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Joseph, 4th October 1969

Sense and Purpose of Life

The divine world is able to intervene in human life if it is considered necessary to promote the individual's spiritual development. In the case of an adult for example, this may prevent him from burdening himself further while on earth. And for children this is an opportunity for a careful education in a children's paradise of the spiritual world. Thus there are various possibilities for a quicker ascent, since their further path in the spiritual world has already been planned in advance. Each and everyone is cared for and not left alone.

Joseph: God bless you! Dear brothers and sisters, heavenly messengers have not only the ability to guide human beings through life but also to intervene in their lives if necessary. For instance they may shorten a life if it appears that the individual would only burden himself still more and make no progress. Of course, they will do so only in agreement with their more advanced spiritual brothers and sisters, and before intervening they would observe the person over a long period of time. On the other hand, they may also lengthen the life of a human being.

You may perhaps be thinking that spirits of God could simply shorten the life of all those who fail to progress but this is not the case because human development differs. From some only little is expected while more of others. And if the spiritual world of God intervenes it recognizes the need for it. Usually it also relates to inner burdens from previous incarnations.

If we tell you that spiritual beings of God reach out their hands to you to help you progress in your ascent, it is literally so. When Christians talk about reincarnation they meet with resistance in general.

One is neither willing to understand this nor to accept that there is a connection with the fate of human beings. This is particularly the case with strict believers who are convinced that there is a benevolent and merciful God only. But how come some are blessed with a healthy body whereas others are born blind or lame having to endure an arduous life while still others have to suffer yet a different fate? There must be a reason that the heavenly Father allows this. For God's justice is perfect and befits each of his children exactly with what belongs to him according to his divine heritage. God loves all his children. Therefore, how could it be God's responsibility alone while they are blameless given that so many have to go through such arduous lives suffering illness, whereas others are healthy and happy, strong and full of vitality?

With a little reflection on this subject one could guess that there is something wrong with the ecclesiastical doctrine. Yes, this is precisely the difficulty: again and again one has to look for cause and effect, for human life, too, has its own cause and effect. If only mankind were prepared to affirm the fall of spiritual beings then they would find an answer to many questions. For without this affirmation of the fall of spiritual beings it remains simply impossible to fully understand that which is also set forth in God's laws. This will also make it clear that human beings are incarnated spirits. But here again is the sticky point, for many simply don't want to believe in spiritual beings. One nurtures all sorts of ideas about what makes a human being alive, but the fact that there is a spirit incarnated in him can be understood with great difficulty only.

For new friends I would have to start all over again from the time when there was no material life, only a spiritual world. And since there was a breakaway from God one should recognize that the cause of this fall of spiritual beings lies in their disobedience to God. This disobedience was only possible because all beings – contrary to being subjected to a forceful leadership – lived and acted freely. They possessed freedom of will, the most precious gift that they could possibly call their own.

You know yourselves what it means to live without freedom, as it happens to entire nations who have to succumb to what is forced on

them. There is a significant difference between people who are free to think and act as they please and people who are ruled by force and who, in their entire being and behaviour, have to show subservience as they are deprived of their freedom.

Since freedom once existed among all spiritual brothers and sisters in the divine world the possibility that disagreements and excessive demands might arise is understandable. Lucifer was the one who of his own free will – which all the others possessed as well – took the initiative to change so many things and to appoint himself for an assignment, thereby offending against the will of God. He agitated amongst his peers and enlisted accomplices.

Opposite this great freedom in the heavenly world of God stands obedience which is not based on might however. Rather, it is simply the following of God's laws. Order must be, as you well know. You live in a free country where you may think and talk as you please, yet you know your laws and you show obedience to your authorities.

However, it is not my present task to keep on repeating these events in detail. I only want to point out that which is the most important for the benefit of those who are unable to understand this spirit teaching; those who cannot see the sense and purpose of life nor why the development of mankind is so varied. They do not ponder the reason why one person has to go through life suffering from sickness whereas others are allowed to be healthy and strong; the reason for this is to be found in a previous life. Whatever guilt a person burdened himself with requires reparation and atonement: it's like a debt which must be repaid.

And the same is true for the whole of spiritual development. Human beings have to move forward and upward in their development. However, angels of God go by their side for they care about human beings. From time to time they check to see how much progress has been achieved in an individual's ascent and they also consult with the person's close guardian spirit. If it can be seen, for instance, that a particular human being makes little or no progress in his development, acquiring only more and more debt, the guardian spirit then consults with those closely connected higher spirit brothers and sisters and informs them accordingly. And so they observe the weak will and faith

in God of their charge and that he makes no progress in his development, rather that he continues to burden himself.

Primarily the individual's guiding spirit will approach the spirit of the human being in question and come into conversation with him. The outer human being is unaware of this as it takes place during sleep when the spirit becomes free, as has been explained to you before. During such a discussion, the individual's spirit is cautioned and told: "You burden yourself if you continue to live as you do, and we can no longer condone this and shall interrupt your human life now."

