

Philosophic Encyclopedia

One of the glories of the Christian religion is its promise of eternal life. For those whose inquiring minds seek beyond a blind faith in this promise, Esoteric Christianity offers the comfort of logical and satisfying details concerning the Spirit's activities after the physical body is discarded.

Introduction

Most people have an instinctive interest in what happens after death of the physical body, though ideas about it vary infinitely. Unfortunately, even many professed Christians are quite fearful about death and look forward to it with dread. This is a great mistake and a hindrance to the individual, for his fearsome thoughts affect detrimentally the value to him of what actually does take place.

That there is a definite, wonderful life for the Spirit after it is released from its physical body is no longer a matter of blind faith. There are many people who have become sufficiently clairvoyant to observe conditions on the other side of the "veil" and thus to resolve any doubt previously held about this vital manner. As a matter of fact, humanity in general is slowly developing etheric vision, so that in the approaching Aquarian Age knowledge

concerning conditions in the land of the living dead will be as available as it is now concerning foreign countries here on Earth.

Life on earth is only one phase of a recurring evolutionary cycle which we all undergo, experiencing and learning in our physical bodies on Earth, then leaving the physical plane to assimilate the essence of what we have learned, rebuild our bodies, rest, and return to Earth to repeat the cycle. The work done by man in the higher worlds is many-sided, and in a sense more far reaching than his work on Earth. His life there is not in the least an inactive, dreamy, or illusory existence. It is a time of the greatest and most important activity in preparing for the next life, as sleep is an active preparation for the work of the next day.

Among those who have developed their clairvoyant faculties in a positive manner, i.e., under control of their will, and can observe accurately what goes on in the invisible worlds, was Max Heindel, an Initiate of the Rosicrucian Order. In his book, [The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception](#), he describes in some detail what happens at the time of passing and afterward between Earth lives in the higher worlds. Most of the following is taken verbatim from this most enlightening volume.

The Passing

Man, the individualized, indwelling Spirit, is a complex being. He possesses not only a dense, physical body, which he uses here in this world to fetch and carry, and which many think of as the whole man, but also a vital body made of ether, which permeates the visible body and is the instrument for specializing the energy of the Sun. In addition, he possesses a desire body, his emotional nature, which pervades both the dense and vital bodies, and extends about sixteen inches outside the visible body. Then there

is the mind, which is a mirror, reflecting the outer world and enabling the Spirit or Ego to transmit its commands as thought and word, and to compel action.

During life on Earth man builds and sows, until the moment of death arrives. Then the seed-time and the periods of growth and ripening are past. The harvest time has come, when the skeleton specter of Death arrives with his scythe and hour-glass. That is an apt symbol. The skeleton symbolizes the relatively permanent part of the body. The scythe represents the fact that this permanent part, which is about to be harvested by the Spirit, is the fruitage of the life now drawing to a close. The hour-glass in his hand indicates that the hour does not strike until the full course has been run in harmony with unvarying laws.

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When that moment arrives a separation of the vehicles takes place. As his life in the Physical World is ended for the time being, it is not necessary for man to retain the dense body. The vital body, also belonging to the Physical World, is withdrawn by way of the head, leaving the dense body inanimate.

The higher vehicles—vital body, desire body, and mind—are seen (by the clairvoyant) to leave the dense body with a spiral movement, taking with them the soul of one dense atom—not the atom itself, but the forces that played through it. The results of the experiences passed through in the dense body during the life just ended have been impressed upon this particular atom. While all the other atoms of the dense body have been renewed from time to time, this permanent atom has remained. It has remained stable, not only through one life, but it has been a part of every dense body ever used by that particular Ego. It is withdrawn at

death only to re-awaken at the dawn of another physical life, to serve again as the nucleus around which is built the new dense body to be used by the same Ego. It is therefore called the "seed-atom." During life the seed-atom is situated in the left ventricle of the heart, near the apex. At death it rises to the brain by way of the pneumogastric nerve, leaving the dense body, together with the higher vehicles, by way of the sutures between the parietal and occipital bones (the Sagittal suture).

When the higher vehicles have left the dense body they are still connected with it by a slender, glistening, silvery cord, shaped much like two figure sixes reversed, one upright and one horizontally placed, the two connected at the extremities of the hooks.

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the foundation, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." ([Eccles. 12:6-7.](#))

(See Diagram below as shown in [The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception](#).)

THE SILVER CORD

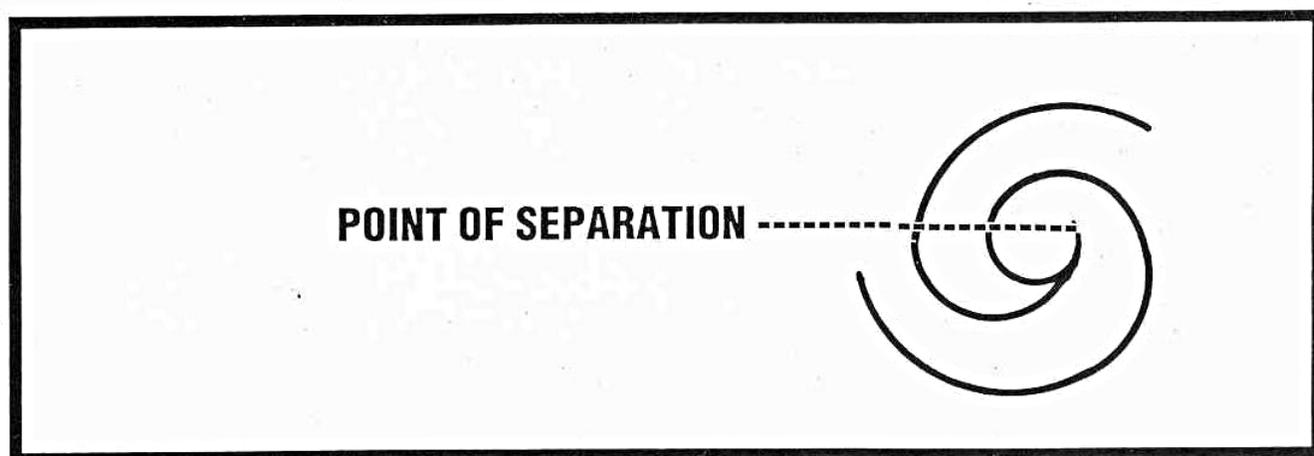


DIAGRAM 5A

One end is fastened to the heart by means of the seed-atom, and it is the rupture of the seed-atom which causes the heart to stop. The cord itself is not snapped until the panorama of the past life, contained in the vital body, has been reviewed.

