

What Occurs After Death?

By H. Spencer Lewis, Ph. D., F. R. C.



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Man is at all times dual in nature, but not dual in consciousness except when he is in a perfectly normal living state, in his normal, physical body. The moment the brain consciousness or the physical consciousness of the physical body is inhibited, made dormant, or suspended by accident, injury, drugs or any other cause, man is then of one consciousness, a Divine, psychic consciousness.

Now we have the question as to what occurs after death. Some might say when reading this, "My, what a cheerful subject," and I say, "Yes, it is *rather* cheerful." After all, the more we understand about so-called death, the more we know about what occurs at the great moment transition takes place.

In twenty-five years of talking with individuals who have been in sorrow and grief over some transition that has just occurred, or who are sick and anticipate that transition may be close at hand, I have found that their great anxiety, their great worry, their great depression concerning transition or so-called death is due to their fear of it. To the average individual, it is one of the two great mysterious events in life. It is a fact that we know little about what occurs before birth. There is more of the greatest chemical, physiological, magnetic, pathological,

scientific mystery connected with birth than there is with any other pathological process known to nature. We have delved into the mysteries of what happens after we leave this plane, but science has been able to tell us little about what occurs before life comes to this plane.

The average person also seldom attempts to understand the mysteries of so-called transition and is greatly misled and misinformed. We hear, for instance, in all of the Christian churches a constant repetition of the statement that there is no death. It would seem to be a slogan of the Christian Church and it would seem to be the keynote to a hopeful message that these churches and religions want to establish in the minds of the populace and individuals. It would seem to be the one silver or golden note that makes man or woman here on earth accept the situations as they come, battle on against all obstacles and fight for all that is worth-while—this one grand and glorious statement that "there is no death."

Yet while this very same slogan may be written in gold letters and represented by a band of ribbon in the church, and may be recited in the rituals, there are songs that are sung in the same churches that speak of death and the fear of it, and your preparation for it. There is a funeral ritual that paints a picture of death as the most horrifying condition. There is everything around us and about us in these churches to remind us of the terribleness of death, and yet we are told there is no death.

To the mystic, neither of these statements, that death is terrible or there is no death, is true, nor does he speak of these things in such a manner. There is no death to some things and some parts of man, but there is nothing terrible, nothing mysterious about it. We speak of the immortality

of the soul, or hear it spoken of in rituals and doctrines as though that were the only part of man that continued to exist after so-called death—after transition; and yet I would like to *make plain to you in a few words at this time*, and perhaps in more words at some other time in another discourse, the fact that the body, the physical part of man is no more subject to death, annihilation, than is the immortal soul and spirit of man.

All that man is composed of, physically, is of the dust of the earth, from the food he eats, the water he drinks, the air he breathes; and the physical part of man is truly the chemical elements of the earth. At transition these elements return to earth and whether the body is cremated and the ashes deposited in the soil, or whether the body, itself, is deposited in the soil, the physical elements of the physical part of man continue to live, for every test and every demonstration shows that the fundamental laws of cohesion and adhesion do exist. There is a retroactive action going on. There is a chemical action going on. There is every kind of action going on in that physical body that there was ever going on in it when alive. It may be a reverse action. These elements return to earth and they become once again the simplest elements from which they came and they help to form new life—new vegetation on the earth plane. They begin again a new cycle and we can easily and truthfully and beautifully think of the physical elements of our body as contributing to some of the beautiful vegetation, the flowers and other forms of life that nature evolves from the simplest elements in filling the earth with life.

There is no death to the physical part of man's body; but aside from this point, which is only incidental in my

talk tonight, I want to speak of what occurs at the moment of transition and thereafter. First of all, from this moment on, let me say that I do not want to use the word "death." I prefer to use the word "transition;" and hope the day will come when our newspapers and magazines will stop using the word, "death." We pick up the Sunday paper and read an editorial, perhaps a religious editorial; it may have the very subject, "There is no death," and then we turn to the news columns and find a list of persons who died, or that death has taken this one or that one. To be consistent, this word should be eliminated.

The majority of the people belong to a church or organization that holds to the principle that the real part of man is immortal; therefore, the word "death" should be eliminated, and I will eliminate it now during the rest of my discourse.

