

A Near-Death Experience By a Student

In seeking and yearning for what I might recognize as my way forward in life, I attended a certain meeting one day. The speaker had been a nun for 25 years but, as she told us, “the search that led me into the convent led me out again.” It was this statement that compelled me to write to her. In her reply she suggested I begin spiritual training but, although I made preliminary inquiries as she had suggested, I did not follow them up, because I realized that a certain confrontation would be called for in the sense of the Delphic injunction to “know thyself.” I continued to drift.

In reality, I had to cross a “burning ground” before I could follow the direction I had been given. “The burning ground is found upon the threshold of every new advance.” (*The Rays and the Initiations* by Alice A. Bailey, page 39) My Soul knew about the necessity of experiencing the burning ground but at that time there was no brain awareness of this fact.

So I drifted.

Within a year I was in crisis. A tumor inside my head necessitated a drastic operation. Forty years ago surgical techniques were not what they are today, and the extremely invasive procedure had a profound effect upon my physical appearance, my emotions and my mind. At first I could not seem to recognize anything about myself except my voice.

However, I discovered that a “barrier” had apparently been removed from between my inner Self, my Soul, and the outer physical brain apparatus of the personality. The first time I found myself completely alone after the operation, and therefore the first time I could turn inward in complete silence without the distraction of other people’s presence, I was immediately aware of communicating easily with my inner Self and saying, “I acquiesce.” I was also aware of the significance of the word *acquiesce*, for I was not accepting what had happened in the sense of meekly bearing a burden; I was choosing to experience this burning ground of my own free will.

It was a significant moment for me. I remembered that in Dag Hammarskjöld’s book *Markings* he had written of a similar experience: “I answered Yes to Someone or Something and from that moment I was certain that existence is meaningful.” (page 169)

I experienced other intimations of a similar nature, but despite this, the adjustment to my changed personality seemed overwhelming and I became downcast and doubtful. Then one day something occurred that lifted me up into an entirely different realm of awareness. One day when I was quietly sitting alone, a complete memory suddenly dropped into my mind. Clearly and certainly, I remembered something that had taken place, and I have not doubted the veracity of this memory for one moment since.

I remembered that during the recent operation I had been on the point of dying. I was in the company of Shining Beings. We were communicating, but not in words. It was an instantaneous telepathic intercommunication. The relationship between us was a total rapport and love for which there are no earthly words. I “said” to them, “thank God I am with you again. I have been searching for you all my life.” They “said” I could remain with them; the choice was freely mine. But I was

aware of another deeper realization: I had not fulfilled some part of a group enterprise that I had originally set out to take part in. There was no hint of reproach or censure from these Beings — only total and understanding love. I, in my own consciousness, radiated the same quality of love towards them.

I made the choice to return to the outer physical plane to try again to fulfill my potential and measure up to the part I had agreed to play. I was then aware of a very definite “descent.” I sank downward into a very murky, dark, watery realm. It seemed a long way down and the descent was accompanied by a sensation of dread.

This memory coming into my brain awareness strengthened my personality and gave me the courage to continue with my life. I now had a strong orientation towards the meaning and purpose of that life. I followed the direction given me by the former nun the previous year and have been a student of the Ageless Wisdom teachings ever since that time.

What struck me at the beginning was the absolute integrity of this spiritual approach. A sense of this can be gained from the Foreword to the books by Alice A. Bailey:

If the teaching conveyed calls forth a response from the illumined mind of the worker in the world, and brings a flashing forth of his intuition, then let that teaching be accepted. But not otherwise. If the statements meet with eventual corroboration, or are deemed true under the test of the Law of Correspondences, then that is well and good. But should this not be so, let not the student accept what is said.

I have found that by following the threefold discipline involved – meditation, study and service – it is possible to corroborate the teachings, especially when working with a group, even though that group may not meet on a personal basis. Minds meditating together seem to be able to comprehend more, and the resulting service of the individuals concerned is empowered as they carry on their independent lives in their own environments.

We are told that the evolutionary process is directed by a Hierarchy of Intelligences who have Themselves reached far into higher states of consciousness. We are told that this Hierarchy can be identified as the Kingdom of Souls. They have walked the same Path we now tread. They have undergone similar experiences, sufferings and trials just as we are now. In the end they have broken through to higher realms of consciousness. As Souls They embody the quality of love, and They direct Their efforts toward the evolutionary process of this planet.

It seems reasonable that there are such grades of advanced Beings, existing as mediators between the divine Creator of the vast universe and the teeming millions of human beings living on planet Earth. Members of the Spiritual Hierarchy can be likened to executives working behind the scenes as the guides of humanity.

In that case, it may be asked why the world is in so chaotic a state! This is because free will is an aspect of the Plan. Humanity determines its own destiny, just as I was allowed to do in my confused early years. The evolving consciousness of humanity is part of the divine Plan. The Spiritual Hierarchy can impress those who are able to respond so that through the inflow of ideas and through

revelation the tide of human affairs can be influenced. But as to timing and detail, humanity makes its own decisions and thereby determines its own destiny.

The names of those wise Souls who give the world a vision of a divine Plan and Purpose are legion. Sensitive to the thought patterns of the illumined minds of the members of the Spiritual Hierarchy, the Kingdom of Souls, they are messengers down through the centuries demonstrating that human beings are the spearhead of the evolutionary process. One who saw this clearly was Jan Smuts, a South African statesman and philosopher, who expressed the thought in striking words:

God reveals Himself not only in the supreme characters of our race – in the Son and sons of God – but also in the human average, rising slowly above and beyond the animal origins that we have not quite outlived. We see around us types and embodiments of Beauty in mind and character that point the way to the future that is surely coming. (*The Fields of Force* by W.K. Hancock, pages 398 and 347)