

REINCARNATION

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THE WAR AND WAR KARMA

The successive implications of many nations in the great war suggests that the occasion is being used by Those Who are Providence to give all the world a purifying. The remote lands that are engaged in actual blood shedding feel keenly the throes of the gigantic suffering.

They Who are Providence know when new and greater outflowings from the central force-vortices are to occur. They have much to do with these force-discharges.

After the war the new outflowings and augmentations of the old ones will take place.

Those nations that hold fast to the *dharma* of their highest, noblest ideals will drive on in the new and strengthened life-currents that shall then flow. Let all the nations fear not, but let duty rule!

W. V-H.

MILE-STONES

How assertive is the mile-stone compared to the mile it marks! It is insistent that we should note its importance by the road-side; and, in our enforced admiration of its presence, we are apt to forget the road which brought us thither. Is it not so with all the great discoveries of men? The invention and the inventor spring to fame in the sudden glory of a minute, but the world seldom looks backward over the long path whereby the karmic attributes of the inventor, and his evolved environments, made possible the invention.

Doubtless it is true that individual discoveries are nicely measured to the fitness of men to utilize each new degree of knowledge. Nor, if the world's karma and readiness for new light is insufficient, is the whole truth given at one moment, lest it should harm rather than aid. Even a Pythagoras could not tell us in the same breath that the Earth was not disc-shaped but a globe and not stationary but moving. Men were not willing to learn the whole truth, and most reluctantly we accepted the single idea that the Earth was a spherical body. Six hundred years before our era it was believed that the world was formed like a saucer; and less than four hundred years ago Copernicus sent it whirling on its orbit around the Sun. Nor may we, from the vantage point of modern science, wonder at the reasonings of ancient astronomers.

Everywhere the wide stretches of land and sea reached out in levelness towards the blue horizon, and every fact in the universe seemed to reach terrestrial fixity. Why should the Earth be imagined as a sphere when its open deserts, steppes

and seas are so impressively flat? Immense distances, broken only by the natural features of mountain, river and wilderness, clearly indicated what Euclid would call a plane superficies; and around all was spread the illimitable sea. Below, in the depth of Terra, were the Plutonian fires of Hades, venting their angry force in earthquake and volcano. Above, in the blue vault of heaven, the greater and lesser stars moved on their quiet courses fulfilling their apparent purposes as thrones for gods and lamps existent for Earth's benefit.

But erroneous conclusions eventually wither into doubts and blossom into wisdom. Slowly it was conceded that our world was an isolated body; and the wise men of each successive empire of olden times devised ingenious explanations for its stationary character. It was generally supposed that its foundations were tunnelled to permit the free passage of the evolving stars, which thus played diurnal blind-man's buff amid the terrestrial pillars.

The Greeks viewed the universe as a sublime temple upheld by twelve columns supported by the broad shoulders of the giant Atlas, whose groaning beneath the burden called Perseus from the skies as he sped to the gods after his slaying of Medusa. Most mythologies, however, imagined the Earth to be carried on the back of a tortoise swimming in the circumambient sea. In Japan the tortoise changed to a great spider; in Mongolia it became a hog; in India, a mole; in South America, a whale; and amongst the North American Indians we find the tortoise again compelled to carry the world. To the uneasy movements

of these much-troubled bearers of our globe earthquakes were supposed to owe their origin.

All this was in the infancy of astronomy. Then followed its childhood, wherein deeper lessons were mastered. Step by step from Ptolemy to Galileo we realised that Joshua might not command, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon," nor Hezekiah note the unchanging dial, for the Sun was now acknowledged as the center of our celestial space, and it was admitted that the Earth and all its companion planets moved unceasingly around the Sun in obedience to subtle and inviolate laws.

And as each successive discovery in this, and all branches of knowledge, is given to the world men set the discoverer on the pinnacle of fame but seldom weigh the ages of hesitation and progress which led upward to the possibility of the discovery and the ripeness of the hour. The milestone with its clear cut inscription is truly the monument of fact, but without the dusty road of daily effort through this and many previous lives there were no mile-stones.

J. B. Lindon.



Oh! Spirit that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st! . . .
What in me is dark, illumine;
What is low, raise and support,
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence
And justify the way of God to men.

Milton,

BREAKING KARMIC LINKS

We often find ourselves tightly bound to other men in ways which are, for the personality, most difficult and painful. "How may I break this link," says the suffering personality, so that I may never again in other lives meet this man?"