After all, what does occur at transition? It is merely a change. I spoke in another address of what you could observe in the unconscious body that is still living. I said if you ever looked upon a person who was in a faint, or unconscious from drugs or anesthetic, you would find there is a normal body with all of the normal activities to maintain life, and that all that was missing was a form of brain consciousness. I said that the Divine or mental consciousness, the mind consciousness of the real inner self was intact, uninjured, unchanged by the outer change that had taken place. All the outer change had done, whether by injury, accident or anesthetic, drugs, or temporary indisposition by faint from weakness, was to close the eyes against seeing (although the eyelids may be open), shut

the ears against hearing, the nose against smelling, the tongue against tasting, and fingers against feeling.

With these five faculties shut off from making any impressions and conveying any intelligence and being able to send forth any intelligence, the brain consciousness of the individual was closed like a book, temporarily. Inwardly, however, the Divine consciousness, the consciousness of God, was maintaining its state of activity. It was keeping the heart beating to the proper rhythm; it was keeping the lungs breathing; it was keeping the various other organs of the body functioning with their rhythm; in fact, so keen is that consciousness that if that unconscious body were taken from a warm room into a cold room, the temperature of the body would automatically change to meet the conditions in the new room, and any other disturbance would be met. If the arms were violently exercised by some apparatus or by someone doing it, the heart would beat faster to make up for the exercise. There is a knowledge, mind control and consciousness guarding and protecting that unconscious body despite the fact that the outer consciousness sleeps.

Now, I pointed out that this so-called unconscious state of the person was only temporary. At transition we have the same situation, but it remains permanent. Transition is nothing more or less, physically and pathologically, than the separation of the two *forms of consciousness*. In the case of transition, the Divine consciousness withdraws itself from the body instead of remaining and this leaves the brain consciousness incapable of any further activity. So we have the soul of man, the mind consciousness, the Divine, immortal consciousness in man, withdrawing at the time of transition. True, disease may have been

responsible and we find at transition an abnormal condition, an injured body; but we have found in many cases, and the physicians and coroners find every day, the bodies of those where transition has occurred without the slightest injury, with no sign of disease, where the heart just stopped and the great separation has taken place. Now after we look at this physical body that is left after this change, we find it is a perfectly normal creation; that is, if disease or accident has not injured it. We find it has all of its parts; it has the necessary blood; it has all of the elements necessary for a living body, but there is no life. There is no action. We find the blood standing still and, because there is no combustion taking place in the system, no heat is being manufactured, and the temperature of the blood is lowered. The blood becomes cold and by standing still it coagulates; the physical body simply becomes inactive by degrees, moment by moment because the great controlling intelligence has left.

This brings us to the point of the very wonderful and beautiful statement in Genesis where it is said that man was formed out of the dust of the earth; God brought together from all of the elements of the physical earth those things needed to make the physical body. The body was formed and there was breathed into it the breath of life, and man became a living soul. You see in that brief statement the duality of man—how the physical part may be formed perfectly, but no matter how perfectly the body may be formed and how well proportioned, it is only a body of clay until the breath of life, soul, enters and makes it a living soul.

They say that for 66 cents, you can find in a pharmacy shop all the chemical elements that compose man's body;

but that only makes the physical body. We cannot make the real part of man out of the chemical elements. You could not take the physical body after transition no matter how well preserved, even though the eyelashes were still on the eyelids, and turn it into a *living body* by any chemical process. It takes more than electricity as some scientists have tried to figure out, and it takes more than oxygen. Look at those cases where transition is close at hand and the person's outer consciousness has already closed its pages. When a person is in a so-called state of coma, he is brought oxygen; he has oxygen added to his system, but the most it has ever done is to encourage or strengthen the weakened heart a little for one or two days more, but transition has always been inevitable. Man has found no substitute for that Divine substance when once it begins to leave or once it has gone. Of this dual man, the materialistic schools put all the emphasis on the physical part of man, that part which is so largely water. For instance, after cremation and extreme heat, when all moisture is drawn out, you have only a few pounds—that which can chemically be bought for 66 cents—and which from every point of view, is nothing more than a gathering-up of the elements you may have in the garden of your homes. That, the materialistic schools point out, is *the great man*. They study minutely every one of these little cells, and get excited over the fact that they have found that one of the little cells of the nail in the finger is similar to the fibrous cell of a plant in the garden. They get excited over such a discovery. A trusting child does not do that. He simply says, "Mama, Papa, if we must eat to live and eating keeps us alive, then my body must be formed by some of the meal and

mush and milk and things of that kind that I eat; and if I go out in the oat field, I will find some of the things that keep me alive." And it would be true. A little child doesn't get excited over that discovery, but science does. Its view-point instead of being broad is narrow.

