

Enlightened Warnings from the Beyond

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Throughout the course of human history numerous individuals have been chosen to enlighten their fellow men with warnings about the soul's fate after death, or to warn them about the trajectory of their lives, i.e. the fate that awaits them if they continue to live as they have been doing. Such accounts are quite common among religious communities who generally classify these warnings as prophecies or visions. But, the same is evident in literature and the arts produced by well-known writers and artists. Except in this instance, the audience, who deem themselves sophisticated, see these works as entertainment with, at best, philosophical value. Examples of the latter include such famous literature as "The Divine Comedy", by Dante Alighieri, and the opera "Parsifal", by Richard Wagner. There is one such literary work that is well known to young and the old, and that is read, or watched at this time of the year especially. This very popular story is also a warning that the very perceptive should easily and quickly recognize. The story in question is "**A Christmas Carol**" by Charles Dickens.

Since its publication in 1843, the story has been immortalized in stage plays and movies. Today, it has become a staple in the repertoire of movies and stories that are presented on televisions in almost all homes in the Western countries during the Christmas season. It is also one that has universal appeal regardless of one's outlook on life.

A Christmas Carol

The story is about Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly and cold-hearted old man who despises Christmas and avoids human connection. On one Christmas Eve he is visited by the ghost of his former business partner named Jacob Marley. He saw how Mr. Marley, in the afterlife, was condemned to wander the earth in chains, as punishment for his selfishness in life.

Marley's ghost is described as a ghastly apparition wrapped in heavy chains, burdened with cash boxes, ledgers, and padlocks, all of which depicted his principal preoccupation and desire while still in the flesh, and which also symbolized his lifetime of greed and avarice. The image of Marley's ghost, plus his recounting of his torment in the afterlife, was to serve as a cautionary account of the suffering awaiting Scrooge as well as to offer a chance for him to change his ways or end up in the same state as Marley in the afterlife.

After the initial shock of seeing the ghost of Marley, Scrooge's initial nonchalant attitude is evident in the ensuing dialogue that takes place between them. Marley's ghost on the other hand tried to stress the importance of the message that he had been permitted, as part of his penance, to convey to his former business partner.

"But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?" asked Scrooge. To which Marley's Ghost sadly responds, "'It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide". That is, it is required that every man should strive to work in cooperation with all of his fellow men from all works of life. "And, if that spirit goes not forth in life, (i.e. does not live accordingly) it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world and — oh, woe is me! — witness what it cannot now share, but might have shared while on earth, and turned to happiness!"

"You are fettered?" asked Scrooge, "Tell me why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it." Then he asked Scrooge, "Is its pattern strange to you? Or do you recognize the weight and length of the strong coil which you yourself bear?" "It was as full, as heavy and as long as this seven Christmas Eves ago. You have labored on it since, and it is a ponderous chain!"

Scrooge objected saying "But you were always a good man of business, Jacob..." To which the Ghost replied: "Business! ... *"Mankind should have been my business.* The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of *my business!*"

"I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope which I hope to procure, Ebenezer."

Then he added, "You will be haunted, by Three Spirits." ... "Without their visits ... you cannot hope to avoid the path I tread."

As Marley's Ghost prepares to leave, through his open window Scrooge observes: "The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost. A few were linked together; none were free. Many had been

personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost in a "white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below upon a doorstep. The misery with them all was clearly that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, but had lost the power to do so."

These images had begun to make an impression on Scrooge, when the three promised spirits started their visitation with him. And each spirit had something to do with the spirit of Christmas.

The first is the **The Ghost of Christmas Past** who takes Scrooge on a journey through his own past, showing him moments from his childhood, youth, and early adulthood. In this vision, Scrooge sees how he once had joy and love in his life but allowed greed and ambition to overshadow these emotions. By revisiting this past, Scrooge is confronted with the consequences of decisions he made in various situations. And he begins to realize that he had put greed and avarice ahead of human relationships. And this had created his sad and lonely life at that point.

The second, **The Ghost of Christmas Present** reveals to Scrooge the happiness and hardships of people who were celebrating Christmas in the present. This is done through spiritual visits to various homes in the city. One is to the home of Scrooge's poorly paid clerk, Bob Cratchit, and his family. Watching, unseen, Scrooge's spirit, in the company of the ghost, learns about the struggles of Cratchit's young, son, Tiny Tim, whose fate depends on the generosity of others.

In other homes, Scrooge's spirit witnesses boundless joy and thankfulness regardless of the celebrants' economic station in life. One of such home is that of his nephew,

Recalling his clerk's modest home with a devoted family and Tiny Tim who is dying, and then his nephew's joyous Christmas celebration with his wife and friends, Scrooge is overcome with emotion. He now sees that he has missed so many experiences in his life. Experiences that were much more important than his *business* to which he devoted all his time.

