nothing has been lost but all still exists there in picture form. He will receive flashing glimpses of most episodes and many details, particularly those which were most intense, of his own past life. Persons who have accidentally fallen to the ground from a great height or who have suffered the pangs of drowning but escaped death often speak of the broken confused fragments of a similar experience which they are likely to remember ever afterwards.

26. The past returns fitfully in an unwinding web of impressive sharply-focussed pictures which stands out as external to him. Nor does he relive them in the same way as when he was in the flesh. For then time ran forward; here it runs backward. That is -to say, he starts from the latest events preceding death and walks backward step by step until the earliest years are reached. Thus his past reverses itself. Again, when he was in the flesh time ran at the rate marked out by the earth's daily round of the sun. Here it rushes along with a hitherto unknown and unbelievable rapidity. And all this happens because he goes out of the body clinging to life, with his face turned towards earthly existence, wanting it and wrapped up in it. Such an imaginative return, such a living back through bygone episodes and ancient events is not merely a memory but something more vivid than that.

27. This is the life review phase mention in the NDE literature.

"I was asked if I was ready to stay. And I didn't know. I really didn't know. And I was told I would have to go and make up my mind. I'd have to go make a decision..."

[Later} before making that decision...I had a life review. This review of my life passed by. A "pssssh" [she makes a fast, hissing sound] -just like that. Yeah a 35 millimeter film went "click, click" in a split second. It was all black and white and I saw everything. I saw my whole life pass right by me. [in any order particularly?] Oh, yeah, All chronological. All precise. It all just went right by. My whole life. [Were you reliving events or just watching like a spectator?] I was, yeah, more of a spectator...there were no emotion. I was just watching this and I saw my whole life pass in review. After my whole life went by - in black and white - zoom! - and black and white ended and it got into color and I got into things that hadn't happened yet. Things that I didn't realize but things that have happened since then!" Ring pp.60-1

28. “This flashback was in the form of mental pictures, I would say, but they were much more vivid than normal ones. I saw only the high points, but it was so rapid it was like looking through a volume of my entire life and being able to do it within seconds. It just flashed before me like a motion picture that goes tremendously fast, yet I was fully able to see it, and able to comprehend it. Still the emotions don’t come back with the pictures, because there wasn’t enough time.

29. I didn’t see anything else during this experience. There was blackness except for the images I saw. Yet I definitely felt the presence of a very powerful, completely loving being there with all through this experience.” Moody p. 70

30. What happens next is that a living being, which although he does not know it has already imperturbably observed the death of his bodily being, a hidden 'I' which has always observed the surface 'I', something within him yet something that he has not hitherto recognized as himself, will now touch his consciousness. This being is none other than his own majestic Overself. Through its eyes he will gaze afresh at the total impression rather than the episodal detail of his earthly life. Through its revelatory eyes he becomes his own incorruptible judge. The purely selfish, purely personal point of view suddenly deserts him. For the first time, perhaps, he sees himself not only as others see him but also as the impersonal power of karma sees him.

31. “The Being of Light engulfed me, and as it did I began to experience my whole life, feeling and seeing everything that ever happened to me. It was as though a dam burst and every memory stored in my brain flowed out.

32. This life review was not pleasant. From the moment it began until it ended, I was faced with the sickening reality that I had been an unpleasant person, someone who was self-centered and mean.

33. The first thing I saw was my angry childhood. I saw myself torturing other children, stealing their bicycles or making them miserable at school. One of the most vivid scenes was of a time I picked on a child at grade school because he had a goiter on his neck. Other kids in the class picked on him too but I was the worst. At the time I thought it was funny. But now as I relived this incident, I found myself in his body, living with the pain that I was causing.”

34. I also felt the grief I had caused my parents. I had been uncontrollable and proud of it. Although they had grounded me and yelled at me, I had let them know by my actions that none of their discipline really mattered. Many times they had pleaded with me and many times they met frustration. I had often bragged to my friends about how I had hurt my parents. Now, in my life review, I felt their psychological pain at having such a bad child.” Brinkley pp.10-1

35. During this time he comes face to face with the consequences for other persons of his acts whilst on earth, consequences of which he was often quite unaware or in which he was often egotistically uninterested. He then perceives that many of his own misfortunes - so vividly depicted again in this amazing panorama - were definitely self-made and self-earned. By this diviner light of a conscience magnified one thousand-fold, he feels that whatever happened to him was a just result, was traceable in the end to his own character and his own deeds. A great remorse overwhelms him.

36. "When I finished the life review, I arrived at a point of reflection in which I was able to look back on what I had just witnessed and come to a conclusion. I was ashamed. I realized I led a very selfish life, rarely reaching out to help anyone. Almost never had I smiled as an act of brotherly love or just handed somebody a dollar because he was down and needed a boost. No, my life had been for me and me alone. I hadn't given a damn about my fellow human beings.

37. I looked at the being of light and felt a deep sense of sorrow and shame."
Brinkley p.20

38. He puts passion aside and sees this surface 'I' as the once-hidden observer sees it, without its own self-flattery and unconscious self-deception. He sees wrong-doing, sin and evil in some of his deeds where, previously, he hardly suspected them even to be present. He also sees other persons, with whom he had come into intimate relation, as they really are too and not as they pretended or as he believed them to be, and thus discovers how he has lived in a make-believe world of his own. Finally, he is made to ask himself the question, What have I done with this gift of life?

39. "The first thing he said to me [the being of light] was, that he kind of asked me if I was ready to die, or what had I done with my life that I wanted to show him."

40. "The voice asked me the question: Is it worth it?" And what it meant was, did the kind of life I had been leading up to that point seem worthwhile to me then, knowing what I then knew."

41. "When the light appeared, the first thing he said to me was "What do you have to show me that you have done with your life?" or something to this effect. And that's when the flashbacks started." Moody

42. The second experience does not last long and is succeeded by a third one wherein the ebbing tide of consciousness turns all existence into what he now has the chance to understand as being the texture of a dream. All these episodes and persons of his past earth life begin to seem curiously remote and unreal. The universal existence becomes mysterious and phantom-like. He has a chance to perceive the world's materiality for the fundamental illusion that it was. If he can realize this - and few do because it demands the putting away of personal desires and heavy attachments to do so - and if he can hold to this realization right to the very end, then he may definitely gain a spiritual profit which will show itself in the following incarnation. He must indeed be able to free himself from this very past whose contemplation he has just finished. Unfortunately man usually passes through this experience without a knowledge of its high potential value, that is to say although his earthly existence now seems like a dream he does not see that it was always like a dream.

43. Comment: this may be in place of the border or limit where the Near Death experiencer would be turned back and return to earthly life. Also in all the Near Death literature I have come across, rarely if ever is anyone a mentalist afterwards.

44. When these revelations are at an end he falls into a welcome dreamless sleep, an utter rest of all his being within simple unconsciousness.

45. So generally the only two key parts PB leaves out are the Out of Body Experience, and the Border or Limit aspect. He also adds the role of the teacher aiding in the transition with that played by relatives on the other side and the clairvoyant telepathic presentation of the immanence of death to loved ones.

46. Only now is the transition of death really complete. An epoch of the individual's life is at an end. The flesh has fulfilled its task of, providing through the senses the needed conditions whereby the consciousness which it enchaind was able to gaze upon and be active in an outside world, thus obtaining contacts with external objects set in a particular kind of space and moving in a particular level of time. In this way alone could the little centre of finite consciousness which is the "I" can gather experience at all, experience which will one day be distilled into the sublime discovery of reality.

47. "I had the opportunity to go to my first wake when my father-in-law died some years ago. It was held in a chapel with an open casket. As soon as I entered I could feel Mike's living presence. The atmosphere was pervaded by a diffuse light and pervasive essence of the man. I could feel that he was conscious and surprised that I could detect him. He was in life what one would call an obsessive-compulsive and powerful man. You had to do the dishes his way and that was it. He had worked in a rock quarry most of his life and built his house by hand. But the Mike I detected here was different. I took it that the light his personality was present in was the Overself and Mike had a completely open heart. Only the best of the man was able to appear in the rarified atmosphere, like an ideal portrait, a eulogy. This open heart experience is very wonderful whenever it is encountered. I think it is ultimately a characteristic of the Overself and have felt in the Dalai Lama and briefly in my interview with P.B. Some of the lessons I have gotten from this are that the bodily basis of the personality is what is responsible for a lot of the quirks, and neurotic tendencies that pervade most people. But these things go as soon as one drops the bodily basis and it's corresponding psychological plane. Also it is the job of the mystic who has had some contact with this prior to death to incorporate this openness as much as possible into the limited personality."

In the Spirit World.