That is the way to look at the material part of man and see nothing. The other side is reached by those schools of mystics, metaphysicians, and philosophers who say that is *not* the real part of man. The inner intelligence of man, that which, according to the Bible, is called the living soul is the *real you*. We note in that statement that man becomes a living soul in a living body. So at transition we find the two dualities being separated, broken down into two distinct entities—the physical body and the soul.

Note through all the years of time, with all the ancient methods of burial and all the ancient methods of caring for those at transition, all sacred rituals and writings say that to dust man doth return. They expect the return of the physical part of man to its original sources. There is nothing horrifying or mysterious about it—that the physical body of man should go back to the source from whence it came. We should have no difficulty in seeing, rationally, the wisdom of that principle, as well as the great fundamental law that the invisible part of man returns to its original source. So at transition we find the physical part and the spiritual part separated, each going to its original source from whence it came, separating from each other moment by moment, hour by hour, until the whole universe is between them.

Now we are particularly interested in what occurs after this separation has taken place. We have, in recent years,

comparatively speaking, a number of schools to explain the possibility and probability of what occurs after transition. We have foremost among the schools one which attempts to claim the greatest teachings—the Spiritualistic School. This system claims that the soul or spirit of man, being immortal, ascends into a heavenly or Divine and spiritual world where it continues to live with its consciousness and personality, and that it is not only conscious of itself, but conscious of the attendance of others around it; conscious of the identity of those still remaining here, and not only capable of communicating and talking to those around it, but can talk and communicate with those who are still on this earth plane. They go further and state that these disembodied or spiritual bodies are capable of returning here momentarily, temporarily, or upon call and request of those on the earth plane. These are the claims set forth by that school. There are other schools which agree to the same fundamental proposition that the soul or spirit of man ascends to a spiritual kingdom; but they claim that it waits in an unconscious state for an ultimate Judgment Day when it will be enlivened with other souls, and physical bodies will be called from the graves. In this new day and new kingdom, the good and evildoers will be judged.

There are some schools which claim that after the soul ascends to a heavenly or spiritual world it dwells in an unconscious or semi-conscious state, and that it never returns again to the earth. There are other schools of thought in the Orient—with millions of followers—that hold that after the spirit ascends to Heaven, it remains in a suspended, conscious state until some other time when it

is absorbed into the consciousness of God, and loses its identity entirely by becoming a part of God again.

So we have these different thoughts, and you will note that most of these systems are highly speculative. One thing is certain—the average teacher or preacher who is expounding any one of these systems or philosophies has never been there and is not talking from first-hand knowledge. Such doctrines are highly speculative. A great many of these systems are based on the statements in Holy or sacred writings. Some from the Christian Bible, some from the writings of Buddha, and Confucius, some from Zoroaster, and some from writings going farther back than any of these. Even opposing schools will use the same Biblical quotations to prove their contentions, by giving a different translation or interpretation to the same statement.

You, as a seeker, you as a student, must form your own conclusions when you come face to face with opposing, contending, and different statements of all these systems. Very few agree on any one point. You find with any of these systems of thought their ideals are based on speculation, and your opinion and your conclusion is just as good as anyone else's. There are, however, some things that are known that occur after transition, or at the moment of transition, by those who have been on the borderline and yet did not cross over it, and who have come back to tell us of their experiences. Those people have the most reliable information we can have. It is to be noted that the statements of those who have been temporarily on the borderline of transition, who have been walking, let us say, the Great Path to the Great Gate, and then came back and did not pass through—the statements of these persons

from various parts of the world agree, whereas statements from those who have never had such experiences are speculative and do not agree.

