

Will There Be A You After You die?

If we really want to pray, we must first learn to listen, for in the silence of the heart God speaks.
- Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa was speaking only to those who believe in prayer, as she had little time for those who did not believe unless they needed her help or they wanted to donate to her causes. But what was she speaking about?

Some would dismiss this quote as meaningless because it speaks of prayer and as they have had no experience with the success of prayer they don't believe in it. Some do not believe in God, thus want nothing to do with entities and concepts they don't understand.

I do not propose to promote either prayer or a concept of God in this article. I would, however, like to make some links that most of us have experienced and encourage you to try to make sense of them without dismissing them as meaningless.

Nothing is meaningless. Nothing happens without a reason. Just because we may not understand the reason or appreciate the concept or the background behind it does not force us to conclude that things happen without reasons.

This is the pivotal point that has caused such grief and confusion in the past, as it does today. When people don't understand important concepts or reasons, those who have something to gain by satisfying that need to know jump in to provide answers. Those answers may be absurd, without reason or justification, but if they are stated with confidence some people will believe them.

Many of our predecessors have devised elaborate concepts and called them God. They even have extensive books or miracles to back them up. They invite people to pray and do so collectively with such enthusiasm that listeners are bound to believe that such exuberance must be divinely inspired. They are excellent actors and role players. Their audience is attentive.

Some say that you can ask God for anything in prayer and that He will respond. If He doesn't respond the way they wanted, they conclude that God must have other plans that they don't know about.

I will ask you to think about whether God would consider what we want of Him more important than what He wants of us. Which does prayer do?

How many of the believers in God have committed their lives to fulfilling what God wants them to do? I don't mean going to war or proselytizing to convert people with another believe set to their own, but actually doing what God has asked them to do.

How do we know what God (if such an entity really exists) wants us to do? For those who pray for the recovery to health of a dying person, do they really believe that God hears their prayers and heals a person that he would not otherwise have wanted to return to good health?

For individuals to believe that they could influence the mind and purpose of God is the kind of thinking that turns many people away from organized religion. It doesn't make sense that one individual human (or many) could sway the mind of an omniscient and omnipotent being.

The human mind has great power and collectively the combined power may be able to influence the immune systems of people with diseases, but it seems conceptually unlikely that these people could change the mind of God to act in such a way as to do their will instead of His own.

Mother Teresa suggests in this quote that prayer is not about asking something of God, but about allowing God to speak to us, to ask of us, to act through us. Prayer is our way of opening a channel to God so that He can tell us what He wants of us.

There are many who don't want to do what anyone tells them to do, on general principle. That's fine. God doesn't force anyone, nor does He likely punish those who do not believe in Him.

When the time comes for those people, God may decide to recycle them. As ninety percent of our body is made up of microbes that are not part of our own collection of body cells (see Discover magazine, July 2007), recycling the corpuscular parts of us is easily accomplished. If we have not made something of ourselves in our lifetime beyond what would be expected of any other animal (beyond what is our body), we are easily converted into fodder for bacteria.

God has no reason to extend the spiritual life of those who have been spiritual dead-ends in their time on earth. Nor does He have any reason to want to keep around anything that remains of a non-spiritual person who didn't listen or who didn't fulfill his or her purpose in life.

As Mother Teresa said, the message is within us. The source is within us. If we don't take the time or the trouble to listen or if we deny the importance everything that doesn't earn us income, we won't hear. Those people are recyclables that have not yet been collected.

Only those who listen quietly will be able to hear.

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