This is a serious talk that the guardian spirit has with this human spirit in the hope that he will be able to make a greater impression on the whole human being. This, however, is rarely the case. If there is only a little good will in the human spirit, even a little urge to aspire to the spiritual heights, then there is always something of this inner desire that penetrates through to the entire human being. However, when the spirit of this human being is weak and the entire human being has this weakness as well – attracted and taken up totally by the externals of life – then the inner voice, or the conscience, is unable to shake him up. The inner voice cannot penetrate through when the flesh is weak even though the spirit may be of good will. The externals influencing human beings form an enormous illusion for people which cannot simply be renounced in favour of matters of faith which offer no tangible success and/or profit.

It is, therefore, extremely difficult for the divine spiritual world to get through to spirits such as these. Even though the termination of his life is envisaged, he is still given some time, perhaps a few weeks, a few months or even more than a year – it all depends on the activities of the human being concerned and on the assessment of the divine beings. Time is not of such importance in the spiritual world though one thing is for sure: if it is the intention of the spiritual world of God to shorten a human life it will be done without regard to the day, week or the year.

On his return to the spiritual world the particular individual will express his astonishment. He will be told immediately: "We have shortened your life because you lacked the strength to progress further in your development; you were about to cause yourself more and more

spiritual damage so that we felt obliged to terminate your life.”

It is possible that this spiritual brother rebels saying that he's not content with his new world and does not accept it, in which case the angels of God will intervene. It serves no purpose to remove a burdened human being from earth only to expose him to uncertainty in the spiritual world. For the sake of his salvation he will be guided by the divine spiritual world and he is clearly given to understand that he has to obey, that he has to live in a particular place and fulfil his duties. He is also forbidden to visit his home and surroundings on earth where he had lived as human being. This ban is handled in such a way as to make it virtually impossible for him to escape from his spiritual plane. However, he can refuse to fulfil his appointed work; he possesses free will and can – up to a certain degree and as long as he does not break any law – do as he pleases.

However, if someone refuses to do his assigned work the divine beings have no choice but to punish him. They will segregate him from the others and lead him somewhere into solitude. There he will have all the time necessary to reflect on his past life and on what the angels have told him. After a certain time the angels will look in on him, for this being is to be promoted in his ascent, provided it is feasible. But if someone is resistant, he will continue to be left to his own devices for an indefinite time. While he can do as he pleases his environment nevertheless is extremely uninteresting. The divine world watches carefully such beings and will, in due time, take further decisions. In the end, in such cases the decision is always to lead these unwilling spiritual beings into a fresh incarnation. The individual is born again as a human being into circumstances adapted to him. Perhaps this time he succeeds in taking one step forward in his spiritual development.

Divine spirits discuss and decide on such cases together. They are beings with the necessary abilities and competence – appointed to decide on the orientation of human as well as spiritual beings. It is possible therefore to send someone into a new life on earth with the hope that this will bring about a change for the better. Such a new earthly existence does not have to be marked by a special karma or fate but if success is still lacking there will be no intervention and, once back

in the spiritual world, such a being will be called to account.

However, I would like to emphasize that if he has simply arrived at a standstill in his development he will be instructed and taught in the spiritual world unless he has burdened himself even more. He will be urged to apply himself and assigned duties. Eventually, preparations for a renewed life on earth will be made, and he will be given to understand that much is expected of him in this forthcoming life. Intervention could once again be implemented if these hopes are not fulfilled. If this should be the case, it is likely that he could be torn out of his life in his prime in order to learn anew in the spiritual world. And this time it would be ensured that his ascent would progress more quickly.

But there are still other possibilities. Those human beings returning to the spiritual world burdened with guilt after their life had been shortened are told: "If we hadn't intervened you would have burdened yourself to an even greater extent. We wanted to avoid this because we are interested in your faster spiritual ascent." First of all one has to observe how the returnee reacts under such circumstances. Perhaps he gained insight and admits: "Yes, there are many mistakes I made in my life." Or he begins to rebel against the idea of having been torn out of his life in this way, because he might have liked to complete certain worldly tasks; perhaps he had to leave a family behind and therefore feels very restless.

In this case the respective being is given a task, and one will have to wait and see whether he performs or refuses the assigned duty. If such a being is also malicious in addition to his refusal to cooperate, he will be isolated and eventually prepared for a fresh life on earth. His stay in the spiritual world will have been of short duration – not the usual decades or even centuries. As his spiritual development just has to progress faster, this quicker return to incarnation is judged advantageous. If, despite all the efforts of the higher brothers and sisters, such a burdened spirit remains obstinate and malicious, then it will be concluded that he will have to be humiliated. It will be arranged that this time he will not incarnate in a healthy body and that he will depend entirely on the help of his fellow human beings, on their compassion, their sacrifice, their charity and love. By this humiliating dependence it is hoped that this

human spirit will become obedient and willing so that his entire – inner and outer – being is suffused with this attitude of obedience and good will. Perhaps he might not be able to think properly – feeble-minded as you would call it – even though his spirit understands and registers everything. For the spirit itself possesses right-thinking whereas the soul is still unwilling and rebels through the human being.