Care should be taken, however, not to cremate or embalm the body until at least three days after death, for while the vital body is with the higher vehicles, and they are still connected with the dense body by means of the silver cord, any post-mortem examination or other injury to the dense body will be felt, in a measure, by the man. Cremation should be particularly avoided in the first three days after death, because it tends to disintegrate the vital body, which should be kept intact until the panorama of the past life has been etched into the desire body.

The silver cord snaps at the point where the sixes unite, half remaining with the dense body and the other half with the higher vehicles. From the time the cord snaps the dense body is quite dead.

When the silver cord is loosened in the heart, and man has been released from his dense body, a moment of the highest importance comes to the Ego. It cannot be too seriously impressed upon the relatives of a dying person that it is a great crime against the departing Spirit to give expression to loud grief and lamentation, for it is just then engaged in a matter of supreme importance, and a great deal of the value of the past life depends upon how much attention the Spirit can give to this matter. This will be made clearer when we come to the description of man's life in the Desire World.

It is also a crime against the dying to administer stimulants which have the effect of forcing the higher vehicles back into the dense

body with a jerk, thus imparting a great shock to the man. It is no torture to pass out, but it is torture to be dragged back to endure further suffering. Some who have passed out have told investigators that they had, in that way, been kept dying for hours and had prayed that their relatives would cease their mistaken kindness and let them die.

The Life Panorama

When the Ego is freed from the dense body, which was the heaviest clog upon his spiritual power (like a heavy mitten upon the hand of a musician), his spiritual power comes back in some measure, and he is able to read the pictures in the negative pole of the reflecting ether of his vital body, which is the seat of the subconscious memory.

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The whole of his past life passes before his sight like a panorama, the events being presented in reverse order. The incidents of the days immediately preceding death come first and so on back through manhood or womanhood to youth, childhood, and infancy. Everything is remembered.

The man stands as a spectator before this panorama of his past life. He sees the pictures as they pass, and they impress themselves upon his higher vehicles, but he has no feeling about them at this time. That is reserved until the time when he enters the Desire World, which is the world of feeling and emotion. At present he is only in the Etheric Region of the Physical World.

This panorama lasts from a few hours to several days, depending upon the length of time the man could keep awake, if necessary. Some people can keep awake only twelve hours, or even less;

others can do so, upon occasion, for a number of days, but as long as the man can remain awake, this panorama lasts.

This feature of life after death is similar to that which takes place when one is drowning or falling from a height. In such cases the vital body also leaves the dense body and the man sees his life in a flash, because he loses consciousness at once. Of course the silver cord is not broken, or there could be no resuscitation.

When the endurance of the vital body has reached its limit, it collapses. During physical life, when the Ego controls its vehicles, this collapse terminates the waking hours; after death the collapse of the vital body terminates the panorama and forces the man to withdraw into the Desire World. The silver cord breaks at the point where the "sixes" unite (see [Diagram 5a](#) in page 8), and the same division is made as during sleep, but with this important difference, that though the vital body returns to the dense body, it no longer interpenetrates it, but simply hovers over it. It remains floating over the grave, decaying synchronously with the dense vehicle. Hence, to the trained clairvoyant, a graveyard is a nauseating sight, and if only more people could see it as he does, little argument would be necessary to induce them to change from the present unsanitary method of disposing of the dead to the more rational method of cremation, which restores the elements to their primordial condition without the objectionable features incident to the process of slow decay.

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In leaving the vital body the process is much the same as when the dense body is discarded. The life forces of one atom (of the vital body) are taken, to be used as a nucleus for the vital body of a future embodiment. Thus, upon his entrance into the Desire

World the man has the seed-atoms of the dense and vital bodies, in addition to the desire body and the mind.

The Desire World

Purgatory: If the dying man could leave all his desires behind, the desire body would very quickly fall away from him, leaving him free to proceed into the heaven world, but that is not generally the case. Most people, especially if they die in the prime of life, have many ties and much interest in life on Earth. They have not altered their desires because they have lost their physical bodies. In fact, often their desires are augmented by a very intense longing to return. This acts in such a manner as to bind them to the Desire World in a very unpleasant way, although unfortunately, they do not realize it. On the other hand, old and decrepit persons and those who are weakened by long illness and are tired of life, pass on very quickly.

The matter may be illustrated by the ease with which the seed falls out of the ripe fruit, no particle of the flesh clinging to it, while in the unripe fruit the seed clings to the flesh with the greatest tenacity. Thus it is especially hard for people to die who are taken out of their bodies by "accident" while at the height of their physical health and strength, engaged in numerous ways in the activities of physical life; held by the ties of wife, family, relatives, friends, pursuits of business and pleasure.

As long as the man entertains the desires connected with Earth life he must stay in his desire body, and as the progress of the individual requires that he pass on to higher regions, the existence in the Desire World must necessarily become purgative, tending to purify him from his binding desires. How this is done is best seen by taking some radical instances.