48. ~~Those who pessimistically believe or teach that death is the unpalatable end of all for man have concentrated all their attention on the human body and merely exhibit their ignorance of what the human mind is, how it comes into activity and what course its evolutionary destiny must naturally take. They would be correct in comparing death, as they often do, to the change which a machine undergoes when its whirring wheels come to a standstill were it not that a machine lacks the unifying consciousness which a man possesses. When a machine ceases to operate we do not have to account for the loss of this consciousness but when a man ceases to live, we do have to account for it. Why, if the body be their true self, do these materialists not insist on remaining alive instead of yielding it helplessly one day to the cold touch of death? Let them take a walk and refresh their fogged wits.~~

49. ~~Those others, however, who have shed such materialistic beliefs and come to regard the body as an intimate form of consciousness to which the 'I's compellingly close but with which it is nevertheless not identical, will not find the next step in this teaching so astounding as it may seem to others. For, knowing the true relation which exists between mind and body, they (the mentalist) cannot be deceived into melancholy acceptance of the materialist belief in human mortality. They can understand from mentalistic teaching that mind has fashioned a brain as it has fashioned the senses to suit its evolutionary needs, and that the five senses spring into activity at its bidding, not mind at their bidding. The sense-powers are mental ones as is amply demonstrated by dream-experience. The body merely brings together our five kinds of sensation into a single group. But what are the sensations themselves? They are experiences of the mind. Consequently the whole collection of them which we call the body is likewise something which essentially pertains to the content of consciousness. Every physical body must be a particular of and within consciousness it exists as~~

an intimately held thought for a containing mind, and so we can cheerfully understand the further truth that death can be nothing more than the cutting off this collection from the mind itself. Its disappearance does not involve the disappearance of that which contained it any more than the cutting off of a part can destroy the whole. There is absolutely no necessity for the mind to cease its own existence when a collection of its sensations; an object of its consciousness like the body ceases to exist.

50. Because Mentalism says the mind per se is immortal, time and space are ideas for it which allow consciousness to function, the senses are forms of consciousness whose copresence go to formulate the idea of the body, then death is actually the mind's withdrawing of attention from this separative frame of reference back into itself.

51. I was seventeen years old and my brother and I were working at an amusement park. One afternoon, we decided to go swimming and there were quite a few of the other young people who went in with us. Someone said, "Let's swim across the lake." I had done that on numerous occasions, but that day for some reason, I went down, almost in the middle of the lake...I kept bobbling up and down, and all of a sudden, it felt as though I wee away from my body, away from everybody, in a space by myself. Although I was stable, staying at the same level, I saw my body in the water about 3 or 4 feet away , bobbling up and down. I viewed my body from the back and slightly to the side. Still I felt as though I still had an entire body form, even while I was outside my body. I had an airy feeling that's almost indescribable. I felt like a feather.
Moody p.35

52. There is one thing which the materialist has overlooked: To what have these ideas of both life and death come? They have come to the mind. In what do they appear and in what will they vanish? They appear and vanish in the mind. Therefore there will still remain something which cannot be lost, that is, the mind itself. It is the witness of the birth and death of these ideas. Even if the idea of life disappears at least it will disappear into the mind and be still contained by it. Even the world-idea disappears into the self. Why then should anyone fear death?

~~53. The unreflective man may deceive himself into believing that the world is outside his consciousness and that when he loses it at death he loses all possibility of further human existence. But the philosophic student knows that the world exists inside his consciousness and consequently knows that it is not lost at death, that~~
54. ~~it will come into spatial manifestation once more when consciousness becomes active again. In this sense his knowledge victoriously triumphs over death. Moreover the mind itself—as apart from its contents—is not in time, is not limited to the succession of 'before' and 'after' for these are in it and for it. Hence birth and death, which are ideas dependent on time cannot apply to it. The mind, in this sense of not suffering from limitations imposed by time, is immortal. Only in the pitiful illusions of materialists can it go out like a quenched flame.~~

~~55. Let it be noted too that the mind must have existed before the birth of the body in order to receive those sensations whose conversion into sight, hearing and other perceptions constitute the body. No man who has thoroughly understood the tenet of the ideality of the body can ever again subscribe to the mistaken notion of materialism that death ends all. It ends something but leaves the mind, the veritable human essence, untouched.~~

56. If we consider the experience of dying once again, we find that when the short period of post-mortem blankness terminates consciousness slowly revives - so slowly that the process is comparable to gestation in the womb - until the man finds himself once again as he formerly was. The higher viewpoint has vanished; the personal one alone remains. Once again he is a living self-centred creature surrounded by an external world.

57. Let me give you an example. I have tried to help someone who during his life was a gambler and a very quarrelsome person. He died from tuberculosis forty-five years ago. He has been living in the psychic world exactly the same way as he did when he was in the gross material plane. He has created with others the same environment analogous to the one they knew on Earth; dirty windows, dirty clothes and tables, fights, arguments, just like the environment of the coffee houses they knew before. They did not even have the imagination to build them any better. One day I said to him, "Come, my friend, let's go somewhere." I took him away from his situation and created the vibrations of a Beethoven symphony that I like very much, specifically that of joy. I told him, "Charilae," that was his name, "look!" And I showed him a beautiful forest, with colors, water, flowers, everything. I harmonized the sounds with the sights and created for him what I considered to be a paradise. He gazed at me for some time and then he said, "Aren't you tired? Let's go back and play some poker with my friends. How long are you going to keep me here listening to these tin drums of yours?" What could I tell him? He lived in his paradise which for me was an intolerable hell. How could I explain to that man the difference between hell and paradise?

'Here is another case. A peevish woman spent her entire life accusing, gossiping and cursing her neighbors. When she died she continued the same kind of life, only more intensely. Instead of the real human beings she left behind, she created and quarreled with their elementals which she brought along with her; the elementals of Maria, of Eleni, of Eferbe. We tried in vain to show her that she lived in a hell and that she ought to dissolve those elementals so that she could see more clearly. Only after she is exhausted from her condition will she voluntarily ask for change. Those of you who will one day become invisible helpers will encounter such difficulties. You must know that unless a person seeks change himself you cannot help him. Each person will develop gradually. The most we can do under such circumstances is to create a benign elemental and place it on the aura of the person to work. When he is ready for change, that elemental will be there to assist him., 'Daskale,' I asked, 'do the psychonoetic planes and subplanes have an objective existence independent of the individual's subjective perception of them? Magus.

~~58. Nevertheless we must understand that what he feels to be external is, in reality, quite internal. For, as we shall shortly show, his new environment is produced in exactly the same manner as were his former dream environments. Its space is not physical but mental.~~

~~59. The question, Where are we after death? is an erroneous one and should be rephrased as: What are we after death? The spirit of the newly dead man does reach this other world by any sensation of geographical travel or spatial movement he reached it by a change in consciousness. The doctrine of mentalism especially makes it easy to comprehend what happens to man after death. It demonstrates physical life to be but a particular mental state; when the latter passes away the mind itself still remains and gives birth to a new and different state. It makes clear that if this earthly world is a form so-called next world into which we enter after all must also be form of consciousness and not a place. It explains that such is the wonder of mind that it can create its own world by its own constructive powers. Whatever other worlds exist they can only be mental ones, forms of consciousness too. These subtler worlds of being are not other-dimensional localities or geographical 'spaced' but only states of being, psychological conditions. This is as true of after death worlds as of mystically experienced 'spheres.' All the different states of consciousness, with their different time and space orders, constitute different worlds of being for the individual minds, that is 'spirits' inhabiting them.~~

~~60. 'An individual will, after death, begin to live fully conscious within one of the subplanes of the psychonoetic world, carrying along with him his virtues and vices, his goals and his aspirations. His personality undergoes no change. Only the reality of space changes. The individual enters~~

into a situation where space as we know it in the gross material plane does not exist. He perceives space as meaning, as conception.' Magus

61. ~~The newly awakened spirit first becomes aware of a succession of thoughts and hence of time. Only later does it become aware of space and the sensations of what may be called the spirit body and then the awareness of other forms, other creatures and objects enters its field. But the so-called spirit body is not at all a body as we ordinarily think of the term. It is not really different from the body—if we may think of it as such—which it formerly used—on earth during its dreams. It is a psychological state. To think of it in the gross way in which we usually think of 'bodies' is to deceive oneself. It must be repeated that all this is mentally constructed. There is really no such thing as 'astral matter' from the ultimate standpoint any more than there is such a thing as earthly matter, both being only forms taken by consciousness. Those who have mastered mentalism will understand why this must be so. But the spirit which enters the next world in the materialistic ignorance which is so regrettably common in human life, will naturally carry its old beliefs with it and imagine that it is experiencing a kind of matter, just as it formerly did on earth.~~
62. It is not ordinarily possible for man to examine the condition of death from the inside, as it were, to understand by his own experience what has happened and yet return to life. But Nature has made it possible for all men to obtain suggestive hints about the state called death by making it possible for them to pass through the two states of dream and sleep. ~~All three phases of man's existence are intimately allied with one another. We praise the wisdom of Shakespeare, and rightly. Writing of death, the poet asked: "And in that sleep what dreams may come?" It is unnecessary to resort to paid intermediaries in order to get at second hand a glimpse of what will happen to us after death. We get it every time at first hand when we dream at night as we get it every time when we are plunged in profound sleep! The psychological experience which we then undergo is up to a certain point the same as in death but its theme differs in certain ways. If we can put ourselves in the extraordinary position of a man who dreams that he is, taken by death and yet the following night dreams again that he is still alive, we can comprehend the position of the man whose earthly body actually dies but whose mentality revives later in a new earthly body. The likeness between death and dream is such that just as the dreamer unconsciously and involuntarily creates scenes events persons and surroundings, so the spirit unconsciously and involuntarily makes its own little world for itself. Each movement of its thought is simultaneously a movement of its environment. The unconsciously and involuntarily exercised power of selective attention makes and unmakes its new experience.~~
63. Although the spirit's state is likened to that of the dreamer's, there are however some important differences. First, it is much more prolonged, According to the new time-standard by which it now lives, years may and do pass away. Second, the wildness, incoherence and illogical disorder which mark so many dreams are not to be found here. Everything is presented to the spirit in an orderly connected and plausible manner. Whereas the dreamer cannot control his phantasies and usually experiences a wild Jumble of incoherent episodes and incongruent figures, the spirit on the contrary finds its existence fairly logical and reasonably continuous.
64. Those who have grasped the central implications of mentalism will not need to be told that the world in which the disincarnate spirit finds itself, although an imagined one is nevertheless as feelingly real and as sensuously vivid to it as the one it has just left. Nevertheless the new world in which it now finds itself is not, as in the case of earthly existence, something which is shared in common with all other human beings. On the contrary it is unique. It pertains solely to the spirit's own person. The truth is that just as the dream world is ordinarily a private world, so is the spirit world. All goals end in God. The spirit-has begun its momentous return journey to the Great Aloneness of God and this first stage is a kind of precipitation into the aloneness of its own individuality. But being alone is not it is alone. It is alone only as a dreamer is really alone with his own pictorial fancies and human figures, who are nevertheless quite real to him and

may give him many crowded hours of experience. From this we may understand how the spirit is no longer in a public and common world as it was when on earth. Those who would make the spirit world merely a glorified second edition of the physical one, err.

