

Pieces of the Puzzle, Volume 3 – The Afterlife and Infinite Beyond

Chapter 11 – To Heaven and Back

Known as the “sleeping prophet,” the famous American intuitive Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) described his routine of astral travel to a great hall of records, one without floors, walls, or a ceiling within the spirit world. As a tiny dot of light in an infinite beyond, he knew he had to follow an even brighter light or be lost along the way. As the light around him grew in brightness, there too came color and the sound of beautiful music. In a self-induced sleep state, he left the earth and all that he knew behind him, traveling ever upward until finally reaching the Akashic Records, a celestial library filled with every soul’s book of their life or record containing their every thought, word, and deed. With each visit, he perceived an old man who would hand him a large book of the individual for whom he sought information. In it, he found that which would be most helpful to the person, something that might improve his or her health or overall well-being. That knowledge was then brought back to the body that lay peacefully upon a couch. He had cosmically traveled *to Heaven and back*.

Like Edgar Cayce, millions of others have mystically moved through time and space. In each spiritual out-of-body or near-death experience, we find an oracle of truth to the afterlife. Within a collage of visions, we often see amazing landscapes, deceased loved ones, and divine beings of light. From an emotional outpour, the memories of those who have had a spiritual experience near death nearly always recall a loving feeling or presence. The feeling of an absolute and limitless love is a consensus among those who have if only briefly returned home. Reminded of the truth that life is eternal and that they are loved, *unconditionally loved*, they return to this life forever affected by the experience.

In the spiritual out-of-body experience, especially near death, we may find ourselves atop of buildings and trees, rivers and oceans, mountains and deserts, and all that is of this world. We may find ourselves traveling from star to star and from light to even brighter light, ever upward until we become conscious of something more. We may come to sense as so many have that the kingdom of Heaven is so grand and all embracing that as humans, we could never imagine the scope of what it truly is. We may *feel* more than we can see. We may *know* all that is needed to know. We may find the breadth and fullness of our surroundings so perfect, so pleasurable, and so peaceful that we never wish to leave. We may find a state of nirvana above the reality of imperfection, pain, and turmoil. Why would we want to go back as so many must into broken bodies and broken lives, and an existence that is seemingly going nowhere?

The voice of wisdom and love tells us we must, that is not our time yet to come home, and that we made a promise. From the mist comes a form, one that will make *us* a promise too, that when we do, things will improve, and that we are not be alone in our journey. Somehow, we know it to be true and days, months, or years later, we come to find that our story, our unbelievable story of travel to a bright light, to Heaven and back has reached others. It has touched the lives of those in doubt, in fear, and in loneliness. It has touched the heart of saint and sinner alike, of believer and skeptic, and it has moved them almost as much as it has you. Your story makes a difference in the lives of others.

Remarkable near-death stories are touching the lives of millions around the globe. The spiritual experiences of all those who have been to Heaven and back are encouraging us all not to give up in troubled times, that there is a meaning and purpose to living in this world, and that there is a greater presence guiding us and loving us along the way.

Someone once described her near-death experience and included an exchange between her and “a being of light.” After an injury, she woke to find herself lying upon a hospital bed with her family beside her. Next to them, she could see a tunnel of light visibly beginning to form. Knowing she was not dreaming, because she could still clearly see her family, she closed her eyes and wondered if it was *the tunnel* so many speak of at death. As it came closer, she felt herself enveloped by it and an incredibly warm and loving feeling instantly came over her. Somehow, she found herself moving through the tunnel and into a room much like Cayce did, one without floors, walls, or a ceiling. More of a space than a room and her feeling of it was that it was limitless in size. There was a feeling of familiarity, acceptance, and immense love. It was in that feeling of unconditional love that a presence embraced her, as if someone’s arms were gently being wrapped around her, and it whispered, “You cannot stay.” Startled; she asked why? “You cannot stay, because you have more to do.” Confused as to what exactly that might entail, she asked what was required of her. The voice tenderly replied, “To love as greatly as you are loved here.” With that, she was once again aware of lying in the hospital bed. She longed to be back, as the other side was caring and loving, but she now knew what her purpose in living was – to give of love, as greatly as she had received it in Heaven.