Karmic links are made and they may be broken, after the karma of the bond is outworked. But to loose such bonds requires more knowledge than most men possess. The very trying so to do, in order to relieve the personality from suffering, is by its very nature, almost sure to meet its failure.

But should we really try to break our karmic bonds? Are they not something precious in our growth and that of other men? What we really, in our inmost being, want to do is to make our bonds with other egos into bonds of love and service, to change them from bonds of hate and hindrance into means of uniting ourselves and others to the One Life which unifies us all. This does not mean servility and loss of our true dignity; it does not mean that we should love a personality which causes us unjust suffering and pain. But it does mean that we must recognize that behind this personality which is imperfect and impermanent there is an immortal ego who has not the vices of the personality, an ego to whom we owe a debt which we should gladly and willingly pay, for the ego needs our help to overcome the very thing in which most likely we ourselves once failed.

*THE TRUTH OF REINCARNATION**

People sometimes say: "I do not like Reincarnation," forgetful that we are more concerned with truth than with liking where our knowledge of Nature is concerned. They would like it if they understood it, but that side of the question is dealt with in another article, on "The 'Good News' of Reincarnation." Here I am concerned with it as a true theory of life and immortality, solving some of the most puzzling problems which we meet in daily life.

'Equality of opportunity' for all is one of the favourite social reforms of those who complain of the inequalities of human fate. The idea which so much inspirited the "Grand Army" of Napoleon was that every man in it had a chance of rising to the highest military rank. "Every soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack," it was boasted. It is not really the differences of opportunity that count so heavily in the game of life, but the differences in the capacity to grasp an opportunity when it presents itself. Many a man surrounded by opportunities proves to be a failure; a man surrounded by difficulties wins a success. Inequality of capacity—there lies the real difficulty, the real injustice, if man has only a single chance on earth. Look at the clever man and the dolt, the saint and the criminal, the healthy and the sickly, the well-made and the deformed. Where is Justice if the dolt, the criminal, the sickly, and the deformed have done nothing to deserve their condition, any more than the clever, the saint, the

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healthy, the well-made have done ought to win their happier fate? Man may remedy inequalities created by man-made laws, but who can touch the inequalities of capacity due to Nature?

But if these inequalities of capacity are due to differences of age and differences of effort: if the more stupid or more vicious is merely a younger soul with less experience behind him than the more clever or the more virtuous; if sickness and deformity are results of past evil living and of cruelty; then Justice is replaced on her pedestal and her scales are a just balance. Difference of capacity between a little child and a grown man, difference between the naughtiness of a child and the strong patience of an adult—these are natural, rightful and inevitable. The child will grow into the man, the criminal into the saint; sickness and deformity are passing results of temporary wrong-doings. Each man passes from infancy to age in the soul's immortal life; each man has the same chances, the same difficulties, the same inevitable success at last.

What are the alternatives? Special creation by God, with the inevitable corollary of favouritism and injustice; heredity, in which the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and the child writhes helplessly in the grip of the father's sin. But if the incoming child is reaping the harvest of his own previous ill-doing, while the father's sin merely provides a suitable body for the outworking of the results of that ill-doing, then man's is no longer the powerless victim of another's sins, but the reaper of the harvest from the seed of his own sowing.

Again, consider the ascent of man from a condition little removed from the animal to a state of high civilisation, and ask what accounts for the difference between the limited content of the consciousness of the child of the savage and the brilliant intelligence of a well-born English child. The qualities shown out in infancy are widely removed from each other in the two cases: if the child of the savage is removed into a civilised environment, he makes very rapid progress for some years, and then stagnates, his mental faculties proving incapable of further expansion. How has this mental content been accumulated with which the child of the civilised man is born? Again the only rational answer is that the soul has accumulated increased powers by long previous experiences, and that the younger soul has not yet had time to accumulate a similar store. Heredity does not here help us, for mental and moral faculties are admittedly not transmissible from parents to offspring; and, further, the greater the mental power the less the prolificness. "Genius is sterile;" the lower organisms multiply the most rapidly. It is remarkable that there are no brilliant descendants of the greatest geniuses; where are the heirs of Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner? If Reincarnation be true, the soul brings his genius with him into a body, and carries it away with him when he leaves the body, to reappear once more, ages afterward—as when a Cicero reappears as a Gladstone, an Alfred as a Victoria, a Hannibal as a Napoleon. Genius is an individual possession, not an inherited legacy.