65. 'I have said before that the psychic worlds have trees, mountains, oceans, rivers, everything that exists on the planet, everything that has ever existed and everything that can exist. What you consider as the real world is actually the shadow or the reflection of other more luminous worlds within which everything material that is considered real exists. In the various planes and subplanes of the psychic worlds there exist not only whatever exists on this planet which was created by archangelic forces, such as water, mountains, forests, but also whatever humans have created either while they are still alive or after they depart. The psychic world is a much richer world.
66. However, most persons who live there perceive it through the elementals; that they themselves create. In the psychic worlds, for example, there is no sun that rises and sets every day, unless we create one ourselves. But the sun we create will be within our individual subjective psychic world, not the external one. Therefore, when a human being abandons his gross material body, he begins to live simultaneously within two planes of existence, the real psychic plane and his own subjective psychic world. Most human beings are so engrossed within their own subjective shell that they are unaware of the nature of the psychic plane within which they vibrate. It is as if, for example, we are on a journey but because of our passions and psychic turmoil, we are oblivious to the beauty of the countryside outside. Magus

67. 'Where is this shell?' someone interjected.

'You mean in terms of space? Again, everywhere and nowhere. But a person who constructs his own shell and lives in it, perceives it as having clear limits within which he is confined and is allowed to act. People build their villages, their churches, their fields, just as they had them on the gross material plane. We can enter into their psychic shells when we coordinate ourselves with them and understand how they perceive their psychic world from within.' Magus

~~68. Waking reverie, dreaming life, artistic phantasy and spirit experience—all these four belong to one and the same general species of existence. This after-death life is really a kind of intense reverie in which the spirit sees its own visions as if they were external to itself, visions peopled with images and scenes which are subconsciously constructed partly out of the ideas, feelings, tendencies and associations of its physical lifetime. The similarity of sensory human experiences in large masses on earth during that lifetime accounts for the similarity of spirit experiences in large masses here too. This does not mean that all the disincarnate beings are experiencing a common spirit environment, however, but that they are each using and reproducing common materials for the construction of their private environments.~~

69. Next it must be made dear that both exceptional happiness and exceptional suffering in the spirit-world can come only to exceptional souls. Most people are not exceptional either in virtue or in vice. Consequently it may be stated that their spirit life will not involve any experience that need be much dreaded nor, on the other hand, any experience that will be highly alluring. The average individual is a lukewarm mixture of good and evil and consequently should not expect any such exaggerated experience after death. The 'hells' of the wicked and the 'heavens' of the virtuous are indeed sparsely populated. The new entrant will most likely fall into a state which is hardly different from that of an uneasy sleeper, a state in which is predominant but is punctuated with fitful scraps of dream-like consciousness. During these prolonged spells of awakening he recovers much the same personal consciousness, desires, emotions and thoughts which he

possessed before. There is no startling change in him. His remembrance of the past returns. He finds it hard to believe that he is really dead. For just as his customary friends, work and pleasure bulked largely in his ordinary dreams during earthly life, so will they bulk largely in this prolonged and extraordinary dream that is spirit existence.

70. But for the others who have been particularly virtuous or particularly bad, there are six fully conscious states in one of which the spirit will find itself by a process of natural gravitation and mental affinity; three being evil, dark and unhappy and three being good, bright, progressive and pleasant. The seventh and intermediate state lies between these two divisions. It is the one which has just been described and to which most people pass at death. Each state may be said to measure a different intensity of moral character.

71. "It seemed as though she was caught in a circle of karmic hell in which the dominant thought that kept repeating life after life was, "It's all my fault. I am a wicked person and I deserve to suffer."

What had occasioned this crippling negative thought? There turned out to be two crucial past life stories, one recent and one ancient...a life as a pirate.

"We're at sea. We've captured a ship. The first victim is a young officer in uniform. We behead him. His eyes are staring, the body crumbles...Now another man. We shoot him in the face. Half his face is gone: there's an eye hanging down...."

The bloody life drags on and on with more and more killing, but unlike Y's pirate life there is no retribution. Too old to go back to sea, the pirate hangs around in bars at port and eventually dies of a fever, alone and destitute in the upper room of a tavern.

"I am dying slowly, I'm cold. Now, I'm hot, sweating...I'm no longer there...I don't understand where I am...It seems to be a dark mist...Oh, help, I'm seeing the faces of the people we killed. They're coming back to haunt me. I see their protruding eyes, the blood; there are so many of them, young and old, it's a kind of hell. I'm a ghost, too. It seems like I have to walk the earth as a ghost for a long long time. There's no place for me. I am totally alone. No one is aware of me. This is my punishment. It's not on this earth but on some other desolate planet, dark and full of cold mists. I remain there for a long, long time. It seems like an eternity. "I am punishing myself. In this dimension a part of me knows that this is what I have to do to atone for what I have done to others and in order to be human again I have to feel what my victims must have felt before they died, desolate, alone without hope."

Finally "I'm walking from right to left. There's a light ahead of me; it's starting to get warm. I'm stepping onto the grass. There are people and voices ahead of me and I hear an authoritative voice which says: "Enough, enough. You have done enough." I know that my punishment is over. -Woolger pp.298-9

72. The fundamental test and final measure of anyone's spirituality is provided by his character. And his character is tested and measured by his actions.(0-6.30)

73. The forming of a good character is the beginning, the middle, and the end of this work.(0-6.35)

74. Thus the lowest state is a sphere of hatred and wickedness, that is a repulsive hell, whereas the highest state is indeed one of goodness, that is a blissful heaven. The forces of moral attraction and moral repulsion determine- the character of the spirit's environment experiences and contacts with other beings.
75. ~~The number of educated minds in the East or in the West which accepts literally the belief in the horrible infernos and smug paradises of popular religion grows smaller and smaller with the passing of every decade. Most of us would prefer soft couches in our present drawing room to soft couches in a hypothetical heaven. Most of these stories of glorious heavens and painful hells are not to be taken literally but neither are they to be despised. They may usually be regarded as true in a symbolic way, provided they are first purged of the fanatical exaggerations which are intended to impress the masses and of the priestly exploitations which are intended to give power over the ignorant. What is the truth behind them?~~
76. ~~The answer is that in the lower states the spirits become victims of their own extreme selfishnesses and extreme vices, which evoke by the same dramatizing power which the dream mind possesses, (for it must be remembered that they are dwelling in a world which is in every way equal to our dream world) a variety of forms figures and continuous episodes of a tantalizing character. They dwell environed by the divinest spheres, to which only a change of thought is needed to lift them, yet they ignorantly gaze mesmerized on their own hideous or vicious creations. These illusions which they hug to their breasts when momentarily attractive but from which they recoil in fear when later grown frightful, always begin with the promise of slaking desire but they always end with the torment of denying it. The spirits imagination wears itself out with these struggles against its own selfcreated phantoms until finally it perceives the truth that hell is simply the hunger of its own unsatisfied passions and thus renounces the grosser ones. This act teaches it to keep its leering aggressiveness on a leash and liberates it to rise higher. The first and last lesson is that the next world is not a geographical place but a vividly prolonged mental experience. And like all mental experiences it can and does contain geographical places within itself And like all vivid mental experiences it is real enough whilst it lasts. The truth is that neither heaven nor hell is actually a place but is only a state of the human mind, that both are, nowhere to be located and that all after death are purely mental existences in the sense that dreams are mental. For example, the multitude of young and convinced Nazi Germans who were killed in the war— fanatically afire with the passions of greed, cruelty, envy, hatred and conceit as they were— were tutored in the most effective way. They were doomed to undergo a veritable nightmare in which they experienced in prolonged form the living images of the agonies they had brought to others. They became the scarified victims of their own debased thoughts.~~
77. ~~The pictures of hell as a sulphurous realm of shades were not therefore without their use for keeping unenlightened multitudes within decent bounds. Their lurid details of torture and torment indicate that the priestly minds which painted them originally understood well the inhibitive power of suggestions given to the impressionable minds of the populace, especially the suggestion that evil doing brings painful retribution. Those who denounce the doctrine of purgatory as mere superstition are only partly right for they have obviously outgrown the mental need of such a suggestion, but they are wrong from the standpoint of others charged with the moral instruction of mankind. We must remember too that such a purgatory as is here described is only a temporary condition, after all. If people who believe in the dreadful doctrine of eternal damnation had either the courage or the competence to analyse their belief metaphysically, they would no longer believe it.~~
78. In the three psychological spirit-states which have affinity with what is finer and purer in man we may find the reality of the better side of those paradises which orthodox religions promise to their devotees. Truly no evil thought and no painful suffering can penetrate the happy blissful visions of these regions, which fulfil both the personal yearnings and idealistic aspirations of their inhabitants in a way that the past earth-life often failed to fulfil. Here they may recognize and meet their beloved ones, whether relatives or friends,