The miser who loved his gold in Earth life loves it just as dearly after death; but in the first place he cannot acquire any more, because he has no longer a dense body wherewith to grasp it and worst of all, he cannot even keep what he hoarded during life. He will, perhaps, go and sit by his safe and watch the cherished gold or bonds; but the heirs appear and with, it may be, a stinging jeer as the "stingy old fool" (whom they do not see, but who both sees and hears them), will open his safe, and though he may throw himself over his gold to protect it, they will put their hands through him, neither knowing nor caring that he is there, and will then proceed to spend his hoard, while he suffers in sorrow and impotent rage.

He will suffer keenly, his sufferings all the more terrible on account of being entirely mental, because the dense body dulls even suffering to some extent. In the Desire World, however, these sufferings have full sway and the man suffers until he learns that gold may be a curse. Thus he gradually becomes contented with his lot and at last is freed from his desire body and is ready to go on.

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It is possible, of course, to avoid this problem in the after-life by disposing of material possessions while yet incarnate on Earth. If we use judgment, when we see that we have lived our lives to the end of usefulness, we may say: Here are things that I have no more use for, and I know I am getting towards the end; where can I do the most good with them, who will enjoy them most, or whom can I help to establish in business so he can do something for himself?

The same thing is true with regard to the affections; we should hold ourselves in check so that we do not love anybody with an inordinate love—such love as that which makes idols of others and puts them before everything else. If we thus get ourselves free from all earthly ties so we are ready to go, then we cannot be kept earthbound.

The drunkard is another case in point. He is just as fond of intoxicants after death as before. It is not the dense body that craves drink. The dense body is made sick by alcohol and would rather be without it. It vainly protests in different ways, but the desire body of the drunkard craves the drink and forces the dense body to take it, that the desire body may have the sensation of pleasure resulting from the increased vibration. That desire remains after the death of the dense body, but the drunkard has in his desire body neither mouth to drink nor stomach to contain physical liquor. He may and does get into saloons, where he interpolates his body into the bodies of the drinkers to get a little of their vibrations by induction, but that is too weak to give him much satisfaction. He may and also does sometimes get inside a whiskey cask, but that is of no avail either, for there are in the cask no such fumes as are generated in the digestive organs of a tippler. It has no effect upon him and he is like a man in an open boat on the ocean, "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink;" consequently, he suffers intensely. In time, however, he learns the uselessness of longing for drink, which he cannot obtain. As with so many of our desires in the Earth life, all desires in the Desire World die for want of opportunity to gratify them. When the drunkard has been purged, he is ready, so far as this habit is concerned, to leave this state of "Purgatory" and ascend into the heaven world.

Thus we see that it is not an avenging Deity that makes Purgatory of Hell for us, but our own individual evil habits and acts. According to the intensity of our desires will be the time and suffering entailed in their expurgation. In the cases mentioned it would have been no suffering to the drunkard to lose his worldly possessions. If he had any, he did not cling to them. Neither would it have caused the miser any pain to have been deprived of intoxicants. It is safe to say that he would not have cared if there were not a drop of liquor in the world. But he did care about his gold, and the drunkard cared about his drink, so the unerring law gave to each that which was needed to purge him of his unhallowed desires and evil habits.

This is the law that is symbolized in the scythe of the reaper, Death; the law that says "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It is the Law of Cause and Effect, which rules all things in the three worlds, in every realm of Nature—physical, moral, and mental. Everywhere it works inexorably, adjusting all things, restoring the equilibrium wherever even the slightest action has brought about a disturbance, as all action must. The result may be manifest immediately or it may be delayed for years or for lives, but sometime, somewhere, just and equal retribution will be made. The student should particularly note that its work is absolutely impersonal. There is in the universe neither reward nor punishment. All is the result of invariable law. This is the Law of Consequence.

In the Desire World it operates in purging man of the baser desires and the correction of the weakness and vices which hinder his progress, by making him suffer in the manner best adapted to that purpose. If he has made others suffer, or has dealt unjustly with them, he will be made to suffer in that identical way. Be it noted, however, that if a person has been subject to vices, or has done

wrong to others, but has overcome his vices, or repented and, as far as possible, made right the wrong done, such repentance, reform, and restitution, have purged him of those special vices and evil acts. The equilibrium has been restored and the lesson learned during that embodiment, and therefore will not be a cause of suffering after death.

A word must be said here about the suicide, who tries to get away from life only to find that he is as much alive as ever. His is the most pitiable plight. He is able to watch those whom he has, perhaps, disgraced by his act, and worst of all, he has an unspeakable feeling of being "hollowed out." The part in the ovoid aura where the dense body used to be is empty, and although the desire body has taken the form of the discarded dense body, it feels like an empty shell, because the creative archetype of the body in the Region of Concrete Thought persists as an empty mold, so to speak, as long as the dense body should properly have lived. The archetype—the "model" of each Ego's dense body, around which the body takes shape—is made of mind-stuff and set to vibrating for a previously determined period of time. When a person meets a natural death, even in the prime of life, the activity of the archetype ceases, and the desire body adjusts itself so as to occupy the whole of the form. In the case of the suicide, however, that awful feeling of "emptiness" remains until the time comes when, in the natural course of events, his death would have occurred. The impression of this particularly unpleasant experience remains with the Ego, and is instrumental in preventing him from falling prey to the temptation of suicide in future lives.

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In the Desire World life is lived about three times as rapidly as in the Physical World. A man who has lived to be fifty years of age in

the Physical World would live through the same life events in the Desire World in about sixteen years. This is, of course, only a general gauge. There are persons who remain in the Desire World much longer than their term of physical life. Others again, who have led lives with few gross desires, pass through in a much shorter period, but the measure given above is very nearly correct for the average man of the present day.

It will be remembered that as the man leaves the dense body at death, his past life passes before him in pictures; but at that time he has no feeling concerning them.