The evolution of social qualities is another proof of the truth of Reincarnation. The social qualities

are of the nature of sacrifice—compassion, tenderness, protection of the weak, are all a disadvantage to their possessor in the struggle for existence: the mother bird saves her young at the sacrifice of her own life; the doctor dies in saving his patient; the son remains unmarried to support his mother; a scrupulous conscience keeps its owner poor. How can such qualities develop, slaying or fettering their possessor? Only if the soul which shows them takes another body after losing the one sacrificed in their manifestation, and so carries them on into another form, wherein they receive further evolution. Hence, it was truly said by an Eastern sage and repeated by Huxley: "The law of the struggle for existence is the law of evolution for the brute, but the law of self-sacrifice is the law of evolution for the man." For such evolution Reincarnation is necessary.

These are a few of the the facts which show the Truth of Reincarnation.

Annie Besant, P. T. S.



Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish—take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

IN THE GARDEN HOUSE

Evening Fifteenth

Inquirer: Why is it that there is so much intolerance among the masses of the people? It would seem as if tolerance ought to be easy to learn, as it makes life so much easier for all. Surely the people who are severe on others would not wish to have severity shown to them by others.

Student: That is true; but most people fail to realise it. Sometimes you may even realise it but not be able to apply it to your own attitude. But I am not at all discouraged about the prevalence of intolerance. Surely the last few centuries have gone far ahead of the older times; people have greater freedom now and are less occupied with the doings of other people, if for no better reason than that they have to be very busy with their own affairs.

The reason why intolerance exists seems to me to be closely connected with man's struggle to free himself from the pressure of his own past karma. Every man has faults and weaknesses which he must overcome. While he is fighting his own shortcomings he is in an attitude of intolerance toward them. He has made up his mind that he will no longer tolerate them, if he can possibly do so. Now suppose he sees other persons yielding to the same temptation which besets him. That naturally arouses a renewed temptation for him, and it arouses also his spirit of opposition and hatred to the fault in question. But as it was the seeing of the other person's fault which stirred up the conflict between the lower and higher nature in himself, he directs his indigna-

tion against the other man, not realising that it is his own lower self which is the immediate cause of the conflict and discomfort within him.

Inq.: Does that mean that intolerance in anything is only aroused while the man is engaged in overcoming a similar thing in himself?

St.: That is my firm belief. There are three stages in men's evolution. First, he has not yet reached the point where something is evil or harmful for him to do. At this stage he can not possibly be intolerant about the thing. His attitude may be either indifferent or favorable to it. It is tolerance, but the tolerance of ignorance.

The second stage is intolerance and is the one we described,—after the struggle has begun, and the man regards the thing as evil, having had harmful or unpleasant karmic reactions from it. He usually does not regard the thing as evil for himself in particular, but as evil in general, as evil through and through, as evil for everybody. The more intense his own conflict rages within him, the more intolerant he is likely to be, and the more universal his condemnation will be. But finally he will overcome the temptation, even if it takes a number of incarnations. He is then at peace with regard to the fault. Seeing it in others does not arouse a storm of conflicting emotions within him; he realises that the thing is not essentially evil, but rather an experience which must be passed through with by all men, and that each must for himself learn the lesson of overcoming. It is no longer evil for him, for he can not be tempted to yield to it. This is again an attitude of tolerance, but it is the tolerance of full knowledge and wisdom. It does not

mean that the man who has overcome an evil has become indifferent to it: he has for himself demonstrated that the fault must be overcome, and he will desire earnestly that other people may also succeed in passing beyond it. He will do what he can to help bring about the freedom of all men from what they are regarding as evil. He will not tell them that evil is imaginary or not evil; but he will help them to master their lower bodies and to teach them that the evil is not absolute, but only relative. When it ceases to affect humanity harmfully it ceases to exist as an evil for humanity.

Inq.: What you say is reasonable and seems to be true. There occurs to me, however, an example which seems to be an exception. Slavery in the northern states had been done away with when the abolitionists of the New England and other northern states became so violent against slavery in the South as to bring about its ending.

St.: True; but would you be willing to maintain that the intolerant abolitionists had entirely freed themselves from the results of the karma of having started negro slavery in the North? Were they not all the more intolerant because they had once had slavery in their own states and had *sold* their slaves to the southern tobacco plantations of Virginia, instead of freeing them?

Furthermore, it is not necessarily true that the person who is intolerant is at that very time engaged in actual conflict with the particular fault. It is true, however, that he has not fully transcended that fault. The mere thought of it arouses a conflict of emotions, due to karmic reactions. What men can not bear, what is intolerable to

them, is not the existence of evil but the storm of passions and emotions which the sight of the evil arouses in their own emotional bodies.

