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THE MAYANS

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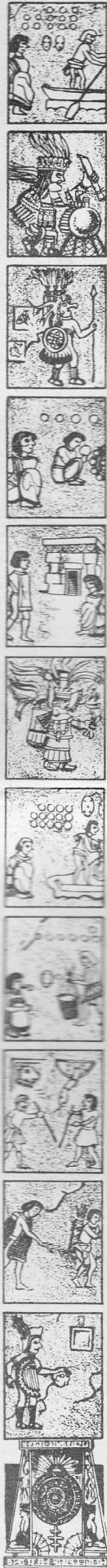
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The

Eternal

Living Series

Mayan Revelation Number 197

Sensing Eternity

Eternal Living

The Changed Life

Two Kinds of Reality

The Changed Self

Seeing the Unseen

Fetters or Release?

Sensing Eternity

Prayer

Beloved Centurion:

You are in an advanced class in Mayanry; - you have come a long way since you first entered the Mayan Way of Life. If you will look back and think of yourself as you were when you first came to us, I am sure you will be able to see a vast difference between your thinking of today and that of the past.

Your ideals are different. The things for which you are seeking are different. You have learned values. You now know the difference between that which is worthwhile and that which consists of "nothingness".

As a member of The Mayan Order, you have learned the importance of meditation in your life. We lay great stress upon it, because when we learn to truly meditate, many things come to us in a mysterious way which is difficult to explain, but nevertheless, come they do.

First of all we must learn how to meditate. One of the rarest of all acquirements is the ability to do so; most people, when they think they are meditating are, in fact, doing nothing and thinking of nothing. As an example, many people read a number of books - and you know that we consider books of great importance to your development - but it is not really the number of books you read, nor the different kinds of sermons you may hear in various churches, nor the amount of religious conversations you take part in. All of this, of course, is important, but most important of all is the frequency and earnestness with which you meditate on these things until the truth underneath it all becomes part of your being and insures your development.

It is not possible for me to tell you how these things permeate your being through meditation; it is one of the things "unseen" which we cannot describe, but which will come to you through meditation. You have learned this through your own experiences and your development, in part, but there is so much more yet to be learned.

Meditation is the life of the soul and action is the soul of meditation.

In this series of lessons we take up the subject of ETERNAL LIVING. Do not confuse "eternal living" with eternity. We are concerned with eternal living here and now, which is, of course, preparation for eternity.

Your Instructor would suggest that at the end of this first lesson of the series you spend some time in thoughtful meditation upon it, then go back and read it again. After you have read it the second time, memorize the following Affirmation:

By meditation I can converse with God. I can comfort myself in the arms of the Saviour. I can bathe myself in the rivers of divine pleasure and, in so doing, view the mansions of Eternity.

And now we commence our study of ETERNAL LIVING:

Sensing Eternity

ETERNAL LIVING

PLEASE note at the outset that this series of lessons does not deal directly with eternal life, but with the approach to it - eternal living. The difference between them is that between the abstract and the concrete, the static and the dynamic, the passive and the active, something we may attain and what we must do to attain it, the indefinite future and the definite present.

Eternal life is a dream of the ages, and a beautiful and treasured dream it is. It is a dream of reaching an unending Homeland; of being forever done with death, and bereavements, and graves, and memorials. At least to those who have lived long enough to realize they need it, this is the heart's dearest hope. No wonder it has been so much and so well expressed in song, art, and oratory.

Eternal living has not been given such great and artistic expression. It has been passed by like the less attractive of two children. But we must not be content that it should be so. Like the toil that makes possible the purchase of a new garment, it is the daily endeavor that builds the endless highway. It is prosaic, rugged, and sometimes trying, as all labor has always been; but it is the most rewarding of all efforts.

There is between these two things a difference in certainty also. We think and speak of eternal life as a hope. We question, and wonder, and wish we knew more about it, and what the chances are that for us it will one day change from a shadowy hope to a definite and glorious experience.

There is no such uncertainty about eternal living. It is a present challenge right here on the road we are traveling and right now while the clock is striking. Eternal life is subject to God's decree, but eternal living is subject to our decision. It is for you to say whether you will undertake it, and when; and if you have undertaken it it is for you to say whether you will give it up or see it through. It is as definite a decision for you to make as what you will do today and how you will go about it.

Eternal life is something we can do nothing about except to try to attain it. It is something yonder, somewhere, to be realized sometime. Not so with eternal living. It is something we definitely can do something about here and now. The end of the road is always uncertain, but the beginning of it always lies at our feet. To be sure, the road is in part a mystic one, as we shall very soon begin to see; but we shall also see that the approach to mystic understanding and experience may be a very practical one.

