



**Meeting Death
Transforming Life
Awakening to Those Who Have Died**

Readings, Thoughts, Poems and Meditative Verses

Cover painting - *Love* - by Deborah Docherty

With loving gratitude
to Simon, 16 December 1981 - 14 October 2006,
my greatest teacher and mentor,
to life itself,
for the possibilities that exist for each one of us
to the Divine Being of Love, the ground of all existence

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Death may be terrible for the human being so long as he remains in the body. But when he has passed through the Gate of Death and looks back at his entrance into the Spiritual World, it is the most beautiful, the most wonderful, and the most glorious event...

Rudolf Steiner

There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning.

Thornton Wilder

We must learn to see the dead not as deceased but living among us, human beings who share our life and work.

Rudolf Steiner

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INTRODUCTION

Each of us walks a unique journey through life, meeting challenges, small and great, along the way. One enormous challenge is profound loss, the death of a loved one, and when that happens our heart is broken. Our familiar world is changed irrevocably. It is as if our very being has been shattered and we wonder whether we might ever find our way out of the quagmire of grief, become whole once more and live again. It is a meeting with death that takes us to the darkest depths of ourselves.

Such a meeting with death was mine. Simon, my son aged 24 years died suddenly. The grief I have experienced through Simon's death has taken me to unexplored realms of my own being. It has been and still continues to be an extraordinary journey, where pain and joy have coexisted, where tears of grief have transformed into tears of gratitude, to an experience of the most profound love - Divine Love - and an over-flowing love in my heart. It is this Love which has enabled me to walk with grace in spite of having "lost" someone who was not only my son, but also someone who was far more than a son to me.

When Simon died, I sensed or "*knew in my heart*" that he had completed what he had come here to do and that this event had come to me for some special reason. I would have to find my way, to work with this tragic event as creatively as I could, to transform my pain into joy, and to honour Simon and his magnificent life by expressing my gratitude to him, and my gratitude to what each moment of life offered me. In so doing, I would also be lovingly setting him free to begin his new journey in the world of spirit.

The path I chose to walk has required commitment and dedication of the highest order. I have "worked" moment by moment, day by day, by expressing my gratitude for anything and everything in my life even when I was in "hell". I never walked away from the pain; I never tried to escape my feelings. I chose to celebrate the lives and joys of others, even when I felt a great sadness overwhelm me. I chose life, I chose to live. I learnt to let go and trust. As I worked inwardly, I was showered with the purest love I have ever known and my heart began to sing with joy.

Messages came to me inwardly - "*Live with joy, live with gratitude, live with love for all that is*", "*I am right here with you*", "*dry your tears, mother dear, share your message of love*", "*we have work to do together*". I felt an inner urgency. I could not see Simon, but he was right there with me, encouraging me on my way.

At first, unable to share my inner experiences with others, my loneliness led me to connect with people across the oceans. I immersed myself quietly and passionately exploring a topic from which most people shy away - that of death. Truly, if we begin to understand what lies beyond in death which is not about dying at all, and we begin to understand who we really are even in just a small way - beings of body, soul and spirit - we will come to understand life. We leave our physical bodies at death, but the essence of who we are continues and never dies - our consciousness remains - and the realm into which we enter, the spiritual realm, is our true home.

For those left behind, the wound of grief can create within us, alongside the vulnerability, extraordinarily beautiful possibilities for us - a heightened awareness physically, emotionally and spiritually. In surrendering, accepting and honouring whatever it is we might be feeling, and not walking away from an experience which might invite deep sadness, by allowing ourselves to enter into the realm of darkness, we are creating the possibility for opening up to our true spiritual selves, and allowing a new birth to occur. Grief opens our hearts to receiving, and to our ability to allow this never-ending stream of love which is always present, to come flowing into us at a time when we need it most. However, nothing will change for us without our active participation. It is a personal choice. When we are ready to take steps forward, whenever that moment happens, we will be given a hand - the hand of Love. For we are all so loved - just as we are, whoever we are, wherever we are in our lives.