who have passed on before them. ~~If the love is really there it will certainly bring them happily together again. Nevertheless, from our earthly standpoint it will be only in the sense that two loved ones are brought together during a dream. Each enters the spirit dream of the other. In both cases the second person will actually but unconsciously be reconstructed by the spirit for itself. Yet for the spirit it will be just as vividly felicitous, recognition will be just as blissfully spontaneous as in earthly life. The spirit in any of the seven states will meet other people and enter into relations with them, but these people are actually thought-beings and these relations are thought-weavings. Nevertheless these meetings in the three higher and heavenly states can be and are most emotionally satisfying to their participants. The fragrance of these affectionate communions, these beautiful interchanges of thought and feeling lingers long in this wonderful region. For in such consciousness a stretched-out time standard yields a period which is indeed joyously spent, compensating in a way for much of the miseries or limitations which afflicted the earth-life that went before. Those personal, cultural and ethical higher hopes which crossed the skyline of their horizon on earth but which were denied realization, now find quick and easy fulfillment. The secret of this glorious existence is now a familiar one: the creativeness of thought working on a level where it can play largely unhindered.~~

79. What the spirit passes through in any of the after-death states is largely determined by the general tendency or habit-energy of what it thought, believed, desired and understood during its earthlife. There is no reason why anyone should not have his glorious picnics in paradise if he wants to. A dreamer may have them, so why not a disincarnate spirit? The after-death state enables man to realize for a limited time his dominant longing. His thoughts and affections will inevitably gravitate to the mental sphere most in accord with them-

80. "Sometimes my navigation (out-of-body travel) wasn't as good as I would like it to be. We finally broke through a haze into a cleared area. This was my intended stopping point. To the right, the surf of a white-capped blue ocean crashed regularly against a rocky shore. Overhead the sky was a lighter blue with no clouds. In front a simple log cabin, and behind the house rose a forested mountain. It could be either Maine or California, but it wasn't. It wasn't anything.

(Hey, why are we stopping?)BB cut in.

(Ident Charlie. A friend of mine)

He did, and I knew what was happening. All I was perceiving suddenly came into BB, the ocean, the shore, cabin, sky, and mountain. He flickered.(We back on earth?)

I smoothed. No, Charlie made it.

BB blanked.(Charlie made it?)

(He likes to be reminded of his favorite physical place so he made a copy.)

(He can do that?)

(It's like a rote, almost)

The door of the cabin opened, and Charlie came out. He was his usual shoet, round-bodied, round-faced self and wearing his usual plaid shirt.

Monroe pp195-5

The Asiatic philosophers have flippantly said that if cows have a heaven it will be full of green grass and if dogs go to heaven it will be full of white bones. This is understandable when we realize that the death-world is such a subjective one and so largely evolved out of the individual's own imagination. Hence a devout sincere Muhammadan who expected that he would find himself in a heaven with all the pleasures promised him in the Quran, might well do so—but not for eternity as he wrongly believes. For just as he had to wake out of his earthly dreams each morning when alive, so the hour must inescapably come when he will have to wake out of his paradisaical ones also. Then he will ruefully realize that the whole experience, prolonged though it be, was created by his mind. There is always an end to the dreaming sleep of earthly life and correspondingly there is always an end to the dreaming activity of spirit life. Even though he meets his beloved ones again in the

after-death state, it will only be to separate eventually a second time. Nature is inexorable. Therefore it is wiser to win the understanding that enduring union with others exists only finding the enduring self.

81. The passage from this intermediate state to the next one, which is that of pure blissful dreamless sleep, is marked by a swoon similar to but without the agonizing features of the swoon which marks the passage from physical life to the spirit-world. The spirit now enters and dwells in a condition which is equivalent to what it formerly knew as deep slumber. Here it finds a merciful rest from the burden of personal consciousness, an utter oblivion of the self-centered memories, joys and pains, which have inevitably accompanied it hitherto upon its earthly and unearthly existences. The peace and refreshment which the man found intermittently for a few hours at a time in physical life during the night he now finds again for a long uninterrupted period.
82. The postmortem period may roughly be divided into three stages. The first is a stage where the dream-life is immersed in the darker side of personal existence and ignoble desire; the second is a stage where the dream-life is immersed in the brighter and nobler side of such existence; whilst the third is an entirely dreamless and unconscious rest. Thus the spirit passes successively through the phases of misery, happiness and that which transcends both. Most individuals skip the first stage, however, and start their spirit-career intermittently conscious in an unexciting neutral zone.
- ~~83. A question commonly asked is whether it is possible to communicate with spirits either through home seances or through sittings with professional mediums. The answer is that under abnormal conditions we may succeed in doing so. But in most cases it is unlikely that the communicants will be the spirits of those whom we believe them to be. Both sitter and medium are usually ignorant of the working of the deeper layers of their own minds, an ignorance which often causes them to ascribe to a spirit words and visions which emanate from themselves alone.~~
- ~~84. It has earlier been explained that Nature keeps a perfect record of everything that transpires in her wide domain. Where a medium is genuinely sensitive to telepathic emanations she may glean scraps of personal identity, description and history from the cosmic mental record and then pass them to her client in all sincerity as a definite message from a spirit, when it is really nothing of the kind. Again, even if a successful contact with a spirit is established the message will naturally and necessarily be 'interpreted by the medium in terms of her ordinary physical space-time perceptions and the belief that accurate expression of the communication is taking place will then be an illusory one.~~
- ~~85. But the most serious drawback is that there exists a sort of noman's land, a psychologically criminal belt which surrounds this earth and contains the most degraded creatures, devoid alike of conscience and truth. Strange evil entities walk these borderlands of the dead. Nature has very sensibly put a curtain between us and the after-world and whoever meddles imprudently with it does so at his peril. That lying and malignant spirits lurk behind this curtain is a fact admitted even by spiritualists themselves. Most attempts, therefore, to look behind it are attempts to look for trouble.~~
- ~~86. Modern spiritualism has rendered great service to mankind in convincing many people of the truth of survival and in consoling the bereaved but the public would be safer in being content with studying its literature for, generally speaking, it is a field of research which should be left to a few carefully selected mediums and a few prudent investigators who are sufficiently trained in scientific methods and yoga technique to work competently and safely in such a deceptive and dangerous field. There have been in the past a few earnest devoted and excellent Spiritualists who have broken the hard crust of materialism for many people and deserve every credit for doing so and there are living today a few Spiritualists whom we personally esteem for similar reasons, but their number is swamped by the multitude who have merely~~

substituted a subtler form of materialism or who have ignorantly opened doors for lying spirits to come out of their lurking places or who have deceived themselves by attributing to outside sources manifestations from the underground part of their own consciousness.

87. By the grace of the Overself or by the force of great love genuine communication is sometimes effected through a medium and does bring great comfort to a bereaved person. But whoever is so bereaved as to feel the overwhelming need of entering into such communication, despite the warnings here given, should remember that the only reliable method in the end is to enter it for oneself. It is also the only satisfying method because it involves one's own personal experience, not something got at second hand. And this can be done only in the stillness of mental quiet or in the vision of dream. The first demands some progress in meditation whilst the second demands the practice of a certain pre-sleep exercise which is given in "The Fifth Meditation" in Chapter XIV. A pure love or a powerful spiritual affinity between a disincarnate person and an embodied one can break through from the spirit world to our own or vice versa. Truly a deep noble affection between two persons conquers the chasm set up by death and brings not only loving thoughts from the spirit to the receptive consciousness of the living person, not only a sense of its personal presence to a sensitive mind, but in times of danger may also bring by spontaneous reaction a protective gesture which may effectually help to ward it off. It is no idle saying that love conquers all things for at the very base of the universe there is this wonderful unifying power. But such communication can in the nature of things be possible only for a limited period. Any attempt to make it a lifelong practice is to ask too much from Nature and will lead to undesirable consequences.
88. The newly arrived spirit will see his old home, city and family but he will not know that they are figures and scenes constructed by his own mind. They will not be the actual figures and scenes of the physical world. For communication therewith will now be as unnatural and unusual as it was from the earth side before his death. Hence a change in the selective space-time level changes the whole universe for the experiencing being. Just as living men are not ordinarily aware of the dead, so the dead are not ordinarily aware of the living. But just as the living may and sometimes do see a genuine apparition of the dead or intuit a genuine communication from the dead, so the reverse may also happen.
89. It was pointed out in *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga* that man's space and time senses were expanding. But that is only half the story. For these senses are also contracting. Man is exploring minute worlds which are as unbelievably tiny as the macrocosmic worlds are unbelievably vast. He has to measure the lightning swift rapidity of light's motion as he has to calculate the immense age of the universe. His thought has indeed to run up and down the scale when he tries to comprehend his environment, to such extraordinary extremes that his whole conception of time and space has to become equally elastic. From this it is easy to see that there are countless possible strata of mental existence, all of which must be relatively real to the conscious beings who dwell within them. Hence if our idea of 'here' and 'now' were to change then the particular world which hinges on it would necessarily change too. Time and space are elastic. They will differ to different beings in different planes. There is no fixed space and no fixed time. We are never conscious of them but only of our own space or time perceptions, which are variables. The mathematical theory of relativity has shown that different kinds of space are conceivable but the mentalistic theory of relativity shows why they must be conceivable. Consequently those who teach that the innumerable hosts of spirits are continuously in touch with and observant of our own physical world, teach what cannot possibly occur in Nature's scheme of things. For when, refusing to keep company with credulity, we understand mentalism we understand too that time and space are the forms under which we cannot help perceiving the world. The different kinds of living creatures have different kinds of space-time perceptions. If such differences exist between the living creatures confined to our physical world, how much more must they exist between them and the so-called dead creatures of what is an entirely different world? Each creature can only possess experience in relation to its own particular level of space-time perceptions. To assert that

