

READERS' QUESTIONS

Tests of Initiation *Persistence of Facial Likeness* *Donating Body Organs*

QUESTION: I have been told that a candidate for initiation must pass certain tests before the initiatory ceremony can be performed. If this is true, can you give me some idea of what these tests are like?

Answer: It is quite true that the candidate for Initiation has to pass a number of tests before he is considered worthy to take this most important step. These various tests, however, come to him during the course of his daily life. This work is carried on under the direction of the Elder Brothers, who are always sure to pick out the most vulnerable points in each individual's character and test him along those lines.

This procedure is used for two reasons: to call the attention of the candidate to the weaknesses in his character, and to give him the opportunity to correct them. No two persons are exactly alike, and it is therefore unlikely that any two persons would be given exactly the same tests. One person might not even be tried in a situation in which another person might fail completely.

It is important to remember that tests are always given to benefit the individual. It is primarily through tests and trials that we grow. Tests are not given with the intent of discouraging a person or causing him to fail.

A considerable part of the process of Initiation consists of showing the candidate how to change the latent powers that he has stored up within himself, by his own efforts, into dynamic energy. This energy then comes under the direct control of the person's will, and is ready for use at any time.

Each individual generates this power by living a life of loving service and developing strength of character. No one can be initiated who has not first prepared himself in this way.

PERSISTENCE OF FACIAL LIKENESS

Question: Does the dense body from one rebirth to another retain a similar facial likeness regardless of sex or race?

Answer: Yes, to a certain extent it does. When the Ego comes back to rebirth, it has an entirely new set of vehicles, which include the essence of the experiences of all its preceding lives. On the inner plane just previous to birth the Ego attracts to itself mind stuff, desire stuff, and ether of such a nature and quality as will correspond to the essence extracted from its preceding lives, including the last one. When it reaches the material plane, these substances attract physical matter and build it into the new dense body, which process includes the building of the physical features as well as the rest of the material form: Therefore the new features will be different from those of the past lives to the extent that the Ego has added to its spiritual accomplishments by the experiences of the last preceding life.

The physical body corresponds to the Ego's spiritual character in every Earth life. However, there are some modifying conditions: in each Earth life the Ego is assigned to work out a certain amount of past destiny, and is therefore given a physical body that will enable it to achieve the desired result. This may entail the temporary holding in abeyance of a part of the forces and qualities which the Ego

has generated in past lives, and this holding in abeyance will be reflected in the physical body and facial characteristics. In other words, an Ego does not necessarily in any particular life reflect in its physical body all the forces and qualities acquired during its entire past series of lives. Thus the matter of facial contour is subject to a great deal of variation, although a certain resemblance can always be traced.

WISDOM OF DONATING BODY ORGANS

Question: What are the teachings of The Rosicrucian Fellowship regarding donating one's body to science and one's eyes to the eye bank? I have been told that the Spirit must then wait out the time the various organs are no longer in use before they can be "free" in a sense. Seems wrong to punish an altruistic (and economical) motive, such as this one.

Answer: The Rosicrucian Fellowship teaches, first of all, that "When the higher vehicles (mind, desire body, and soul body) have left the dense body they are still connected with it by a slender, glistening, silvery cord shaped much like two figure sixes reversed—one upright and one horizontally placed, the two connected at the extremities of the hooks. One end is fastened to the heart by means of the seed-atom, and it is the rupture of the seed atom which causes the heart to stop. The cord itself is not snapped until the panorama of the past life, contained in the vital body, has been reviewed."

If the body or the organ is not disturbed until the end of the panoramic period (up to three and one-half days), it matters little what is done with it afterward, although cremation is the best procedure, since it terminates completely all magnetic attraction that may exist between the Spirit and its higher vehicles with the dense body. However, in the case of transplanted vital organs (such as the kidneys), it seems essential that the organ be removed immediately upon the stoppage of the heart action. This would of necessity interfere to some extent with the panoramic process of the donor.

One should remember in regard to the matter of transplanting and donating organs that we each build our own bodies; they reflect our own state of

ALL ARE BUT PARTS

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body, Nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in a vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns;
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all.

—Alexander Pope

consciousness. One who receives an organ from a person or a "bank" may temporarily benefit, but unless he so lives afterward as to transmute the part of his nature which resulted in the impaired organ, he will not carry that benefit with him into his next life. We rise on the ladder of evolution solely by our own efforts—by transmuting the undesirable in our natures into the desirable.

One's motives are certainly important in gauging spiritual progress. However, the motives which spring from ignorance are not likely to be helpful in the long run. One might give matches to a child to play with, in order to keep him happy, not knowing the flammability of the matches. When fire results from the child's striking of the matches, accidentally or otherwise, the motives of the donor of the matches would surely be questionable, to say the least. Along with good motives, one needs knowledge and wisdom.

In the light of the above occult facts, we might add that it would be far better for the human race if more attention were given to living in accord with God's laws than to patching up impaired bodies. Our ultimate goal—the goal of the entire human race—is to live in such a manner that our bodies are fit "temples" for the living God (2 Cor. 6:16). □