Inq.: Does that explain anything about the nature of evil?

St.: Indeed it does. We have seen that evil is relative. What we said just now points the way to the recognition of the truth that what men call evil for themselves exists in their own bodies, or auras, as a condition, if not in material form. They may in thought project the evil into the outer world and external conditions, but the fact remains that their own bodies or instruments of consciousness are as yet imperfect or not yet brought under their control.

Inq.: Truly, I can not well conceive of anything that would sooner bring about the attitude of tolerance in men than their recognition of the truth, if truth it be, that the evil they are fighting exists within themselves alone!

St.: I hope no sarcasm was intended in that remark. Man really cannot measure the other men and their conduct except by himself and his own standards of right and wrong. I do not believe that true tolerance is possible unless we have achieved the faculty of entering in consciousness into the very consciousness of other men. The tolerance of ignorance and indifference is not true tolerance. Only he who has suffered can understand the meaning of suffering in others.

Nor do I believe that a man can be truly tolerant who rejects the truths of karma and reincarnation and continuous spiritual evolution. When you look out upon life from the point of view of the one-birth theory there is not the pos-

sibility of real tolerance. We could not possibly look calmly on the hideous and terrible facts about the life of humanity, unless we could see and know that the present time does not determine things rigidly and absolutely. The present does make the future, but only in part. And yet the present moment is the all-important thing.

Inq.: Your explanation of tolerance would seem to indicate that one can not be truly tolerant until he has freed himself from his karma. What can we do in the meantime?

St.: Well, there is such a thing as raising one's consciousness above the worlds of personalities, while still subject to karma in the personality. Impersonal thought can not be colored by our imperfections. And in this viewing of life from an impersonal standpoint we may exercise tolerance. It is a most happy fact that we are not wholly limited by karma: we may not escape it, but we may by earnest practice learn to maintain a part of our consciousness above the worlds where karma is powerful and tolerance is difficult.

To realise that we have life and consciousness in realms in which the law of karma does not bind us fast and rigid is really to begin to live. The life of the personality is only a half truth. It is necessary and desirable, but never for its own sake, only for the sake of the greater life which includes all separate lives.

C. S.



FROM A LETTER

Your letter was received and has received careful consideration. I thank you for your confidence in me and will try to give you all the help in my power, as long as I may be able to help you to see more clearly the meaning of the Great Law and of human life.

It would be altogether a mistake to advise you what to do in detail. Men are fallible, and no one else knows your difficulties as you do. And it is *your* privilege and *your* duty to solve your hard problems of life for yourself, aided by your understanding of karma and evolution.

However, it is *my* privilege and *my* duty to try to give you such an insight into the Law as will help you to better find your way on. You have been very frank in your letter, and I will be frank also. I may not be able to cover your needs fully at this time,—in fact I may make only a small beginning. But you may write again and ask any definite questions that need solution. You must, however, not follow my suggestions because you have faith in me, but because you find them, in your inmost consciousness, to be right and reasonable. In other words, you must act upon your own responsibility, in the conviction of acting rightly, or doing that which seems right.

Let me try to show you how you can try to gain a point of view from which you may always safely decide in all matters of detail. You are an individual being, an immortal ego, in your real, inner self. You are also an impermanent personality, plunged into this human life, and into the relentless but just workings of karmic

law. Now it is for you to learn the distinction between these two beings: the one you can feel or experience at times in moments when you can forget your personal life and its troubles and are looking inward, aspiring to live the more perfect life; the other being is well-known to us all,—it is the life which is centered in our personality, that is, in our actions, our feelings and emotions, and in our concrete thinking, or thinking of things which may be pictured in the mind.

Now let us remember that the personality is only temporary; it is in fact merely an expression of the higher being, or ego, under conditions which the higher being can not always fully control, and is merely learning about, so that he may express himself in the future and in future lives on earth, with greater freedom and harmony. Your consciousness may center in the life of the personality, or it may take a loftier point of view in which the personality is recognized more nearly at its true value, as being only an instrument for obtaining knowledge and greater powers of acting for the sake of the Great Life which includes all separate lives and beings.

It is easy to know when you are living mostly in the personality. That is when you are strongly affected by troubles which come from outside yourself, when you are thinking much of "I," of "me" and "mine," when you recognize yourself as a separate being who has interests which are different from those of other personalities, and even opposed to them. It is also fairly easy to know when you are living and working as the ego. It does not identify itself with the personality, but recognizes its own superiority over outer

conditions. You live in this higher consciousness when you can study the troubles of your personal self without emotion, impartially; when you can look at the problem of life in which the interests of all appear of equal value.