Yes, we have a mass of information from those who have claimed to go to the spirit world and are giving messages through mediums, automatic writing, spirit photography and *inspirational talks, etc.*; but from the thousands and thousands of books written under such influence, it is interesting to note that the reports of what is going on in the spirit world do not agree. Sometimes they are quite amusing. I remember reading one not long ago, reported through a medium, who said he was still laying bricks in building houses. He had been a brick-layer here on this earth plane and therefore could think of no other important trade. Others make reports on all sorts of things. There are statements from those stating that in Heaven one passes the time leisurely away and there is no work and no effort. Others tell us that they know each other and speak to each other. Some say they have marriages and that even children are born. Sometimes they say there are big buildings up there. I could go on and repeat the many, many statements, the contradictory statements; they all disagree. From those that have been on the borderline, the reports are all alike.

In one case an electrician was not expected to live for more than twenty-eight hours. He had been shocked by high voltage. He was taken to the hospital in an unconscious state, believed to have passed through transition; he was covered over with a sheet; the door was closed; the doctor notified the undertaker to take his body to the morgue, and in every way he was considered to be lifeless.

Suddenly they began to feel a little warmth, showing indications of life that startled the nurses.

Then there is the statement of a woman, believed to have passed through transition for twenty-four hours. She was deeply religious in an orthodox, Methodist sense, and was intolerant of any viewpoint other than that which was prescribed by her church. Her report after she came back was like that of the electrician.

Then there is the little girl in the Montreal Hospital, just able to talk and describe in a childish way what she experienced. She had never heard of such an experience before, had no idea of what Heaven was like, yet her report was identical with all the others, even that of a philosopher. And what do they report?

There is first a great lightening of the body. That seems to be the first outstanding thing that impresses them. Long before they are willing to let the nurse or doctor know something peculiar is going on, they begin to sense they are not lying heavily. At first they think it is imagination; then they begin to sense a warmth and the lightness begins to feel as though they could spring from bed and nothing could keep them from it. The room that was only a few feet away, begins to look as though it were many, many feet away. It is not that their eyesight becomes blurred as they still recognize certain persons, and witnesses show that to the last moment they were able to recognize their presence. It is not a blurred eyesight, but a matter of Fourth Dimension. They are beginning to sense themselves in a world that has another dimension that they have never sensed before. They begin to feel that they are existing in the Fourth Dimension.

None of them, except the philosopher, knew anything about the Fourth Dimension. Then the voices of those that were talking together, begin to get further away until it sounds as though they were off at the end of the hall. This is a great moment with them because of the closing-out of physical impressions. Eventually they can see nothing but themselves. They see themselves lying on the bed. They see their physical bodies, not from their own eyes, but from another sense of vision. They say they seem to be six or seven feet away and above themselves, looking down on their own physical bodies, and between them and the physical body there seems to extend a haze. One described it as an aura, another like the silver thread spoken of in religious writing. Another described it as being similar to the umbilical cord, only not so solid. The fact is that they see something between themselves and the physical body, and they feel the separation gradually taking place. I have seen about a hundred letters in the last twenty years from those who felt they did not desire to go back to the physical body to stop the separation. However, there is this one feeling, of sorrow for those who are weeping, and they sense that sorrow. They feel they must go back to relieve the sorrow, but as for themselves, the lightness, the sense of great peace and the sense of music so intangible that they can hardly hear it, are pleasant sensations; while the freedom from all pain is a relief and is an impelling urge to let the separation continue. Bear in mind the man with a leg cut off, who looked down upon himself and saw the mutilated body, but the part rising above had all of its parts, and no pain. There was absolute freedom from all suffering; and that is why there is no desire to go back into the physical body

again. There seems to be a dual power — one trying to hold them to the physical body and one drawing them away, and so they waver in that state.

