

# THE WORD

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## MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*Do the dead live in families, in communities, and if so is there a government?*

Those who depart this life take a rest which is long or short, according to their needs. They then continue their existence in the after state as they had lived on earth. But there is this difference, that whereas life on earth required all the constituent principles of a man to be present in this world, the after state requires only a vehicle suitable to the plane on which the mind, the ego, functions.

Has man lived with his family or in a community on earth according to his desire, it will then also be his desire to continue this sort of life in the after-death state. If he has preferred a solitary life, or a life devoted to study or research, then he will not desire a life among others; but in either case, according to what was his desire in physical life, so will his desire continue after death.

After death, man, the ego, the mind, continues with all his faculties, but minus the physical body and the form of that physical body. Wherever his thought and interest lay there will the man be. When, however, the mind is separated from the world by the severance from its physical body, the medium of expression and communication with the physical world is cut off and the man cannot be with the physical bodies of his family or the community which had occupied his thought. If, however, his thought of family or community had been strong he would be in thought with them or hold them in his thought as one may be in thought with his family or friends while living in the world even though he be living in a distant country. He would not have new thoughts, nor derive information concerning the family or community after his death, nor be about them knowing their fate, as is sometimes erroneously supposed. After death man lives in thoughts which he had had while in physical life. He thinks over again what he had thought during life.

There is a world of thought, which is after all the world which man really lives in even while in a physical body, for the world is to him as he translates it into his thought world. But there is another world which lies between the thought world and the physical world

to be drugged or intoxicated. The desire would be the dominant factor. Such an apparition would act much the same as one under the influence of a drug or intoxicant. Nevertheless, the desire would make itself manifest even as the drunkard makes manifest his desire. Only in few appearances of such desire bodies is the mind present. As the mind conceived of family life or community life as an ideal in its physical world, so will the same mind hold family or community life in the ideal thought world in its after death state. But whereas in this physical world the ideal life seemed to be shadowy and vague and the physical life the real and matter of fact, now the condition is reversed; the ideal world is the real and the physical has entirely disappeared or simply remains an abstract ideal.

Yes, there is a government in the after death states. Each of the states after death has its own government and the laws of each state control that state. The law of the desire state is indicated by its own name: desire. The ideal world is governed by thought. Each state is controlled automatically by desire, or ideal thought, each according to its nature, and all according to justice.

*Is there a punishment or reward for the deeds done by the dead, either while in life or after death?*

Yes, and each deed brings its own result, according to the action and according to the motive and thought which prompted the action. Many who act in this world act ignorantly, nevertheless the action brings its reward or punishment. The one who pulls the trigger of a gun that he didn't know was loaded and shoots off his finger, or the hand of a friend, suffers the results physically quite as much as though he had shot with intention to injure. The physical punishment is the same. But he does not suffer the mental punishment which would ensue as remorse, which he would suffer had he performed the action with knowledge of what would take place.

This applies to the question while living in the physical world. But there is another side which is the after death state. Those in the after death state act only as effects following causes. This world is the world of causes as well as of effects, but the after states are only of effects. The desire body continues to act after death according to the impetus permitted it during physical life. Therefore, the deeds performed by the astral entity, or even by the mind in its ideal world, are only results, not causes. They are the consequences as reward or punishment for deeds performed in the physical world. But these deeds are not in turn rewarded or punished.

The terms “reward” and “punishment” are theological terms. They have a personal and selfish meaning. Whether in this or any other world, the true law interprets punishment to mean a lesson given to the performer of wrong action. Reward is the lesson given to the performer of right action. The lesson which has been called punishment is given to the performer to teach him not to do wrong again. Reward teaches the consequences of right action.

In the after death state, the desire body suffers much the same as a man of strong appetites, when he has not the means nor the opportunity of satisfying his appetite. The physical body is the medium through which the desire body satisfies its appetite. When the desire body is deprived of or cut off from its physical body at death, the appetites remain, but it has not the means of gratifying them. So that if the desires have been intense and for physical gratification there is after death the hunger of desire, or the burning of passion, but without the means of gratifying or appeasing it. But the mind whose ideals were high, experiences all the joys attending the fulfillment of these ideals, because it is in the world where ideals are.

Thus we have in the after death states punishment or reward, or more properly called, the lessons of right and wrong action, as the results of the thoughts, deeds and actions performed while living in the physical world.

*Do the dead acquire knowledge?*

No, they do not in the proper sense of the term. All knowledge which the mind acquires must be acquired while living in a physical body in this physical world. Here is where it must acquire knowledge if knowledge is to be acquired. After death we may pass through a process of digesting or assimilating, but only of the things acquired in this world, in the same sense that an ox might chew its cud while in its manger, but only of that which it has carried with it from the field. So the departed lives over or digests those desires, thoughts, or ideals, which it has generated, developed and garnered during life. The real knowledge of all the worlds must be acquired while living in this world. The entity cannot acquire after death what it has not known during life. It may magnify and live over again what it has known during life, but it can acquire no new knowledge after death.

*Do the dead know what is going on in this world?*

Some may, others cannot. It depends on what we mean by “the dead.” The earth bound desire bodies are the only class of the many

classes of "the dead" who may know what is going on in this world. But then they can know only what is going on as it is related to the desires and cravings which they had experienced during life, and which goings on are related to them. As for example, the desire body of a drunkard would know only what was going on in the world as it related to his desire for drink and even then only when he could find the neighborhood and people who were addicted to drink. He could find the neighborhood by the natural attraction of like to like, but in order to experience what was going on he must do so through the physical body of one who drinks, which he would do by entering and obsessing the one who drinks. But the desire body of a drunkard would not likely know what was going on in the world of politics or of literature or art, nor would it know or understand the discoveries in astronomy or the mathematical sciences. As each person seeks the environment most agreeable in the physical world, so desire bodies would be attracted to physical environments suitable to the nature of their desires.