~~all the millions of inhabitants of the spirit world are co-conscious with us of this physical world, is to assert what is metaphysically impossible. The belief that thousands of ghostly eyes are constantly prying into his private existence may be welcome to a naive and humourless person but must be repugnant to a sophisticated one.~~

- ~~90. All general descriptions of the next world which give the contrary impression are inaccurate merely because they are descriptions made from outside, as when a medium sometimes succeeds in passing on a communicating spirit's account of its experience. The spirit does not usually understand that its world is a dream world and the medium certainly does not even consider the notion. Each spirit will have its own private world just as each dreamer may be said to have his own too. Consequently there may be as many million spirit worlds as there are spirits. We can therefore describe with conscientious accuracy only the psychological condition of the spirit, not its particular environment. Whoever has followed carefully the foregoing explanation will understand why it is impossible to give in detail a genuinely scientific account of everything that happens to an individual spirit. We can no more ordinarily do so than we can cross the silent shore of sleep and describe what dreams other human beings are having. All that can be done here, if the reader is not to be misled as most people usually are misled when reading descriptions which purport to describe postmortem life, is to provide an outline of the general psychological condition in which the spirit finds itself and the general destiny which faces all spirits at the end of a certain period.~~
91. The master key to understanding the psychological experience of death is to keep in view its identity with dream or sleep. Mind is immortal. It remains untouched despite the body's dissolution. We have no more reason to fear its death when the body is destroyed than we have to fear its death when we retire to sleep at night. Sleep affects the body but leaves the mind as active as ever in dream or as potentially active as ever in deep sleep. Death works upon the human being in a somewhat similar manner and the experiences which come to the soul after the flesh has terminated its living existence are nothing else than prolonged vivid dreams or unconscious deep sleep. If we can touch and see things and people without the help of the flesh during dream, we shall certainly be able to do the same during so-called death. And if we can take a benign rest from all the fret and agitation of personal existence at a later and deeper stage of sleep, we shall certainly be able to enjoy the same rest at a later and deeper stage of death. That in us which can survive dream and sleep in the earth-world will like wise survive them in the after-world. Why then should any of us fear? If however we insist on believing that we must eventually perish which means that we insist on identifying ourself with the body thought rather than its Thinker, then we must accept the fear and suffering which come with wrong thinking.

The Magus of Strovolos

Kyriacos C. Markides

From Death to Rebirth

One after another Daskalos' students arrived, a total of about twenty-five, ranging in age from twenty-five to seventy and evenly representing the sexes. Like the Nicosia circle, they came from the more educated segments of society. Daskalos arrived last, along with Kostas, who drove from Limassol to attend the meeting. Iacovos and Kostas regularly attended all the lectures that Daskalos offered at various parts of the island. They would always sit next to their master as if to offer emotional support during the lesson.

Before the formal meeting began Daskalos sat in the living room, had coffee and cracked a few jokes.

He then moved to another room and had private conversations with some of those in attendance. Daskalos was not only a teacher to these people, but also a confessor and advisor for their personal problems.

After everybody had gathered in a larger room, Kostas lit within a container some incense, the type used in Greek churches. Daskalos stood up and everyone followed suit. He held high the container with the burning incense and with it made the sign of the cross. He then recited a short prayer. 'We will spend the period today,' Daskalos said after he completed the short prayer, 'reexamining some issues concerning the psychonoetic worlds. I have noticed that some of you have many questions about the nature of these realms. You may proceed with your questions. Father Yohannan is ready to answer them.'

Kostas, who was sitting on Daskalos' left side, served as moderator. The first question from the audience was sweeping. 'What happens to a person from the moment of his death to the moment of reincarnation?' Kostas repeated the question so that everyone would hear it clearly.

Daskalos began to answer by first giving a definition of death and by explaining the transformation of the selfconscious personality after death.

'We have said before that the gross material body cannot maintain itself without its corresponding etheric-double. Death, therefore, means the separation and disintegration of the etheric-double from the gross material body. Normally it takes forty days for the dissolution of the etheric-double of a deceased person. It is for this reason that in our religion a candle is lit for forty days over the grave of the dead. Fire accelerates the process of dissolution of the etheric-double.'

Daskalos pointed out that the etheric-double of a dead person is highly malleable and can be snatched by a black sorcerer who can use it for evil purposes. The custom in India, therefore, of burning the bodies of the dead is preferable.

'Ordinary people assume that death is a frightful and painful experience. In reality it is the opposite. The process of death is no different than a pleasant sleep after the exhaustion from a day's work. One may suffer from a serious illness but at the moment of death no pain is experienced. A great mystic once said, "Never have human lips tasted a sweeter kiss than the one given by the angel of death." I know this from personal experience. The moment a person begins to abandon his body his face acquires a serene stillness and he no longer experiences any pain.

'An individual will, after death, begin to live fully conscious within one of the subplanes of the psychonoetic world, carrying along with him his virtues and vices, his goals and his aspirations. His personality undergoes no change. Only the reality of space changes. The individual enters into a situation where space as we know it in the gross material plane does not exist. He perceives space as meaning, as conception.'

Daskalos' last remarks provoked several questions for clarification. 'Suppose,' he went on, 'I bring you into this room while you are asleep and give you a certain lesson. You will have the impression of the space as you have at this moment. When you see me the next day you will probably tell me, "Daskale, we came to the Stoa, and each one of us sat at the spot of our preference." The question I pose to you is the following. Will you have really come to this room to listen to my talk? In the state you will be in anybody living within the psychic world, regardless of distance, may be able to hear the same lesson through coordination. In the psychic world we are like television stations that others can tune into and receive whatever we monitor. When we leave our bodies, either through death or through exomatosi, we actually enter within ourselves. Communication, then, as well as all other experiences, takes place from within. Everything is there. Some time ago our master mentioned to us a great truth. "The abyss within us," he said, "is in no way less than the abyss without."

'Perhaps it will be easier to understand what I have been saying if I offer you the following concrete case. Three brothers in their wish to communicate with their father decided to carry out a psychic experiment after his death. One of them was in Australia, one in London, and the third in America. Working through three different powerful mediums they managed to contact their father

simultaneously. They wanted to bring their father "down" they said. They actually assumed that their father was somewhere "up." He talked to them about certain family matters that none of them was aware of and which later they confirmed to be true. They reached the conclusion, however, that it was not their father they conversed with, but the devil. How could it be their father, they reasoned, since they were at three different spots on the planet while communicating with him at the same time? They assumed that their father was in a similar condition after death as that of the material world.

'They came to Cyprus and through me contacted their father again. He reassured them that it was he who had spoken to them earlier. "I did not pay attention to your surroundings but I did speak to all three of you. I even touched you," he told them. "How could you do that, Father, since we were so far away from each other?" his three sons asked.

'I warned them that had they persisted in doubting him they could create confusion in his mind. Just because he was on the other side did not mean that he had transcended the phenomenal reality. I reassured them that it was not the devil's doing but that it was indeed their father who talked to them. I pointed out that in the psychic realm communication takes place through vibrations at similar frequencies. "Let us suppose," I told them, "that I have several powerful radios that can get any station anywhere on the planet. Now, if I place these radios at different parts of the Earth and then tune them in to the same frequency, would not all of them receive the same broadcasting?"

Communication on the psychic plane is something analogous. No human consciousness will ever be mixed up and be confused with another. Ever since the discovery of radio and television it is much easier for ordinary human beings to understand the nature of the psychic worlds.

'You must realize that the planes and subplanes of the psychic and noetic worlds occupy the same space. And this space is the center of the Earth, everywhere on the planet, the periphery of the planet and the space around the planet. Do not imagine that these psychonoetic planes and subplanes are juxtaposed one on top of the other. At this very moment inside the head of a pin, in this space and everywhere there exist all the planes and subplanes of the psychonoetic worlds. It is a state of being, of vibrations and a method of tuning into them.

'Within the psychic world you, as a self-conscious personality, will be wherever you choose to focus your attention. That is why whenever you see a vivid dream and you perceive yourself moving instantly over vast distances, you conclude that such experiences are unreal, that they are illusions. They are not. When, some day, you find yourself in the psychic world, you will realize that those worlds are more concrete than gross matter. You will begin to live with greater intensity with greater ease. Yet the world that you will find yourself in will be in many ways similar to the one you now know. It is a matter of your ability of receiving impressions and psychonoetic vibrations. On the basis of your interests and predispositions, you will enter after death into an analogous psychic state. You will find yourselves in a hell, a purgatory or a paradise, the same one you are in right now at this very moment.