There is no one way to grieve. However, knowing that our loved ones, those who have “died”, are there with us and want us to know that they are indeed alive *can* make a profound difference and assist us in our grief. It is also helpful to know that what we carry in our hearts and minds affects and touches the “dead” very deeply.

In this book is presented a small offering, a gesture, in the form of a collection of quotes, readings and reflections, poetry and meditative verses. It can be looked upon as a garden through which you can wander and reflect, pausing every now and again as something catches your eye. It serves to open the heart and mind - the heart-mind - to seeing death in a new way and awakening to those who have died.

THE DEATH EXPERIENCE

birthday

in the stillness
of meditation
we celebrate
together
on opposite shores
the days
of your birth

father to son

when i saw you
come into the world
it seemed that no
greater miracle
had ever occurred

you were the first
child ever born
Adam

when i watched you
leave this world
no greater tragedy
had ever been

with you the world ended
and all that remained
was darkness

Jeffrey Kane

son to father

on the day of my death
the world was born
how could it have been
that i so unaware
i know peace
i know joy
i know love
i know light

you walk in darkness
where many wander
lost for a lifetime
but there is a path through
to the world that you
barely remember
even with my death

darkness means nothing
your task is to listen
and you will find
your way

Gabriel Kane



On earth, death has a terrifying aspect only because we look upon it as a kind of dissolution, as an end. But when we look back upon the moment of death from the other side, from the spiritual side, then death continually appears to us as a victory of the spirit that is extricating itself from the physical. It then appears as the greatest, most beautiful and significant event.

Rudolf Steiner



For what is it to die but to stand naked
in the wind and to melt in the sun?
And what is it to cease breathing
but to free the breath from its restless tides,
that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence
shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top,
then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs
shall you truly dance.

Kahlil Gibran



Throughout the universe we see the two powers of life and death in action. But in reality, the only true power is life, for nothing exists outside of life. Death is contained within life; it is merely a shift to another plane, a change of form, of clothing, time away to fulfil a new mission, an alteration in ones state of consciousness.

When life is transformed, it does not mean it has ended. Life and death work hand in hand for evolution. Death is only an illusion. We have all been through what we call death so many times! And there we are, alive again... Never-ending life, unbounded life, is all there is.

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov



Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am in a thousand winds that blow,
I am the softly falling snow.
I am the gentle showers of rain,
I am the fields of ripening grain.
I am in the morning hush,
I am in the graceful rush
Of beautiful birds in circling flight,
I am the starshine of the night.
I am in the flowers that bloom,
I am in a quiet room.
I am in the birds that sing,
I am in each lovely thing.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there. I do not die.

Mary Elizabeth Frye



The more I observe and study things, the more convinced I become that sorrow over separation and death is perhaps the greatest delusion. To realize that it is a delusion is to become free. There is no death, no separation of the substance. And yet the tragedy of it is that though we love friends for the substance we recognize in them, we deplore the destruction of the insubstantial that covers the substance for the time being. Whereas real friendship should be used to reach the whole through the fragment. You seem to have got the truth for the moment. Let it abide forever

Mohandas K. Gandhi



My body is just my reflection ...
When you die you leave your reflection.
Your real self leaves your body and goes into another world ...
where it will be the happiest life of all
God has the answers, we have the questions,
and only in the end will he tell us the answers.
God has kept that new life a secret and I am
glad because it will give us a surprise,
it will give us such a big surprise.

