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Rays From The Rose Cross Magazine

The Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions & Answers

The Three Kinds of Memory

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Question: If a person has lost his memory through nervous shock or fever, does that affect his vital body and prevent him from getting the record of his life in the three days immediately following death? (Vol. I, #54)

Answer: No. Memory is of three kinds: There is, in the first place, the record which is made by our senses. We look about us in the world, we see and hear things, these impressions are engraven upon the cells of our brain and we are able to consciously call them back—yet not always, but in varying degree, for this memory is extremely unreliable and capricious, and were this the only method of gaining a record of our lives the law of cause and effect would be invalidated—our after life would not be a sequence of what we have done or left undone in the past.

There must be another memory, and this is what scientists have called the subconscious mind. Just as ether carries to the camera of the photographer a record of the surrounding landscape and imprints it upon the sensitive plate to the minutest detail, regardless of whether the photographer observed these details or not, so also does the same ether which carries a picture to our eye

and imprints it upon the retina carry into our lungs a similar picture which then is absorbed by the blood, and as the blood passes through the heart this record is indelibly inscribed upon the sensitive seed atom which is located in the left ventricle of the heart near the apex. The forces of that seed atom are taken out by the spirit at death and contain the record of the whole life to the minutest detail, so that, regardless of whether we have observed the facts in a certain scene or not, they are, nevertheless, there.

George du Maurier has written a story called "Peter Ibbetson," wherein this theory of the subconscious memory is very clearly shown. Peter Ibbetson, a prisoner in an English penitentiary, learned how to "dream true," that is to say, by putting his body in a certain position he learned how to lock the currents of ether within himself so that at night he was able at will to keep in touch with any scene in his past life that he desired to; there he would see himself as a spectator (grown man that he was), and he would also see himself among his parents and playmates and in the environment as he was at the time that scene was enacted. He would see the whole scene with many more details than he had been able to observe at the time when the events took place in this material world. That was because, under these circumstances, he could get in touch with his own subconscious memory. He would have been unable to gain any information concerning the future, but the past had been inscribed upon the tablet of his heart and was, therefore, accessible under the proper conditions. It is from this subconscious memory that the record of life is taken after death, and as that is dependent upon the breath alone, it continues regardless of all other circumstances while life is in the body, and though a man may lose his conscious memory and become unable to recall past events at will, the subconscious

memory contains them all and will give them up at the proper time.

The Consequences of Suicide

Question: Does the person who commits suicide stay longer in Purgatory than the people who die naturally? (Vol I, #58)

Answer: When the Ego is coming down to rebirth it descends through the Second Heaven. There it is helped by the Creative Hierarchies to build the archetype for its coming body, and it instills into that archetype a life that will last for a certain number of years. These archetypes are hollow spaces and they have a singing, vibratory motion which draws the material of the Physical World into them and sets all the atoms in the body to vibrating in tune with a little atom that is in the heart, called the seed atom, which, like a tuning fork, gives the pitch to all the rest of the material in the body. At the time when the full life has been lived on the Earth the vibrations in the archetype cease, the seed atom is withdrawn, the dense body goes to decay and the desire body, wherein the Ego functions in Purgatory and the First Heaven, takes upon itself the shape of the physical body. Then the man commences his work of expiating his evil habits and deeds in Purgatory and assimilating the good of his life in the First Heaven.

The foregoing describes the ordinary conditions when the course of nature is undisturbed, but the case of the suicide is different. He has taken away the seed atom, but the hollow archetype still keeps on vibrating. Therefore he feels as if he were hollowed out and experiences a gnawing feeling inside that can best be likened to the pangs of intense hunger. Material for the building of a dense body is all around him, but seeing that he lacks the gauge of the seed atom, it is impossible for him to assimilate that matter and

build it into a body. This dreadful hollowed-out feeling lasts as long as his ordinary life should have lasted. Thus the law of cause and effect teaches him that it is wrong to play truant from the school of life and that it cannot be done with impunity. Then in the next life, when difficulties beset his path, he will remember the sufferings of the past which resulted from suicide and go through with the experience that makes for his soul growth.