When a spirit has to pass through a human existence with this kind of degradation and humiliation, believe me, such an experience is like a healing balm for such an unwilling, base spirit. He gets used to depending on the help of others and is grateful for what he receives. In this way the incarnated spirit is being purified when, as a human being, he has to forego so much because, unlike others, he is not in full possession of his powers and thus at a disadvantage in every respect. Once he has shed this sick body he is an entirely different spiritual being. He is grateful to be rid of his sick body and happy to be able to think as other spirits can. And above all he has become willing and obedient.

This is the case with most, particularly those who did not receive any special care from their neighbours, who were not pampered and who had to be really thankful when somebody helped them. However, there is a difference when a sick person who is marked in this way is spoiled by his environment. In such a case different laws apply.

In my discussion, I would like to focus on the aspect of humiliation which the spirit of this kind of human being has to endure. It is a healing therapy for spirit and soul, and when the individual returns to the spiritual world he will be much healthier. He will then be overjoyed to be rid of this imperfect body of flesh and to return to the spiritual realm. He can now be offered a new kind of spiritual existence and also an appropriate task. He can finally move forward!

It should be noted though that it may be predetermined for others to enter human life for a short period only. It is frequently the case that this period lasts only a few days, weeks or months because the intention is to recall such individuals to the spiritual world as children. Then, once in the beyond as spirit children, they can be nursed and brought up particularly carefully and lovingly. When someone has already

reached a higher spiritual level yet still shows some shortcomings, a brief lifetime may also be decided upon. By passing through a very short life on earth that which is lacking can be learned through a careful spiritual upbringing in a children's paradise. As a growing spirit child enjoying loving care he can easily be taught and it is anticipated that he will return in the same measure that which he himself has received.

And so it may happen that spiritual beings from a certain level of ascent onward have to enter brief incarnations only. When the time comes for them to return to the divine world, as children, they will receive the very little that is still lacking and will no longer need to reincarnate. Individual development can be speeded up in this way and the added benefit is that it will prevent an already quite advanced spirit from burdening himself again during a long life on earth. And in the cases we have just been discussing, it may also be of assistance in the ascent of parents who are mourning the loss of a child. I will add here that every child returning to the spiritual world will find himself in a children's paradise corresponding to his level of development. He is cared for and will grow up under the devotion of God's angels and can therefore become an angel of intercession on behalf of his earthly parents. But there are also little ones dying who – based on their previous human incarnations – have not yet made any significant step forward in their spiritual development. For this reason every level of development in the spiritual world has its own children's paradise. Once these children have grown up they will again be integrated in the spiritual plane which matches their level of development.

The death of an only child – which may have survived for only a few hours or days – can also serve as a test for the parents. It may be just this loss that leads them to the spiritual path. There is no coincidence in such an event. Spirits of God select those human beings for whom they have a plan which they will bring to fulfilment by arranging for the appropriate incident to take place. The child that is given to these parents may come from any level of development and, on its return to the spiritual world, will be brought up and educated in the appropriate children's paradise. Indeed it may be a child that has reached a highly advanced level of development prior to entering incarnation, lacking

very little which he can amend through the perfect upbringing of God's angels.

Thus there are various reasons for an intervention into human life. And if the life of a human being is shortened it happens only to serve his salvation. Thus the spiritual world of God can lead these returning spirits hand in hand towards the spiritual heights. There is a wonderful providence; and the divine world always tries to make the best out of the disastrous strife of human action.

Heaven is not indifferent in their guidance of human beings, even if some of them burden themselves heavily. You may think: "Why does one not shorten the life of this or that person? The time would be ripe for him to be called back." – Well, dear brothers and sisters, everything is dealt with according to spiritual law. It may well be that someone burdens himself in his present life to such extent that he will have to make amends for it in a forthcoming incarnation. Or he is sentenced to a conditional punishment which is something I have already explained on an earlier occasion. His human existence may be shortened in the prime of his life if it is seen that he neither improves nor progresses.

On the other hand, you must understand the great temptations human beings are exposed to and that the lower spiritual world tries to influence all. Divine spirits approach people on earth and pray with them so that they may not fall when tempted. Sometimes temptation is much closer to a human being than the angel of God.

Those who understand the true sense of life and try to strive towards the spiritual heights may be assured that their life is very much worth living and that his loyalty to spirit faith will be rewarded. The benefit of this reward may not become effective immediately on earth; for there is the spiritual reward, and there is also the reward in a further incarnation which may be very significant. How very necessary it is to have spiritually strengthened human beings among society – human beings who follow the spiritual path, guiding others along as well, and who have the courage and strength to show and explain to them the true path!

Well, dear brothers and sisters, I tried once more to give you an insight into the heavenly world and into its laws of cause and effect.

May God's blessing be with you. May those of you who are sick recover in body and soul. God bless you!