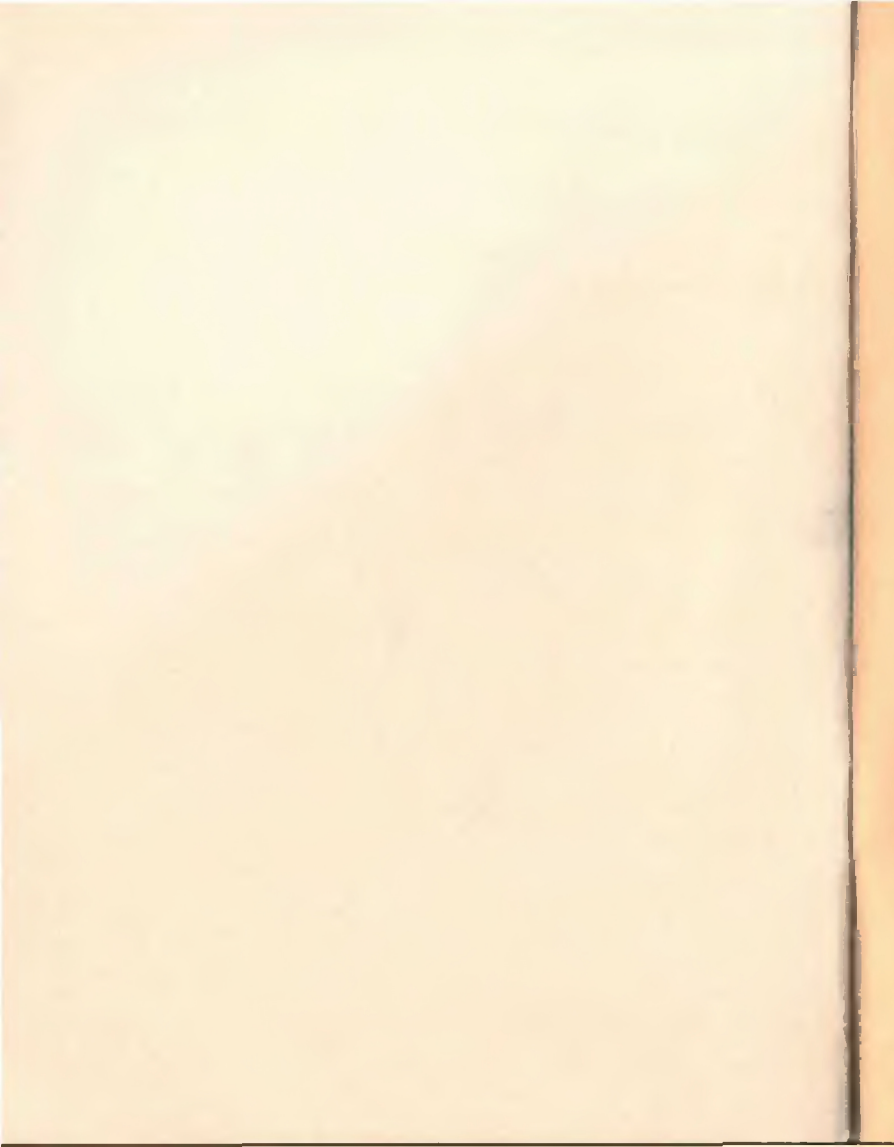
Finally, in the case of those who made the reports, they are drawn back into the physical body. They feel themselves cramped, shut in and crushed, and immediately the physical actions and powers begin to come back; they begin to feel warm instead of the cooling sensation; they begin to feel heavy and weighted down as though there was a load on their chests. It is hard for them to breathe. The eyelids are hard to open and yet they gradually do, and that is the first sign to the doctor that they are coming back; he sees the eyelids begin to quiver. He sees a struggle. Sometimes it is one, two, or three days before they are able to speak. They know all that is going on about them, but the body is heavy and cramped. They know something must be done to relieve the suffering and weeping of the beloved ones.

That is their picture of the borderline condition and they not only all agree, but give us the most understandable report. Here is a great story, a great picture. What a wonderful thing life is, and yet how painless and how beautiful transition can be.

Because my time is limited, I cannot go on and tell you what occurs after what their statements indicate, but I would have you think over these things again in the meantime, whenever you have a few moments. The lightness of the body, the expanding space, and the beauty of the haze surrounding them. The ability to see themselves, showing the dual consciousness, showing that the Divine

Consciousness can be independent of the physical body. Sometime you will understand more about it. I think in the future it will be well to have a discourse on the subject, "Why Are Some Earthbound?" and explain why some persons feel that they cannot get away, and must stay here near the physical body. So with these few words to think about, I believe you will be able to build up an idea and picture of transition.





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