But it is hard to live and maintain the consciousness of one's higher self. The wild emotions and the strong vibrations of the personal life will often overpower the consciousness which tries to remain impersonal, and to hold to the larger view of life. And right here is your battleground, and mine, and that of all other men who are striving for Truth!

In your personality you are completely under the sway of karma, and are continually generating more karma, both helpful and hindering karma. But when you can live in the higher consciousness, where peace and harmony may be found, then you are outside of the limitations of karma. You may even maintain a part of your consciousness at the higher point, while another part is suffering the pains and troubles in the personality.

Now, it is for us all to try to lift our consciousness higher and higher and to maintain it there, even if only a little can be kept there. And in that more exalted freedom of soul-life we can see our duty in life below the more clearly, and can find the counsel we so sadly need at times. And we must always remember that it is the higher consciousness which is the more true and real; the consciousness which is deeply affected by personal grievances and sufferings, though for the moment of tremendous force, is but temporary and exists only for the sake of the higher, that the real man may grow and evolve.

To free ourselves from our karma is a wonderful goal,—one we should desire with our inmost strength. But the personality, the consciousness which is centered in the personality, can not be safely trusted with this work; it is not able to see clearly how to accomplish the work of freeing itself; it is only likely to add to the complications. What, then, must we do? We must see and realize clearly that the pains and sufferings of the personality have their divine purpose; that we should never long for freedom merely because that will spare us some of the pains we suffer.

Is the personality to be buffeted about; is it to be made subservient to karma, to the selfish desires of others? By no means. The personality has its rights, indeed, and its dignity; it has its part to play in the great drama of life. But let the personality yield to the higher consciousness to decide for it what it may suffer, and what it may or should refuse to suffer.

Righteous indignation belongs to the personality. If it springs from the personality, it is harmful. If you in your higher self are following out what in your highest consciousness feel to be your duty, then will you be doing that which is most helpful to you in your evolution. You may still make mistakes, but you will not aggravate the ills of life. Our mistakes teach us more than our successes. And if you determine your conduct from the higher self, there will be no more righteous indignation.

Ah! let us avoid the great pitfall of believing ourselves to be the righteous agents of karma! We may be, but how can we know? If we do believe that we may work along the destructive,

negative side of life, inflicting pain and suffering on others, as agents of karma, then we are indeed still under the sway of karma, and making links which will bind us to those whom we think we have a right to punish. Only the men who have achieved perfection, the Masters of karma, may safely wield the forces which cause pain and harm. We may wield them, you and I, but we do so without full knowledge, and we will surely make grievous mistakes and these will bring us great suffering in their karmic reactions.

What, then, are we to do in the great crises of life? Are we to let ourselves be outraged and trampled upon? Let us answer, No; but let us be careful not to follow the cries of the outraged personality. We must check these cries, restrain them, and try to reach our decisions from a standpoint which sees our own personality as though it were somebody else's.

Should we ever wish to act so as to never again meet another man in any future life? Only the personality could wish that. The real self in you and me would wish to act so as to free both ourselves and our oppressor from those karmic bonds which tie us together, and make life difficult for both. Let us remember that karmic ties are mutual; they act both ways. I can not be free from my bond to my apparent enemy until he becomes free from his bond to me. And I will not make much progress in freeing myself, unless I can desire in my heart that he also be freed from his bond. He holds just as important a place in the Great One Life as I do. If I fail to realize that, then I have simply separated myself in consciousness from the Life of the Supreme.

We may not always have to live with our apparent enemies in order to work out our karma. In fact we can do more toward realizing the true relations of our karmic bonds with other people, when we are not thrown into the full force of karmic difficulties. But we should not run away from any obligations which may necessitate our coming in contact with our apparent enemies.

Why do I use the expression "apparent enemies"? Because friends and enemies are illusions which belong to the personal life. When we can fully identify ourselves with the Great One Life—in other words, when we have become perfect men—then it will be seen that there are no friends and no enemies, no separation from any life, but all will be One.

Let us remember that if someone does us injury, it is not he in his real being, but that it is his imperfect expression of himself, that does the injury. If we have ever, in our oppressor, seen something true and permanent, let us think rather of that, and avoid thinking of that which we recognize to be a distortion of the real man. This is what the beautiful book *At the Feet of the Master* means, in part, when it speaks of discriminating the real from the unreal.

