

Title

LIFE AND ITS MYSTERIES

By
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About this eBook

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LIFE AND ITS MYSTERIES

Preface

Life and Its Mysteries first appeared in serial form in *The New Age* magazine, and in response to numerous requests they are herewith published in one volume with their permission. A few revisions have been made and two chapters added entitled: "Future Life of Animals," and "Answers to Questions."

This book attempts to explain in a clear and logical manner some of life's mysteries. Mystery, of course is only absence of knowledge, for when we understand a thing it ceases to be a mystery. But since we never will know all, there will always be mysteries. Some of the views expressed may not appeal to the orthodox or to the materialist, but they will prove acceptable to those who are seeking light regarding the deeper things of life—and to those who have in their home a chair forevermore vacant. For the subject of immortality is today engrossing the interest of millions of people all over the world. Sorrow, suffering, devastation

and death are clearing the earth of error and superstition and preparing the way for an influx of truth and knowledge of life beyond. When a dearly beloved one departs from terrestrial scenes belief in a vague hypothetical hereafter is of scant value. *THEN*, only definite knowledge of factual immortality is able to assuage grief and provide positive assurance of continued life and love and certainty of reunion.

We devoutly hope that the thoughts presented in this book will acquaint people with the truth of immortality; bring them comfort and consolation, and a better understanding of life and its mysteries. The reader, we hope, may have some of the peace and contentment which we ourselves have derived from this knowledge. We are deeply grateful for the help we have received from others in the preparation of this book.

Frank L. Hammer

1. Birth

Strange, indeed, that people who have implicit faith in life after death should imagine the soul to be new at birth. They do not reason deeply enough. If the soul lives after death it must, of necessity, live before birth, as the circle of immortality is not complete unless the living come from the "dead" as well as pass to them.

The soul has lived before, and is merely awakened when it comes to earth, being borne from another state to continue its development. Physical birth clothes the soul with a body of flesh, and countless people think this body the real man. "I am tired," "I am hungry," "I am sick," etc.; are common yet erroneous expressions, for it is the body clamoring for rest, food or attention.

And in this article we are confining our statements to man, the spirit; therefore, there need be no conflict with the theories entertained as to his physical origin. There are scores of volumes on anthropology, and every theory supported by an imposing list of authorities.

Questions most frequently asked pertaining to Birth we shall try to answer in this chapter. Those who believe that man's ancestry is animal usually ask this question: "At what stage of evolution did man come into possession of a soul, and evolve from an animal into a human being?" Man has always been man and a human being. But it was many ages before the soul spoke and the man heard, and in appearance resembled the brute more than the present form of humanity. But no one, regardless of animal propensities or aspect, ever was or is devoid of soul. Man is a child of God, not an offspring of a monkey. Both his origin and destiny are spiritual.

"Does the soul enter the body at conception, during gestation, or at birth?" There is a wide divergence of opinion on this subject. The truth is the union of soul and body begins at the time of conception, but is complete only at the moment of birth. The soul is related to the body as a cause to an effect, and is the matrix from which the body is formed. The cry when uttered by the infant announces that memory and thought have united, and that he is now numbered among the living. But it is only by growth and gradual development that he learns the use of his earthly instruments, the brain and the body.

"Were all souls created at the same time?" There is no age to the soul. It was never born; it can never die. It is part of the Deity and partakes of His Nature, changeless, eternal and indestructible. When occult students say: "He (or she) is a very old soul," they have reference to experience and wisdom. On earth the soul acquires experience through its entanglement with matter. And it is truly amazing how some people can live so long and learn so little!

Knowledge and truth are never forced on anyone and individuals can either hasten or retard their progression. Some souls evolve slowly, others rapidly, and the choice and consequences are theirs. Alas, years do not necessarily make a man wiser, only older.

Mysterious as are the ways of Deity, we do know that He operates through and with immutable and natural laws. Consequently, how, when and where one is born is in accordance with law, and not an accident. "Oh, why was I ever born?" we often hear people lament. The

answer is: "Most likely they desired it, or else needed the lessons of the flesh."

Others insist: "I didn't ask to be born!" They probably did, only they don't remember it. Most of us imbibed too freely of Lethe water, forgetfulness ensued and, temporarily, memory of our heavenly home has been mercifully dimmed. Most souls are not rebellious at coming to earth, but when told their time of birth has arrived have submitted; even though some would probably have preferred remaining on the other side for a season.

Plato tells us: "The soul knows all things, learning is only recollection." He discovered that latent knowledge of mathematics and the sciences could be elicited from unlearned men. In other words, the soul exists prior to the body and has opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skill. These it brings to earth in the form of latent capacities and potential aptitudes. Whenever an individual possesses an extraordinary endowment of creative powers, a native ability or aptitude for literature, art or the sciences, we can be absolutely certain it is prior knowledge. The preparatory work was done by the person himself before birth, on other planes of existence, and are not gifts of God as erroneously called. Deity has no favorites, nor does He promiscuously shower unearned powers on anyone.