The third was **The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come**. Seeing the sadness that he was experiencing after the visit of the Ghost of Christmas Present, Scrooge confesses to the third ghost, "I fear you more than any specter I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear your company, and I do it with a thankful heart." Furthermore, Scrooge adds, "Men's courses will point towards certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead. But if they change their courses, the ends will change. And then he added, "Say it will be so for me with what you show me!"

The ghost then offers a chilling vision of the future in which Scrooge sees his own lonely death and the negative legacy he will leave behind *if he continues on his current path*. He also witnesses the sorrowful death of Tiny Tim, and sees his role in this sad event, largely due to his own negligence. Finally Scrooge is shown a gravestone with his name written on it. He is so shaken by this sight that he falls on the ground before this spirit, pleading, "Good Spirit, your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these visions (outcomes) you have shown me by changing my life." He then pledges, 'I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all through the year. I will now live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within

me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me that I may erase the writing on this stone!"

At this point, Scrooge suddenly wakes up to find himself still alive, but deeply shaken. Thereafter, he becomes a changed, generous, and joyful man: Best and happiest of all for him is that he still has enough time to make amends for past misdeeds, errors and neglects.

This story has a happy ending with "Scrooge doing better than just his word. In fact, he abided by it all, and infinitely more. To Tiny Tim, who did NOT die in real life, he became a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a citizen as there could be. He had transformed into a beloved figure in the community, living the rest of his life with compassion and goodwill.

While some people laughed to see the change in him, he ignored their laughter, for he was wise enough to know that nothing good ever happened on this globe, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset. Knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, or exhibit their attitudes in less attractive forms. But his own heart laughed, and that was quite enough for him."

The popular interpretation of this story is one of a fictional tale of redemption, highlighting the importance of empathy, generosity, and the enduring value of human connection.

But the discerning one will see this as yet another warning about how the life we live today paves the path to our afterlife condition. And this applies to all,

believers and nonbelievers, because we are all subject to the law of sowing and reaping, i.e. as we Will it with our free-will.

To buttress this point, the excerpt below from the book *Nosso Lar*, narrates the actual experience of a spirit immediately after departing his life on Earth. Here we see similarities between what “**A Christmas Carol**” and a departed soul, drawing from his own personal experiences, warn those who will listen. In the latter case, this soul while was alive on Earth he refused to heed any warnings and was skeptical about such things.

Experiencing In the Lower Regions

“I felt like I had lost all notion of time. The idea of space had left me long ago. I was sure that I no longer belonged to the incarnate ranks of the world, but my lungs continued to take deep breaths.

How long had I been the puppet of irresistible forces? It was impossible to tell. Actually, I felt like a prisoner trapped behind dark bars of horror. With my hair on end, my heart pounding, and scared stiff, I often cried out like a madman. I begged for mercy and clamored against the painful despondency that had taken hold of my spirit. But when my loud cries didn’t fall on an implacable silence, they were answered by lamenting voices even more pitiful than my own. At other times, sinister laughter rent the prevailing silence. I thought that some unknown companion out there was a prisoner of insanity. Diabolical forms, ghastly faces, animal-like countenances appeared from time to time, increasing my panic. When it wasn’t pitch dark, the landscape seemed to be bathed in a lurid light as if shrouded in a thick mist that was warmed from afar by the rays of the sun. The strange journey continued... To what end? Who could

say? I only knew that I had to keep moving. Fear drove me blindly onward. Where were my home, my wife and children? I had lost all sense of direction. The fear of the unknown and my dread of the darkness paralyzed all my powers of reasoning as soon as I had broken free of my last physical ties in the grave! My conscience tormented me. I would have much preferred a total absence of reason – or non-existence. From the beginning, tears had run constantly down my face and I only rarely enjoyed the blessing of sleep; however, any feeling of rest was suddenly interrupted. Monstrous, sneering creatures would awaken me; I had to get away from them. I realized I was in a different sphere: one that arose from the dust of the earth, but it was too late. Anguished thoughts weighed heavily on my mind, and when I would try to make some sense of it all, a string of incidents would drive my thoughts into confusion. Never before had the religious problem seemed so profound to me. The principles that had been purely philosophical, political and scientific now seemed completely secondary for human life. In my present view, they did represent a valuable heritage on the earth; however, I had come to realize that humankind was not comprised of transitory lifetimes, but of eternal spirits on their way to a glorious destination. I could see that something stands above every merely intellectual thought. That something is faith – a divine manifestation to human beings. Such an analysis came too late, however. Indeed, I had known the words of the Old Testament and had often leafed through the Gospels, but I was forced to realize that I had never searched the sacred writings with the light of my heart. I had identified with them through the critique of writers who were either not inclined to sentiment and conscience, or who were in outright disagreement with the essential truths. On other occasions, I had followed the interpretation of priests, never leaving the circle of contradictions into which I had willingly entered. Actually, from my own point of view, I had not been a criminal, but the philosophy of living for the immediate present had absorbed me fully. My earthly existence, which had been transformed by death, had been no different than the average standard. Born of perhaps excessively generous parents, I had earned my academic degrees without much sacrifice and had shared in the vices of the youth of my time. I had set up a home, and had had children. I had