'There is, however, one important difference between the material and the psychic realms. When we find ourselves in the psychic environment, feelings acquire a greater intensity. For "ample, feelings. of hatred and jealousy can become like fire that burns. In this life such sentiments can be tempered by the limitations of the material brain. On the psychic plane limits do not exist. That is why in the psychic worlds life is experienced with such intensity. But you should never assume that the so-called hells are some kind of psychic torture chambers. The hells and purgatories are schools and workshops for the acquisition of experiences so that human entities may ascend towards their perfection. In reality there is no punishment. There is only experience. If there is suffering it is not because the Absolute wishes to punish us for our transgressions but so that we can find out who we really are. The purpose of such experiences is to help us shake off our illusions and ignorance.

'Hell and paradise are relative terms. One person's hell may be another person's paradise. To help someone in the psychic plane move out of his hell, for example, you must show him an alternative condition to the one he is in. If he was a querulous person during his life on Earth, he will find himself

in a similar situation after he leaves his body. To help him you will have to expose him to the immediately better condition that he can move into. If he is not receptive to your suggestions, let him remain where he is. He lives in his paradise even though it may be the most tortuous hell. Let me give you an example. I have tried to help someone who during his life was a gambler and a very quarrelsome person. He died from tuberculosis forty-five years ago. He has been living in the psychic world exactly the same way as he did when he was in the gross material plane. He has created with others the same environment analogous to the one they knew on Earth; dirty windows, dirty clothes and tables, fights, arguments, just like the environment of the coffee houses they knew before. They did not even have the imagination to build them any better. One day I said to him, "Come, my friend, let's go somewhere." I took him away from his situation and created the vibrations of a Beethoven symphony that I like very much, specifically that of joy. I told him. "Charilae," that was his name, "look!" And I showed him a beautiful forest, with colors, water, flowers, everything. I harmonized the sounds with the sights and created for him what I considered to be a paradise. He gazed at me for some time and then he said, "Aren't you tired? Let's go back and play some poker with my friends. How long are you going to keep me here listening to these tin drums of yours?" What could I tell him? He lived in his paradise which for me was an intolerable hell. How could I explain to that man the difference between hell and paradise?

'Here is another case. A peevish woman spent her entire life accusing, gossiping and cursing her neighbors. When she died she continued the same kind of life, only more intensely. Instead of the real human beings she left behind, she created and quarreled with their elementals which she brought along with her; the elementals of Maria, of Eleni, of Eferbe. We tried in vain to show her that she lived in a hell and that she ought to dissolve those elementals so that she could see more clearly. Only after she is exhausted from her condition will she voluntarily ask for change. Those of you who will one day become invisible helpers will encounter such difficulties. You must know that unless a person seeks change himself you cannot help him. Each person will develop gradually. The most we can do under such circumstances is to create a benign elemental and place it on the aura of the person to work. When he is ready for change, that elemental will be there to assist him., 'Daskale,' I asked, 'do the psychonoetic planes and subplanes have an objective existence independent of the individual's subjective perception of them?'

'I have said before that the psychic worlds have trees, mountains, oceans, rivers, everything that exists on the planet, everything that has ever existed and everything that can exist. What you consider as the real world is actually the shadow or the reflection of other more luminous worlds within which everything material that is considered real exists. In the various planes and subplanes of the psychic worlds there exist not only whatever exists on this planet which was created by archangelic forces, such as water, mountains, forests, but also whatever humans have created either while they are still alive or after they depart. The psychic world is a much richer world. However, most persons who live there perceive it through the elementals; that they themselves create. In the psychic worlds, for example, there is no sun that rises and sets every day, unless we create one ourselves. But the sun we create will be within our individual subjective psychic world, not the external one. Therefore, when a human being abandons his gross material body, he begins to live simultaneously within two planes of existence, the real psychic plane and his own subjective psychic world. Most human beings are so engrossed within their own subjective shell that they are unaware of the nature of the psychic plane within which they vibrate. It is as if, for example, we are on a journey but because of our passions and psychic turmoil, we are oblivious to the beauty of the countryside outside. And let me say something that may seem blasphemous. On the basis of my own personal experience what may be considered an intolerable hell is, in reality, a most beautiful space, assuming that you can coordinate your consciousness with the real psychic plane. It is our predisposition that will let us or prevent us from perceiving that beauty.' Daskalos went on to say that the evolution of the Researcher of Truth implies the development of the ability to distinguish between

the real psychic world and the subjective psychic environment that people build around them with the elementals they bring along when they enter there. What is ugly in these psychonoetic planes is what each individual hides within his subjective shell, his own psychic world, which gives him vibrations of evil, hatred and vulgarity.

'Where is this shell?' someone interjected.

'You mean in terms of space? Again, everywhere and nowhere. But a person who constructs his own shell and lives in it, perceives it as having clear limits within which he is confined and is allowed to act. People build their villages, their churches, their fields, just as they had them on the gross material plane. We can enter into their psychic shells when we coordinate ourselves with them and understand how they perceive their psychic world from within.'

On a different occasion Iacovos had mentioned to me that he regularly meets with his grandfather who died several years back. His grandfather, he said, is still preoccupied with the same concerns as when he was alive. He looks after his citrus orchard, cultivates it, sells the fruit and worries about the rainfall!

'In the lower levels of the psychic world that we call hells and purgatories there is less light than in the higher planes. Divine Mercy places within beautiful landscapes those vibrations of light that make these subplanes equivalent to convalescent homes. It is similar to what we normally do when we attend to the needs of an ailing person. We keep the windows shut and the room dimly lit so that the nervous system of the patient may calm down. In a comparable manner the Absolute dressed all those magnificent landscapes of the lower psychic planes within a twilight. It is an appropriate environment for those sickly personalities who find themselves there so that they can recuperate and evolve. As we move from the lower planes towards the higher, we observe that there is increasingly more light in a similar manner to the way that a landscape is illumined as the Sun rises over the horizon. Paradises, which are the higher psychonoetic planes, are swimming in light of vibrating intensity.

'Notice,' Daskalos continued, 'that a key attribute of the psychic world is that every atom of matter emanates its own light. It is unlike the three-dimensional world where light comes from a Sun or some artificial source.'

Daskalos' last remark brought to mind Castaneda's description of an experience he had during his apprenticeship with Don Juan. Castaneda claimed that one moonless night while walking in the desert with Don Juan, having difficulty in moving about because of the darkness, he suddenly perceived the entire landscape lighting up as if the Sun had come out. He could see, he said, everything clearly and could walk forward, as if it were daytime, with great ease. In addition, he said, he was able to carry on a dialogue with a coyote that happened to be there. Did Castaneda, I wondered, enter at that moment into a state of what Daskalos would have called the psychic counterpart of that place? When I posed the question to him later on, he said that probably this is what must have happened.

'Let me now ask you this question,' Daskalos went on. 'Can one communicate with a flower or a plant? Ordinary people, no matter how much they may love plants and flowers, cannot consciously communicate with them. They appear as objects to them, outside of themselves. A poet may be inspired by the beauty of a flower, but can he incorporate into his consciousness the semi-consciousness of the flower? In the psychic world it is very different. When you advance you will be able to communicate with all forms of life. All things are alive and have their own language, vibrations, and luminosity that you can feel on your psychic body.

'In the psychic world,' Daskalos said further, 'we do not think with our brains. We have them but we do not need them. Every cell of the psychic body is a center of consciousness receiving impressions. We have eyes but we do not need them for the same reason. Within the psychic world there is no separation between us and an object outside of us. When we coordinate ourselves and focus on something we are simultaneously one with that object. We are within it and around it. But we can do

this assuming that we are in fact within the real psychic world and not within our shells which create for us our own psychic world. Under these conditions we color everything through our preconceptions and impressions.'

Responding to someone's query on the nature of movement within the psychic planes Daskalos went on to say that it is radically different from the way we are accustomed to moving on Earth. 'We do not move by walking, taking buses or driving. But we can perceive ourselves and others as walking or driving. This is only a perception, and an illusory one at that. When we are outside our bodies and we move here and there within the psychic world and the etheric of the gross material world, we may have the feeling that we are flying. Sometimes in your dreams you have this sensation. Have you ever wondered how this is possible? Are we birds that can fly? In the psychic world movement can take place instantly. It is a matter of transporting our consciousness through coordination. We can be in London, for example, in a split second without having to "fly" over Europe. Some day you will learn how to transport your consciousness over vast distances instantly while you are still within a gross material plane.'

'Can you tell us how this is done?' I asked.

'I can tell you but it will not mean anything to you at this stage. You have to create in your mind the image of the place you want to go to, live intensely within that image, hold it in your mind without distraction, coordinate yourself with that place, then you will be there. And if at that moment there happens to be a clairvoyant at the place where you transported your consciousness, he will be able to see you. When you develop further you may be able to actually materialize yourself at that place and be seen by people who do not have clairvoyant abilities.'

'When you do that,' I probed further, 'what happens to your material body?'

'Again it depends on how advanced a master you are. Your body may be in a state of deep sleep. But one can reach a point at which he can do all that while at the same time being fully awake. With time you can develop a superconscious selfawareness and be at several spots of the Earth fully conscious and focused.'

I confessed that I had a hard time understanding what he was talking about. To be at several places at the same time!

'These are difficult issues,' Daskalos proceeded, 'but your question was such that I had to give you a general answer. Do not torment yourself for the time being. These are great truths that are very difficult for you to understand because you are familiar with conditions within time and space.'

