

## *How to Have a Peaceful Death*

**T**HERE ARE MANY THINGS which, if done wrongly, bring pain and suffering, but if done rightly can bring peace and even pleasure. Dying is one such thing. It is the purpose of this article to indicate what must be done in order to have a peaceful death.

Prior to a person's birth, the Recording Angels create in the Region of Concrete Thought an archetype for that person, which eventually draws to itself physical materials which it shapes according to the form of the vital body. This archetype from the very beginning is set to continue in operation for a certain amount of time. The natural death of an individual occurs when his archetype ceases to function.

Natural death is not painful and need not be preceded by sickness, if one takes proper care of the dense body so that it does not wear out before the archetype ceases to function. The suicide, who intentionally makes his dense body uninhabitable, experiences much pain after death, because the archetype still tries to draw physical matter in but is no longer able to do so. This gives the suicide an aching feeling akin to that of intense hunger, which continues until the time when death naturally would have occurred. We thus may write the first rule for a peaceful death.

*Rule 1. Take good care of the dense body during life.*

Prior to birth, when the Recording Angels are building the archetype for a person's life, they plan various learning and serving opportunities for that individual. If, during life, that person neglects to take advantage of the learning and serving opportunities given and turns onto a path which is of little value to his or other people's soul growth, the



Detail from *The Last Judgment*, Fra Angelico (1387-1455), Museum of San Marco, Florence

*Angel Conducting a Soul to Heaven*

Recording Angels may shorten the life of the archetype, so that the person may die at a relatively young age, earlier than originally had been planned. It is difficult to die in the midst of life, when one still has many earthly interests. Thus we arrive at the second rule for a peaceful death.

*Rule 2. Take as full advantage of learning and serving opportunities during life as possible.*

(Note: Some people's archetypes may have been constructed for a short life, so we should not

conclude that everyone who dies young did not take advantage of their learning and serving opportunities. Also, the fact that following Rule 2 promotes a more peaceful death is not the only reason why Rule 2 should be followed; the other reasons are not a part of this discussion.)

When a person approaches the point of death, the Spirit and its higher vehicles may start to leave the dense body. This, as mentioned earlier, is not painful. It is, however, painful to the dying to be given stimulants which force the higher vehicles back into the dense body with a jerk, thus imparting a great shock to the individual. This may generate feeling similar to that produced when a loud noise is made every time one “drops off” when trying to fall asleep. Thus we have the third rule for a peaceful death.

*Rule 3. Avoid giving stimulants to the dying.*

When natural death occurs, the heart stops beating. For up to three and one-half days after the heart stops beating, the Spirit is engaged in reviewing the scenes of its past life and transmitting the record of the scenes from the lower to the higher vehicles of the Spirit. This review of the scenes has no feeling associated with it, so this interval of time should be peaceful for the Spirit. During this time, however, the Spirit still has a connection with the dense body and still can feel, in a measure, anything which is done to the dense body. Post-mortem examinations, organ removal, embalming, cremation, and loud noises can cause pain and disturb the Spirit. Thus we have:

*Rule 4. For three and one-half days after the heart stops beating, the body should be in as peaceful an environment as possible and should be disturbed as little as possible.*

Subsequent to the three and one-half days after the heart stops beating, a multitude of feelings become possible. So-called “dead” people still can

see what happens and hear what is said on Earth when they turn their attention in that direction. It can cause the dead person grief to see his family and friends grieving. It can cause a dead person frustration to want to complete unfinished “business” on Earth and to not be able to do so. Thus we have:

*Rule 5. Those who still are living on Earth should adopt an attitude of calmness and prayer when a loved one dies.*

They should try to take care of any business which the dead person left undone, and should try to do it in a way which would satisfy the dead person

(within reason). Since there is a limit as to how much “business” friends and relatives can be expected to take care of after one dies, we also have:

*Rule 6. One should keep one’s affairs in order so that one is pre-*

*pared to die at (almost) any moment.*

Death does not remove earthly desire. Those who were addicted to smoking, alcohol, or drugs prior to death still feel the same cravings after death, but these cravings cannot be satisfied by the disembodied Spirit. Suffering results until the cravings can be overcome. Thus, if the after-death state is to be peaceful, we must follow:

*Rule 7. One should avoid becoming addicted to anything during Earth life. If addiction is present it should be overcome prior to death.*

When the attention of the dead person in time becomes focused in the higher worlds, the scenes of the past life again are reviewed. During this second review, that person begins to feel the effects of all his or her evil actions on Earth. When a scene is reached in which he hurt someone else, he now will feel the hurt himself. We can minimize the suffering which we will feel in this stage if we minimize the suffering which we cause others during Earth life. Due to insensitivity and ignorance,

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we may sometimes unintentionally cause others to suffer. We may retrospect such events during Earth life, however, and try to feel the full effects of such actions while we still are embodied. If we succeed in this, the record is wiped clean and we correspondingly will be freed from suffering after death. We thus have:

*Rule 8. During life, one should try to retrospect what one has done and should try to feel the full effects of one's actions.*

After the stage in which we feel the effects of our evil action, we pass into the heaven worlds. In these worlds there is no longer pain or suffering, regardless of what we did or did not do in the previous stages. There is much activity in the heaven worlds, and there is much we can do during Earth life to prepare ourselves to obtain maximum benefit from our stay in these worlds, but such considerations are beyond the scope of this article.

If we were taking a trip into an unknown and potentially hazardous country, we might be full of apprehension. If, however, we knew what the hazards were to be and could make sufficient preparation so that they could be avoided or overcome, we could set out with confidence. If we keep the rules of this article in mind, we can avoid the 'hazards' associated with dying and can approach death with confidence, whenever it may come. We then truly can say, along with the poet Nancy Byrd Turner:

Death is only an old door  
Set in a garden wall;  
On gentle hinges it gives,  
At dusk when the thrushes call.

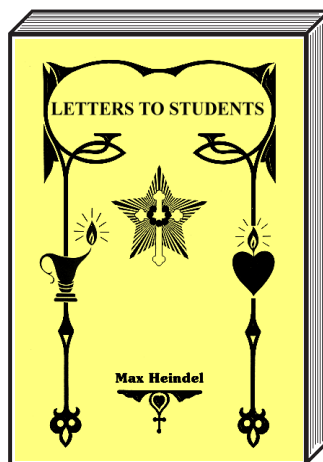
Along the lintel are green leaves,  
Beyond the light lies still;  
Very willing and weary feet  
Easily move across that sill.

There is nothing to trouble any heart;  
Nothing to hurt at all.  
Death is only a quiet door  
In an old wall. □

—Elsa Glover

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237 Pages. Paper. Published by  
The Rosicrucian Fellowship.