

“The Esoteric Perspective on Death”

Presentation, April 18, 2021, online for the Seattle Theosophical Society, by Stanton Stevens

Online resources:

<http://www.laurency.com> – All that has been translated into English is available here.

The Basic Esoteric Dictionary, The Explanation, Knowledge of Reality, all good starting points

<http://www.lucitrust.org/> - The writings of the Tibetan, Dwal Khul, via Alice A. Bailey

<http://theosophical.org/> - The Theosophical Society, the first reintroduction of Esoterics to the public.

<http://onepurelove.com> - Stanton’s website; talks, transcripts, and handouts are there with articles.

<https://esotericlaw.com> – A presentation of the Esoteric truths, with a forum and a mini-course.

Books:

Laurency: Only two Laurency books are available in print in English (though all are in print in Swedish).

Both are available at Quest bookshop or can be ordered from the Laurency website mentioned above.

Knowledge of Reality - a review of Eastern and Western philosophies, contrasted with Hylozoics

The Philosopher’s Stone – cosmology, evolution, the stages of humanity, higher worlds

The other Laurency books mentioned in the quotes below are available online. I highly recommend Laurency’s presentation. It is clear, concise, free of misunderstood Sanskrit and other terms that are too often ambiguous. Both of the books above are excellent, containing an overview of Pythagorean Hylozoics and the essential facts of reality.

Also, mentioned in today’s talk:

The Other Side of Death, C.W. Leadbeater

<https://www.theosophy.world/resource/ebooks/otherside-death> - over a hundred years old now, but full of fascinating thoughts and experiences on the topic, by the great Theosophist Leadbeater.

Esoteric Healing, Alice A. Bailey

A Treatise on White Magic, Alice A. Bailey

The AAB books above are actually by a Tibetan Adept, who has progressed beyond the human kingdom. They are the ultimate source of information on Esoteric topics, released to guide those who are on the path to enlightenment and transcendence from human life. They are advanced material, for those who can meditate to take advantage of the teachings.

Ongoing:

Alice A. Bailey study group – Led by Karen Johannsen: ksjohannsen@gmail.com

Laurency discussion group – online, please contact me if you are interested.

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Quotes

“Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that, unless we love the truth, we cannot know it.”

== Blaise Pascal

“Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased by tales, so is the other.”

== Francis Bacon

Esoteric Healing, Alice A. Bailey

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As regards those who have passed into the light, whom you want to help, follow them with your love, remembering that they are still the same people, minus the outer limiting shroud of body. Serve them, but seek not that they should serve your need of them. Go to them, but seek not to bring them back to you.

It is physical plane life that is the purgatory, and life experience that is the school of drastic discipline. Let us not fear death, or that which lies beyond it. The wise disciple labours in the field of service but looks forward steadily to the dawn of the "clear, cold light" into which he will some day enter, and so close the chapter for a while upon the fever and the friction and the pain of earth existence. But there are other phases of life experience wherein the sense of futility and frustration meets the server in the world today.

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The growth of etheric vision and the largely increased numbers of clairaudient and clairvoyant people is steadily revealing the existence of the astral plane and the etheric counterpart of the physical world. More and more people are becoming aware of this subjective realm: they see people walking around who are either the so-called "dead" or who, in sleep, have dropped the physical sheath.

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But people are apt to forget that every night in the hours of sleep we die to the physical plane and are alive and functioning elsewhere. They forget that they have already achieved facility in leaving the physical body; because they cannot as yet bring back into the physical brain consciousness the recollection of that passing out, and of the subsequent interval of active living, they fail to relate death and sleep. Death is, after all, only a longer interval in the life of physical plane functioning; one has only "gone abroad" for a longer period. But the process of daily sleep and the process of occasional dying are identical, with the one difference that in sleep the magnetic thread or current of energy along which the life force streams is preserved intact, and constitutes the path of return to the body. In death, this life thread is broken or snapped. When this has happened, the conscious entity cannot return to the dense physical body, and that body, lacking the principle of coherence, then disintegrates.