During his life in the Desire World also these life pictures roll backward, as before; but now the man has all the feeling it is possible for him to have as, one by one, the scenes pass before him. Every incident in his past life is now lived over again. When he comes to a point where he has injured someone, he himself feels the pain as the injured person felt it. He lives through all the sorrow and suffering he has caused to others and learns just how painful is the hurt and how hard to bear is the sorrow he has caused. In addition there is the fact already mentioned before that the suffering is much keener because he has no dense body to dull the pain. Perhaps that is why the speed of life there is tripled—that the suffering may lose in duration what it gains in sharpness. Nature's measures are wonderfully just and true.

Nature, which is God in manifestation, always aims at the conservation of energy, attaining the greatest results with the least expenditure of force and the least waste of energy. If we study the effect of change in the Physical World, we shall learn something of its consequence in the realm above us. A person who is here suffering acutely for a short time usually feels pain very intensely; whereas those who suffer for years in succession,

though the pain which is inflicted upon them may be as severe, do not seem to feel the suffering in the same measure. They have, as it were, grown used thereto, and their frame has in a certain sense become emaciated and adjusted to pain; hence suffering is not felt as keenly as by the person in the first case.

It is similar in the purgatorial existence. When a person has been very hard and harsh in life, when he has thought nothing of the feelings of others, when he has inflicted severe pain here, there, and everywhere on whatever occasion offered, we shall find that his suffering in Purgatory will be very severe, intensified of course by the fact that the purgatorial experience is shorter than the life lived upon Earth; but the pain is intensified in proportion. Now, therefore, it is evident that if his experience were continuous, if the pain engendered by one act were followed immediately by the next, much of the effect of the suffering would be lost upon the Spirit because it would not feel its full intensity. Therefore, the experiences, as it were, come to him in waves so that there is a period of respite after each period of suffering in order that the full intensity of the next may be felt.

The motive in this is for a greater good, for Nature, or God, never seeks to revenge or avenge any wrong, but only to teach those who permit themselves to do wrong not to repeat the act by giving the wrong doer exactly pain for pain. The tendency in a future life is to cause him to respect the feelings of others and so be merciful to all the world. Thus the very highest intensity in pain is necessary for the conservation of energy, and to make him good and pure sooner than would be the case if the pain were continuous and the suffering correspondingly lessened.

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Another characteristic peculiar to this phase of post-mortem existence is intimately connected with the fact that distance is almost annihilated in the Desire World. When a man dies, he at once seems to swell out in his vital body; he appears to himself to grow into immense proportions. This feeling is due to the fact, not that the body really grows, but that the perceptive faculties receive so many impressions from various sources, all seeming to be close at hand. The same is true of the desire body. The man seems to be present with all the people with whom on Earth he had relations of a nature which require correction. If he has injured one man in San Francisco and another in New York, he will feel as if part of him were in each place. This gives him a peculiar feeling of being cut to pieces.

The student will now understand the importance of the panorama of the past life during the purgative existence where this panorama is realized in definite feelings. If it lasted long and the man was undisturbed, the full, deep, clear impression etched into the desire body would make life in the Desire World more vivid and conscious and the purgation more thorough than if, because of distress at the loud outbursts of grief on the part of his relatives, at the death bed and during the three-day period previously mentioned, the man had only a vague impression of his past life. The Spirit which has etched a deep, clear record into its desire body will realize the mistakes of the past life so much more clearly and definitely than if the pictures were blurred on account of the individual's attention being riveted by the suffering and grief around him. His feeling concerning the things which cause his present suffering in the Desire World will be much more definite if they are drawn from a distinct panoramic impression than if the duration of the process were short.

This sharp, clear-cut feeling is of immense value in future lives. It stamps upon the seed-atom of the desire body an ineffaceable impression of itself. The experiences will be forgotten in succeeding lives, but the feeling remains. When opportunities occur to repeat the error in later lives, this feeling will speak to us clearly and unmistakably. It is the "still, small voice" which warns us, though we do not know why; but the clearer and more definite the panoramas of past lives have been, the oftener, and clearer shall we hear this voice. Thus we see how important it is that we leave the passing Spirit in absolute quietness after death. By so doing we help it to reap the greatest possible benefit from the life just ended and to avoid perpetuating the same mistakes in future lives, while our selfish, hysterical lamentations may deprive it of much of the value of the life it has just concluded.

The mission of Purgatory is to eradicate the injurious habits by making their gratification impossible. The individual suffers exactly as he has made others suffer through his dishonesty, cruelty, intolerance, or what not. Because of this suffering he learns to act kindly, honestly, and with forbearance toward others in the future. Thus, in consequence of this beneficent state, man learns virtue and right action. When he is reborn he is free from evil habits, at least every evil act committed is one of free will. The tendencies to repeat the evil of past lives remains, for we must learn to do right consciously and of our own will. Upon occasion these tendencies tempt us, thereby affording us an opportunity of ranging ourselves on the side of mercy and virtue as against vice and cruelty. But to indicate right action and to help us resist the snares and wiles of temptation, we have the feeling resulting from the expurgation of evil habits and the expiation of wrong acts of past lives. If we heed that feeling and abstain from the particular evil involved, the temptation will cease. We have freed ourselves from it for all

times. If we yield we shall experience keener suffering than before until at last we have learned to live by the Golden Rule, because the way of the transgressor is hard. Even then we have not reached the ultimate. To do good to others because we want them to do good to us is essentially selfish. In time we must learn to do good regardless of how we are treated by others; as Christ Jesus said, we must love even our enemies.