Trance address by spirit teacher Joseph, received in German through the Swiss medium Beatrice Brunner at the Academy of Music in Zurich, 4th October 1969

Joseph, 4th April 1973

Children Growing up in the Spiritual World

After a long illness, a ten-year-old girl named Monika entered the spiritual world. In the beginning, she had difficulties adjusting to the conditions in the new world and longed for her parents who had cared for her so affectionately. Eventually she found a new home in a foster family with five other children. Among the children there were two each who spoke English, French and German. Thus Monika learned these languages in the family and also attended spiritual schools where she studied the same subjects as did children on earth. For all children who die at an early age, the divine world wishes to promote their spiritual ascent.

Joseph: God bless you! Dear brothers and sisters, the reports we bring you from time to time based on individual experience serve to broaden your knowledge, giving you insight into the world beyond and above all improving your understanding of life in the beyond. Today I would like to tell you about a young girl who died when she was ten years old. I have the opportunity to see what is happening on the various planes of the spiritual world and when I come to talk with you I have companions with me who will draw my attention to the most suitable topics on which to base our explanations to you. Our world is immensely large and full of diversity; we therefore have to – as I have told you before – find a consensus as to what our addresses could usefully cover and what you would be able to understand. As you know there are many things I could explain to you which, however, would be beyond your grasp. Some of you would be able to comprehend, but we have to show consideration towards all friends, for it could happen that certain explanations could lead to misunderstanding which might cause

harm. We therefore always have to be very careful. We have to gear our explanations to your way of thinking and terms; we try to present our teaching in such a way that you can understand it and profit from it. In agreement with my spiritual friends I always select a meaningful and instructive theme on which to address you. We have decided this time to tell you something about these young people, these children.

A child had been sick for years and died at the age of ten. We will call her Monika even though this is of little importance for in the spiritual world an earthly name is retained only until one has reached a higher level of development and has taken up an occupation which requires a new name. All spiritual beings have a name and sometimes several names. This is the case with the angels. It can be that after his arrival in the spiritual world a deceased human being may not be satisfied with the name he had in his earthly life and say: "I was never happy with this name, and I no longer wish to be addressed in this way." And one does so to please him, unless it is a particularly burdened being that is not considered worthy of any concessions. Thus if someone asks not to be called by such-and-such a name but instead to take on the name of a friend or a relative, the divine world will come to a decision – but such a request is seldom refused. You should not assume that one simply continues to bear the earthly name although it's quite natural that one bears this name in one's spiritual consciousness and does not necessarily wish to part with it. What I mean to say is that those who were unhappy with their names during their lifetime will be the ones who want to make a change.

Let's turn now to this little girl who died at the age of ten and, as mentioned, had been ill for years. You know that those who die during childhood are taken to a children's paradise in the spiritual world where they will be looked after and given the care appropriate to their age group. This is something, too, which causes difficulties for some of our friends to understand but the fact is that the spirit of a human child that dies is also a spirit child in the beyond. In this connection I would like to draw your attention once again to the fact that, before human incarnation, preparations are made for a life on earth and a transformation of the spirit is necessary. The spirit about to be

incarnated must be transformed in such a way that it can harmonize with the child's body; this requires the intervention of the divine world – a special piece of guidance and providence. If I were to explain this in more detail some of you might not understand. So all I will say is this: there has to be a transformation, an intervention by the spiritual world to make this incarnation possible. And so, the spirit entering the child's body has to grow jointly [with the human body]. Growth is simultaneous, and together they will develop empathy and the capacity to adapt to their new surroundings. This can only take place gradually and is in harmony with the spiritual and physical growth. Those who die at an early age will therefore continue to be looked after in the spiritual world. Of course, they have no idea that they have already had other earthly lives. The little ones as well as those who have already attained a certain independence are surprised. Suddenly they are in a strange world; they feel abandoned and long for their relatives with whom they had lived on earth. Memories and desires all belong to the soul and are not lost with death but continue to exist and therefore need to be guided and transformed in the spiritual world.

That is how it was with this ten-year-old girl of whom I would like to tell you especially. Her parents had given her a particularly affectionate upbringing. She had been ill for several years and they knew that she had to die, so they wanted to make her life as pleasant and agreeable as possible – indeed they had tended to spoil her a little. Naturally Monika did not familiarize herself with dying and she had not been told that she had to die. Her parents certainly told her a good deal about heaven – the place where everyone went after their earthly death. However, the parents themselves had hardly any spiritual knowledge and therefore this was only a means of consolation for Monika.

When the time came for Monika to open her spiritual eyes in the world beyond, everything naturally appeared strange to her even though the surroundings she found herself in were delightful. She was taken into a house where everything had been beautifully arranged with a lot of love. Angels were there to greet her and to give her instructions. Surrounded as she was by strangers, Monika naturally longed for her parents and had to be told: “You are no longer living on earth: you are

now in the heavenly world. And you are no longer ill, for you have left your sick body behind on earth. Your spiritual body is healthy. Your mind may still be confused somewhat, and you may have feelings which you will have to overcome in time, but you certainly are no longer ill.”