A Treatise on White Magic, Alice A. Bailey

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I speak about Death as one who knows the matter from the outer world experience and the inner life expression: There is no death. There is, as you know, entrance into fuller life. There is freedom from the handicaps of the fleshly vehicle. The rending process so much dreaded does not exist, except in the cases of violent and sudden death, and then the only true disagreeables are an instant and

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overwhelming sense of imminent peril and destruction and something closely approaching an electric shock. No more. For the unevolved, death is literally a sleep and a forgetting, for the mind is not sufficiently awakened to react, and the storehouse of memory is as yet practically empty. For the average good citizen, death is a continuance of the living process in his consciousness and a carrying forward of the interests and tendencies of the life. His consciousness and his sense of awareness are the same and unaltered. He does not sense much difference, is well taken care of, and oft is unaware that he has passed through the episode of death. For the wicked and cruelly selfish, for the criminal and for those few who live for the material side only, there eventuates that condition which we call "earth-bound." The links they have forged with earth and the earthward bias of all their desires, force them to remain close to the earth and their last setting in the earth environment. They seek desperately and by every possible means to re-contact it and to re-enter. In a few cases, great personal love for those left behind, or the nonfulfillment of a recognised and urgent duty, holds the good and beautiful in a somewhat similar condition. For the aspirant, death is an immediate entrance into a sphere of service and of expression to which he is well accustomed and which he at once recognises as not new. In his sleeping hours he has developed a field of active service and of learning. He now simply functions in it for the entire twenty-four hours (talking in terms of physical plane time) instead of for his usual few hours of earthly sleep.

The Way of Man, Henry T. Laurency
Chapter 4 The Physical Being of the First Self

4.16 Discarnation

1 Against our modern enormous scientific authorities the esoterician maintains (vainly, of course) that science cannot decide when a man is truly dead. Still they do not seem to know that a man is not “dead” merely because he has ceased breathing and his heart has ceased beating. He is “dead” only when his etheric envelope has finally left the organism and the thread of life (the sutratma) has been severed, the thread connecting the heart centre of the etheric envelope with the heart centres of the higher envelopes. Then not even a cosmic self is able to resuscitate that man. But as long as the etheric envelope has not left the organism, man is fully aware of what is happening around him, for example, hears everything said, although he is unable to react in any way.

2 The process of death is by no means the simple procedure that ignorance thinks, but instead a troublesome one. In addition it can be rather unpleasant, as appears from the instructions given to facilitate the separation from the two physical envelopes. It takes time before the centres of the etheric envelope have been freed from the attachment to the glandular system of the organism, the centres of the emotional envelope from the coalescence with those of the etheric envelope, and physical consciousness has ceased functioning. The only fully sure sign of death is that decomposition has begun. As a rule it takes twelve hours for the emotional envelope with higher envelopes to pull out the etheric envelope from the organism. In extreme cases it takes 36 hours or even longer.

4.17 Physical Life is the Most Important

5 Physical life is the essential life, since only in the physical world can all qualities and abilities be acquired, can man (thanks to his faculty of objective consciousness) liberate himself from emotional illusoriness and mental fictitiousness.

7 The only true hell is the physical world. It is in this world each individual must acquire all the necessary qualities and become his own “saviour” (from more incarnations). It is in this world that he must acquire causal consciousness and become a second self. It is in the physical world that “the kingdom of god” shall be realized.

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4.19 Health

7 The custom of burying human corpses with all their germs of disease, as well as the custom of manuring the earth with human excrements, has had the effect that the earth is thoroughly poisoned. Nowadays also the water is poisoned since faeces are flushed out into lakes. Plants assimilate germs of disease and pass them on, and fish as well. When, some time in the future, science has realized this fact, cremation will be made compulsory and human waste be neutralized in special factories. Cultivated earth with its germs of disease will be disinfected. Many hundreds of years later we may expect that the diseases brought to us through the vegetable life will be eradicated.

Chapter 5 The Emotional Being of the First Self

5.20 The Illusoriness of the Emotional World

9 It cannot be too forcefully inculcated that the individual must be skeptical to all phenomena in the emotional world. In that world there is nothing corresponding to permanent reality. The emotional world is and will remain the world of illusions, however intensely its reality manifests itself. This fact is constantly forgotten by clairvoyants and by other people who have passed over to that world.

10 The emotional world is the least “spiritual” of all worlds, and beings in that world are, on account of its irremediable illusoriness, quite unable to come into contact with the planetary hierarchy. That is why people are asked to try, as soon as possible after so-called death, to liberate themselves from their emotional envelopes and to pass to the mental world. They do so by refusing to take any interest in the pertaining phenomena and by directing their attention to mental ideas. Thereby the emotional envelope will not be supplied with new energies but will dissolve out of powerlessness.