Garvan Byrne, aged 11, a year before he died



If I be the first of us to die,
Let grief not blacken long your sky.
Be bold yet modest in your grieving.
There is a change but not a leaving.
For just as death is part of life,
The dead live on forever in the living.
And all the gathered riches of our journey,
The moments shared, the mysteries explored,
The steady layering of intimacy stored,
The things that made us laugh or weep or sing,
The joy of sunlit snow or first unfurling of the spring,
The wordless language of look and touch,
The knowing,
Each giving and each taking,
These are not flowers that fade,
Nor trees that fall and crumble,
Nor are they stone,
For even stone cannot the wind and rain withstand
And mighty mountain peaks in time reduce to sand.
What we were, we are.
What we had, we have.
A conjoined past imperishably present.
So when you walk the woods where once we walked together
And scan in vain the dappled bank beside you for my shadow,
Or pause where we always did upon the hill to gaze across the
land,
And spotting something, reach by habit for my hand,
And finding none, feel sorrow start to steal upon you,
Be still.
Close your eyes,
Breathe.
Listen for my footfall in your heart.
I am not gone but merely walk within you.

Anon



WHERE ARE YOU?

*"You must not mourn, I am beside you,
I hear everything you say - I am alive!"*



The Bridge over the River

When I was a child, death was spoken of as though it was the end of the show. A person lived a long or a short, an adventurous or a dull life, then died; people cried, and that was that. Once one of my grandmothers spoke of death as "passing over to the other side". I puzzled over the term for some time. I sensed death to be the other side of life but couldn't figure out where the edge was that separated the two. My childish imagination liked to picture people going to heaven, up in the sky, when they died. But heaven and sky, for me, were not "the other side." I could, after all, see the sky. "The other side" for me meant China, or whatever you might come to if you started digging from this side down. So exactly how and what did one "pass over"?

I was thinking in very literal terms without being able to connect my wonderings with things that happened. For I'd had experiences that did not support the idea that death automatically means either the end of the show or separation involving a great distance.

Claire Blatchford - Friend of My Heart



This is what it comes down to: that we learn to experience that those who have passed through the gate of death have only assumed another form.

Having died, they stand before our feelings like those who, through life circumstances, have traveled to distant lands, whither we can follow them only later. We have therefore nothing to bear but a time of separation.

Rudolf Steiner



*"The bond that unites us is more than during my lifetime because I can
be within you. I am surrounding you with my help and love"*

The Bridge over the River



Death is nothing at all
I have only slipped away into the next room.

I am I and you are you
Whatever we were to each other
That we are still
Call me by my old familiar name
Speak to me in the easy way you always used
Put no difference into your tone
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow
Laugh as we always laughed
At the little jokes we always enjoyed together
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was
Let it be spoken without effort.
Without the ghost of a shadow in it
Life means all that it ever meant
It is the same as it ever was,
There is absolute unbroken continuity.

What is death but a negligible accident?
Why should I be out of mind
Because I am out of sight?

I am waiting for you for an interval
Somewhere very near
Just around the corner
All is well.

Nothing is past; nothing is lost
One brief moment and all will be as it was before - only better, infinitely
happier, and forever we will be as one.

Canon Henry Scott-Holland



BEING PRESENT FOR THE DEAD

The dead are all around us as much our neighbors as the family next door, the tree at the corner, the birds at the feeder. We need not be on speaking terms with all our neighbors, but the recognition of their presence, if only in a form of a nod, a smile, or a thought of appreciation and thanks, can go a long way. When we acknowledge each other we affirm and quicken life in each other. Though we may not be able to see the dead outwardly or inwardly, openness to their presence means a great deal to them

Claire Blatchford - Experiences with the Dying and the Dead



Look for me when the tide is high
And the gulls are wheeling overhead
When the autumn wind sweeps the cloudy sky
And one by one the leaves are shed
Look for me when the trees are bare
And the stars are bright in the frosty sky
When the morning mist hangs on the air
And shorter darker days pass by.

I am there, where the river flows
And salmon leap in the silver Lune
Where the insects hum and the tall grass grows
And sunlight warms the afternoon
I am there in the busy street
I take your hand in the city square
In the market place where the people meet
In your quiet room - I am there.

I am the love you cannot see
And all I ask is - look for me.