The question is, could they know what was going on even in those localities? The ordinary desire body could not, as it has no physical organs through which to see physical objects. It may feel the desire and be near the object of its expression, but it could not see the object unless it entered into a human body and used the organs of sight or the other senses to connect it with the physical world. At best, the ordinary desire body can see the astral counterparts only of the desires of the physical world.

The mind which had severed its connection with the body and passed into its ideal world would not know what was going on in the physical world. Its ideal world is to it its heaven. This heaven or ideal world would cease to be such if all of the things in the physical world were known. The ideals of the earth world may be known to the departed in the ideal world, but only as these ideals are the same, such as are being experienced by the mind in its ideal world.

*How do you explain cases where the dead have appeared either in dreams, or to people who were awake, and have announced that death of certain persons, generally other members of the family, was near?*

A dream which is not due to a physiological cause comes from the astral world or from the thought world. The death of a person announced in a dream simply means that the one announced to die has already set up or generated the causes which are to bring about

his death, and the causes thus set up are reflected into the astral world. There they may be seen as a picture; all the circumstances attending the death may also be seen if sought for. Thus dreams, of the deaths which do take place, as announced, may be seen by anyone coming into contact with the current of thought which caused the picture. In the case where someone appears in the dream it means that such appearance directs the attention of the one in dream to the coming death. This would be done either to attempt to avert the death, or to prepare the one for it, or as an example to be noted by those most concerned.

The same principle would be involved in the case where the dead have appeared and announced the coming death of another to a person who was awake, except that the eyes of the person would be sensitized to the appearance, or the astral sense quickened to perceive the appearance. The same reasons would be applied. But the difference would be that whereas the mind sees in dream more clearly than in waking life, and therefore the astral entity need not be dense, the apparition would have to be more pronounced and the physical senses brought into play in order to perceive it. The dead who thus appeared would be the desire body which was connected or related in some way with the one whose death it announced. But all persons so announced to die do not always die as announced. This means (when the person is not deluded by fancy) that the causes which absolutely require death have not been actually evoked, but that death will follow unless countercauses are set up to avert it. When the proper action is so taken the death may be averted.

*Are the dead attracted to members of what was their family while on earth, and do they watch over them; say a departed mother over her young children?*

It is possible that one of the departed members of a family may be attracted to one or others of the family if there is an unfulfilled desire which was strong during life. As, for instance, one who desired to convey a piece of property to another which he had possessed during life by trickery. As soon as the conveyance was made, or the one entitled came into rightful possession, the desire would be fulfilled and the mind freed from the bonds holding it. In the case of a mother watching over her children, this is possible only where the thought is so strong during life and the moments of death as to hold the mind of the mother to the conditions of her children. But this

must be loosened in order that the mother be freed and the children be allowed to work out the destiny which they had created in former lives. After passing into her ideal world or heaven, the departed mother has still in thought the children who are dear to her. But her thought of the children cannot be disturbed in her ideal state, else the state will not be ideal. If the children suffer she cannot know it without suffering herself, and suffering has no place in the ideal world. Suffering forms a part of the lessons and experience of life from which the mind so suffering acquires knowledge and learns how to live and think and act. What does happen is that the mother, holding in thought the children who are dear to her, might affect them through thought. She cannot watch over them in their physical welfare, but she may by her high ideals convey such ideals to them when their thoughts and lives will respond. In this way not only may the children of parents be aided by those departed, who are in the ideal world or heaven, but all departed friends may help those now living in this world if the ideals of the departed have been high and noble during their contact and friendship in physical life.

*In the world of the dead is there the same sun and moon and stars as in our world?*

No, certainly not. The sun and moon and stars are said to be physical bodies in a physical universe. As such they cannot be, nor be seen as such, after death; for though the thought of them may be carried in the mind after death the thought would be different from the objects. The astronomer whose thought had been entirely taken up by his study while living, may after death be still engrossed with his subject, yet he would not see the physical moon and stars, but only his thoughts or the ideas of them. The sun and moon and stars furnish to the beings on earth three kinds of light of varying power and intensity. The light of our physical world is the sun. Without the sun we are in darkness. After death the mind is the light which illuminates the other worlds as it also may illuminate the physical. But when the mind or ego leaves its physical body the physical is in darkness and death. When the mind separates from the desire body, that body is also in darkness and it must also die. When the mind passes into its ideal state it lights up the obscure thoughts and ideals of life. But the physical sun, or moon, or stars, can throw no light on the after death states.

*Is it possible for the dead to influence the living without the knowledge of the living, by suggesting thoughts or deeds?*

Yes, it is possible and it often does happen that disembodied entities whose desires were strong and whose life had been cut off have by their presence incited persons who were susceptible, to commit crimes which they would not have done without that influence. This does not mean that the action is entirely due to the disembodied entity, nor imply the innocence of the one who committed the crime under such influence. It simply means that the disembodied entity would seek or be attracted to the one most likely to be influenced. The one most likely to be impressed must either be a medium without high ideals or moral strength, or else one whose inclinations are similar to those of the entity that impressed him. This is possible and often is done without the knowledge of the one incited to action. So also is it possible for thoughts, which are of a higher character, to be suggested to others, but in such case it is not necessary to go to the dead for thoughts, because thoughts of the living have far more power and influence than thoughts of the dead.

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