Monika was glad to hear that she was no longer ill, but she yearned for her parents. And so she asked that since she was now in heaven she would really like to be together with her parents and suggested that one should go and fetch them as well. Her only wish was that her father and mother, who had treated her so lovingly, should also come to the beyond so they could then all live together. At this point she was asked to think again: “Do you really wish for the death of your parents? What about your brothers and sisters who would be left without any parents! It would be most unfair and selfish of you to want to have your parents here with you now. This cannot be. However, we will give you foster parents who are just as loving.” Monika was reluctant to accept this; she didn’t want foster parents – she wanted her own parents. Of course, she lacked the necessary insight. Then she asked if the solution wasn’t simply to recall her brothers and sisters – the whole family to the beyond. She had discovered that in the end everyone would leave the earth and return to eternity; the time of return would not really matter, and therefore they could all live together in happiness. Such were her childish thoughts and reflections, and this called for a thorough discussion with her: “That’s not possible. There is God’s order and laws to be considered, and everything will be handled in accordance with these laws. Your arrival in the spiritual world was premature, but this will not harm you for you can continue to develop here in this world – indeed you can progress more quickly than your relatives on earth.” And she was told: “When the time comes for your mother, your father or some other member of your family to return you will be able to welcome them and to show heaven to them. They will be so pleased to see you.” This is how it was explained to her.

Well, she was then taken to her foster parents; she didn’t like it at all and cried and struggled against it. She simply would not and could not come to terms with this new world. Everyone seemed strange to her. She was told: “You will soon get to know everyone. Your foster parents

are just as loving as your earthly parents. They will give you all the attention you need, and you will have a lovely time here.” Thus she needed continual encouragement.

Let me just say this: human beings are full of grief when they lose a child or a relative, but they give no consideration to the fact that others suffer and grieve as well. They think only of their own pain and don't at all think of the sorrow of others. If those on earth could only refrain from prolonged mourning, weeping and yearning for their departed loved ones, they would be contributing considerably to their peace of mind in the beyond. Many of these spiritual beings experience the grief of their relatives and are aware of their sorrow and yearning which draws them back to them and hinders them in their ascent. They feel restless and would like to tell their loved ones: “Don't be sad, don't cry – only set me free and wish me all the best.” This is what they would like to say but they cannot be heard, as it is spoken in the spiritual world.

This is why spiritual believers are told not to be excessively sad and disconsolate when a loved one has to leave them. Rather they should take heart knowing that this spirit will be paving the way for those he has left behind. It can be an advantage for many human beings when they have a relative in the spiritual world with whom they have lived together in a good and just way. This spirit will perhaps do something for them, or make certain preparations. In a manner of speaking, he will prepare a home and pave the way for those relatives left behind. It is an advantage to have a truly good and easy-going relationship with someone without constantly pining for him and wanting him back out of sheer egoism, because one can no longer live together and has to do without this and that. Love and separation that are purely egoistic have no value – it does not help those in the beyond, and they in turn cannot give any support to those left behind.

Well then, let us return to our little girl. She had in the meantime been taken to the house of her foster parents where she found herself with five other spiritual children of the same age. The foster parents introduced her to these children, saying: “With you, we now have six children. It is our task to look after you. But you will also need to go to

school – you have to be educated and to learn languages.” As it happened there were three pairs among the six children who spoke the same language – that is to say, two spoke German, two spoke French and two spoke English. The foster parents spoke all these languages and could converse with their charges in their mother tongue. It was the children’s duty to go to school; where they had to acquire a degree of spiritual education which did not, however, cover knowledge of the plan of salvation and creation. They were to receive the same kind of education as is usual in your world. Because of their illness these children had had little or no education. So they now needed to learn everything that they would have learned in elementary school on earth. It is not as you might think: “Well, when in the spiritual world one knows everything there is to know; the spirit knows everything.” No, as I emphasized at the beginning; a transformation has taken place, and the spirit has to adjust to this new world and atmosphere. And if this spirit returns to the spiritual world at an early age, the required knowledge does not reappear immediately in his consciousness. By entering a new life on earth previous knowledge has been extinguished and so has to be relearned. This is just by way of general information. Thus these six children had to acquire general knowledge again. They had to go to school to be taught all they needed to know, just as though they had still lived in their human guise. This was one school. Of course – and I would like to emphasize this – learning is not as difficult for spiritual beings as it is for people on earth. One is freer, and there are opportunities to learn faster: there is no longer the hindrance of the earthly body, and many distractions have been removed. One is more concentrated and has a better and quicker grasp. Some spirits do, however, have a hard time in acquiring the necessary general knowledge, but they are the exceptions. Normally, as it was with these six brothers and sisters, learning was no problem for them.

But now they also had to learn the languages spoken by the others. It was wisely arranged; so that each child had one other with whom he could converse. Now they were all to learn the other two languages – a process that was made easy for them. In time, the six brothers and sisters were able to speak all three languages and to understand each

other with ease. They learned at school as well as at home in the family circle. Thus it is wisely arranged that such a child is not given to foster parents as an only child; the children live in a community where they learn to do without many things and where they will be able to talk things over with each other. It makes sense to live in such a family, for these children had by then reached the spiritual age when they could be expected to live together with other brothers and sisters and to learn and spend time together.

