

# **Bridge Across the River**

**Communications from the life after death  
by a young artist killed in the First World War**

**In 4 Parts**

**Botho Sigwart Earl of Eulenburg**

Excerpt from Part 3 (January 11<sup>th</sup> 1917 - September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1919)

Translation: Joseph Bailey

## **Content**

**August 20<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>, 1919**

August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1919

I felt your wishes and am glad to come, even though it is harder today than otherwise, as you are not entirely in the proper frame of mind.

I want to say something to you about the length of time everyone has to spend on earth.

The causes for this differ:

First, there are the laws of devoted love that knows only the welfare of the other and measures its time accordingly.

Second, there is the demise of certain forces that need to be used up and spiritually expended.

Third, there are various agreements bound up with this matter which we have made with others and now need to make good on.

Fourth and finally, our physical life forces also play a limited role, inasmuch as they sometimes lack the power to attain the desired goal. When this obtains, the spirit's dire battle against matter takes place. In many instances the victory goes to the spirit, but not always, alas. I have seen a number of cases where matter was unable to hold up under the will of the spirit and broke down in its service to it. That was always highly lamentable, as on account of this breakdown there was a lot left undone, which in turn made it impossible for the person in question to carry out the work prescribed for him. In most cases, the fault for this is to be found in the person's younger years, during which he pursued not the task dictated to him by his inner voice, but rather worldly pleasures; thus he was already used up by the time he got around to seeing to his actual tasks.

These people often suffer greatly, as they see that they can no longer compensate for the consequences of their neglect, which can cause them hardship over a number of subsequent incarnations. Thank God this only happens seldom among serious-minded people; such souls sense their goal very soon and steer toward it – if in some cases only circuitously.

I said before that love and joy in life also play a part, and that this involves the soul's or the spirit's strong impulse to live out its stored-up abilities and recast them into spirit goods that are of service to them in the beyond. This capacity for love in the noble sense is often able to impart huge freshness of youth to the physical body and to maintain it longer than would have been the case under normal circumstances.

I myself have seen how material sheaths that were utterly spent were only able to go on living because of their inhabitants' enlivening the powers of love, which enabled them to be active on the physical plane.

Moreover, the tasks a person has to carry out play a role. In general, a person's body is endowed with sufficient time to follow through on them. In most cases, it is fashioned by the very spirit whose use it is intended for. But in cases where the spirit is as yet unable to take part in such fashioning, the vehicle of the incarnating spirit's body is created by this spirit's guides for its earthly tasks.

It also frequently occurs that for one reason or other this fashioning is not entirely successful. In such cases it takes a lot of effort for the spirit to struggle through the inadequacies or defects of its manifest body to a real development of its abilities.

There are very few people who do not have to struggle with some flaw or another in the construction of their bodies. The more actively and consciously the spirit itself takes part in

the fashioning of its future earthly sheath, the more consummately it will one day be equal to and satisfy this spirit's wishes.

You can well imagine that it is the objective of times to come to give more and more complete form to these spirits' capacity to work toward shaping their own physical bodies, and in this way to render future races of human beings more perfect and diligent for their tasks on earth.

How many are those who have missed their calling solely on account of the inadequacy of the body they were chained to. This phenomenon will disappear more and more in the future, and thus eliminate much in the way of dissatisfaction among people.

This was an entirely new topic that I wanted to elucidate for you today.

I send you fervent greetings.

Your *Sigwart*

August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1919

Spirits wanting to incarnate are sent to a kind of school by their masters or leaders long beforehand. They need to find out exactly what service their impending incarnation is to do them and what they are supposed to learn during it. Each more highly developed spirit then sets for itself the most important events of its future incarnation. The intended purpose of this insight is to help the spirit look forward with strength and autonomous will to the earthly events involving it.

During the time of my life here, I have often witnessed preparations of this kind. Each time, I was amazed at the courage a spirit had to wish worrisome and complicated earth lives for themselves. I often feared that their fervency was too intense, that afterwards they would be sorely disappointed. But I was informed that without this overzealousness a person's further development would take too long. They are *supposed* to have enthusiastic resolutions for their new earth incarnation. That is precisely what makes for the beauty, youth, and strength of a new life. Even I myself had wished upon myself a life full of obstacles, but I knew that in spite of the stones laid in my (and every more deeply feeling person's) path, a life full of sunshine and love would blossom for me, and that the cause of this lay in the far distant past.

Presumably you want to know how the process of becoming incarnated takes place. It is like a bath. The spirit rests in waiting like a person who longs for cold water after a long, hot, hard day of work. This longing is heightened to a state of despair. The spirit seeks out the mother charged with conceiving it, and does not leave her side. One could say the two are connected as if by a net. The spirit waits and surrounds the mother with great care, for fear its incarnation might suffer some mishap. Then comes the moment when the fruit is ripe, and its intense wish notwithstanding, this moment is deeply shaking, perhaps even tragic; for it is only now that the spirit feels what it actually means to climb back into the physical sheath. But there is no going back at this point. With a cry of woe it plunges headlong into the floods and shudders over the water's coldness, but only for a moment. Then the spirit gives itself over entirely to the mother, for whom it has prayed and whom it has enveloped in love and care.

That is a brief description of the process of incarnation. It is important, especially for women, to know how great a role this process plays in their life. How often sins are committed out of ignorance and self-centeredness!

5 August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1919

Spirits who wish for themselves a life filled with worry are ones with a profound sense of love for the Almighty and the Divine. They are devoted to God, often without even knowing it themselves. On the other hand, precisely those are frequently not devoted whose lives seem without worry. You all have no idea either of these deeply religious processes or of the sublime, almighty guidance involved in events such as incarnation. As long as the earth remains the center of an ever newly incarnating human race, this segment of life will remain the *most important moment*, the *event of events*.

Human beings are ignorant of this moment, nor *can* they know when it has come. It varies according to the development of the respective spirit, depending on whether or not it is highly developed as an I. Highly developed I-individualities decide on very short notice when it is time for them to return to the earthly sheath. This is because they have taken part in its formation up to the very last minute. The other incarnating spirits unite with their earthly sheaths earlier, because they are not interested in helping to form it.

August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1919

You can hardly imagine what your faith means to me. Without it, my life here would not even come close to being this rich. You alone make it possible for me to lead this abundant, nearly godly life. Hence my repeated profound thanks, which seemed so inexplicable to you in the beginning.

Each one of you gives me gifts and makes me happy in his or her own way, and each of you has become a contributor to my swift development. That is why the thanks of my heart goes out to each single one of you. Let me permeate you with the divine spark that lives in me, so that it may enlighten you in turn with its holy power!

This is my prayer at this hour.

Your brother *Sigwart*