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There is an inestimable benefit in knowing about the method and object of this purgation, because we are thus enabled to forestall it by living our Purgatory here and now day by day, thus advancing much faster than would otherwise be possible. The exercise of Retrospection is given in the latter part of [The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception](#), the object of which is purification as an aid to the development of spiritual sight. It consists of thinking over the happening of the day after retiring at night. We review each incident of the day, in reverse order, taking particular note of the moral aspect, considering whether we acted rightly or wrongly in each particular case regarding actions, mental attitude, and habits. By thus judging ourselves day by day, endeavoring to correct mistakes and wrong actions, we shall materially shorten or perhaps even eliminate the necessity for Purgatory and be able to pass to the First Heaven directly after death. If in this manner we consciously overcome our weaknesses, we also make a very material advance in the school of evolution. Even if we fail to correct our actions, we derive an immense benefit from judging ourselves, thereby generating aspirations toward good, which in time will surely bear fruit in right action.

In reviewing the day's happenings and blaming ourselves for wrong, we should not forget to approve impersonally of the good

we have done and determine to do still better. In this way we enhance the good by approval as much as we abjure the evil by blame.

Repentance is also a powerful factor in shortening the purgatorial existence, for Nature never wastes effort in useless processes. When we realize the wrong of certain habits or acts in our past life, and determine to eradicate the habit and to redress the wrong committed, we are expunging the pictures of them from the subconscious memory and they will not be there to judge us after death. Even though we are not able to make restitution for a wrong, the sincerity of our regret will suffice. Nature does not aim to "get even," or to take revenge. Recompense to our victim may be given in other ways.

Much progress ordinarily reserved for future lives will be made by the man who thus takes time by the forelock, judging himself and eradicating vice by reforming his character. This practice is earnestly recommended.

Egos dwelling in the Desire World find it possible to mold desire-stuff by thought, in any manner desired. For instance, they can form whatever articles of clothing they might wish. They usually think of themselves as being dressed in the conventional garb of the country in which they lived prior to their passing into the Desire World, and therefore they appear so clothed without any particular effort of thought. But when they desire to obtain something new or an unusual article of clothing, naturally they have to use their will power to bring that thing into existence; and such an article of clothing will last as long as the person thinks of himself as being clad in that apparel.

This amenability of desire-stuff to the molding power of thought is also used in other directions. Generally speaking, when a person leaves the present world in consequence of an accident, he thinks of himself as being disfigured by that accident in a certain manner, perhaps minus a leg or arm or with a hole in the head. This does not inconvenience him at all; he can move about there just as easily without arms or legs as with them, but it shows the tendency of thought to shape the desire body. At the beginning of World War I, when great numbers of soldiers passed over into the Desire World with lesions of the most horrible nature, the Elder Brothers of the Rosicrucian Order and their pupils taught these men that by merely holding the thought that they were sound of limb and body, they would at once be healed of their disfiguring wounds. This they immediately did. Now all newcomers, when they are able to understand matters over there, are at once healed of their wounds and amputations in this manner, so that to look at them nobody would think they has passed over in consequence of an accident in the Physical World.

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Another evidence of the readiness with which desire-stuff is molded by thought is where many people on Earth think along similar lines. In such cases their thoughts mass themselves and form one grand whole.

Thus, in the lower regions of the Desire World, the thoughts of people who believe in a fiery, furnace-like Hell make of the desire-stuff there such a place of torture. There we may see devils with horns, hoofs, and tails, prodding the unhappy sinners with pitchforks, and often when people pass out at death, after having lived in that belief, they are in a sad state of fear on beholding this place which they have helped to create. There is also in the higher

regions of the Desire World a New Jerusalem with pearly gates, with a sea of glass and its great white throne upon which is seated a thought-form of God, created by these people and appearing like an old man. This is a permanent feature of the Desire World, and will remain so as long as people continue to think of the New Jerusalem in that way. These forms have no life apart from the sustained thoughts of mankind, and in time when humanity has outgrown that faith, the city created by their thoughts will cease to exist.

The Borderland: Purgatory occupies the three lower Regions of the Desire World. The First Heaven is in the three upper Regions. The central Region is a sort of borderland—neither heaven nor hell. In this Region we find people who are honest and upright; who wronged no one, but were deeply immersed in business and thought nothing of the higher life. For them the Desire World is a state of indescribable monotony. There is no "business" in that world, nor is there, for a man of that kind, anything that will take its place. He has a very hard time until he learns to think of higher things than ledgers and drafts. The men who thought of the problem of life and came to the conclusion that "death ends it all," who denied the existence of things outside the material sense world—these men also feel this dreadful monotony. They had expected annihilation of consciousness, but instead of that they find themselves with an augmented perception of persons and things about them. They had been accustomed to denying these things so vehemently that they often fancy the Desire World an hallucination, and may frequently be heard exclaiming in the deepest despair, "When will it end? When will it end?"

Such people are really in a pitiable state. They are generally beyond the reach of any help whatever and suffer much longer than almost anyone else. Besides, they have scarcely any life in

the heaven world, where the building of bodies for future use is taught, so they put all their crystallizing thoughts into whatsoever body they build for a future life. Thus a body is built that has the hardening tendencies we see, for instance, in consumption. Sometimes the suffering incident to such decrepit bodies will turn the thoughts of the entities ensouling them to God, and their evolution can proceed; but in the materialistic mind lies the greatest danger of losing touch with the Spirit and becoming an outcast.

The First Heaven: When the purgatorial existence is over, the purified Spirit rises into the First Heaven, which is located in the three highest Regions of the Desire World, where the results of its sufferings are incorporated in the seed-atom of the desire body, thus imparting to it the quality of right feeling, which acts as an impulse to good and a deterrent from evil in the future. Here the panorama of the past unrolls itself backward, but this time it is the good acts of life that are the basis of feeling. When we come to scenes where we helped others, we realize anew all the joy of helping which was ours at the time, and in addition we feel all the gratitude poured out to us by the recipient of our help. When we come to scenes where we were helped by others, we again feel all the gratitude that we then felt toward our benefactor. Thus we see the importance of appreciating the favors shown us by others, because gratitude makes for soul growth. Our happiness in heaven depends upon the joy we gave others, and the valuation we placed upon what others did for us.