Chapter 9 The Second Self, Part 1

9.25 Insights on the Path

5 We must want to live and want to live to serve evolution, mankind, and unity. There is no death, just the putting off of worn-out envelopes of incarnation. Life is an unbroken continuity if we see it from the view-point of reincarnation and know that the new life actually begins where the old life ended. (We are born in the same sun sign and in the same rising sign we “died” in, with our causal chain unbroken; a fact we shall find when we as causal selves can trace the chain of reincarnation. It is an unbroken life; symbolically spoken, a five hundred years life, where each day is a new incarnation.)

Knowledge of Life Three, Henry T. Laurency

Chapter 9 Spiritualism

9.1 Spritualism

18 What spiritualists call “spirits” are people in their emotional envelopes. What they call “spirits” may also be emotional corpses (elementaries) the original possessors of which have moved to the mental world. Those corpses (aggregates of emotional matter) have their collective consciousness and can be activated by the vibrations emitted by the people attending the séance. This collective consciousness retains the memory of everything the individual experienced when he used the envelope.

23 The warnings issued concern two procedures, in particular. The medium lends his organism with its etheric envelope to any emotional being whatever. Then the medium does not know what is being done and said. The medium is unable to check whether the information given is correct or not. Apart from the fact that mediums often fall victim to fraudulent manipulations, the individuals appearing and taking possession of the medium’s organism with its etheric envelope all too often are under the spell of their

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own illusions. Only causal selves are able to judge whether the individuals appearing are the persons they claim to be and whether the information they give is exact. No highly developed human beings want to use the envelopes of other people. The information given is generally exceedingly unreliable, often positively erroneous, most often it just reflects what the people present “know”. No new valuable facts are received. And the medium incurs very great risks.

Chapter 10 Life Between Incarnations

10.1 There Is No Death

2 The monad can lose its self-identity for some time. That happens when, at “rebirth”, the monad loses its continuity of consciousness. You cannot speak of the monad losing its self-identity until it has acquired one, which occurs in the human kingdom. Man can certainly lose his self-identity, which is what repeatedly happens at each incarnation. However, this self-identity exists in man’s causal envelope. And when he has become a causal self, he can study all his previous incarnations and identify himself with the self-consciousness there is in them all. He has gained permanent continuity of consciousness and, with it, an unlosable self-identity as well. “Eternal now” or “eternal present” means unlosable continuity of consciousness, since the self always lives in the present and has a constant self-identity. Thus there is no death, only new forms for the monad to inhabit.

5 If people knew that they have “died” thousands of times and will do it many times yet, they would not worry, as they do, about their liberation from the physical organism.

6 Normal death means that an envelope is discarded that has ceased to offer the self opportunities of new experience and further consciousness development. Nothing is more pitiful than witnessing the care taken to preserve a useless frame. Still people are so ignorant of life that they believe that “death is the end of it all”, whereas it is the liberator from an existence unfit for life.

9 We are exhorted to look forward to life in the emotional world with joyous anticipation. Then we shall not be deceived either. There more than ever the motto holds good, “be done to you as you wish” (“believe”, for imagination is creative). We can make it an exciting adventure. Fighting against the process is a big mistake, which only increases suffering and delays our liberation.

10.3 The Process of Dying

4 The unconscious state at death is one of the many phenomena in the life of the organism that we should not call rational. Before the body has cooled, memory pictures of the individual’s entire life glide like a panorama through his brain consciousness. Subsequently he is capable only of perceiving what is going on around him, but quite incapable of activity of his own.

5 In the case of suicides this process goes on until the symptoms of decomposition appear. In other cases of sudden death (accidents, etc.), when the body has been deformed, the brain crushed, etc., and thus normal separation is not possible, Augoeides steps in, releasing the envelopes. In the case of suicide, the individual has “taken his fate into his own hands” and in so doing loses the right to receive help from Augoeides.

6 Suicides do not remain by their organisms (as many people say). They live in the emotional world. But they are held in the moods that dominated them at their “transition” during all the time “normally” corresponding to their physical life time, something that only the authorities of incarnation are able to judge.

7 The etheric envelope belongs to the organism, not the other way round. It dissolves along with the organism (Knowledge of Reality 3.5.11). When the organism is cremated or “exploded”, the emotional envelope is released from the etheric envelope.

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9 Within one hundred years (*stated in approximately 1965*), it will be possible to photograph the process of dying, to observe how the etheric envelope is released from the organism, and the emotional envelope from the etheric envelope. The condition of this is a series of scientific innovations involving the sensitivity of the film as well as a combination of electricity and photography enabling researchers to film material forms in the four lower emotional molecular kinds (48:4-7).