Our Monika, of whom I am talking in the main, soon made friends with the others so it wasn't all that long before she began to forget her earthly parents. There was so much this new and interesting world had to offer, and one had to learn – one had to. The children also had to pass examinations set for them by the higher spirit beings in charge of them.

Thus one had the school of general education, but there was also the school of spirit-teaching which was not to be neglected either. This spiritual school is commonly intended for all those deceased human beings who have no idea about the divine laws and the divine order and who need to be informed about the truth. They enter a world which is entirely strange to them, of which they know not the first thing. They respond to it partly with rejection and partly with admiration. However, they have to learn. And this is another thing many cannot grasp and do not want to understand: the fact that in this other world one has to work and learn; and that it is necessary to recapture this knowledge. The time will come when one has to pass the respective examinations.

It's just like in the human world, and that is how it was with these brothers and sisters.

I must also tell you that two of these children were not white-skinned – there are also beings in the spiritual world whose spiritual appearance is of dark colour. I don't want to mention the terms by which you name such people but I do want to say that these dark-skinned beings, in so far as they have reached a reasonably advanced spiritual state, are both admirable and beautiful. This is part of the diversity of heaven, part of the manifold creation of spiritual beings. In the world beyond there is no bias because of – now I need to say – this

colour of the spiritual skin.

The plan to send Monika to this particular family had been carefully prepared, for they all belonged to the same level of development. You may well have been told that white-skinned people were of a higher level of spiritual development – but here I must raise an issue! What I have to say is this: the majority of all spiritual beings have white skin but there are others as well who have dark spiritual skin and who are at the same level of development as those of white skin. They do not outweigh the latter in number but they are nevertheless a sizeable group. In this connection, I also want to tell you that there are princes in the highest heavens whose spiritual skin is of this very colour. Perhaps I shall one day have an opportunity to explain this to you in greater detail, but that won't be possible this evening. You can, however, take it for granted that in the spiritual world spirits with dark skin are no less respected than others, nor do they stand on a too low level of spiritual development. Of course they are in the process of ascent to higher planes; I may well say there are a great many spirits who move from lower to higher levels. And I may also say that there are those among them who have reached a higher level of spiritual development.

That was precisely the case with the two children who had come to these foster parents – they had already reached a higher spiritual level. After all, having to leave the earth at an early age should now serve to accelerate their ascent. As you know, those who leave the world at an early stage, before they have acquired a burden of guilt, have the opportunity to be instructed in the spiritual realm, and so they can progress and develop at a faster pace. Of course, I don't want to give the impression that it is a good thing to die as early as possible – no, that is not how it is. For each human being is given the opportunity to work and prepare as much as possible for the life hereafter and also be rewarded respectively while still on earth. One can gain great merit on earth which will make it possible to be led to a higher spiritual plane. There is so much a human being can accomplish. But there is always the possibility of an early recall from earth. In such an event predestination may be at work, especially when the divine world is seeking to promote

the spiritual progress of a particular individual – there are always reasons for this to happen.

It may be divine destiny that a man's life is of such short duration, unless caused by human beings. Thus we are talking of divine providence: it will already have been decided at the time of his birth that his earth life will only last for a certain length of time. The reason for this could be that he had acquired a burden of guilt during an earlier life, after which he had successfully tried to make progress in the spiritual world by fulfilling great deeds. Therefore the higher spiritual world is interested in promoting the ascent of this being by preventing or averting anything that could damage his spirit or soul or represent an obstacle in his way. A human life always involves spiritual dangers; though in the early years a human being cannot know what course his life will take, whether or how he will burden himself which might bring his spiritual progress to a halt.

For most people life is intended to be a test, and they are to prove their ability to achieve something. This applies in those cases where there is no need for a special provision or intervention where things can take their usual course. However, now and again exceptional circumstances arise, as was the case with these six brothers and sisters whose lives were deliberately shortened because the divine world did not want them to run the risk of accumulating further guilt. They were to be given further education and other forms of encouragement in the divine world, for this is what they had earned for themselves previously during their life in the spiritual world. However, the divine world felt that they could not quite be trusted to live out the whole span of a human life without acquiring a burden of guilt in the same way as before. That was the reason for their early demise. Intervention of this kind can be set in motion by the divine world for certain individuals, but I should like to make it quite clear that it is not the general rule. When it does take place, very important factors are always involved. Every individual being is evaluated from a loftier standpoint which includes the earlier spiritual existence before the fall. From that perspective it will be seen to what extent he has acquired personal guilt and how much progress he has made in his spiritual development as a

human being; the weaknesses and also the strength of each individual soul are considered. Thus the divine world will intervene in order to achieve higher goals.

In the divine world everything is planned. Every individual being belongs to a spiritual family – a spiritual group – and each spiritual group has its leaders. The focus is always to boost the progress of these leaders; beings with the inherent capacity to guide others spiritually can be fostered by the divine world. It is similar in your world: you have natural leaders who guide their fellow human beings; they have the talent for directing others and for organizing. Others lack this capacity: they have no foresight, no anticipation of the future and cannot judge or grasp it. They are people or spiritual beings who simply lack the talent for leadership or to carry others along, to guide them forward or higher. And so, the spiritual world intervenes. I just wanted to give you the reason why it is that the spiritual world intervenes particularly in such cases – and now you know.

