

THE WORD

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

If it is true that none but shells, spooks and entities devoid of manas appear, according to theosophical teachings, at seances, whence comes the information and teachings of a philosophical and often theosophical nature, which some mediums have undoubtedly received?

Teaching of any kind carries its value on or within itself. All teachings should be judged for what they are worth, irrespective of their source or authority. It depends upon the ability of the one who receives a teaching as to whether or not he is able to judge the teaching at its true value. Some teachings bear on their face all there is to them, while others have to be looked into, thought over and assimilated before the true meaning is perceived. Mostly mediums babble and drivel at seances, and the listeners receive these utterances in wonder. Occasionally a medium may receive or repeat a philosophical discourse, which is said to be dictated by some control. When teaching of a philosophical or theosophical nature is given through a medium, it may be said to come from either the medium's higher ego, or from a wise man still living in a body, or from one who has learned to separate himself and live distinct from the physical body, or it may come from one who has departed this life, but has not dissociated himself from his body desire which then connects him with the world and who has not been subject to the state of coma through which the ordinary man passes during and after death.

Teaching which is worth while may come from any of these sources, through a medium, whether at a seance or not. But never should a teaching be valued because it comes from a source which one regards as "authority."

Do the dead work individually or collectively to attain a certain end?

What do we mean by "the dead?" The body dies and is dissipated. It does no work after death and its form is dissipated into thin air. If by "the dead" is meant the personal desires, then we can say that they persist for a time, and such personal desires continue

in their efforts to obtain their object or objects. Each of such dead ones must work for his or her personal ends, because as each works for the personal desire they are not concerned with attaining certain ends for others. If on the other hand, by "the dead" is meant that portion of one's self which persists from life to life, then we would say that it may live after death in the world of its ideals built by itself, and for its individual enjoyment, or its ideals may have been such as to include in their aims the lives of others, in which case the departed would live out or assimilate the ideals which it had formed during life on earth. This earth is the place for work. The dead pass into a state of rest preparatory to their return to this world for work. Of the immortal sparks acting through these physical bodies in this world, some work in this world to attain certain ends as individuals, while others work collectively to attain their end. Each of the first class works selfishly for its own individual end. The other class work individually and collectively for the good of all. This applies to both of these classes who have not attained their immortality, meaning by immortality an unbroken and continuous conscious existence through all states and conditions. Such as have attained immortality in the present life may work after the death of the body either for their individual objects or for the good of all. This life is the place for work in this world for the ordinary human being. In the state after death he does not work, as that is the time for rest.

How do the dead eat, if at all? What sustains their life?

Food is necessary to maintain the existence of a body of whatever kind. Rocks, plants, animals, men and gods require food to continue existence. The food of one is not the food of all. Each kingdom uses as food the kingdom below it and in turn serves as food for the kingdom above it. This does not mean that the gross body of one kingdom is the food of the other, but that the essence of these bodies is the food which is either taken from the kingdom below or offered to the kingdom above. Dead bodies of men serve as food for the earth, the plants, the worms and animals. The entity which used the food continues its existence by food, but the food of such entity is not the same food that was used to continue the existence of its physical body. After death the real man passes into a state of rest and enjoyment, only after he has separated himself from the gross desires of his physical life. By his association with these desires through contact with the physical world he gives to these desires a semblance of human being and these desires partake

somewhat of thought, but only in the sense that a glass bottle partakes of the fragrance of a perfume which it contained. These are usually the entities which appear after death. They continue their existence by food. Their food is taken in many ways, according to the particular nature of the entity. To perpetuate the desire is to repeat it. This can only be done by experiencing the particular desire through the physical body of a human being. If this food is refused by living human beings the desire burns itself out and is consumed. Such desire forms do not eat physical food, because they have no physical apparatus to dispose of physical food. But desire and other entities, such as nature elementals, perpetuate their existence in form by the smell of foods. So in this sense they may be said to live on the smell of foods, which is the grossest form of food of which they are able to make use. Owing to this fact, certain classes of elementals and discarnated human desire entities are attracted to certain localities by the odors which arise from foods. The grosser the odor the more dense and sensual will be the entity attracted; pre-human entities, elementals, nature sprites are attracted and propitiated by the burning of incense. The burning of incense attracts or repels such classes or entities according to their nature. In this sense "the dead" may be said to eat. In a different sense the departed conscious principle who lives in his ideal heaven or state of rest may also be said to eat in order to continue his existence in that state. But the food which he lives on is of the ideal thoughts of his life; according to the number of his ideal thoughts he furnishes the food which he assimilates after death. This truth was symbolized by the Egyptians in that part of their Book of the Dead in which it is shown that the soul after it has passed through the Hall of the Two Truths and has been weighed in the balance, passes into the fields of Aan Ru, where it finds wheat of the growth of three and five and seven cubits high. The departed can only enjoy the period of rest, the length of which is determined by his ideal thoughts while on earth. When these are exhausted he returns again to earth.

Do the dead wear clothes?

Yes, but according to the texture of the body that is to wear them, of the thought that formed them and of the character which they are intended to express. The clothes of any man or race are an expression of the characteristics of the individual or the people. Aside from the use of clothes as a protection against climate, they exhibit certain peculiarities of taste and art. This is all the outcome

of his thought. But to answer the question directly, we would say that it depends on the sphere in which the dead are as to whether or not they wear clothes. When closely associated in thought with the world the departed entity will retain the habits and customs of the social world in which it moved, and if such departed entity could be seen it would appear in the clothes which were most suited to its liking. It would appear in such costume because whatever its thought is, that it would be, and the clothes which one would wear naturally in his thought are those which he would have used while in life. If, however, the thoughts of the departed should change from one condition to another, then he would appear in the clothes which he would have in thought, to suit the condition. However, owing to the thought of human beings, clothes are intended to conceal defects or improve the form, quite as much as to shield or protect it from inclement weather, but there is a sphere into which one passes after death and where he is seen as he really is and not as clothes would make him appear to be. This sphere is in the light of his inner god, who sees him as he is and who judges according to worth. In that sphere one needs neither clothes nor any protection, as he is not subject to nor affected by the thoughts of other beings. So “the dead” may be said to wear clothes if they need them or want clothes, and may be said to wear the clothes needed to shield, hide or protect their bodies according to the conditions in which they are in.

Do the dead live in houses?

After death the physical body is tightly housed in its wooden casket, but the form of the body, the astral body, does not remain in that house. It dissipates as the body does about the grave; so much for the physical side. As to the entity inhabiting the body, it lives in such conditions or environments as are most in keeping with its nature. If its dominant thought has been such as to attract it to a particular house or locality, it is there either in thought or in presence. This applies to the desire body, but the entity who lives in its ideal world after death—usually called heaven—may there live in a house, providing it thinks of a house because it may paint any picture that it pleases. The house if any that it would live in would be an ideal house, built by its own thought, and not by human hands.

Do the dead sleep?

Death itself is a sleep, and it is a long or short sleep as the entity who has worked in this world requires it. Sleep is a period of rest, a

temporary cessation from activity on any plane. The higher mind or ego does not sleep, but the body or bodies through which it functions require rest. This rest is called sleep. So the physical body, all its organs, cells and molecules sleep or have a period however short or long, which allows them to readjust themselves magnetically and electrically to their condition.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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