It should be ever borne in mind that the power of giving is not vested chiefly in the monied man. Indiscriminate giving of money may even be an evil. It is well to give money for a purpose we are convinced is good, but service is a thousandfold better. A kind look, expressions of confidence, a sympathetic and loving

helpfulness—these can be given by all regardless of wealth. Moreover, we should particularly endeavor to help the needy one to help himself, whether physically, financially, morally, or mentally, and not cause him to become dependent upon us or others.

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The First Heaven is a place of joy without a single drop of bitterness. The Spirit is beyond the influence of the material, earthly conditions, and assimilates all the good contained in the past life as it lives it over again. Here all ennobling pursuits to which the man aspired are realized in fullest measure. It is a place of rest, and the harder has been the life, the more keenly will the rest be enjoyed. Sickness, sorrow, and pain are unknown qualities. This is the Summerland of the Spiritualists. There the thoughts of the devout Christian have built the New Jerusalem. Beautiful houses, flowers, etc., are the portion of those who aspired to them; they build them themselves by thought from the subtle desire-stuff. Nevertheless, these things are just as real and tangible to them as our material homes are to us. All gain here the satisfaction which Earth life lacked for them.

This heaven is also a place of progression for all who have been studious, artistic, or altruistic. The student and the philosopher have instant access to all the libraries of the world. The painter has endless delight in the ever-changing color combinations. He soon learns that his thought blends and shapes these colors at will. His creations glow and scintillate with a life impossible of attainment to one who works with the dull pigments of Earth. He is, as it were, painting with living, flowing materials and able to execute his designs with a facility which fills his soul with delight.

The poet finds a wonderful inspiration in the pictures and colors which are the chief characteristics of the Desire World. Thence he will draw the materials for use in his next incarnation. In like manner does the author accumulate material and faculty. The philanthropist works out his altruistic plans for the upliftment of man. If he failed in one life, he will see the reason for it in the First Heaven and will there learn how to overcome the obstacles and avoid the errors that made his plan impracticable.

Our life in the First Heaven is always blessed and filled by the presence of those we love, whether relatives or friends. Those who love each other and are, therefore, in a sense, necessary to each other's happiness, are united in a bond of closest friendship during the stay in the First Heaven if they pass out at or near the same time. If one remains in the body for a number of years after the other has passed over, the one who is in the heaven world will, with his or her loving thought, create an image of the other and endow it with life; for we must remember that the Desire World is so constituted that we are able to give bodily shape to whatever we think of. Thus, although this image will only be ensouled by his thought and the thoughts of the other person still living in the physical region, it embodies all the conditions that are necessary to fill the cup of happiness of this inhabitant of the heaven world.

Similarly, when the second person passes on, if the first person is no longer in the First heaven but has progressed on into the Second, the disintegrating desire body in which he or she lived will remain in the First Heaven and seem perfectly real to the second person until his or her life in this realm is ended. It must not be thought that this image is pure illusion, for it is ensouled by the love and friendship sent out by the absent one toward the person of whose heaven they are a part.

Then, when they both pass into the Second and Third Heavens, forgetfulness of the past comes over them, and they may part for one or more lives without loss. But some time, somewhere, they will meet again, and the dynamic force which they have generated in the past by their yearnings for each other will unvaryingly draw them together so that their love may reach its legitimate consummation.

Children in the First Heaven lead a particularly beautiful life. If we could but see them we would quickly cease our grief. When a child dies before the birth of the desire body, which takes place about the fourteenth year, it does not go any higher than the First Heaven, because it is not responsible for its actions, any more than the unborn child is responsible for the pain it causes the mother by turning and twisting in her womb. Therefore the child has no purgatorial existence. That which is not quickened cannot die, hence the desire body of a child, together with the mind, will persist until a new birth, and for that reason such children are very apt to remember their previous life.

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For such children the First Heaven is a waiting-place where they dwell from one to twenty years, until an opportunity for a new birth is offered. Yet it is more than simply a waiting-place, because there is much progress made during this interim.

When a child dies there is always some relative waiting for it, or, failing that, there are people who loved to "mother" children in Earth life who find delight in taking care of a little waif. The extreme plasticity of the desire stuff makes it easy to form the most exquisite **living** toys for the children, and their life is one beautiful play; nevertheless, their instruction is not neglected.

They are formed into classes according to their temperaments, but quite regardless of age. In the Desire World it is easy to give object-lessons concerning the influence of good and evil passions on conduct and happiness. These lessons are indelibly imprinted upon the child's sensitive and emotional desire body, and remain with it after rebirth, so that many a one living a noble life owes much of it to the fact that he was given this training. Often, when a weak Spirit is born, the invisible Leaders who guide our evolution cause it to die in early life that it may have this extra training to fit it for what may perhaps be a hard life. This seems to be the case particularly where the etching on the desire body was weak in consequence of a dying person having been disturbed by the lamentations of his relatives, or because he met death by accident or on the battlefield. He did not, under these circumstances, experience the appropriate intensity of feeling in his post-mortem existence. Therefore, he is caused to be reborn and die in childhood in his next Earth life, so that the loss can be made up. Often the duty of caring for such a child in the heaven life falls to those who are the cause of the anomaly. They are thus afforded a chance to make up for the fault and to learn better. Or perhaps they become the parents of the one they harmed and care for it during the few years that it lives. It does not matter then if they do lament hysterically over its death, because there would be no pictures of any consequence in a child's vital body.

The World Of Thought

The Second Heaven—Region of Concrete Thought: In time a point is reached where the result of the pain and suffering incident to purgation, together with the joy extracted from the good actions of the past life, have been built into the seed-atom of the desire body. Together these constitute what we call conscience, that impelling force which warns us against evil as productive of pain

and inclines us toward good as productive of happiness and joy. Then man leaves his desire body to disintegrate, as he left his dense and vital bodies. He takes with him the forces only of the seed-atom, which are to form the nucleus of future desire bodies, as it was the persistent particle of his past vehicles of feeling.