Parents are often very sad when they have to lose a child at such an early age, but I must emphasize once again that if the death has not occurred through personal fault then it will have been brought about by the divine world, in order that that particular child could be educated in the spiritual world. It will surely be clear to you that one can achieve much more in a spiritual school than in a worldly one.

Amongst the various teachers in the divine world, some are spiritual beings who have reached a higher spiritual level and others are God's angels. On these higher planes everything takes place in perfect harmony and near God – if I may say so. These beings know: "We are in the heavenly world." They have a deeper feeling for God, a greater longing and yearning, a more profound regard and respect than do human beings. For mankind God is someone strange, even if they believe in him. If he really were familiar and close to them they would not commit so many injustices – if God were truly close to them; but God is a stranger to them. However, those in the divine world are close to God and know that it is their obligation to put all their energy into learning and working as part of a higher, lovelier and more meaningful engagement. They are no longer exposed to any significant dangers as

during human life. By that I mean dangers of temptation for the soul: they are no longer exposed to the danger of burdening themselves. A being, therefore, can no longer burden himself in this way and can concentrate on a God-pleasing spiritual life. The early death of these children will consequently be of great use and advantage to them.

And so these children grew up in the beyond. Monika went to school with her brothers and sisters. In order to make you understand I have to use human expressions: the children lived with their foster parents and were looked after by them up to the age of about sixteen. They had to learn a great deal, and yet they also had time for recreation. Moreover they had the opportunity to devote themselves to the arts – this too was a matter of choice. They could decide freely to join classes and take part in whatever they felt drawn to. When these brothers and sisters were looked upon as adults and no longer as children, they were separated from each other. The need for foster parents was over, and they were now to enter community life of another kind where they would be working to promote God's plan of salvation and order. When individuals have lived together and have formed a family, spiritual bonds develop and friendships are sealed. These six brothers and sisters promised each other friendship and loyalty. They promised to visit each other, never to become estranged. Having become so close to one another there was no question of any one member of the family dissociating himself from the others because of a difference in the colour of their skin – on the contrary, each promised the others that if the opportunity arose and they were ever to meet as human beings their concern for each other and their readiness to support each other would remain. This is what they promised each other, although they had been taught that when they entered a new incarnation these promises, together with all the knowledge they had gathered in the spiritual world, would not readily come to light, for they would have embarked on a new beginning. However, all that they had experienced could never be lost or forgotten spiritually. It would be held firmly within their soul, and an impulse or energy could originate from the soul which, as a human being, one cannot really understand; one cannot really explain why it is that one feels drawn to a particular person – why it is that one

devotes one's attention to that person and feels that one has a task to fulfil with him. But it isn't really necessary to know the reason for this, one should not be influenced by the matter at hand, but rather respond to an inner urge to do what is good and noble and to let one's actions be consistent with a loftier point of view.

So in fact these promises of mutual friendship in a new incarnation had no special significance. What was of significance to them was simply the power of spirit and soul that they had acquired in the beyond. This power should now be so strong that it would one day pervade the whole human being, for it is a spiritual power that flows through the earthly body and is able to reach consciousness and thus give something of itself to the human being. It may perhaps be too much to speak of "reaching consciousness" at this stage, for at the moment I only want to talk of the power of the soul and the spirit. Both of these spiritual powers flow through the organism – the human body – and thus have the possibility of influencing the faculty of thinking. The human being, though, is now living in another environment and is receiving different impressions; he is no longer aware of anything he had previously learned and promised, but is obliged to reach a higher spiritual understanding and must try to foster this. He has to become aware that there is within him something that is higher than his usual human way of thinking and feeling. He needs to realize that as a human being he contains a superior consciousness – a consciousness that can, in a higher sense, give him inner guidance.

But if a man places obstacles in his own path by saying: "I can never grasp this, I can never understand this," then he will be setting up barriers which make it impossible for this higher spiritual power to become effective thus allowing him to gain higher insight. People create enormous obstacles of this kind for themselves – here, too, we are looking at something that the majority of human beings simply cannot and does not want to understand. That is why we keep on emphasizing that our spirit teaching has a starting point. Let me say it this way: one needs to start with the first class and move up to the higher school. One cannot simply enter a higher class and imagine already having all the necessary knowledge. One must be familiar with the basic teaching after

which one can take the first steps in acquiring spiritual knowledge. Only when one possesses this fundamental knowledge can one grasp other things. And we shall not cease to explain it again and again, for we have good reasons for doing so.

Friends who come here over the years to listen enrich their understanding. With these explanations I am able to spread more seeds again and again. As their knowledge expands, they make more efforts to gain higher insights and to keep and cherish them. This is essential. You should not imagine that you know it all, thinking: "That's enough now, I don't need to know anymore." To think on those lines is to show poverty of outlook. The heavens are so vast, so mighty and so full of variety; and human beings imagine they know enough, that they know it all – this just as a comment.