Forgiveness is very wonderful; but if we can know the Truth, there is really nothing to forgive. What befalls us is our karma; let us learn our lessons of the Law from that, and try to be really thankful that we are given opportunities to learn our lessons, even if they come with pain and evil.

And let us not pass judgment on our fellowmen for their actions, which to us may seem wholly wrong. We can never know their motives, nor

can we know but very little of their karma which leads them into doing things which are to us hideous and unjust. Let us rather look on in awe and wonder, at this great drama of life, and aspire that we may grow stronger and wiser, so that we may help "lift a little of the heavy karma of the world." It is Ignorance which causes men to do wrong; they see their way through life only darkly.

Have you ever seen the little book, *Light on the Path*? It is a hard book to understand for most men; but when one reads it time and again he finds more and more wonderful things in it. It teaches the wonderful lesson of Selflessness, of learning to live where karma acts not.

It is well for one who is in deep trouble to read such books often, especially just before retiring for the night, and to realize these wonderful truths. In the night-time we are often able to reach a higher consciousness than we can reach during the day-time. That is why we may often wake up with a feeling of great peace and serenity. We can help much to prepare the right conditions for this, if we retire with thoughts strongly centered on higher things, and not allow any troubles to be dwelt on in thought.

You will find a new life opening out before you, if you can follow your highest aspirations, and practice indifference to troubles as much as possible, and if you try to find out at every step what is your *real* duty. Often it is a great boon for us to suffer, because we thereby learn a new view of life, which enables us to transcend suffering and live higher up or deeper within our real being.

EXPERIENCE

Life in forms or bodies is a limitation of a freer or more spiritual life. Why is there such a limitation?

The result of life in human bodies is to gain experience. But the purpose of it all is that consciousness may grow and develop its inner powers. At present man has only five senses by means of which he may come in contact and into relations with the objects of the physical world. Each of the five sense-organs can only be affected by vibrations of a certain kind and of limited range. There must and do exist vast ranges of vibrations to which our consciousness cannot respond at all. It is quite evident that we are very much limited in our possibility of gaining experience in the physical world. We can only contact such expressions of life outside us as give rise to vibrations which can affect one or more of our physical sense-organs.

This shows that man's physical body, his instrument of action in the physical world, is as yet quite imperfect and undeveloped. Surely in the ages to come these deficiencies will be filled out and supplied. Our present senses may expand their range of perception and new senses may be developed, just as the sense of smell was once unknown but came gradually into functioning.

With our emotional bodies evolution has been even slower. The method of evolution of the various bodies of man is that the lower ones must be the first to reach some degree of organisation, for the evolution of the higher bodies can only take place if it has the support of the lower ones.

Thus the astral bodies of most men are not nearly so much developed as their physical bodies, and this is why the self-consciousness of humanity is confined to the physical body, using the brain as the organ through which it manifests. Only those men who are far advanced in spirituality are self-conscious in their astral or higher bodies. Our evolution makes it necessary that we shall first master to a large extent the consciousness of the physical world before undertaking relations with the life of the astral world. Thus experience is what we have come to earth for to obtain.

But while experience is the object of physical, emotional and mental life, this experience is only of permanent value to us in so far as it aids us to unfold our inner powers and to grow into our higher consciousness. The very word *evolution* means an unfolding. And while there is evolution of physical forms and bodies, the real and permanent evolution is that of life and consciousness. Now, experience deals with forms and their interactions, but the real value of experience is found in the understanding of the life which exists in all forms, in obtaining the power to come into fuller relations with life in nature and in other beings, and in learning to unite our life harmoniously with the greater Life which pervades all the worlds of this universe.

The ego thirsts for experience, and it is this desire which periodically draws down a part of the ego into human incarnation. But the experience which the ego gains through each one of his lower representatives, the personalities, is only regarded as raw material by him, out of which he extracts the inner meaning or the essence, or that

which belongs to the life or spirit side of things. He extracts and treasures in his causal body, or body of character, the powers of vibrations, not the actual vibrations themselves. How this is possible is a mystery, but it is no more mysterious than the fact that any man may become skilled in doing anything by doing it often.

Thus the ego becomes able, after much experience has been collected, to initiate vibrations from within himself, without receiving any sense-impression from outside himself. The feeling of love which we can generate at will and direct to another person, is an illustration of this power of character gained through much experience in many former life-times.