So, however much you treasure the hope of eternal life, let us now consider some truths which should enable you to treasure it even more, by making it less of a shadowy hope and more of a definite anticipation, while at the same time making the life that now is to mean infinitely more.

TWO KINDS OF REALITY

IN the scripture verse which has been chosen as the general theme of this series of lessons, St. Paul gives his readers in the Church at Corinth the master key to all this. He does it by referring to two kinds of reality and indicating that the values of eternal living which are the ones that lead to eternal life lie in the realm of the things that are unseen rather than among those that are seen.

He says we are not to look at the things which are seen. That is not easy. Then he goes on to say that we are to look at the things which are unseen. That is even less easy. We are not to look at what we see, but at what we do not see. Is it any wonder that people were often mystified at the Christian belief?

We have to understand that even much physical reality is not visible to our limited human vision, and no spiritual reality is. Spiritual reality is often expressed in visible things or has its application in them, but the basic reality itself remains unseen. For instance, love may be expressed in a material gift or a physical service, but love itself is a spiritual fact and therefore both invisible and eternal.

Just as St. Paul says, the things that are seen are temporary, while the things that are not seen are permanent. We can readily see that for ourselves. Consider some of the things we see like the seasons, the weather, the garments we wear, the houses we live in, the various works of man. They all come and go, even as do our material bodies. Some may endure a long time, but they pass. Archaeologists are always digging up ruins that mutely testify that the things that are seen are temporary.

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Now think of the things that are not seen: love, hope, faith, devotion, truth, wonder, wisdom, aspiration. For these there is no passing. They are as vital and wonderful now as in any age gone by. They know no death, or age, or change. They are not subject to the chime of the clock, the cycle of the seasons, or the turning of the years. They existed before the morning stars first sang together, and they will be the same when the last blazing orb has turned to a blackened cinder in the sky.

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Eternal living is living with the emphasis on eternal values, and they are unseen. Our present existence has its physical needs and material responsibilities, but if we give them supremacy we shall miss our opportunity to give our lives eternal sinews and reach. The soul that has chosen the eternal portion meets the physical necessities, but its gaze is upon the unseen and thus it proves itself to be equally changeless and abiding. Thinking and working in terms of eternity sets us and keeps us on the highway of the forever.

St. Paul had done that himself. His triumphant living, confident spirit, and fearless passing from death to life, show how well he succeeded. His victory was wrought of the unseen values.



SEEING THE UNSEEN

THIS matter of looking at the things which are not seen is not the impractical, impossible thing it may seem to the person without experience or reflection. It is a very real thing. You, as a Mayan, have spent many hours in meditation, and have learned much of this. It happens, and could happen more often if more people would make the effort. Two experiences your Instructor had may serve at least as hints of this:

Once I was standing about ten miles north of a certain large city at the center of which stands a tall monument. I was gazing in the direction of the city with its buildings and patches of smoke under the sunshine of a clear summer sky. The space above it looked perfectly blank. With no particular reason in mind, I kept looking steadily into that space. In other words, I was looking at things not seen.

Suddenly there stood out against the horizon what looked like a long, shining needle. It was the tall shaft of the monument reaching above the tops of the buildings. The unseen had become the seen as someone looked steadily at it. The watcher's eyes had been kept centered intently on one area of what appeared to be vacancy, and suddenly it ceased to be vacancy. Though till that moment it had been invisible, there was something there.

Another time I was standing on a beach looking out over the Atlantic Ocean. Nothing was visible except the gray expanse of water with the deeper gray mist hovering over it. I was thinking how many ships passed over that area and wondering how long it would be before another appeared. All the while my eyes were fixed in one direction.

As I looked over the still, gray ocean, merging with the distant horizon, it seemed as vacant as it was still. On the beach all was activity amid the sound of voices, but from the ocean there was no sound and not so much as the glint of a gull's wing in the sunshine.

Suddenly something was there. A great, gray ship was moving across that misty silence. It had not just come into sight. It had been there for some time. It had not swung into the range of vision. The range of vision had become adjusted to its presence. Gazing intently and concentratedly into the unseen had changed it to the seen. It happens all the time. No one else on the beach saw it because no one else had been looking. It had reality only for me.

It is the same with the spiritual values that must be seen with the eye of the soul. One will never see them if he never looks; but if he makes a habit of looking, contemplating, searching, and waiting, he is likely to see a great deal he had not known, and otherwise never would have known, was there. So cultivate the habit of searching the unseen with both your eyes and your heart. But let us now consider further this second process of searching with your heart, - in other words, sensing eternity.