Iris Hesselden



Live with gratitude
Live with joy
Live with love for all that is



Though I am dead
Grieve not for me with tears
Think not of death
With sorrowing and fears;
I am so near that
Every tear you shed
Touches me although
You think me dead
But when you laugh
And sing in glad delight,
My soul is lifted
Upwards to the light
Laugh and be glad
For all that life is giving,
And I, though dead,
Will share your joy in living.

Anon



To honour the dead, we need to truly live.



GRATITUDE

*Gratitude is priceless.
It cannot be bought or sold.
It is the doorway into the spirit.
Too often you want to "get through" things.
To what?
Attempt to give thanks for where you are
IN THIS VERY MOMENT.
It will help recollect you,
open you to little things you are missing.
It will be food for those on the other side,
many of whom suffer because they rushed
through their earthly lives.
When you do what they did not do,
it is balm for them.*

Claire Blatchford – Words heard from within



“If they wish to speak to us, it is necessary that we take into our consciousness something of the feeling of gratitude for all that reveals itself to us. If there is none of this feeling within us, if we are not able to thank the world for enabling us to live, for enriching our life continually with new impressions, if we cannot deepen our soul by often realizing that our entire life is a gift, then the dead will not find a common air with us, for they can speak with us only through this feeling of gratitude. Otherwise there is a wall between us and them.”

“We should not cling to the idea that we have them no more, for that is an ungrateful feeling in the wider sense of life. If we clearly understand that the feeling of having lost our dead weighs them down, we will keep in mind the whole import of this.”

Rudolf Steiner



"We remain united exactly as on earth, although the bereaved ones are not able to perceive it. You cannot imagine what it means when someone we love weeps for us. This is the most severe anguish for us to endure because we feel exactly as we did on earth."

The Bridge over the River



Every experience enriches our life, raises the soul, including all the hurtful and unpleasant experiences as well as the happy and harmonious ones. Every disappointment and failure is received as an enriching gift and calls forth a fine feeling of thankfulness. The attitude that welcomes and is grateful for all experiences as registered in the supraconsciousness, must be drawn into our consciousness in this age of light and of the development of the consciousness soul, so that we no longer hold grudges, nurse resentments, feel bitter, or are hurt by harmful acts of speech of others or by blows of destiny. Then we have gratitude for every event and for the gift of life itself, given by the entire universe. Feelings of unity with all beings and things, and the constant upwelling of gratitude in the soul, create an atmosphere that connects the so-called living with the so-called dead. Whether we are aware or unaware of the fact, we are always connected with the spiritual world and with discarnate souls who were related to us by the forces of destiny. But the discarnate cannot relate to us if we wish they were still in the flesh. To mourn because we have them no more is an ungrateful feeling. We should rather be thankful we did have them with us, and be grateful that they enriched our life. To entertain a feeling that we have lost them weighs them down.

In lectures on Earthly Death and Cosmic Life, Rudolf Steiner makes clear: "If we have lost someone we love, we must be able to raise ourselves to a feeling of thankfulness that we have had them with us; we must be able to think selflessly of what they were to us until their death, and not upon what we feel, now they are no longer with us. The better we feel what they were to us during life, the sooner will it be possible for them "to speak" to us, to speak to us by means of the common air of gratitude." There is rejoicing in all worlds when souls on earth change their attitude from grief to gratitude.

John and Beredene Jocelyn



...from the far side of the western horizon
"All the world is sacred, and life on the earth is a sacred gift."

Gabriel Kane



TRUST

Underlying the soul qualities we have already uncovered - universal gratitude for the experiences of life and a sense of community with the world around us - there is an even more basic factor. This other aspect is universal trust, which might also be called faith, or confidence in life. This is the rock-bottom, fundamental conviction that life, no matter what, is always good and always has something to give us. Such basic trust leads us to the spirit. Opening to trust, we open to perceptions of the spiritual world weaving in this world. Underlying gratitude, solidarity with all existence, and so forth, this trust in all life and in humanity and the earth provides the basic medium whereby the dead can communicate with us. Such trust, in fact, forms the basis in the soul of all spiritual cognition, while at the same time renewing the soul, making it healthy and in love with life, full of hope and expectation.