searched for a stability that would guarantee my family's economic tranquility, but on self-examination, something in the silent pangs of my conscience made me feel like I had wasted my time. I had lived on the earth, enjoyed its benefits and reaped the blessings of life, but I had never contributed anything towards repaying my enormous debt. I had had parents, whose generosity and sacrifices I never appreciated, and a wife and children, whom I fiercely imprisoned in the unyielding web of destructive selfishness. I had had a home, whose doors I closed to all who walked the desert of anguish. Deaf to the most elementary duties of fraternity, I had delighted in the joys of my own family circle, but had forgotten to share such a divine blessing with the immense human family. In the end, like a flower in a greenhouse, I couldn't stand the atmosphere of the eternal realities. I hadn't nurtured the divine seeds that the Lord of Life had sown in my soul. I had wrongfully suffocated them in my insatiable desire for my own welfare. I hadn't trained my organs for a new life. It was only right, then, that I should awaken here like a cripple, who, thrown into the infinite river of eternity, was unable to swim in the unstoppable current of water, or like a miserable beggar, who, exhausted in the middle of nowhere, wanders about at the mercy of a furious storm.

Oh, dear friends on earth! How many of you could avoid the bitter path of sorrow by cultivating the inner fields of your hearts! Light your lamps before crossing the great darkness. Seek the truth before the truth finds you unprepared. Sweat and work now, lest you weep later".

This account is in one of series of books written by Francisco Cândido Xavier, "Nosso Lar - Life in the spirit world Collection", as dictated by the Spirit of Andre Luiz originally was published in Brazil in 1944. The narrator of the message is Andre Luiz, who like Jacob Marley of "A Christmas Carol, has come to the realization that death is not the end, but just the continuation of an eternal

journey. The spirit (or soul) now realizes that "Life never ceases, but that Life is an eternal fount and death is only an obscure game of illusion. He compares life on Earth as "A great river that follows its course before joining the immense sea. Likewise, the soul also follows its course of various roads and goes through different stages. In each stage, the soul receives streams of knowledge here and there which augment the way it expresses itself and helps in purifying its character before reaching the Eternal Ocean of Wisdom.

Andre Luiz also came to the realization that exiting our physical body (i.e. dying) does not solve the fundamental problem of enlightenment, because changing out of one's cloak has nothing to do with the profound solutions to the problems of destiny and being (i.e. living). He further warns that it would be extremely childish to believe that the mere "lowering of the curtain" (death) could settle the transcendental questions concerning the Infinite.

After decades of bitter experiencing, he came to recognize that "there are those who are learned in doctrine but illiterate in spirit, and that ultimately, we must all enroll, in time, in what he described in the school of the Gospel of Christ, i.e. learning to love our neighbor as ourselves. And this we can only learn through the struggles of life, in which we learn lessons without spoken words and without visible professors, or listening to long lectures." _____

As is usually the case, such transcendental narrations are done in the anonymity that places emphasis on the message and not the person. Therefore the reader who seeks to authenticate that this narrator lived on earth would search in vain for a doctor named Andre Luiz, listed in the conventional records. This is because, as explained in the preface to the book, "Sometimes, anonymity is the child of real understanding and true love. For example, in order to redeem a disgraceful past, former names are changed in the process of reincarnation. Temporary forgetfulness also acts as a blessing of Divine Mercy. Andre, too, has needed to pull the curtain over himself. That is why the true

identity of this terrestrial doctor and human author is not divulged in the book. Instead, Andre is introduced as *a new friend and brother in eternity* who is allowed to bring valuable insights to his earth-bound brothers and sisters. In doing so, he had to renounce all conventions, including his own name. This way he neither offends those who are reaping their own ripe seeds, nor disturbs the unripe crops that are still developing.[1] _____

For those interested, the book "In The Light of Truth" (The Grail Message) explains to the keen reader the Laws that operate to bring about the reaping, or revelations presented in this write up. Needless to say many may deride them as fantasies. But; like the reformed Scrooge, those who have experienced or absorbed these laws know their Truth. Through knowledge of these laws we develop a deeper appreciation of the purpose of Christ's mission, which was to teach these laws to mankind. And to lead us the recognition that it is only if we live by these laws that we can ever hope to achieve the Peace, and Goodwill that many are reminded of, and long for at the Christmas season, and a few strive after, even if only for fleeting moments.

[1] Xavier, Francisco Candido. Nosso Lar Edicei of America.