Experience is for the ego what food is for the physical body. And just as it is well for the personality to desire food only for the sake of the life-energy which it gives him and the rebuilding and strengthening of his physical body which results, so also should the man seek experience not for the sake of the experience but for the sake of the growth in consciousness which results.

Men of the world are gaining valuable experience but in a blind and inefficient way. The conscious gaining of experience for the sake of the greater self is perhaps the most difficult and important of all the arts. It needs exact knowledge and constant watchfulness. And some knowledge of the truths of karma and reincarnation are absolutely essential.

C. S.

THE STORY OF DICK, THE YEGGMAN

Dick came early one morning before breakfast. He was somewhere between thirty and forty years of age, small of stature and with the prison pallor on his cheek, which once recognized one seldom mistakes.

He had just completed a term in one of our western penitentiaries and had done our little settlement-house the honor of an early call, because, as he expressed it, he "had heard that it was a place where a fellow could get help, without the danger of having a prayer-meeting or a Sunday school said over him." He had a keen sense of humor, to which his Irish blood doubtless entitled him, but it was patent that he was undergoing some great upheaval in that volcanic region where spirit and matter meet and his soul was in the throes of the mighty struggle.

He was decently clad and it was not because of a lack of money or food that he came. It was, as he said, because he wanted "to live square" and he didn't know how to go about it. At the mention of the various associations whose business it is to look out for men when first dismissed from our penal institutions, his reply was that they weren't for his kind, that he was what the world calls "an habitual criminal." There was no bravado visible in his attitude—only an acceptance of facts, overshadowed by a profound wonderment at this strange new thing which had come to him—the desire "to quit and live square."

His story was something like this. He was the youngest of a large family—all belonging to the so-called "criminal class." As a mere babe, he

was carried in his mother's arms through the crowded streets of San Francisco, his native city, and taught how to take things out of other people's pockets. He remembered the day when his big brother, the one to whom he was most attached, took him on his knee and gave him a pistol with the words: "This is your best friend, the only one that will stick by you through thick and thin. Everybody in the world wants to knock you down. Use this whenever you need to."

As the boy grew up, the family group gradually disintegrated. He knew that his father was in the New York penitentiary and that his mother died in another prison, while he himself was passing through the various penal institutions set aside for minors. Of course, he never went to school.

At an early age he fell into the hands of an expert yeggman—a man of high standing in his profession and one who received much consideration from his fellow citizens in the great underworld. This man made Dick his apprentice and assistant. The boy was quick and apt. In time he became almost as proficient as his teacher, and together they travelled all over the globe, living a life of great excitement and adventure.

When his teacher, who had been father, friend and comrade passed away, Dick had gone on doing the thing he best knew how to do, and in his turn was in great demand as an instructor. But he seldom found a pupil worth the while, because the necessary qualifications were so uncommon. It seems that he made no use of the ordinary means of opening a safe, such as dynamite and the tools usually deemed necessary, but

depended upon his power to read the secret of the combination of the lock from the safe itself,—in other words, he psychometrized it; and no one was more awed and even frightened at times, than he was when the door opened in his hand.

Money was of little value to him. He could not keep it or invest it for fear of detection. He kept only that which would meet immediate personal needs, and his mode of living was usually of the simplest. He had no common physical vices, such as the use of liquors, drugs, etc., sometimes denote. Indeed he was compelled to live almost the ascetic life of the *religieux*, in order that he might not lose his peculiar gift. He scattered his booty generously among those who were in need in his particular world and large sums went to help fill those great cesspools of concealed political power, known only to those who glimpse our municipalities as they really are. It was the thrill of life that he sought. He loved to play his game well, to hazard all on one big stake, to live as fast in a short time as possible, and for this he had paid society's allotted price in more than one prison.

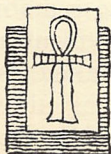
Of course, the whole story was not gathered during Dick's first call. He came at various intervals during those months when he was making his strange new venture of "living square." He decided that there was no help for him, outside of those powers which lay within himself. It was not possible for him to remain long in a city but he found honest employment as a brakeman on a freight train which snailed along over our great prairies through the long nights, while he sat on top of a car and tried to reason. He did not

find it in his code of honor to ask any one to go to the trouble of testing him until he had first tested himself. His idea was that if he could prove that he had the sort of self-control and the particular brand of honesty which organized society could use, he might find a friend, "a backer," as it were, who would give him a chance to live as other men live.