Christopher Bamford



“The feeling I refer to may be called a universal trust, faith, or confidence in the life that flows through and past us - trust in life! From a materialistic standpoint, this mood of trust in life is very difficult to find. It resembles gratitude for life, but is a different feeling; it exists alongside gratitude. It consists in an unshakable mood in the soul that life, however it may approach us, has under all circumstances something to give us, so that we can never fall into thinking that life could have nothing more to give us. True, we pass through difficult, painful experiences, but in the wider context of life these experiences appear as precisely those that do the most to enrich and strengthen us for life.”

“When we have confidence in life, faith in it, we are able to bring the soul into a condition such that inspirations - which are thoughts sent to us by the dead - can appear. Gratitude for life and trust in life belong together in a certain way.”

“We need to call forth freshly renewed trust or confidence in one who can no longer inspire that trust through physical presence. To do this we must, as it were, ray out into the world something that has nothing to do with physical things. The all-embracing trust, confidence, and faith in life that I described have nothing to do with physical things.”

“Ultimately the feeling I refer to - the feeling of never, never losing hope in life - is the feeling that enables us to experience a right relationship between the living and the so-called dead.”

Rudolf Steiner



COMMUNICATION WITH THE DEAD

... the Friend of the heart has indicated we **can** offer help when others pass over; regardless of whether the death experience has been abrupt, prolonged, or somewhere in between. At the same time, he has indicated that those who have passed over can in turn help us, who remain on this side, in ways yet to be discovered.

*A whole new dimension of communication between the
spiritual worlds
and your physical world is waiting to open up.
It IS opening.
It MUST open.
The so-called dead are waiting,
as are the angels and the soldiers of light.
You have no idea how great their eagerness is,
how great their need and longing.
Your heart senses this.
Open to it.
Turn to the spirit worlds, so close, so near,
Open and ask.*

Claire Blatchford – Friend of My Heart



Your relationship with the Dead must be one of the heart, of inner interest. You must remind yourself of your love for the person when he was alive and address yourself to him with real warmth of heart, not abstractly. This feeling can take such firm root in the soul that in the evening, at the moment of going to sleep, it becomes a question to the Dead without your knowing it. Or you may try to realise vividly what was the nature of your particular interest in the one who has died. Think about your experience with him; visualize actual moments when you were together with him, and then ask yourself: What was it about him that particularly interested me, that attracted me to him? When was it that I was so deeply impressed, liked what he said, found it helpful and valuable? If you remind yourself of moments when you were strongly connected with the Dead and were deeply interested in him, and then turn this into a desire to speak to him, to say something to him - if you develop the feeling with purity of heart and let the question arise out of the interest you took in him, then the question of the communication remains in your soul, and when you go to sleep it passes over to him.

Rudolf Steiner



"Every thought that concerns me penetrates to me. This is so beautiful! Even when I am far away, suddenly such a thought wings itself to me as a tender, lovely greeting from the physical world."

The Bridge over the River



The quality of our thoughts, feelings, and actions are as important for the dead as they are for the living. Moreover, it is usually through *our* thoughts, feelings, and actions that the dead express themselves. Since they are no longer able to respond to us through a physical body, they have to use other ways. If we had a strong sense of their essence, apart from their bodily appearance during their life on earth, it is much easier for the connection to be made. This is not to say bodily appearance is not important.

To help clarify the point: I mentioned that I sometimes have known the presence of the deceased through inwardly sensing their smiles or other facial expressions. We all know what a smile is, but every smile is unique. Through the smile we not only gather something about the condition of a person in that moment (happy, amused, sad, mischievous, etc.) but we can also connect with the essence of the person. The spirit of the individual makes the smile unique. It is this spirit of the deceased, this essence, that comes to us in our thoughts, feelings, and actions. If you have unexpectedly found yourself growing warm with pleasure at the thought that someone you know who has died would like the poem you are reading, that person may be right there enjoying the poem through your reading! The reading does not have to be out loud. The dead person can participate directly in the inner activity of thought and feeling called up by the poem.

