

CONVERSATIONS WITH
BROTHER LAWRENCE
THE AFTERLIFE
PART 3



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“Yes, indeed the body is weak, and weaker still as we grow older and closer to being with our Lord in eternity.” smiled Brother Lawrence. “But on this side of eternity we are rather in the dark. We do not know what actually lies ahead although from our very enlightening discussion I believe that we know more than we give ourselves credit for.”

“How so Brother?”

“Since our discussion went on for some time, and I do not wish to relate everything that transpired, I'll just summarize for you what I believe we will encounter when we DO make our final journey home. I use the word “home” as a more accurate term because I believe Heaven will be more like home than we may realize. To our minds, the word 'home' summarizes all that is comforting, safe and sure. Unfortunately, there are some poor souls who have never really had a home but they will none-the-less have one there IF they make their decision to follow our Lord in this life. I remember the quote attributed to St. Augustine that goes something like...” our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” And indeed, we do find our rest in our Lord here and into eternity for resting in our Lord IS our natural state. When we worry, when we fret over the future or try to take up the mantle of controlling our destiny, we show our lack of faith in our Lord and usurp the rightful place of King that only God has the right to inhabit in our lives which, as you know dear Brother, is the same sin that Satan committed.

Not very good company to keep I can assure you.”

“Let me go back a minute to your metaphor of Heaven as our home. How do you think Heaven is like home?”

“Did you have a happy home-life growing up Brother?”

“Funny you should say that Brother because during my nap at the discussion I was dreaming about just that. My mother had a cherry pie baking in the oven, my Father was fixing the bar, and my brother was shooting hoops. I was there too, high above, yet there much closer than if I had actually been there. Does that make any sense?”

“It doesn't have to make sense to me, it only has to make sense for you. I believe that we create our memories from the deepest emotional feelings we have and they reside in our souls to feed us with comfort throughout our lives. They remind us of the most important gifts we receive from our Lord and they will remain with us when we reside in Heaven.

“Allow me to contrast the experiences of our dear Protestant pastor in the television special to that of the atheist. The pastor had rich experiences full of his loving family, experiencing the images he learned from the Bible of what Heaven must be like and having expectations of meeting God face to face. Then he was returned BEFORE he was to meet God because he was not yet ready to end his ministry to us here in time. And even though it was a very personal experience, for our benefit he opened up his most inner loves to comfort us about our future IF we also trust in God. Compare that with the atheist who related her experience as “nothingness.” She found it comforting because there was not pain nor any attachment with this world and its cares, but other than an appearance by her atheist teacher, nothingness. She seems to understand her destiny as filled with nothingness. It is what she believes is there after her live on this world ends and that is what she saw; nothingness. She had made a choice to not believe in

the richness of images in the Bible, the love of family and the act of eternally glorifying God. Instead she chooses nothingness.

“While not trying to demean the atheists believes, although I DO dispute her conclusions with every fiber of my being, I think she taught me more than the others about what I will experience in Heaven; you included dear Brother. For she, in her atheistic belief, believes that there is simply nothingness in her future and that somehow gives her comfort. I for one do NOT expect nothingness when I reach Heaven. I believe in a Heaven filled with the joy and the glory and the wonders of God almighty because I believe we are now, and have been our entire lives, creating our Heaven while we serve here on earth. We build each future experience from the ones we have now. We are deciding each day, each minute, how and what we will experience there.”

“That is a little heavy Brother. Are you saying we create our own Heaven? Is that not like taking God's place in creation?

“You misunderstand me Brother and I don't blame you for I don't know if I understand just what I'm saying myself, it is so overwhelming. But yes, I believe that we are creating our EXPERIENCES of Heaven now because we are creating our understanding of Heaven here first. Think of it this way, Heaven is like a large house. When we are born it is completely empty except for the beauty of the building. As we grow, we add to it bits of furniture. These furnishings are not physical as much as they are experiential; the loving caresses of our Mother as she holds us in her arms, the safety we feel when we see our Father working hard to provide for our needs, the joy of our siblings as we play together. These provide us with the richness of our lives although we sometimes need to be reminded of it. As we learn more from the Bible about the richness and beauty of God and from those who teach us faithfully how we are to serve one another

and learn what it is to serve in Heaven. All these furnishings we build here in our temporal lives and there in our eternal dwellings, all with the Lord's help. When we do finally leave these mortal bindings and are transported to our Heavenly home, there they will all be for us to enjoy.”

“But what about those who have not had a good life here; those who are orphans or who live but a brief moment in this world?”

“Now this is merely my speculation Brother, for only those on the other side of eternity know for sure, but our Lord did give us a brief glimpse in the story of Lazarus. If those you mentioned have lived long enough, even though poor and in the most depressing situations, and looked longingly to our loving God in the midst of their despair, I believe God will hear their hearts begging him and they will indeed be lavishly provided for when they arrive at HIS house. Heaven is not only our home, it is His home too. And we will all together spend eternity praising HIM for who and what HE is.”

“What you are saying does make some sense Brother because there is much, I still don't understand.”

“As it should be Brother, for none of us will understand fully until we arrive there. Even Saint Paul, who recorded his own Heavenly experience, did not understand fully.”

“But Brother, it bothers me that those who do not believe in our Lord take comfort in nothingness. How can nothing be comforting especially since it will be for all eternity?”

“You are a very loving person dear Brother. Your caring and sensitivity is necessary to help these unbelievers to NOT spend eternity in nothingness. That is a special charisma, but that is also what ALL of us are called to do IF we love others as much as we love ourselves. But for now, let us leave our discussion for it is time for bed, and simply trust our Lord for what we do not understand and thus strengthen our faith.”

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