

## THE VISION OF PARADISE ON EARTH

Light a candle and close your eyes, spend some time meditating so that your mind begins to quieten and you pass into stillness and silence. Be aware of the flame before you, see it in your mind, and become aware of the eternal flame of the soul that burns bright, cool and strong within you. As you look at the candle flame with your mind, the flame it grows bigger and bigger until it turns into a column of fire. You are drawn to the column of fire and you step through into the flames without fear. As you step into the flame you are energised, and your everyday life falls away, leaving the eternal you standing in the flame of life.

As you stand in the flame, using your mind, look through the flame back into the room where you are sat: see your body sitting before a candle, notice your bright eternal inner flame of the soul, and notice that around the room, four entrances, one in each direction, have appeared. They may look like cave entrances, tunnels, gates – it does not matter how they present to you, just let them form themselves naturally, do not try to force an image. One entrance shines much more brightly than the other three, and threshold of the east. Step forward from the column of fire and walk to the east entrance. As you move towards the entrance of the east you become aware of two angelic guardians standing shoulder to shoulder, blocking the entrance: the angelic guardians of the Threshold. They have many wings that wrap around them, and their wings are covered in eyes: one or two of the eyes open and look at you. They look deeper and deeper into you and when they are happy with what they see, they part and become the two pillars of the entrance to the east.

Stand on the threshold of the east and let yourself become accustomed to the power of the threshold. When you are ready, walk over the threshold and find yourself stepping into the outer courtyard of a vast and ancient temple. Continue to walk forward, passing through the second courtyard of the temple, and as you get nearer to the third and final courtyard a wind begins to blow. The wind gets stronger and stronger until you are having to lean into the wind to reach the third small courtyard that you can see before you.

The wind becomes like a hurricane which takes the breath from your lungs, and you battle against the hurricane that stings your eyes and suffocates you. Pushing forward against the wind, you manage to get into the third small courtyard and reach a shrine room that is the source of the wind: a stone chamber within which is in total darkness and out of which blows the wind. The wind sucks you in and you fall through the wind and darkness, twisting and turning as you fall. The wind seems to have arms that hold you as you fall, until you hit a sandy floor with a thump.

Standing up, you find yourself in a small empty cubic stone building. The aged walls are covered with many small rough-cut niches. The niches are empty and you know that you must fill them, but you are not sure what with. Go up to the walls and run your hands over the niches. They feel beautiful and strange, a feeling that you cannot understand, but a feeling that you recognise from deep within you.

You become aware that an angelic being is behind you. You feel its presence and power all around you like an intense whirlwind that creates an intense pressure behind and all around you. The angel leans against your back. Power builds up within you, forcing breath from your lungs until your body screams for oxygen. Colour drains from your face, and nausea assaults your throat. You cannot inhale and you feel like you are going to die.

The angel grabs you by the hair, pulls your head back and shouts in your ear:

*Recite! Recite what the lord thy God commands you. Recite the words that the Prophets brought to the world and uttered before the throne of God. Recite so that thy soul shall never forget. Recite from the depths of thy heart where the words of God are written upon the souls of all beings. Recite so that all worlds and all times shall hear what we have given to those who would listen. Recite the Song of Paradise so that all shall behold its beauty forever.*

Open your mouth and inhale. The oxygen hits your brain, exploding light throughout your mind that weaves its way to your lips: forcing out words that you cannot understand. The words take form and travel across the surface of the room, mingling with the angel who joins the recitation.

The word forms become shapes and settle in the niches creating a light of their own. Each word form becomes a Deity, an expression of Divinity, flowing with the power of the void. When the niches are full, the room dances with brilliant light and you finally understand why it is paradise as you bathe in the Divine power and beauty that surrounds you.

Each word shape shines with the light of power. The power of the void flows through each word as each word takes a form and shape. Some shapes stay as words, some become trees and creatures, some have human form and some are a mix of human and creature: these are the vessels that house the Divine forms in all their beauty and glory.

The angel passes a hand over your face and tells you to look through its fingers. You see a door that you had not noticed before. As you touch the door, it moves and breathes causing you to step back. The door transforms into a light which is so bright that it burns all images from your mind.

The angel holds out his hand and speaks to the light.

*Hail Ridwan, keeper of the doors of Paradise, threshold to the Throne of God. May this mortal pass through you and still be as one being. May they leave Paradise and hold its secrets on their lips and in their hearts throughout eternity.*

The light dims and the angel pushes you forward. You fall into the door and find yourself enveloped by the power of the Angel of Paradise. In the depths of this power, the Angel speaks to you about your immortal self, and you commune together in silence. The beauty, stillness and balance that surrounds you is indescribable, a beauty that there are no words or images for – your heart utters to the angel and the angel listens intently before whispering something to your heart, something that your mind cannot understand, but your heart does.

The power of the Angel burns through you and for a brief powerful moment you see yourself in your entirety, through all lives you have lived in all worlds and times. You see yourself within everything, within trees, rocks, stars, dust, creatures, humans and the wind. Within the vision of yourself you see Paradise: the first expression of Divinity as it emerges out of the void.

Ridwan, Keeper of the doors of Paradise, opens himself and you tumble out of his protection and fall through a vast gate: you fall and fall and find yourself falling through fire, a fire that has many eyes and the sound of the wind within it. Looking down as you fall, you see the

planet Earth below you, and you fall towards it at great speed. As the planet gets nearer, you hear many whispers and feel the hands of people reaching out to touch you.

The Earth gets closer and closer until you fall towards a city, a street and finally a building. You pass through the roof of the building and end back in the room where you first started. You fill the whole room and look down with difficulty at the tiny body that you have been living in.

Breathing deeply, you begin to draw yourself in, a step at a time. Slowly, you shrink yourself down until you are the same size as your body. You begin to realize just how limited your true expression is while you are in a living body. Sit for a moment in silence and allow your body to adapt to the awakened power within you. When you are ready, you open your eyes and look around you. Be aware of all the Divine expressions of power in the rock, buildings, living beings, plants, creatures and landscapes around you. When you are ready, gently blow the candle out, sending the flame back into the void.

© Josephine McCarthy 1994- 2019 *These texts are fully copyrighted and here for personal use only. You may not copy, redistribute or publish these texts without permission of the author.*