I believe this point is essential. We are bound to be disappointed if we assume everything has to happen the way we know it happens in the physical world with people and events approaching us from outside. This point can help assuage the grief, the overwhelming sense of loss one may feel when a dear one goes on. We have obviously lost physical contact with our loved one, but what we most truly love in him or her - the spiritual essence, the very "gist" of that person - can now be with and in us. As he once reassured me:

You never lose those you love.

(Those who have died.)

They are within you.

You know that.

Claire Blatchford – Friend of My Heart



To communicate with the dead, we need a common language - a living language, not a dead language of old thoughts, unconscious habits, and mechanical emotions. Thoughts sent to the dead must be in a language they can understand; what we think must have meaning for them. Thus it must have meaning for us, too. To communicate with the dead therefore requires freshness, spontaneity, creative intention, and truly felt feelings. The first approach to this must include the understanding that the language must be "spiritual", not "material". The dead cannot understand dead, materialistic thoughts, but only living, spiritual thoughts. Spiritual thoughts are those that we make our own. First, we think them afresh and try to raise them to their highest meaning for us. Then, emptying ourselves, we offer that experience to the spiritual world. Once thoughts can become a living reality for us in this way, they are able to cross the abyss between the living and the dead. The dead can share in such thoughts and learn from them; they can even act within them and take them further. In fact, without such thoughts we are not present for our loved ones who have died. They look in vain for us. They depend upon us but cannot find us. More than that, they are constrained, even fettered, by our absence. We do not provide a medium within which they can live and continue to participate in the earthly stream that is their karma. When our souls are filled with materialistic thinking, we are like a void to them: nothing. Nowadays, many souls are cut off in this way! Therefore, spiritual reading - what is called *lectio divina* - the meditative reading of spiritual literature to the dead can be a great comfort to them. At the same time, through this process and through the process of living thinking and living feeling, the dead can also communicate with us. After all, they continue to care and still have a great deal to offer. To establish relationships with the dead, however, requires effort. This effort is part of the greater work of overcoming materialism and spiritualizing human life on earth. Since this work is an aspect of cosmic evolution as a whole, it involves the entire spiritual world and all the beings in it.

Christopher Bamford



Two other steps besides being inwardly alert to our thoughts and feelings seem to be necessary for connecting and working with the dead. They are, for me, so intimately interwoven they could almost be called two halves to one step.

The first has to do with keeping ourselves firmly in our lives here on the Earth. When a connection is made with the dead we must always be aware of where we are. I do not really know anything about the world those on the other side inhabit. It is my impression that they have much to share with us and that this sharing is going to occur increasingly in the years to come. At the same time the dead have their own work to do; they participate in events in their world, so it is not as though they are just sitting nearby waiting for us to wake up to them. And they have their own varying degrees of wakefulness to us and to each other.

If I keep my feet firmly on the Earth, if I am fully present in all I do here, I am doing the dead a service. This is true even if I am not conscious of their presence or if, with time, the sense of their presence fades away. It is a service in the same way that my being fully present is a service, a courtesy, even a gift, to anyone I am with on this side. As I understand it, entering into an awareness of the dead means an expansion of consciousness; it does not mean going off into realms of fantasy. Fortunately this expansion doesn't occur all at once because the powers that be know my tension point, know I have personal limits to the amount I can take in. Gratitude, however, is ever and again mentioned as being necessary for this expansion of consciousness to occur.

Claire Blatchford – Friend of My Heart



“The threads of our love are becoming ever more intimate and beautiful. We are actually bound by invisible threads, therefore the subtle reciprocating responses. Naturally, this is easier from my side as I do not have a physical body and sense every vibration immediately. With you it has to penetrate the many dense layers, and you do not feel all my gentle sentiments and expressions of feelings. Few people know that an actual connection, fostered by great love, exists between the living and the dead.”