The six brothers and sisters who had made promises to each other once again entered into human existence. However, they were guided by divine spirits; after all, the divine spirits had taken particular care of them. They had reached a certain level of spiritual development. The divine world thus supported them, and had a very good reason for doing so. There are, however, other children and young people who die early and who are at a lower level of spiritual development; accordingly they will enter a lower plane of the spiritual world. There they are given a general education, each one being given the same treatment. The story I have just been telling you constitutes a special case: those six children went to foster parents in a small family, whereas on other occasions I have spoken about beings having to live in communities of fifty, a hundred or even more beings. This all depends on the individual development.

I would now like to talk about the meaning of this kind of intervention. You will probably have wondered: "Where is the sense in all this, because they no longer know anything that they have learned when they enter human life?" Nothing that they have learned is lost: it is in the possession of their soul. Yet this knowledge may not be revealed to them as human beings; they have to struggle to get in touch with it by applying their human willpower. They are required to show whether their willpower is strong or weak – whether they believe in

God or reject him. This is something they have to demonstrate – so it constitutes a test.

On the whole it is like this: if a spirit has been chosen for a higher task these spiritual beings will be very interested in the life of such a human being and try to guide him in such a way that the plan made in the spiritual world will come to fruition, without the human being concerned knowing anything about it. So the spiritual world plays its part and brings people together so that they can in a higher sense work with one another to fulfil their tasks together – this is arranged and directed by the divine world. But before the people concerned are guided towards a task which is of importance to the divine world, they are put to the test in their earthly life – sometimes very severely so. They have to prove also that as human beings they are able to fulfil higher tasks, for life on earth is something quite different again. One must never overlook the influence of the environment which is the undoing for many but those who are sufficiently strong in spirit, generally speaking, are unaffected by it.

When those concerned have passed the test set for them by the divine world, they will be directed towards the tasks laid down for them in the spiritual plan. The progress of mankind is to some extent indicated in spirit. There is much that depends on human beings themselves, but the plan has been laid down in broad outline. It allows for any small changes that are necessary to make. If the individual has passed his human tests the path towards his spiritual activity will be made smooth for him by the divine beings who are interested in his progress and advancement.

This is what happened with Monika and the others. They had been given a careful upbringing in the spiritual world, yet they still had to go through further testing as human beings. With one exception they all passed their tests, and were therefore able to be guided by the higher spiritual world in such a way that they could live and work as human beings in the service of higher spiritual goals.

Dear brothers and sisters, today I have addressed you on a particular subject which I, or we, felt you needed to have explained to you. If you are familiar with our spiritual teaching your desire should be to strive

for higher goals. Even if in this lifetime you are unable to accomplish great deeds it will still be to your advantage to have acquired spiritual knowledge, for this will bring to your human consciousness a feeling for spiritual order, spiritual law and the plan of creation. What lies in your human mind, in your consciousness, is by no means simply superficial – on the contrary, it fertilizes your soul. And when you will eventually have shed your earthly body and your spirit takes leave of it, all the energy of your body – which the physical body required in order to live – will be given back to the spiritual body and the soul. Therefore higher thinking and striving is necessary, for this energy of the earthly body is not of such a fine consistency. The energy of the spiritual body and the soul is a special energy; it is of subtle substance. It absorbs the coarser energy. If the unrefined energy is so powerful that it outweighs the finer spiritual energy, then the human traits emerge, exactly as one lived as a human being. The bad habits, obstinacy and self-will – basically these are energies as well – flow into the soul and spiritual body, creating a distinct influence. The more powerful this energy still is, the more forcefully will it express itself in the nature of the individual concerned. When, as a human being, one was dissatisfied, jealous – or whatever the vices were – one will consequently remain stubborn and dissatisfied. If one indulges in these vices with “body and soul” – as you call it – it is something terrible. The soul is permeated by this energy. In the beyond it will take much longer to purify. This energy needs to be eliminated; the thinking and attitude must be purified; the odic energy has to be cleansed. Harmony is a necessary condition of soul and spirit. Therefore it takes quite a long time before purification is complete. If human beings are stubborn in their thinking and their characteristics they will have to go through a rebalancing process in the spiritual world. And this is something which you can do during your lifetime: refine yourselves in spirit and in your whole nature. If you do, your human energy will become purer.

This is what I wanted to tell you; it will one day be to your advantage. This energy in its refined state will blend with your spiritual body and your soul. Thus you will be seen in a quite different light, for the od can be fine, so subtle that it starts to glow. But it can also be

murky and dark and when that is the case the cleansing process will take time. Strive for a higher thinking and willpower and try to cultivate it!

And so, I dismiss you with God's blessing; may this blessing accompany you and influence your entire being. May you be protected and shielded on your paths, and may those of you who are sick be healed in body and soul, in God's name. God bless you!

Trance address by spirit teacher Joseph, received in German through the Swiss medium Beatrice Brunner in the hall at Münchbaldenstrasse 9 in Zurich, 4th April 1973