



E-Read



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The Measure We Give

Muriel Morgan writes:

I recently watched a documentary about near-death experiences called *Life After Life*. Frankly, I watched it to see if anything in it was not in accordance with what the Writings tell us about life in the spiritual world. Had I found something that contradicted the Writings, I probably would have dismissed the documentary as a waste of time and that would have been the end of it. But I was very happy to realise that none of the experiences described seemed to contradict what

we are taught in the Writings.

It is not a new documentary, and I think I may have watched it before, but that was before I had studied the Writings. This time, it meant much more to me because I now have a deeper understanding of what happens in the spiritual world, which allowed me to compare and think about the experiences being recounted in a very different way.

Most of the cases in the programme were memorable, but three particularly stood out to me. One person had such a wonderful heavenly experience that, many years later, he was still extremely depressed about being brought back. In contrast, two others had such hellish experiences that, when they returned, they changed their lives so dramatically that the people who knew them hardly recognised them.

As we die, our spirit goes through a process in the world of spirits before entering either Heaven or hell. So, **in a nutshell**, this is the process:

1. **Resuscitation**

“When someone's body can no longer perform its functions in the natural world..., then we say that the individual has died... The person, though, has not died at all. We are only separated from the physical nature that was useful to us in the world. The essential person is actually still alive. I say that the essential person is still alive because we are not people because of our bodies but because of our spirits.... We can see, then, that when we die we simply move from one world into another. This is why in the inner meaning of the Word, ‘death’ means resurrection and a continuation of life.”

— *Heaven and Hell* 445

2. **Arrival in the World of Spirits**

“The world of spirits is neither heaven nor hell but a place or state between the two. It is where we first arrive after death, being in due time either raised into heaven or cast into hell from it depending on our life in this world.”

— *Heaven and Hell* 421

3. **The First State — A State of Exteriors**

When we first enter the world of spirits, we feel very much as we did when we were in the natural world. We speak in much the same way, have the same personality, and are welcomed by loved ones who have already passed on. During this time, good spirits discretely observe us, and what we are naturally drawn toward begins to reveal our ruling love.

4. **The Second State — A State of Interiors**

While we are in the natural world, we have the ability to “wear a mask”. In other words, we can keep our internal thoughts and feelings hidden from others if we choose to. In this second state, that mask is removed, and our true character becomes visible. This is where the law of retaliation and the process of vastation come into play. Good spirits are also drawn toward other good spirits who have similar ruling loves, while evil spirits are similarly drawn toward those whose

ruling love corresponds to their own.

5. **The Third State — Instruction**

This state is for those who have chosen a heavenly life. Those who are bound for hell cannot be instructed in the same way and therefore move on toward their place in hell. Those who are bound for heaven, however, receive instruction suited to the life they are about to enter, helping and guiding them toward their new life.

6. **Clothed and Homed**

After their instruction, those entering heaven are clothed in angelic garments and led into their new home, in a society that corresponds to their ruling love.

This is, of course, as I said, only in a nutshell. The Writings give us so much more information about these states, including many fascinating accounts, and much of this can be found in *Heaven and Hell*.

One part of this process that struck me particularly strongly in the documentary was the law of retaliation.

We are told in Matthew 5:38:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’”

And in Luke 6:38:

“For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

The Writings give us a much deeper understanding of this principle. In *Spiritual Experiences* 2913, we read:

“It was often granted to tell this to spirits on whom evil is inflicted, that they are the cause of evil, and that vice or evil contains this in itself or that in evil there is such that it is reflected back on him, in a wonderful manner: which also is the law of retaliation: for such as is the character of the evil, and such as is the character of him who permits evil, such is the evil that is reflected upon him, or returns to him.”

And in *Spiritual Experiences* 2905, we are given an example of this:

“A certain one, who said that he had also injured others during the life of the body, so that he inflicted on others, evil, pains and the like, and in the other life practices the like, was told that the punishment of such things is one of retaliation: wherefore evil spirits have dragged him away to themselves, and tormented him with similar pains, which was given me to know by his outcry and lamentation; he said with a bitter voice that he has sinned.”

We are also told:

“It was observed and imparted that whatever a person had done in the life of the body, returns in the other life...”

The passage goes on to explain that the states of hatred and other evils that a person has harboured will return to them, while for those who have lived in goodness, states of friendship, love, and goodness return with corresponding delight and happiness.

So, what does this mean for us now?

Although we are all born into evil tendencies, the Lord has blessed us with freedom and rationality, and He has also given us His Word. We are therefore given a way of easing this difficult process of retaliation. We know it as *the Golden Rule*, found in Matthew 7:12:

“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

I feel an enormous amount of thankfulness for having been “given” the Writings. They allow me to learn things that I otherwise would have remained in the dark about. So many of the mysteries that philosophers have pondered for millennia are, through the Writings, brought within our reach. And I am very thankful to have the opportunity not only to learn this vast amount of knowledge, but to try to apply it.

Because, really, what good is knowledge without application?

One thing is certain for all of us: we will eventually “level up” from the natural world to the spiritual world - or, as a friend of mine once put it, we will be “promoted”.

And maybe it is my tendency toward delayed gratification, but I want to do my best here, in the natural world, so that when that time comes, I have done everything I can to make the process we all have to go through in the world of spirits as easy and as smooth as possible.