SENSING ETERNITY

WE are now discussing something with which only a limited number of people have worked enough to have had much experience. Thus far to the majority it seems only a mystery. The aim of this lesson is to try to indicate what you may do to change it from a mystery to be wondered about to an experience as definite and real as going to the mail box or eating a meal.

Eternity is something you cannot see, touch, or hear, so physical sense is more of a hindrance than a help. This is something you have to approach in an entirely different way, and even being blind or deaf will not hinder you. It may be the more difficult because in the beginning it looks useless to try. Your mind lays hold on nothing, because you are so unaccustomed to that kind of thing. You are gazing at a road that looks strange and does not seem to go anywhere. What can you do about it?

Have you not had the experience of having to do something for which you had no feeling and which you wanted to avoid or postpone? Then you took hold and made a little effort. You found that you and it moved together. It yielded to your efforts and you warmed to it, so that soon you were swinging away at it with real interest and zest.

Do you not remember mornings when you rose with no taste for the day's work? It was the last thing you wanted anything to do with; but you forced yourself to begin it and soon found yourself warming to it and getting it done so successfully and happily that what had threatened to be a poor day in your life turned out to be a very excellent one.

It is the same with the effort to sense and understand something the reality of which you may have at first only assumed. A real test disclosed that the assumption was a fact. When you looked at the unseen it became real. This process will become easier and more enjoyable as you practice it and develop the habit, though it is likely to be neither at first. One has to learn how to go about it.

First, you must learn how to have periods of silent, relaxed contemplation. It is while one muses that the fire burns. Find a place where nothing will disturb you, and wait there till the hand of silence has brushed out the dust and cobwebs and cleared your processes of perception. There in your closet or upon your Olivet of silence let your soul look gently but intently about you. Think about eternity. Let your thought reach out into its vastness and see how impossible it is for its fleet wings to find any boundary. Realize that it is something lying beyond any beginning or end that we can think of.

This great sea of speaking silence over which you are looking is something that was there in the beginning and that will still be young when present created things have grown old and passed away. It is something so vast that it has neither a beginning nor an end.

It is not something toward which we are moving with each tick of the clock. It is something in which we have been all the time, something into which we were born and out of which even death cannot take us. It is not something that will take the place of what we now call time. It is something of which time is a part.

Time was born into it, just as we were.

We are in eternity today. We could not escape from it if we tried. Our lives are helping to give eternity meaning and expression. Everything we do is forever. Think of these things till your mind clears. You will then be beginning to sense eternity. Think from the eternal viewpoint and live in terms of it. Never stop, for there will always be more to discern.

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THE CHANGED LIFE

THE day you feel out a sense of eternity and begin to grasp it as a great, unseen reality will be the second most important day in your life, the most important being the day you accomplish the same thing with the reality of God. It will be such a day for many reasons; one being that life for you will never be the same again. It will be blessedly different because it will be more spacious and adequate.

The popular song, "Don't Fence Me In" has an important meaning founded in fact. One of the difficult things about doing a good job of living is the feeling of restriction this condition or that so often gives us. This fence that we feel but do not see is baffling and hard to escape from. Some unfortunate people never do, but you can and will if you learn to perceive the releasing fact of eternity. Eternity is a phase of the universe and a twin fact with space. Neither of them is limited. In it you never come to a forbidding frontier. You never hear a forbidding voice. There are no border guards. You may always go as far as you can and wish. You travel on wings of thought, faith, aspiration, and prayer, so distance ceases to mean anything to you at all.

The largest telescope now in use has disclosed star groups many trillions of miles away, and no one knows what infinity of time and distance may lie beyond that. One would not live even to travel the first lap of the distance, but consciousness can travel the whole distance in a flash. These distances and the time it would take to travel them make no difference whatever to faith. Do you not begin to see what it means to sense eternity, to become a citizen of the universe? Do you not see why the little things of time and space give such small concern to those who, like Jesus for instance, are living in terms of universal and eternal values? Do you not see why we say that the day you discover all this and it becomes reality to you, is such an important day in your life?

From that day on you will see life differently because you will have become a different sort of person. You will see life as a whole and not be centering your gaze just on some little puny fragment of it at a time. Seeing it as a whole, you will perceive its vast, general design, and be able to see where all the seemingly minor details fit in. Then you will begin to understand the things that baffle so many and for so long have baffled you.

That will be the time when you begin to make the continuing journey of life on sure and confident feet. You can look people, days, situations, questions, and the future unshrinkingly in the face. You will have done with flinching and hesitation. The tempest will not terrify you, for you can see the blue sky above the

storm cloud. Difficulties will not dismay you because you can look beyond them. Instead of the problem you will see the solution, instead of the sunset, the dawn, instead of the winter the springtime, instead of failures the new beginnings to which they lead. These are just a few of the things that will start happening to your life the day you begin to sense eternity. These are the things unseen that will begin to manifest in your life!