At last the man, the Ego, the threefold Spirit, enters the Second Heaven. He is clad in the sheath of mind, which contains the three seed-atoms—the quintessence of the three discarded vehicles.

When the man dies and loses his dense and vital bodies, there is the same condition as when one falls asleep. The desire body had no organs ready for use. It is now transformed from an ovoid to a figure resembling the dense body which has been abandoned. We can easily understand that there must be an interval of unconsciousness resembling sleep and then the man awakes in the Desire World. It not infrequently happens, however, that such people are, for a long time, unaware of what has happened to them. They do not realize that they have died. They know that they are able to move and think. It is sometimes even a very hard matter to get them to believe that they are really "dead." They realize that something is different, but that they are not able to understand what it is.

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Not so, however, when the change is made from the First Heaven, which is in the Desire World, to the Second Heaven, which is in the Region of Concrete Thought. Then the man leaves his desire body. He is perfectly conscious. He passes into a great stillness. For the time being everything seems to fade away. He cannot think. No faculty is alive, yet he know that he IS. He has a feeling of standing in "The Great Forever"; of standing utterly alone, yet

unafraid; and his being is filled with a wonderful peace, "which passeth all understanding." In esoteric science this is called The Great Silence.

Then comes the awakening. The Spirit is now in its home world— heaven. Here the first awakening brings to the Spirit the sound of "the music of the spheres." In our Earth life we are so immersed in the little noises and sounds of our limited environment that we are incapable of hearing the music of the marching orbs, but the esoteric scientist hears it. He knows that the twelve signs of the zodiac and the seven planets form the sounding-board and strings of "Apollo's seven-stringed lyre." He knows that were a single discord to mar the celestial harmony from that grand Instrument there would be "a wreck of matter and a crash of worlds. Celestial music is a fact and not a mere figure of speech. Pythagoras was not romancing when he spoke of the music of the sphere, for each one of the heavenly orbs has its definite tone, and together they sound the celestial symphony which Goethe also mentions in the prologue to his Faust.

Echoes of that heavenly music reach us even here in the Physical World. They are our most precious possession, even though they are as elusive as a will-o-the-wisp, and cannot be permanently created here as can other works of art such as a statue or a book. The World of Thought, however, where the Second and Third Heavens are located, is the sphere of tone, and the musician here finally reaches the place where his art will express itself to the fullest extent.

The power of rhythmic vibration is well known to all who have given the subject even the least study. For instance, soldiers are commanded to break step when crossing a bridge, otherwise their rhythmic tramp would shatter the strongest structure. The Bible

story of the sounding of the ram's horn while marching around the walls of the city of Jericho is not nonsensical in the eyes of the esotericist. (Joshua 6:13-20; Hebrews 11:30). In some cases similar things have happened without the world smiling in supercilious incredulity. A few years ago a band of musicians were practicing in a garden close to the very solid wall of an old castle. There occurred at a certain place in the music a prolonged and very piercing tone. When this note was sounded the wall of the castle suddenly fell. The musicians had struck the keynote of the wall and it was sufficiently prolonged to shatter it.

When it is said that this is the world of tone, it must not be thought that there are no colors. Many people know that there is an intimate connection between color and tone; that when a certain note is struck, a certain color appears simultaneously. So it is also in the heaven world. Color and sound are both present; but the tone is the originator of the color. Hence it is said that this is particularly the world of tone, and it is this tone that builds all forms in the Physical World. The musician can hear certain tones in different parts of Nature, such as the wind in the forest, the breaking of the surf on the beach, the roar of the ocean, and the sounding of many waters. These combined tones make a whole which is the keynote of the Earth—its "tone." As geometrical figures are created by drawing a violin bow over the edge of a glass plate, so the forms we see around us are the crystallized sound-figures of the archetypal forces which play into the archetype in the heaven world.

The life in the Second Heaven is an exceedingly active one, varied in many different ways. The Ego assimilates the fruits of the last Earth life and prepares the environment for a new physical existence. The Second Heaven is the real home of man—the Ego,

the Thinker. Here he dwells for centuries, using the sound or tone which pervades this Region as his instrument, so to speak.

It is this harmonious sound vibration which, as an elixir of life, builds into the threefold Spirit the quintessence of the threefold body, upon which it depends for growth. This spiritualization of the vehicle is accomplished by cultivation, during earthly life, of the faculties of observation, discrimination, memory, devotion to high ideals, prayer, concentration, persistence, and right use of the life forces.

As much of the desire body as the man had worked upon during life by purifying his desires and emotions will be welded into the Human Spirit, thus giving an improved mind in the future. As much of the vital body as the Life Spirit had worked upon, transformed, spiritualized, and thus saved from the decay to which the rest of the vital body is subject, will be amalgamated with the Life Spirit to insure a better vital body and temperament in the succeeding lives. As much of the dense body as the Divine Spirit has saved by right action will be worked into it and will bring better environment and opportunities.

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It is not enough, however, to say that conditions in the forthcoming life on Earth will be determined by conduct and action in the life just ended. It is required that the fruits of the past be worked into the world which is to be the next scene of activity while the Ego is gaining fresh physical experiences and gathering further fruit. Therefore all the denizens of the heaven world work upon the models of the Earth, all of which are in the Region of Concrete Thought. They alter the physical features of the Earth, and bring about the gradual changes which vary its appearance, so

that on each return to physical life a different environment has been prepared, wherein new experiences may be gained. Climate, flora, and fauna are altered by man under the direction of higher Beings. Thus the world is just what we ourselves, individually and collectively, have made it; and it will be what we make it. The esoteric scientist sees in everything that happens a cause of a spiritual nature manifesting itself, not omitting the prevalence and alarmingly increasing frequency of seismic disturbances, which it traces to the materialistic thought of modern science.

