

Life and Death
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Making Your Self the Master
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"Verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." -- Jesus.
Man has always yearned for convincing evidence as to the continuity of life. Death appears to stop the stream of consciousness, and break the individual's connection with the world in which he lived. He no longer communicates with those who knew him. So far as the testimony of our senses goes, the one who "passes on" is no longer in existence as a conscious being, and his body is put away where all trace of his personality is lost, except as memory preserves it for a time in the hearts of the living.

But does this disconnection from the earth life imply that the soul that occupied the body is dead? When we turn off our radio in the midst of a program, we do not stop the program. Others are listening. The vibrations of the music are still in the room. The physical instrument is all that has been disconnected. Even if the receiving set should be smashed, it would make no difference so far as the continuance of the program is concerned. The analogy is not perfect, but it indicates at least one reason for believing that death does not end life; does not stop the functioning of the soul.

Our individual life originates in Universal Life, and is that Life manifesting as personal being. The instrument which Life thus uses may get into a state of disrepair, may stop altogether. But surely this does not signify that Life has stopped. The life program goes on, and the soul shall surely find another body. We know that the soul is not the body, but simply uses it as vehicle of expression. The creative impulse which gave identity to the I Am must be identified with its own expression, and though the form of that identity may change, the identity itself is actually spirit, and must always remain spirit - Universal Spirit identified, expressed. I must eternally be that I AM which is my only source of consciousness.

Experience is the great mystery associated with life. It is only through experience that we know life, and this is the soul's movement through time and space, its perception of the relations existing in time and space. It is through experience that consciousness expands.

If the soul should be limited to one set of experiences forever, it would never grow, and would in fact be confined to a prison more terrible than annihilation. Infinite Wisdom has made it impossible that such a perpetual tragedy should ever be inflicted upon any creature. For if the individual, for any reason, becomes marooned in a restricted orbit of life, confined to a monotonous grind and daily sameness, then at last comes death, and says, "Move on. I will give you a new environment and another opportunity to find a greater life."

There are two major divisions of experience - mental and physical. By far the greater part of our experience is purely mental, but this mental force is kept fresh and new only as we provide new channels for its expression.

We have all seen people whose minds were narrow from being occupied altogether with certain fixed duties, and who have failed to find mental stimulus in reading, games, and the arts, or other

avocational activities. This narrowness is revealed in appearance, in conversation, and in a fixed order of beliefs. But the great Life-Giver will not have His bounty thus restricted for long. He says in effect, "Here, my son, let's be going. New adventures await you. This experience called death is only a Door. Pass on."

In all physical action and mental experience, we are simply turning on the Receiver which translates the Universal Rhythm into the music of life. When we change the experience, we do not change or diminish the omnipresent Life-Wave. We simply vary the program through the instrument of consciousness and, if that instrument gets out of order or stops functioning, the soul is not stopped. Life knows how to build another body.

We see life doing this in nature on a grand scale in the Spring. Life lifts up its countless bodies and rejoices in its new dress, colorful and radiantly beautiful. When we change our experiences, whether it be a simple human action or the grand natural action of death, we do not discontinue the Power back of the experience. We give it a new direction, and a new body.

Such sayings as that quoted from the Nazarene as the text of this chapter are so stupendous that we usually accept them only as purely intellectual concepts, which have been built up by billions of repetitions in the race-mind. What can it mean - "if a man keep my saying he shall never see death?" Every human being that was ever born has died, Jesus included. All his disciples, who were certainly in the best position to know what he meant, passed through this gate of death. So Jesus could not have meant that the body or vehicle of the soul would never cease to function as a physical organism.

It seems to me that he must have meant that if you do not accept death, if you look steadily at life and believe in eternal life, you will at last reach a state of consciousness in which death has no place. You shall not see death, because you will be looking at and thinking only of life.

Undoubtedly this would remove all fear and distrust of death. If you only know life you cannot know death. And the soul, thus fortified with faith in life, will come to see that even death is part of life, a part, that is, of experience. Only this Grand Experience that opens the Door to another of the Father's many mansions, is not looked upon as death, but simply as an experience imposed by Cosmic Wisdom, to make certain that no soul should be condemned forever to the hell of a monotony of its own making.

No doubt when the wisdom of man has evolved to a point where he can profitably use a longer time in the Earth School, he will attain a greater longevity. At any rate all nature teaches us that the continuity of life does not depend on the continuity of matter. For matter is discontinuous in its very nature. It is made up of particles and parts widely sundered in space. But the energy out of which matter is made is as omnipresent as the ether of space. And so it is with the human body, which has its temporal relation to the entity which occupies it, even as that entity has its relation to the Universal Soul. The greatest scientists now admit that the real substance of the universe is Mind, and that man is a mental rather than a physical being.

Our lives become sodden and old, and gray and cold, for one reason only: we lose sight of the power of love and beauty. That, after all, was the supreme message of Jesus. He lifted life up out of its hard and fixed conventions and gave it new meaning in terms of love and beauty and romance. He was free from creed and dogma. He lived a free life. He disdained pomp and

circumstance and ritual. He lived naturally and simply, in the open. He loved flowers and trees and birds and children. He loved people, and made love the supreme principle of his life and religion. In effect he said: "If you want to be spiritual, love. If you desire happiness, love. If you aspire to perfection and completeness of life, love. Not an abstract love, but warm, living, vibrant, human love. Thus shall you come to know God, who is Love, and because you love human beings, you shall love the God within them and in all things."

Life is eternal; it is only the form that changes, and if the forms of life did not change there could be no growth. Evolution would stop. The Wisdom of the Eternal teaches us, in nature and in human experience, that perpetual transformation is the very Law of Life, and that without it the universe would be stagnant, dead indeed, and that this would be the ultimate conceivable tragedy. I am life, and I am life resurgent, eternally expanding to embrace the love and beauty of the Universal One in terms of my consciousness and individual being.