10.5 Life Between Incarnations in the Emotional World

1 Life between incarnations can be divided into three different periods: life in the emotional world, life in the mental world, and the sleeping state in the causal envelope in the causal world after all the envelopes of incarnation are dissolved.

9 The emotional world is the world of feelings, and feelings intensified a thousandfold, so that you understand why the ancients talked about the lowest regions as hell. Hatred is the only means of expression there. Anyone who refuses to give his attention to these manifestations of hatred, however, will acquire the quality of “invulnerability” (particularly valuable since the desire to take revenge and persecute is weakened in the process).

10 In the higher regions of the emotional world, you will find everything mankind has fantasized about at all times. You will experience it with a sense of intensive reality impossible to doubt. Everything is there: heaven with all its content, all people you have learnt about in history are there in lifelike replicas speaking whatever you know or have read about them, all manner of exalted beings. And it is all mere illusion, but impossible to see through.

11 Life in the emotional world is the life of illusions affording no possibility of contact with reality. It is impossible to ascertain facts or do any kind of research there. Whatever you know is what you believe you know. Those who gained esoteric knowledge in their physical lives will probably try to teach it to the ignorant. But people refuse to learn, as usual. They are content with the fictions they have once acquired. On the other hand, it seems easier to make people in the higher regions strive to acquire some percentage of the qualities of affection and compassion, so that in new incarnations they will be able to demonstrate those.

12 It is necessary to particularly emphasize that the emotional world is no world of knowledge, that no knowledge can be obtained from that world, that all so-called knowledge derived from it is some sort of illusion.

13 In the emotional world, there are many aspirants to discipleship who are eager to help and to teach. They set up groups which newcomers can join. Many people who were teachers of esoterics in their physical lives lecture to those who want to listen to their message.

14 Generally speaking, the aspirant’s language determines which group he will join, since language is still the means of communication. The more languages you can speak, the more groups you will be able to contact.

15 There are still relatively few individuals, however, who upon their emancipation from their physical envelopes are able to do some useful work in the emotional and mental worlds: informing, orienting, inspiring people, and doing them good in other ways. Most people are too ignorant of the conditions of such service, and they are disoriented themselves.

16 By and large, the life of consciousness the individual leads there is determined by what interests he cultivated in his physical life.

20 Suffering in the emotional world is due to unbridled imagination: the keeping of attention on unsatisfied physical desires, imagined terrors created by fear, dependence on the opinions of other

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people with the ensuing vulnerability. Man can liberate himself from all these things using his purposive will, by refusing to pay attention to them. To sum up: Suffering is due to “wrong identification”.

21 People’s fear of the “afterlife” is the triumph of satanism, reinforced by the fictions that theologians have manufactured to retain their “power over souls”. There is nothing to fear. All emotional suffering depends on the individual’s own illusions and the vibrations they produce in his emotional envelope.

22 In the emotional world, you can sow good or bad sowings for future incarnations by your consciousness expressions. However, the reaping effect of old sowing manifests itself in physical life only. Therefore, you do not “reap” in the emotional and mental worlds.

Chapter 11 Reincarnation

11.8 Discarnation

1 For the individual, it is always a benefit to put off his physical envelope. It is by no means as gratifying, however, to be forced to incarnate again, to lose one’s consciousness, and to have to start all over again, to grow up in ignorance, to be idiotized by all the teachers of spurious wisdom, and then to use a large part of one’s life to free oneself of all illusions and fictions that have been impressed on one’s brain subsequently to attain one’s true level, perhaps late in life.

2 We do not lose our loved ones through death. We find them again in the emotional world. Those who belong to our “esoteric family” and with whom we have been connected during thousands of incarnations we shall recognize in the causal world when we have acquired causal consciousness. True love is a bond between individuals, which can never be broken and which always reunite them both in the physical world and in higher worlds, when they meet again in new incarnations.

3 Life between incarnations in the emotional and mental worlds has of old been called “periods of rest”. It is true that in those worlds we need not work for clothes, food, shelter, etc. As regards life in the emotional world, however, it is in emotional respect at least as tumultuous as physical life. Moralists there are at least as aggressive and go on spreading their poisonous gossip with the same frenzy as in the physical. And heated disputes are endlessly going on about religious, political, etc., views. Hatred spews out its venom at all who are “different”. In that world, no one can any longer conceal his feelings, though still his thoughts, if they can be prevented from affecting feelings. Now, if not before, one is convinced that mankind is at the stage of hatred and in the lower regions of the emotional world. The higher regions are almost empty, for few there are who have acquired noble feelings, and when hatred goes out the emotional envelope dissolves.