The Bridge over the River



HOW DO THEY PERCEIVE?

This has to do with the special way in which the dead perceive. ... For instance, suppose you have before you a small vessel containing salt. You can see that. The salt looks like a white substance, a white powder. The fact that you see the salt as a white powder depends upon your eyes. Your spirit cannot see the salt as a white powder; but if you put a little salt on your tongue and taste its special taste, then the spirit can begin to become aware of it. Every spirit can perceive the taste of salt in you. In fact, everything that takes place in human beings through the outer world can be perceived by every spirit, including human souls who have passed through the gate of death. Within us, the sense world extends to our tasting, smelling, seeing, hearing and so forth; the world of the dead also reaches down into what we hear, see, and taste. The dead can experience with us what we experience in the physical world. This is because these experiences belong not only to our world but also to theirs. Our experiences belong to their world when we thoroughly spiritualize what we experience in the outer world with spiritual ideas. Otherwise, what we experience as the effects of matter remains dark and incomprehensible to the dead. To the dead, a soul devoid of spirit is a dark soul. This is why the dead have become estranged from earthly life. We must overcome this estrangement. The so-called dead and the so-called living must learn again to live together inwardly...

Rudolf Steiner



"We meet in everything be it in art, in prayer, or in the beauty of nature, it is all the same. I still feel every great thought. You have to understand that I am able to maintain our connection from every sphere because the loftiest, purest love is uniting us, and it will endure eternally, you must believe me!"

The Bridge over the River



FURTHER THOUGHTS

Above all, we must learn to empty ourselves and to wait for thoughts, insights, feelings to arise from the soul depths, where we touch the universal spirit - the cosmic world of thoughts - that we share with the dead. Cultivating this inner quiet will help us touch this universal, surging "sea", or "web", of thought in which we and the earthly world are submerged. If we are able to cultivate the presence of this world within us, we will share a common sphere with the dead that they can enter. Once we become aware of this, we can begin to notice the many other points at which our lives touch this sphere. Chance encounters, synchronicities, and seemingly accidental occurrences begin to indicate another world. Too often, we forget to look for the unconscious and unthought in the "outer" world. In fact, there is an "underground thought" that encompasses both inner and outer. Becoming aware of this, our lives become richer, wider, deeper. Thereby, we come closer to the dead. We learn to unite with them in interest and love. We learn to wait for them to speak.

Christopher Bamford



*"Be silent, for your silence is akin to outspread wings, under
whose protection I scatter shining blossoms into your hands.
They may not wilt nor may frost carelessly destroy their splendor."*

The Bridge over the River



We must regain the understanding that we are not on earth just to build things in the physical universe during our physical existence. We must understand that during our whole existence we are connected to the whole world. Those who have passed through the gates of death want to work with us on the physical world. This working together only appears to be a physical collaboration, for everything physical is only an outer expression of spirit. Materialism has alienated human beings from the world of the dead. Spiritual science must help us make friends again with that world. The time must come when we no longer alienate ourselves from the dead for it is our alienation that prevents them from spiritualizing the physical world. The dead cannot grasp things in the physical world with their hands or do physical work. To believe that would be superstition. The dead can, however, work in a spiritual way. To do so they need tools placed at their disposal; they need the spirit to live here in the physical world. We are not just human beings, we are also tools - instruments for the spirits who have passed through the gate of death. While incarnated in a physical body we use a pen, or a hammer, or an axe; but once we are no longer physically incarnate, the tools we use are human souls themselves.

Rudolf Steiner



Above all, we learn that we do not live - or love or experience - for ourselves alone. All our experience feeds the universe. We are the books the dead read. Our thoughts and feelings are the works of art that brighten and instruct their lives. When we meditate (or pray) and do our spiritual practice, when we organize our lives to serve and make manifest the good, the true, and the beautiful, then we are doing so not only for ourselves but for all beings in all worlds. Truly, we are called to serve: to offer up our experience for the sake of the world's evolution. Not only do we take it all with us, we must also give it all away. When we do so, we live together with world evolution. We cannot do it alone, but only in and through and with those we love - in and through and with love. For the work of the earth is love: that the substance of the earth become love.