While education undoubtedly excites, exercises and determines the application of talent, it never has nor can produce a genius such as Pope, much less a Shakespeare or a Milton. Nor does genius arise from heredity, for different members of the same family with the same training in every respect will develop different talents. One can be a genius, the other most mediocre, although gifted children are sometimes born in families capable of providing the requisite organization and facilities for its cultivation. However, when a man has genius, he manifests his natural superiority in spite of the greatest obstacles arising from circumstances, heredity or education.

Neither birth nor any of its attendant conditions are ever accidental; the inequalities and injustices arise from the opportunities or lack of them when born. To be well-born appears to have many advantages, but history does not bear out that it is of the greatest importance. One need only read the lives of illustrious men and women to learn that humbleness of birth and station have never been deterrents to fame and success. The shining immortals with few exceptions labored under tremendous difficulties, yet despite them achieved glory and acclaim. How one begins life is not important, but how one ends it is. It is no disgrace to be born in the gutter, but it is a disgrace to die there.

It is only too obvious that all men are not born with equal mental capacities; for there is a wide disparity in the degree of knowledge and skill with which people are endowed. One vast intellect like Newton's fathoms the profundities of science, while the mind of another can scarcely grope its way through the daily occurrences of life. These differences do not arise from external circumstances, but from conditions prevailing before birth. The same analogy is true when we leave this life. As our status here was determined to a major degree by our innate intelligence and ability, our standing in the community to where we are going will likewise be governed by the amount of wisdom and experience acquired on earth. This is all we take with us.

Entirely too much significance is given to the relative influence of heredity and environment. Some authorities have gone so far as to say heredity determines destiny; others maintain that environment is the controlling factor in an individual's life. There is no doubt these factors contribute to the formation of personality traits and habits, but there is a force stronger than either of these and that is character. Character, or lack of it, is the determining power of life. Many a strong, determined character has overcome the worst kind of heredity and unfavorable surroundings.

All spiritual thinkers are convinced that the powers of the mind and soul are derived from their Celestial Progenitor. There is slight reason for believing that mental and moral characteristics are inherited although many scientists make this claim. Mozart did not inherit

what neither of his parents possessed, nor does any genius. Every man is his own ancestor so far as mental and spiritual endowments are concerned. Spirit is forever master and responsible for the incident of birth.

The belief that parents are the creators of their children is one of the greatest fallacies entertained by man, even some biologists. God is the Architect of the soul, not parents, who fashion the body only. The individual is a sovereign unit and not at the mercy of his predecessors. He inherits himself, and gravitates to the right parents, environment, organism for the manifestation of his tendencies. Every individual is integrated, a center himself from which he operates, is responsible and capable of selection and choice.

The lack of affinity between relatives puzzles many people of earth, for it is not uncommon for brothers and sisters, parents and offspring to feel deep antipathy toward one another. When parents and children meet for the first time on earth often there is but little affinity. Occasionally they are old friends brought together again through birth and then there will be genuine affection. Antagonistic souls, those who have violent hatred for each other have met before birth and accrued karma which they are now expiating. They have not been permitted to choose their environment, and this explains in some measure why you find such odd persons in groups where they do not seem to belong. They actually do not belong there, yet in order to have earthly expression take the opportunity open for birth, and come in an environment that is not the best for them.

We often see, in families of several children, one who has peculiar traits of character and personality entirely foreign to the others. The soul in that body desired earthly expression and came to an alien family, where he is usually misunderstood. Unfortunately, these odd persons seldom realize that this relationship exists only for the duration of earth-life, and that there are no deep, binding ties for such a one.

The blood tie has no permanence or significance unless augmented with spiritual kinship. Those who have relatives for whom they feel no affinity should make every effort to discharge whatever obligations were incurred by birth and relationship, thus obviating the necessity of future association.

While color and race begin on earth, they often persist for many years after the change called death, for the soul has learned to function through that particular channel. However, all race consciousness is gradually obliterated and the universal consciousness accepted.

There is no break in the chain of eternity and no interruption in the law of cause and effect. Not chance but justice rules our life. The soul is not new at birth, and is not much older at death, and will be born many times in spirit that it may attain perfection.

Man himself is the greatest mystery of all.

2. Mind

I

No study is more fascinating or of greater benefit than the subject mind. It has engaged the most powerful intellects of all ages, from the days of Aristotle down to the present. However, during the last two thousand years, that is with the exception of the last one hundred years, not much progress has been made in this department of science. Anatomists and physicians have studied the brain and ignored the mind, while psychologists have studied the mind and ignored the brain. The human mind cannot, by itself, become an object of investigation; it needs the medium of an organic apparatus.

It is mind which distinguishes man from the animals and man from man. While there is not much difference between one cow or one cat from another, the difference between one man and another is vast. In man the scale extends from the lowest point of idiocy to the highest