Avoidance of the Post-Mortem Purgatorial Experience

Question: Does a good person have to go through Purgatory and be conscious of all the evil there before he can get into the First, Second and Third Heaven? And, if so, isn't that an undeserved punishment for him? (Vol. I, #59)

Answer: The inquirer would do well to get away from the idea of punishment. There is no such thing as punishment. Whatever happens to a man is in consequence of immutable, invariable laws, and there is no personal God who gives rewards or punishments as he sees fit, according to an inscrutable will or any other such method. When the Ego invests itself with bodies, or when it divests itself of its vehicles, this is done on the very same principle and by the very same laws that govern, for instance, in the case of a planet. When a planet is being formed from the central firemist, a crystallization has taken place at the poles where motion is the slowest. The crystallized matter is thrown out by centrifugal force and flies into space because it is heavier than the rest of the firemist. For similar reasons, when the body of the spirit which is densest has become so crystallized and heavy that the spirit can no longer use it to gain experience the process of disrobement is accomplished by the centrifugal force which naturally eliminates the dense body first. That is what we call death. Then the spirit is free for a time, but the coarsest desire matter which was the

embodiment for the lowest passions and desires must also be thrown off, and it is the forcible ejection of low desires that causes pain in Purgatory where the centrifugal force of repulsion is the strongest. If a man has any of that coarse matter in his desire body, naturally he will have to stay in Purgatory and undergo the process of purgation before he can enter the First Heaven. There the centripetal force of attraction whirls all the good in the life inward to the spiritual center, where it is assimilated as soul power available for the use of the spirit in its next Earth life as conscience. Thus our stay in Purgatory depends upon how much of the coarse desire matter there is in the man, and a good man naturally, would have very little or nothing of that kind. Therefore, he would have no life to speak of in Purgatory; he would pass directly through those regions into the Heaven World.

Why We Don't Remember Previous Lives

Question: Why, with a few exceptions, are we reincarnated, without having the slightest knowledge of any previous existence, to suffer blindly in this life for transgressions committed in some former life of which we are now entirely ignorant? Could we not advance better and quicker spiritually if we knew where we had erred before and what acts we must correct before we can progress? (Vol. I, #65)

Answer: It is one of the greatest blessings to man that he does not know his previous experiences until he has attained considerable spiritual advancement, because there are in our past lives (when we were much more ignorant than we are now) dark deeds that call for retribution, and this fate is being gradually liquidated, so that did we know our past lives, did we know how and when the law of cause and effect will bring to us retribution for past misdeeds, we would see this impending calamity hovering

over us, and fear of our fate would then be apt to rob us of the strength wherewith to battle against it, and at the time of its arrival we should stand appalled and helpless.

On the other hand, not knowing what is behind us, we escape knowing what is before us, and, therefore, we learn the lessons without being deprived of our strength by fear. Besides, for those who wish to know, there are certain means of knowing what lessons we are to learn and how best to learn them. For instance, our conscience tells what we are to do or not to do. If we care to study the science of astrology the horoscope tells us our tendencies and the lines of least resistance, so that by working with these laws of nature we may advance quickly, and the more we study the laws of nature as revealed by astronomy, the quicker we shall be ready for first-hand knowledge.

In "Zanoni," Bulwer Lytton speaks of a fearsome specter which met Glyndon as he was attempting to enter a step in unfoldment not hitherto attained by him, and that is called in Occultism the "Dweller on the Threshold." Between the time of death and a new birth, this Dweller on the Threshold is not seen by man, but it is the embodiment of all our past evil deeds, that must first be passed by one who wishes to enter the inner worlds consciously and attain to a full knowledge of conditions there; but there is also another Dweller which is the embodiment of all our good deeds, and that one may be said to be our Guardian Angel.

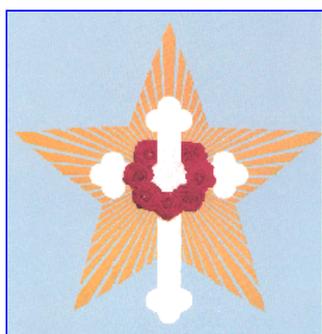
If we have the courage to pass the hideous one, which is perceived first because formed of coarse desire matter, we shall soon obtain the conscious help of the other and then we shall have the strength to stand fearless in the storms of vilification that come to all who attempt the path of unselfishness. But before we have passed this specter we are not fitted for knowledge or our

previous lives; we must rest content with the ordinary view given to mankind.

This article was adapted from "[The Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers, Vol. I,](#)" by Max Heindel.

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