Daskalos then mentioned that the worlds of 'separateness' are the poorest kinds even though they give us the greatest paradises and the greatest hells. 'The worlds of separateness include not only the material world but also the psychic and the noetic. These are worlds of forms, images, impressions. We call them worlds of separateness because one sees oneself as a separate entity which gets impressions and interprets them. It is something other than the real self. There are, however, other worlds where separateness is transcended. There are, for example, the higher noetic worlds, the worlds of ideas - laws that are beyond concrete thought forms. There is also the world of eternal light, of the seven heavens. We have talked of only three, the gross material, the psychic, and the noetic. Beyond that there is what our religion calls the kingdom of heaven which is within us.'

These lessons,' Daskalos proceeded slowly after pausing for a few seconds, 'were given by the Most Beloved One to his disciples under the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane. He taught them exomatism, materialization, dematerialization, and many other secrets. In the essence of Christianity there are no barriers to knowledge even though black-robed priests have imposed limits and restrictions. We, as Researchers of Truth, want to know through reason, inquiry and concentration. We take seriously Christ's admonition, "And the Truth shall make you free." This is why Christ-came to this world, to give us a few lessons and show us the road away from the hells that we find ourselves in, and to lead us to His paradise, and ours. Unfortunately very few men have learned from His teachings.'

Daskalos stopped his monologue and waited a few seconds for further questions. He then stressed once more that the psychic planes are schools where human beings enter to receive the necessary lessons and draw appropriate conclusions based on their experiences on Earth. 'The individual will then move to higher, more luminous planes, and after he reaches a certain point he will be ordered by the great masters of Karma to return to Earth in order to receive further lessons. In short, the psychic planes are resting homes for the self-conscious personality until the new school year begins. Unless of course one flunks the exams and has to repeat the year all over again.' With these remarks Daskalos laughed heartily and everyone else joined him.

'Is it possible to enter a lower class?' someone joked.

'Never. It is possible to remain in the same class where one becomes a more experienced student. A self-conscious entity will incarnate within an environment analogous with other kindred spirits that vibrate on the same frequency. People call it heredity. There is no such thing. Instead of heredity I would say there is the omniscience of the Absolute which brings together those that must be brought together in order to advance together towards love. Hatred, in reality, does not exist. It is an illusion based on ignorance. Of course these issues require deep contemplation and study.'

'Does the soul know its destiny and the experiences that it will acquire from a future incarnation?' a black-dad middleaged woman asked.

'Not in detail. Subconsciously, however, the permanent selfconscious soul knows. But it does not bring this knowledge to the conscious level of the present personality. For example, a little child touches fire and bums his finger. He will forget the detail of the accident but when he is near fire again he will pull his hand away. It is not necessary to remember the details of his earlier experience.

'Should we assume, therefore, that the experiences acquired in a given incarnation are predetermined?'

'No. The self-conscious soul knows only possibilities and probabilities. 'My present personality has freedom of action. Otherwise human beings would be nothing more than robots. How an individual pays off his debts is his own choice. It is as if at this very moment I am ordered to embark on a vessel headed for New York. My destination is preordained. The kind of life I lead on the boat is my own concern. What is predetermined is my destination, New York.'

Then everything is based on a Divine Plan,' the woman insisted.

'The Divine Plan means birth and death, that is all,' Daskalos said in a loud severe voice betraying impatience. 'Everything else is your affair. Let us not misunderstand this question and assume that what happens to us is unavoidable. Otherwise we become absurd fatalists and we cease to be Researchers of Truth. What is predetermined is that you descend to be born, complete a life cycle, and then die. This you cannot avoid. Everything else within life is based on what you bring from previous lives and how you choose in the present life to develop or express it.

'I repeat, what is predetermined is our descent into matter after passing for the first time through the Idea of Man. "Men, through repeated incarnations, our destiny is to return to where we came from. This is the general law of incarnations. One descends into matter with the ultimate aim of ascending back to the source. How long it will take you to do that is your problem.'

'Why is it necessary for a soul to incarnate and then return?' I asked.

'To realize, perhaps, who one is and acquire self-consciousness

'Are you saying that inside the Holy Monad there is no selfconsciousness?'

'There is, but one does not recognize it. Let me give you a simple example. Suppose you were born into a luminous room and I asked you, "Do you know what light is?" Do you think you would know? On the other hand if I turn the lights off or take you outside the luminous space you will be able to know what light is. As eternal entities we do not become something which we are not already.

However, my permanent selfconscious personality, which is the sum total of all the incarnations that I go through, develops around my eternal beingness my distinct individuality. Beingness and

individuality are not identical. I exist even before I pass through the Idea of Man. Once I do pass through and acquire the experiences of gross matter, I am in a position to realize that I exist. Therefore, what we pin is individuality within beingness. We become conscious of our beingness. Had this not been the ultimate goal, descent into gross matter, followed by the incarnational cycles, would be pointless. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Christ cryptically revealed to Mankind the purpose of its existence.

'Christ narrates how one of two sons decided to leave the palace of his father. He asked for his share of the wealth so that he might go and experience the world. Had it not been part of the Divine Plan, the all-wise father could have refused. But the plan was to let him go, suffer hardships, acquire knowledge and then return. The son was given what he asked, in reality reason, sentiment and a material body, that is, his present personality. He took his share and went off. Some may call the departure from the palace and descent into matter a fall or sin. I choose to call it experience. In this new condition the son abused his inheritance and consequently was transformed into a swineherd. In reality he created elementals, pastured them and nourished himself with the same food, that is, with the lowest expression of the mind. The pigs in the parable symbolize the elementals that men create ceaselessly.

'One day he rebelled and questioned the life he was leading among the pigs, that is, within the world of elementals. He decided to return to his father's palace where even the servants were so blissful. He asked, "Father, I have sinned. Make me one of your servants." The son took one step forward, the father took ten. Where is the punishment? Have you noticed any reproach or punishment in the parable? The father opened his arms, embraced his son and brought him back into the palace. Instead of punishment he rewarded him by placing on his finger a ring, that is, the symbol 'of eternity. Life is movement. When we move on the ring in any direction, we cannot stop. There is no beginning and no end. There is only eternal movement, symbolizing eternity. The other brother who never left the palace lives in the eternal present. He is not aware of eternity. Man, on the other hand, through the experiences of the swineherd, has tasted time as past, present and future. The father, according to the parable, ornamented the Prodigal Son with the costume of his brother, that is the Prodigal Son lost nothing of what he had had. The father then killed the fatted calf, a symbol of the material body. The other son protested. "What have you done for me who has been loyal to you all along?" But that son, the archangel, never entered inside a material body. "Everything I have is yours, my son," the father responded. I am asking you now, who is in a better position) The archangel who never stepped outside of the palace, who is good but knows nothing else? Or the Prodigal Son who returned and has whatever the other brother has plus self-awareness? Consider it as an axiom that in Theosis (return to the palace), the condition of man is much superior to all the archangelic systems. Therefore, in the final analysis there is no eternal punishment. There is only the acquisition of experience within matter that develops for us our self-consciousness. In the words of Saint Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

When Daskalos ended his analysis of Christ's parable, there were further questions from the audience about reincarnation, a topic of apparently great interest to those in attendance. Someone raised the issue of population increase and reincarnation. He wanted to know where the new souls come from. Daskalos replied briefly that there is continued communication between the noetic, psychic and gross material level. Humans who are born now may come from other dimensions of existence. Those who die move to these other universes. We should not consider this a problem, he said, since we know how a first incarnation takes place. That is, by the passage through the Idea of Man of an emanation springing from a Holy Monad. This is an eternal and continuous process. 'How long does a human being stay within the psychic worlds before he reincarnates again?' I asked. 'The Rosicrucians claim one hundred and forty-four years. Others say fifty years, some others five hundred. Still others insist that it takes one thousand years before one is reborn. I say nonsense. There is no fixed time. It is a personal matter. I know of a mystic, for example, who stayed within the

psychic world for only ten months before he reincarnated.'

'Who decides,' someone asked, 'when one will return to Earth?'

Daskalos replied that after a period of time within the psychic world, when the individual has assimilated the experiences of the previous life, he will reach a point when the appetite for more experiences on Earth will be rekindled. The person then will search for a kindred spirit to have him incarnated. Daskalos mentioned that a clairvoyant can see the spirit of the entity to be incarnated attached either to the aura of the prospective father or mother, awaiting the opportunity to be conceived. It often oscillates between the auras of the father and mother.

'Are you suggesting, Daskale,' I probed, 'that when you are on the psychic level you will voluntarily search around to find someone to incarnate you?'

'Naturally.'

'But I thought that these matters were determined by the Masters in charge of incarnations?'

'The Masters will shut you up with others in a pen. Then it will be up to you to find a house to enter. Suppose that through the centuries you established close relationships with forty or fifty persons whose aura is like yours. You love them, they love you. They could make you their child. Wherever you can accommodate yourself you can enter. There are beings that are so dense that whenever they are herded together they will find one another. But there are those who come together blindly, because like attracts like. Do you understand now what is happening? Suppose we have a basket like a sieve, full of holes of different sizes. When we pour various objects through and shake them well, those that are bigger than a given hole will stay on top, others will pass through. Those which remain will try to find another hole to pass through. It is possible that there may be fifty similar holes through which an object can pass. Which one it will choose does not matter. It is possible that great love between individuals which developed through the centuries will create strong magnetic attractions so that two souls will pass through the same hole. This process of incarnation is a very complex matter that requires careful study.'

'It seems from what you are saying that to an extent it is up to you to find the appropriate hole so that you can pass through,' I added.