To make Heaven on earth possible, we must give of ourselves, as we would want to receive, as we could only imagine receiving, as if resting in the arms of a deeply, loving being. While the spiritual experience may only give us glimpses, visually and emotionally of what the afterlife may be like, none validates the reality of a loving environment like the accounts from those who are physically blind.

Dr. Kenneth Ring describes twenty-one cases of visual perceptions of the blind during their near-death experiences in his book *Mindsight: Near-Death and Out-of-Body Experiences in the Blind* (iUniverse, 2008). Included in a second edition are reports of astonishing scientific research showing that blind persons, including those blind from birth, have had visual experiences and could actually “see” in out-of-body near-death experiences. Without sight as their point of reference or familiarity, each experience assures us of what the sighted similarly claim.

Those who have never seen anything of form or color, not even in their dreams, see for the first time while in the out-of-body experience. Their miraculous stories may come about from a serious accident or illness, but from their experiences, we all begin to heal. In the realization of being out-of-body, he or she may see for the first time in their life, of a body only recognizable by its clothing or jewelry, those things familiar from touch alone. Free to move about perhaps for the first time in their life, their spirit travels effortlessly heavenward. Somehow knowing where it wants to go. Upon reaching their destination, many are met by beings of light, individuals pulsing and glowing of brilliant colors. I cannot imagine what seeing light and color for the first time must be like, but those who do say it is the most emotional they have ever been. Recalling their visions in detail, the blind traveler returns all too quickly, back into a body that may physically recover as it once was, except with the memory of *seeing*. From those few precious moments of light and color, shapes and sounds, each comes away from the experienced forever changed. They want to tell the world that they have been to Heaven and back and that we will all one day see again. They now share their personal stories of sight, as messengers of light and love.

So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.”

- - Luke 7:22

“Go back and report...what you have seen and heard.” There are those throughout the world who are doing just that. From nearly every culture and every walk-of-life, both the sighted and the blind are telling their stories of life after physical death and of those out-of-body experiences, which can even be validated. It seems we are now ready to listen to those who have made the journey to Heaven and back and who wish to report what they have seen, heard, and felt, but more importantly, *why*.

In the spiritual near-death experience, one often encounters a being, a being of light, love, and authority. For many, the initial question posed to this divine entity is, “Am I dead?” The answer comes, telepathically, “Yes, but you must return.” There is a tenderness felt and an amazing love, so much so that leaving is unthinkable. The plea to stay is repeated, but the answer remains the same, “It is not your time to be here.” Apparently, there is still more to learn and do on the earth plane. There is an understanding that it has something to do with acceptance and love.

By looking deep within yourself, to the very core of your being, you realize that at the center of *every* human being is a divine connection. It is the purest part of us that connects to one another and to a divine and loving source. It identifies who we really are – a spiritual being of perfection, of light, and of a love. It is what some can only describe as our God consciousness. That is the message that so many return with, that there is a spark of that divine light and love within each of us. It may hide behind our human frailties and human fears, but it is there. Humanity’s mission, like those who return from a spiritual near-death experience, is to recognize that spark of light in everyone we meet. Only then will we begin to see the greater potential in all of us. When we live as Spirit hopes and asks of us, to “love your neighbor as yourself,” in both acceptance and unconditional love, we see the power of love in our daily lives. When we live in this way, we see the power of our divine gifts and abilities. We see our potential manifested into the material world. By recognizing our divine connection to one another, we see prosperity and happiness abound in *this* world.