Christopher Bamford



PRAYERS AND MEDITATIVE VERSES

We seem to give them back to You, O God, who gave them to us.
Yet, as You did not lose them in giving,
So we do not lose them by their return.
Not as the world gives, do You give.
You do not take away, for what is Yours is ours also, if we are yours.
And life is eternal, and love is immortal,
And Death is only an horizon,
Is nothing save the limit of our sight.
Lift us up, Strong Son of God, that we may see further;
Draw us closer to you that we may know that in You we are closer
To those whom we love and are now with You.
Amen.

Father Bede Jarrett



You, who have gone so suddenly
Torn from this life:
We are still with you
As you are with us.

You, who have found so suddenly
Light weaving of love:
We are still with you
As you are with us.

May our will guide you
In the mill of creation,
For we, who would sorrow,
Find purpose: Your light.

May our thoughts balm you
In the kiln of renewal,
For we, who would miss you,
Meet comfort: Your love.

Jens-Peter Linde



Verses given by Rudolf Steiner

I was united with you.
Stay now united in me.
So shall we speak together
In the language of eternal Being.
So shall we work together
Where deeds find their fulfilment.
So shall we weave in the Spirit
Where human thoughts are woven
In the Word of eternal thought.



No barrier can separate
What, united in the spirit,
preserves
The light-shining
Love-streaming
Eternal soul bond:
Thus I am in your thoughts
Thus may you be in mine.



Ye who watch over souls in the spheres,
Ye who work on souls in the spheres,
Ye spirits who, in protection of men's souls
Work lovingly out of the wisdom of worlds,
Hear our prayers, behold our love
Which would unite
With your helping streaming forces,
Divining spirit,
Radiating Love.



May my soul's love
Make its way unto thee
May my love's inmost sense
Make its way unto thee
That they sustain thee
That they enfold thee
In heights of hope
In realms of love.



Those who have gone
through the gate of Death
are gazing at me,
they enliven me;
their strength is streaming down to me.



My eyes be unto you, beloved soul, as windows,
that through them you may see the earthly beauty
My ears be unto you, beloved soul, as doorways,
that through them in hearing you may enter Ether's weaving realm,
When you behold through my eyes the earthly beings
through you I listen upward to the starry ways
When you through my listening enter into the weaving Ether light –
then I behold, through the mirror of your soul
with mine inner eye the realm of angels
And the here and the yonder,
Find themselves in loving harmony
If the sun is in the middle
If the flame of love glows full of sacrifice.



Upward to thee strive the love of my soul,
Upward to thee flow the stream of my love!
May they sustain thee,
May they enfold thee
In heights of Hope,
In spheres of Love.



CLOSING WORDS

How may we be of service and begin to develop soul capacities required for being present for those who have died?

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude

Trust the process of life

Appreciate every moment

Be present in all that we do ("*Present Moment Living*")

Feel into each experience or activity in which we are engaged

Be in the silence of our own being

Look for the sacred in all

Speak to those who have died with love and reverence as if they were here

Be open to their needs

Come to an inner knowing that those who have died are here even if we cannot see or hear them

Read texts which meet the heart, enrich the soul and meet us spiritually, being aware that this is for them as well as for ourselves

Become awake to the thoughts that come to us and the feelings that arise within us

Enliven our thinking – spiritualise our thinking

Develop an imagination for the spiritual world

Our inner work is a service which we offer to the whole world,
the visible physical and the invisible spiritual world
- not two worlds, but one.



the light of death

your body
gone
the world
stands naked

the sacred
in everything
now
is all i see

Jeffrey Kane





Humility and Joy - David Newbatt

Main References

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Friend of My Heart – Claire Blatchford

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