Man's work in the heaven world is not confined solely to the alteration of the surface of the Earth which is to be the scene of his future struggles in the subjugation of the Physical World. He is also actively engaged in learning how to build a body which will afford a better means of expression. It is man's destiny to become a Creative Intelligence and he is serving his apprenticeship all the time. During his heaven life he is learning to build all kinds of bodies—the human included.

Man is directed in this work by Teachers from the higher creative Hierarchies, which helped him to build his vehicles before he attained self-consciousness, in the same way he himself now builds his bodies in sleep. During heaven life they teach him consciously. The painter is taught to build an accurate eye, capable of taking in a perfect perspective and of distinguishing colors and shades to a degree inconceivable among those not interested in color and light.

The mathematician has to deal with space, and the faculty for space perception is connected with the delicate adjustment of the three semi-circular canals which are situated inside the ear, each pointing in one of the three dimensions in space. Logical thought

and mathematical ability are in proportion to the accuracy of the adjustment of these semi-circular canals.

Musical ability is also dependent upon the same factor, but, in addition to the necessity for the proper adjustment of the semi-circular canals, the musician requires extreme delicacy of the "fibers of Corti," of which there are about ten thousand in the human ear, each capable of interpreting about twenty-five gradations of tone. In the ears of the majority of people they do not respond to more than from three to ten of the possible gradations, but the master musician requires a greater range to be able to distinguish the different notes and detect the slightest discord in the most complicated chords.

The instrument through which man senses music is the most perfect sense organ in the human body. The eye is not by any means true, but the ear is, in the sense that it hears every sound without distortion, while the eye often distorts what it sees.

In addition to the musical ear, the musician must also learn to build a long, fine hand with slender fingers and sensitive nerves, otherwise he would not be able to reproduce the melodies he hears.

It is a law of Nature that no one can inhabit a more efficient body than he is capable of building. He first learns to build a certain grade of body and afterwards he learns to live in it. In that way he discovers its defects and is taught how to remedy them.

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All men work unconsciously at the building of their bodies during ante-natal life until they have reached the point where the quintessence of former bodies—which they have saved—is to be

built in. Then they work consciously. It will, therefore, be seen that the more a man advances and the more he works on his vehicles, thus making them immortal, the more power he has to build for a new life. The advanced pupil of an esoteric school sometimes commences to build for himself as soon as the work during the first three weeks (which belongs exclusively to the mother) has been completed. When the period of unconscious building has passed the man has a chance to exercise his nascent creative power, and the true original creative process—Epigenesis—begins.

Thus we see that man learns to build his vehicles in the heaven world, and to use them in the Physical World. Nature provides all phases of experience in such a marvelous manner and with such consummate wisdom that as we learn to see deeper and deeper into her secrets we are more and more impressed with our own insignificance and with an ever-growing reverence for God, whose visible symbol is Nature. The more we learn of her wonders, the more we realize that this world system is not the vast perpetual motion machine unthinking people would have us believe. It would be quite as logical to think that if we toss a box of loose type into the air the characters will have arranged themselves into the words of a beautiful poem by the time they reach the ground. The greater the complexity of the plan the greater the argumental weight in favor of the theory of an intelligent Divine Author.

The Third Heaven—Region of Abstract Thought: Having assimilated all the fruits of his last life and altered the appearance of the Earth in such a manner as to afford him the necessary environment for his next step towards perfection; having also learned by work on the bodies of others, to build a suitable body through which to express himself in the Physical World, and having at last resolved the mind into the essence which builds the threefold Spirit, the naked individual Spirit ascends into the higher Region of the World

of Thought—the Third Heaven. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such as one caught up to the third heaven."—[II Cor. 12:2](#) Here by the ineffable harmony of this higher world, it is strengthened for its next dip into matter.

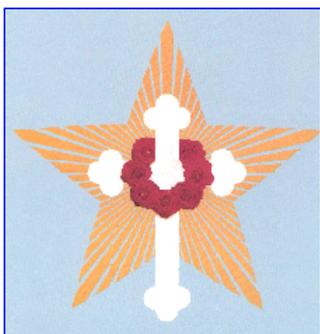
After a time comes the desire for new experience and the contemplation of a new birth. This conjures up a series of pictures before the vision of the Spirit—a panorama of the new life in store for it. But—mark this well—this panorama contains only the principal events. The Spirit has free will as to detail. It is as if a man going to a distant city had a time-limit ticket, with initial choice of route. After he has chosen and begun his journey it is not sure that he can change to another route during the trip. He may stop over in as many places as he wishes, within his time limit, but he cannot go back. Thus as he proceeds on his journey, he becomes more and more limited by his choice. If he has chosen a steam road, using soft coal. He must expect to be soiled and dusty. Had he chosen a road using anthracite or using electricity, he would have been cleaner. So it is with the man in a new life. He may have to live a hard life, but he is free to choose whether he will live it cleanly or wallow in the mire. Other conditions are also within his control, subject to the limits of his past choices and acts.

The pictures in the panorama of the coming life begin at the cradle and end at the grave. This is the opposite direction to that in which they travel in the after-death panorama which passes before the Spirit immediately following its release from the dense body. The reason for this radical difference in the two panoramas is that in the before-birth panorama the object is to show the returning Ego how certain causes or acts always produce certain effects. In the case of the after-death panorama the object is the reverse,

that is, to show how each event in the past life was the effect of some cause further back in the life. Nature, or God, does nothing without a logical reason, and the farther we search the more apparent it becomes to us that Nature is a wise mother, always using the best means to accomplish her ends.

- Reference: [The Passing—And Life Afterward](#), by Max Heindel [1865-1919]
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