But the day arrived when Dick very soberly announced that his experiment was proving a failure. His days were of a dulness unspeakable and his nights a dreary waste. He said that he had found out that there were two men in him—one wanting very much "to live square" and the other dreaming of all the thrilling adventures of the past and calling imperatively for more. He seemed anxious that the knowledge of his experience and failure should not prove a hindrance to a spirit of helpfulness for others of his class. He was quite certain that his was a more hopeless case than most. He left, promising to continue his efforts as long as possible, but also with the declaration that if he failed we should never know about it.

We never saw or heard from him thereafter. Somewhere in the great unrolling of the divine plan, the ego once yoked to Dick's personality will gain freedom and power.

Alice Holt Guagliata.



WHY WE DO NOT REMEMBER PAST LIVES

One of the commonest objections to the idea of reincarnation by people who hear of it for the first time is the fact that they do not remember anything about having lived before. "If I have lived on earth many times, why is it I do not remember something about it?"

The answer to the question is simple enough, but the full understanding can only be reached by a careful study of the nature and constitution of man, and especially of the nature of his limitation. The answer is, briefly stated, that the memory of most men works through and by means of the physical brain; this brain is newly formed and developed for every life on earth, and is disorganized and disintegrated at death. It is clear, therefore, that the brain-memory can not be expected to remember past lives in which the brain of the present life did not exist at all.

The difficulty to grasp this simple fact shows that people have not as yet learned to distinguish between the different departments of their being, or their various bodies or instruments by means of which they express themselves.

How can we help people to realise that they are not their brain, their feelings or their mind? There are many ways to help them do so, but we must clearly understand that we can only help: the actual realisation must come from within the people themselves.

The scientific way is to study psychology, especially the strange phenomena of consciousness which appear in hypnotism. These prove conclusively that the man is something apart from his

bodies, that his consciousness becomes more lucid and his memory more perfect when the physical brain is least active.

The philosophic way is to analyse and study the life of man. It may be seen that all the manifestations of life take place under limitations. These limitations to a large extent are the man's own bodies and their lack of perfect organisation. But the life itself is something which transcends its manifestations and instruments of manifesting.

The way for the religionist is to study any of the great religions of the world and note how they all distinguish between bodies and the real man. St. Paul speaks of body, soul and spirit. The Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The body is rightly regarded as a mere machine; the soul is man's lower organism which feels and thinks and causes the body to act; and the spirit is the real man, who is immortal.

The practical way for most men is to watch their activities, feelings and thoughts all along, and notice that they can act, feel and think without identifying themselves with their body, feelings or mind. They may have a part of their consciousness watching the other parts live and act. It is this practice, which can be easily carried out by any earnest and determined man, which will yield results which are most sure, of the greatest value and permanent.

"Know yourself." Study yourself, to know.

It is by individual study that man learns to discriminate between his different natures, or bodies, and himself.

Always identify yourself most with that part of your being which is highest, least material.

FIELD NOTES

South Africa continues to push forward the *Legion* activities. Mrs. E. C. Allsopp, Scottsville, P. M. B., is the leader of Maritzburg Group. Mr. A. G. Williams, Box 24, Salisbury, Rhodesia, will be leader for that city. One of the members of the South African Section has generously donated £1 for subscriptions to REINCARNATION to be placed in various Public Libraries in South Africa.

A letter recently received from Norway brought in fourteen applications for membership. Handsome adhesive seals have been printed in the Norwegian language for the use of members in that country.

Our Group at The Hague, Netherlands, is active and enthusiastic. Holland will be strong support for our work.

The work of giving stereopticon lectures to the public is being carried on energetically by some of the Groups. Three new lectures are now in the field, doing service: *Some Problems in Eugenics*; *Tibet, Land of Mystery*; and *Monastery Life in Tibet*. Still others are being prepared. San Francisco and Minneapolis Groups have recently given their first lectures. The lecture, *Thoughts Are Things!* drew an audience of eighty-two people in Minneapolis on a rainy evening. San Francisco reports having had fifty-seven people out for the lecture, *A Story of Karma and Reincarnation*.

Members are invited to help in preparing more lectures and finding good pictures to illustrate them. Work up bright, popular talks on some live topic of the day,—anything which is interesting and can be helpfully discussed with reference to the truths of karma and reincarnation. Old steel engravings and good photographs make the best reproductions for slides, but good half-tone cuts and others may be used. Write to the Secretary, and state what subjects you have in mind to work on.

We would much appreciate any information regarding the state of knowledge of karma and reincarnation in many countries, ancient and modern. Particularly do we desire accurate facts about Ancient Peru and Mexico, Scandinavia, Ireland and the North American Indians.

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