

RHAGAVAN IYER on DEATH AND DYING

On the subject of End of Life issues, I'd like to suggest this reading from **Hermes, March 1981, passage by Professor Raghavan Iyer**. I think it provides an excellent broad view for the discussion of transitioning from incarnation to after-death states.

Throughout manifested nature and in all beings – human, animal, vegetable, mineral and elemental – there is a universally diffused magnetic field in which one common vital principle circulates that may be controlled by the perfected human will. Beyond the illusion of time produced by the succession of finite states of consciousness, every present moment of manifest life is both a summation of a series of moments that goes back into the night of time and the dawn of cosmic manifestation, and also an emanation from a single stream of consciousness, an immortal ray of Light that travels through a long journey over eighteen million years and stretches into future time. The emergence from past time and the entry into the future are illusory in so far as these alterations in awareness or modifications of mind only affect the elemental vestures. Made up of changing combinations of sentient lives, these enveloping vestures are involved in an ever-revolving motion under a universal law, which balances every outgoing and ingoing – the Great Breath. In every human soul there is an innate tropism, a natural propensity towards the Good at some level of self-persistence. Not a living being on earth lacks a germ of good, a spark of truth and a ray of supernal light. Nothing could survive in the realm of form apart from this essential element of universal light-energy which makes cohesion possible. But this same law of balance also decrees the dispersion of life-atoms, providing for decay and death as well as for birth and growth, and hence permits not only rebirth but also regeneration or retrogression.

The path leading to conscious immortality, to freedom from the grip of all-devouring Time, must necessarily involve a spiritual process of progressive self-regeneration; it is founded upon detachment from form, veneration of the universal sacrifice of life, and serene meditation upon the One Light beyond all manifestation. The Buddhas of Contemplation are constantly established in the pristine unmodified state of cosmic meditation. Krishna, the Logos incarnate, instructs Arjuna: "Out of a single portion of myself I create this entire universe and remain apart." This is the highest standpoint conceivable in cosmic evolution. It is a supreme state of freedom which is accessible only at the summit of enlightenment, attained by those Bodhisattvas who have become illumined beings in the fullest sense, capable of mastering all the vestures of incarnation and remaining in effortless attunement to the Great Breath, the Soundless Sound. Acting in time but abiding outside time, moving in space yet resting beyond all visible space, they remain in an Atmic state of eternal motion which is motionless in comparison with all modes of motion recognizable on the external planes of matter. This is the ultimate object of mystic meditation and continuous contemplation by the developing disciple who sits ready for *Dubjed* (Initiation). After a long period of preparatory discipline, the neophyte reaches repose wherein it is meaningful to ask whether, and in what sense, there is any essential difference between such fundamental conceptions as space, causality, time and motion. Are they merely conceptually interdependent facets of a single reality, or are they ontologically separate? To the ordinary mind they would seem to be separate because the familiar framework of cognition identifies a spatio-temporal context or sphere in which one is firmly focussed upon a single point of concentration. The mind would persistently seek to focus upon a seed-idea as the germ or cause of a new train of self-reproductive thought which might take root in the Tree of Life, and in successive lives of spiritual discipline the seed may sprout into the Tree of Immortality.

The disciplined mind could also become intensely aware of the rates and phases of breathing and soon discover that it is impossible to go from the in-breath to the out-breath, or from the out-breath to the in-breath, without a minimal pause or interval, some sort of *laya* point. Many a monk seeks to prolong the interval of stillness between inbreathing and outbreathing, or between outbreathing and inbreathing. At this stage the discursive mind notices that there are distinct differences of time intervals in varying contexts. With steadfast persistence in such a simple exercise, these differences become less important, especially when there is a decisive shift of attention from physical to mental breathing. A heightened concentration of awareness is possible when one can smoothly dissolve the seemingly discrete intervals between breathing in and breathing out. This can arouse the power of noetic discernment, giving a finer sense of the particularity of each moment, and sharpening the intensity of awareness. This will help in time to attain an assured sense of what is essential in every momentary experience, of the hidden core meaning in a humdrum day of familiar events and responses. There is that which is truly valuable in every context of human interaction, but the discerning soul can only learn from each day by rendering gentle service to all that lives. Within a limited sphere of duty – on a single day for a particular period of time while meeting other beings – one must pierce the veil of unconscious collective processes, which otherwise leave one a victim, more acted upon than acting, mentally passive rather than spiritually awake.

Buddhic insights are best understood in terms of the attempt to transcend all divisions, to go beyond every sense of separateness. It may be initially difficult to avoid the feeling that one is oneself, that one has a neighbour, that one is passing other human beings, that one meets *A* and *B* and *C* while at work. This is an illusion which is needed at a certain stage of differentiation but which must be transcended on the Path. The goal is first to see only rays of light in those who masquerade under different names and diverse forms, and then to go further: not only to see no differences but also to see oneself in each and every other person one encounters. This means projecting not one's lower self, (that merely inverts the process), but one's truest Self. The aim is to see the best one knows in each and every human being, and also to recognize the best in each and every human being as present in oneself. This psychological process takes years of sustained self-training and self-correction, with concrete tests applied to the reflected ray which is involved in the many pairs of opposites – heat and cold, loss and gain, growth and decay, fame and ignominy, creation and destruction, and so on. These are all part of the ethical burden of incarnation, while one is alive and awake, and while one is moving in and through a world of many minds and hearts, lives and souls, each of whom is on a solitary pilgrimage. It is the longest journey for each and every human being, dateless and deathless: no landmarks are on the visible plane, but all are eternally enshrined within the tablets of the astral light and upon the records of *Akasha*, the fiery mist out of which the Golden Egg encircling the universe is constituted. Consubstantial with the universal *Hiranyagarbha*, there is that which is like a minute portion of it, and provides protection for each and every human being. It is largely potential, but may be activated during deep meditation, when one has abstracted from the physical body with its senses and organs, and from the reflected ray of the lower mind with its likes and dislikes, fears and hopes, hates and suspicions, its pride, conceit, delusion and illusion. All of these, endemic to the assemblage of lower lives, can be let go and the mind may be withdrawn to that still, motionless centre unmodified by colour, by limitation, by form, by change, by seeming movements of succession in time or coadunition in space. All of these could be transcended because one could bring consciousness to a still centre in the place between the eyes where the eternal motion of *Alaya-Akasha* becomes the alchemical elixir of life.