'Of course, with the understanding that Karma will permit you to do so. The choice is given to you to decide to pass through wherever you can fit. Pay attention to this point. From all the thousands of holes, you can pass through from, say, only two hundred. It is natural that I will pass through a hole of the two hundred that is nearest to me during the shaking of the sieve, a hole through which I can fit, for which I have similarities, where the vibrations are alike, the Karma is alike.'

'But the hole you have chosen may create problems for you I began to say.

That is a different issue. We certainly do have problems. But the vibrations fit. We have to pay our debts together. We cannot avoid the problems. The Divine Plan is similar. All the incarnations that I have studied show that the Law works mercilessly. You cannot transcend it. Why do we fit? We fit in terms of give and take. We may have certain unfinished tasks from the past that must come forward in order to torment us so that we can evolve. Or to torment others involuntarily in order for others, as well as ourselves, to evolve. You may say, for example, "What do I have in common with this parent who is depressing and oppressing me?" Or if you are a parent, "Why did he have to come into our family and tyrannize us, such nice people that we are?" Do you understand now? It is the give and take within Karma. It is also possible for the Masters of Karma to take hold of someone and place him at the right hole because it may be better for the person to pay his debts that way. Now how these four Masters of Karma work, I do not know.'

Tour?'

'They are the Masters of the four elements. They are eternal archangelic entities, laws. They are a certain class of Michael, a certain class of Raphael, a certain class of Ouriel and a class of Siamael. The Siamael are those who give us the meaning of Evil. Through them we have Satan. All four

cooperate in terms of where an individual will go to incarnate. They weave his psychonoetic body. It is very difficult for us to understand how they work through the cells, through magnetism, through energy. It is a complex question how a being becomes entrapped in this whirlpool which brings him down to Earth.'

'What rational arguments can you offer in support of reincarnation and what proof do you have that it is not an illusion but a reality?' I probed further.

'First, there are historical and religious arguments that, although not proofs in themselves, support the idea of reincarnation. Second, there are cases that clearly show that reincarnation is a reality and not fantasy. And the third and best proof of the reality of reincarnation for an individual is when he awakens to the memories of past lives. But let us take one argument at a time.

'In our world a great number of people, if not the majority, accept reincarnation as a fact of life. In most of the religions of the planet reincarnation is either clearly stated or implied. In the esoteric traditions of Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism reincarnation is taken for granted. For those who understand Islam, I mean the Sufis, reincarnation is also a reality. In Christianity, too, reincarnation is implied. In the Eastern religions, of course, the idea of reincarnation is much more easily accepted because in these religions there is more direct contact with the psychic spheres. Unlike Western societies, there is a continuous contact in the East with the departed and of entities living within other dimensions. Therefore they are more aware of the reality of these dimensions. In Christianity reincarnation was widely accepted until the fathers of the Church removed it from the scriptures.'

Daskalos went on to elaborate that the idea of eternal damnation is a cruel and tyrannical doctrine cooked up by the priests to terrorize the faithful into submission. A person now had only one chance to attain the kingdom of God and could do so only by submitting to the authority of the Church and the clergy.

'This doctrine is both foolish and an insult to the "most merciful God" that the priests eulogize in their churches. We know that even Orthodox Christians accepted reincarnation. We can find these ideas in the works of Origen and many others. In the New Testament itself, of the things that survived the censorship of the clergy, we hear Jesus Himself asking his disciples, "Who do men say is the son of man?" And they reply, "Elias or one of the prophets that came from the dead," that is, reincarnation. Christ could have told them that "What you are talking about is nonsense, there is no such thing." Instead He responded that indeed it was Elias but they did not recognize him. They asked John the Baptist whether he was Elias. He replied very correctly, "I am not Elias. Now I am John." "And who are you?" they asked. "I am a voice crying in the wilderness," that is, a situation similar to the one in which Elias found himself, in the desert. We can observe in John the Baptist the characteristics of Elias, with the same virtues and the same weaknesses.

'And what about Paul's epistle to the Corinthians when he said that "Your sons have preceded you."? Does that not imply the idea of reincarnation? However, there is better evidence about the reality of reincarnation than resorting to the Scriptures. Is it not proof when a child suddenly begins to speak a foreign language fluently without any prior training? Furthermore, is it not proof when he claims that he was a certain person whose relatives have been located? There are many such well documented cases.

'An even more powerful evidence for a Researcher of Truth is when he finally manages to enter into his subconscious and becomes aware of his own past lives. Believe me there is no greater proof than this.'

'Why don't we all remember our past lives?' someone asked.

'You do not remember for your own sake. It is part of Divine Mercy so that you will have a chance to progress in your path without remaining attached to old habits and desires. Suppose, for example, that an individual in his present life is a good missionary. He has reached a certain point in his evolution where alcohol no longer poses a problem for him as it did in previous incarnations. Within Universal Memory, however, the alcoholic part of him is alive. If such memories reawaken in him in

his present incarnation, he may regress to his old habit and become an alcoholic again. Christ Himself made the point when he said that whoever puts his hands to the plow should look forward at the furrow to be created rather than focusing his gaze on the one already plowed.'

'Daskale, when you say that the alcoholic part is still alive, are you suggesting that it exists as an elemental? And is it possible for a master to make contact with such an elemental?' I said.

'Whatever has been imprinted on the Universal Mind will always exist. Suppose, for example, I wish to contact a master who lived four thousand years ago, let us say he lived in Egypt as Rasadat. Since that time the entity that manifested as Rasadat has incarnated over twenty-five times. Is Rasadat at this moment alive or is he a dead entity? Both Rasadat, as well as all his other incarnations, are alive within the Universal Memory. Subconsciously we are linked to all our incarnations and whatever incarnation we bring to consciousness is a living entity. Rasadat is alive because the entity that emanated him is alive. Socrates may have incarnated many times. Perhaps he is alive today in another body, in a different culture, with a different name. It is possible, however, to bring up Socrates from the pool of Universal Memory and even semi-materialize him in front of us and converse with him irrespective of the fact that today the entity that incarnated as Socrates may be in another body.'

'Is it possible,' I asked, 'that Socrates would act and talk in the same way as the entity who was once Socrates but is presently somebody else?'

'No. You must bear in mind that Socrates within the Universal Memory is a living elemental and not a human being. The self-consciousness that was Socrates is no longer there. If I bring Socrates and converse with him, he will have the intelligence and knowledge of the Socrates of that period. He will not be able to offer more *than Socrates knew his life.

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"The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob is not a God of the dead but of the living," said Christ. How many do you think understood what He meant? He was not talking of the self-conscious soul of the patriarchs, but of the then self-conscious personalities.'

'Daskale,' I persisted, 'who can awaken the elemental of a past incarnation?'

'Either the person himself or a master. However, masters as a rule are reluctant to tell you of your past lives lest they awaken in you old weaknesses and habits.'

Daskalos then explained that it is possible for a master to read one's past lives like pages from a book. He can do so by 'coordinating' his consciousness with the elemental of a person's past life and experience the sentiments and thoughts of that elemental. Unless past incarnations are still alive, such a feat would be impossible. 'The pages in our book of incarnations are not dead leaves but living elementals,' Daskalos said.

'When, then, can we have memories of past lives without a disturbance on the present self-conscious personality?' I asked.

'Each Researcher of Truth will learn the way slowly and patiently. At first we will feel our past incarnations intuitively until full memory is recovered. The memories will come as the present self-conscious personality is more closely in atunement with the permanent personality. Then, like good actors, we will be able to remember the roles we have performed. The Earth is the theater within which every one of us plays his various roles in order to learn and progress towards perfection. When we look back without being disturbed at what we see, it is time and safe to remember. Before we can safely remember, we must first transcend the idea of Good and Evil. In the meantime Divine Mercy has shut the door of past memories in order to give us a chance to proceed in our path without the interference of past imperfections and weaknesses.'

'You said that our past incarnations are living elementals within the Universal Memory. If so is it also possible to contact a past incarnation-elemental and effect changes on its behavior?'

'Let me answer your question by telling you of a personal experience in this life. A few months ago I wanted to observe myself giving a talk in the psychic world. I remember my Master (Yohannan) saying to me, "You shall give a talk and yet it will not be you." So I withdrew, sat back, so to speak,

and listened to my talk. As I was observing myself I detected certain mistakes I made. The Master brought to me, with mathematical precision, the elemental of myself as I had given the talk in the psychic world months in the past. It was like a recording of myself on a video tape. Could I intervene and make corrections at the moment I realized my errors? No. I did not have the right or power to add or subtract anything. At that moment I was simply coordinated with the one who was giving the lesson, the elemental of myself. I relived the lesson as an observer. Someone other than myself could have listened to the same talk had he coordinated himself with that elemental.

'It is possible, however, that I can create a new elemental of myself and make the appropriate corrections. This is different. But whatever has been imprinted cannot be erased, and what is imprinted is alive. Perhaps this could offer us an explanation of the meaning of hell and paradise. An elemental of myself may exist in a hell of its own making which can affect and tyrannize the present personality when the latter has not transcended its past problems. That is again the reason why Divine Mercy has shut the door towards the past, so that we will not be adversely influenced from the life of ourselves as elementals which we have left behind in a hell or a paradise. However, we should keep in mind that the present personality is always linked through the law of Karma to the living shadows of its past.

'The subject you have raised today,' Daskalos concluded, 'is inexhaustible. I hope our discussion has given you some basic ideas on the nature of the psychonoetic worlds.'

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