This predestined life is one in which our soul will experience a number of lessons, particularly from our relationships with one another. We need only remember to look at others with loving eyes to see their true self. Then we will see each as a valuable part of something greater, something that can take us from lack to abundance, from fear to freedom, and from hate to love. That is the goal before us, to bring about the awareness of that love and light or spark of the divine within each.

With love as the driving force in our life, peace and positive changes are possible. This world *can* be better. All we need do is hold onto love. Allow love to lead the way at all times. It is as simple as keeping love present in our conscious being, in every waking moment, and in every circumstance – in every thought, word, and deed. As *human* beings, there is the potential to do so. As *spiritual* beings, there is the certainty of it. We have within us a divine presence and a power that is limitless. Remember who you really are and you will more easily connect with a higher power and presence. Remember who you really are and you will more easily see miracles manifest in this material world. Remember who you really are and you will more easily accept that you are loved, unconditionally loved, no matter what. Remember you are part of a greater essence, higher consciousness, and purest light. *You* are a spiritual being, part of an infinite, divine, and loving light, and you can radiate as much of it here as you wish.

It is in that realization that we begin to see the potential, value, and worth of every human being. We begin to see the potential for change in both our world and ourselves. This change can only come from within and not by any outside force. It comes by recognizing not only who we truly are, but also who we can *become*. Then, the transformation

begins to take place. As we practice living in the light of love, thinking, speaking, and walking in the light of love daily, that light touches others along our path. We change our world by first changing ourselves, not our neighbor, or another, but first *our self*.

Like the millions of others who have had a spiritual experience, many come away from it with profound changes to their conscious self. They may even rise from that of a human being to that of a more spiritual being. Forever changed by the experience, somehow they are able to find the strength they need to hold onto love in their daily life and to continue through life's greatest difficulties. They come to realize their value and worth and purpose in this life, which is the same as it is for everyone else. It is simply to be here together in this time and space, and to try to hold onto a greater something or essence that is love.

As we embrace that love within our entire being, others will know of it too. As we think of that love, that unconditional and limitless love, it influences our decisions. As we speak of that love, it inspires others. As we allow love to guide us in this life, it leads others. As we live with the presence of love within us, others will learn of it too. As spiritual leaders, we need only walk in that purest part of the light ourselves and allow it to subtly flow through us, touching others like the rippling effect of one drop into a pool of water. It will reach all those who are seeking it. It will comfort all those who yearn for it. We need only remember a divine light and love will light the way for all to follow.

“Love is never alone. Love is a shared self. The deepest love is an embrace. Love is a purpose.” Those few lines from Akiane Kramarik’s poem, *Love*, which she shares with us in *Volume 2 – Our Reality*, echoed from deep within me. I now know the fullest meaning behind her poem. Love is within us, Spirit is within us, and thus, we are never alone. Love must be shared and when we do, we love the Spirit within, we love others, and we love ourselves. Embracing that love is our purpose and our mission in life. That is the main message of those who have had an out-of-body or spiritual near-death experience, the only one that need remembering, that at the very core of every living being is love.

Love is the essence of you and the essence of me, and when we allow love to lead the way, others will follow. Love is the presence and the power that affects change in our world. No matter our difficulties in life, no matter our pain, and no matter our human frailties and fears, *love* allows us to triumphantly, come together. Together in love, we can overcome any physical obstacles. Together in love, we can ease the pain of others. Together in love, we can let go our fear of lack of any kind. There is no need for jealousy or greed. There is no need to fight for our abundance or whatever we desire in this life. There is no lack of any kind, once we know from where our true riches come. It comes from a greater essence, higher consciousness, and purest light that we quite simply know as *Love*.

Akiane Kramarik was only a child when she wrote her poem, *Love*, but within it, her channeled words of wisdom remind us all that, “The longest breath of love is the shortest distance to Heaven.” For those adults and children who have been *to Heaven and back*, their mission is now clear and purposeful, to live this life while holding onto love, until we too may one-day move ever *closer to the light*.