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THE CHANGED SELF

WHY will all these things happen to your life? Because of all the things that will have happened to you. We have said that from the day you begin to sense eternity life will never again be the same. Now let us add that

neither will you.

Our lives are like looking into a mirror. What we are is but the image of what we see. If we see only a little fragment of life our understanding and action will be gauged by it. If we see our fellow men as animals or machines it means that these are the levels at which our lives are being lived and our work is being done.

If some day we get a glimpse of eternity and begin, even in a small way, to know it as a reality, our lives will begin to take on something of its reach and adequacy because we ourselves have done so.

A great and good man used to be fond of saying to groups of earnest and aspiring young people, "Choose your ideals as early in life as you can, for you need them to build your life around. Choose them true enough that you will still be content with them as your viewpoint matures. Choose them large enough to move around and grow in."

This last is something sensing eternity will surely do for you. It will give you the universe and the forevers in which to hammer out, improve, correct, and finally perfect the pattern of the ultimate you. The day you begin to sense eternity you will be starting on a journey in which there will be no roadblocks or detours unless you make them yourself.

That day will either confirm or correct your purpose and goal, your idea of what to make of your God-given life. If your plans have not been adequate, you will then want to revise them, because you can see ahead farther and more clearly. If you are already on a way that will bring out your best and allow you to express it in the most worthy way, you will see how it all fits in with the larger pattern. You can better judge the road ahead with a field glass or telescope, and a sense of eternity serves that purpose well.

We get along well in the world in proportion to our qualities of personality. Back of force and all phases of temporal power we can see the moving, the transforming, the overpowering influence of human personality. People everywhere are seeking by all kinds of means improvement in this phase of their lives. They spend time, effort, and treasure, learning only a little of what a sense of eternity

Do you want to be an adequate person, living your life in an adequate way? If so, get an adequate viewpoint. You will begin to do so the day you begin to sense the greatness of life framed in eternity.

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FETTERS OR RELEASE?

ONE of the great longings of the human heart is for freedom, but our conceptions of freedom are rather limited. Freedom as we think of it has many facets. One of them is the personal freedom which we try to attain, and which some of us so misuse that it ceases to be freedom and becomes a greater bondage.

There is the political freedom for which the peoples of the world have struggled for centuries, and which our forefathers in this country obtained in unusually large measure, and which we still have to guard lest we lose it by the operation of forces without or within. Its dearness to the hearts of our people is expressed in an inscription on a monument in a New Jersey churchyard - "Of what avail is ship or sail, or land or life, if freedom fail?"

There are various individual freedoms which are precious in varying degrees to different people - freedom of thought, of speech, of worship, and the like. There is the license which some mistake for freedom. Then there is the brightest individual freedom of all - freedom to do right, to follow the best way, and to achieve a place of true honor and credit in the world.

All these are forms of the exercise of the freedom of choice and decision which is a part of the divine image in us, the crown of kingship God himself has placed upon us. Freedom in its essence is greater than all of them taken together. Freedom in its completeness is freedom to attain and live the maximum life and freedom from all that would weaken and hinder our attempts to do so.

Consider this freedom, and you will see that it is as vast as life itself. It is a condition necessary to the growth and development of life to the fulness of its possibilities in all its phases - freedom of mind, of will, of influence, of spirit, of power, in short, of the whole life. As you contemplate these various aspects you will see more and more that freedom is something beyond measure or calculation. At its best it is coexistent and coextensive with life itself, and life at its best is universal and eternal in nature and scope.

With this the sensing of eternity and the discernment of eternal values has everything to do. Sense fetters us and binds us down to a little, restricted, fragmentary, temporary kind of life. It forbids us to reach beyond its narrow limits in either space or time. So living we must know nothing sense cannot recognize and perish with the passing of sense and the things of sense - the things that are seen.

The realization of the unseen breaks all these barriers down and removes all limits to what life may mean or achieve. It reveals the sense life as a localized and temporary phase of existence, and reaches beyond it, defying horizons and

disregarding graves. Sensing eternity and following through with that experience opens the way to knowing the universal thing freedom really is and possessing it for ourselves in its highest form.

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PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, we have looked upon eternity, and we have felt our lives expand to fit the view. Lead us into the fulness of what we were born to be, and make us worthy of it in all things. Amen.

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And so, Beloved Centurion, until our next study period together, God bless you and keep you. God make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. God lift up the light of His countenance upon you and help you find your way to the person you dream yourself to be. May you find the perfect state of Eternal Life.

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR.