

REINCARNATION

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FREEDOM

In theory there is no freedom. Freedom can be but relative. Interdependence is a necessity. Every will must be subject to some will above it. For all unevolved men Those next above, Who govern men, are the karmic deities. In Their hands are all the forces we have used in the long past of our helpfulness or of our ignorance and wantonness. These forces They apply upon us. We are like driven sheep until we learn how to cope with this Law and find the larger Law. It is easy to begin and the learner finds teachers and leaders ready to point out The Way to the lofty freedom of blended harmonious Wills.

W. V.-H.

LIFE'S GOLDEN CHAIN

This life we live, this period of existence between the limits of birth and death, is like a pearl threaded upon the golden chain of the True Life, stretching from the limitless space of Infinitude to Eternity's boundless shores.

Many pearls are thus suspended. They are not all alike, varying in size, color and purity. So the soul has many lives, differing one from the other by lessons learned and experiences gained. Some pearls are of surpassing beauty, of unrivalled lustre, and flawless purity, while others are unsymmetrical, imperfect, dull and lustreless.

It rests with ourselves whether we will have each pearl of our separated lives beautiful with deeds of unselfishness, cheerfulness and loving kindness, symmetrical in outline, by rounding off all ugly excrescences of the lower nature, such as anger, malice, jealousy and passion, and of perfect lustre and purity by allowing the Divinity within us to penetrate the gross vehicles of the flesh and to manifest the fruits of the spirit, which are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering and Meekness; or whether we will have worthless jewels, unlovely with selfish desires, with flaws of pride, cruelty and unbridled tempers, lacking in brilliancy because of the gross walls of materialism, love of wealth, power and ambition through which the spirit cannot penetrate.

Every individual, because of the God within, has in his power the ability to make each of his separated lives a perfect pearl of spotless purity to thread upon the golden chain of his Immortal Life.

Esther S. Stevens.

MAN AND THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Man was given dominion over the lower kingdoms, and he has easily maintained his supremacy by the force of his superior intellect. There has resulted a two-fold effect from this dominion. On the one hand there has been an effect upon man. He has either dealt wisely and compassionately with the animals, or he has been cruel and unmerciful, thereby laying up for himself good or evil karma for the future.

On the other hand there has been a marked effect upon the animals. Through association with man they have developed many qualities, both good and bad, which would not otherwise have been developed for many ages yet to come. These qualities have greatly hindered or hastened animal evolution.

The domestic animals show many of the traits peculiar to man: pride, vanity, desire to excel, fear and hate; obedience, faithfulness, devotion and love. Few human beings realise the responsibility that such a dominion entails upon them. The hound and the horse, trained for the chase, have developed more cruel traits than the course of nature would have evolved. Specialised as instruments for man's cruel sports, they seem to enter into his fiendish enjoyment of the torture and death of helpless creatures.

Animals domesticated for pets have often little chance for service. The "poodle" seems to have lost all of his chances. His prospects for developing courage, endurance and strength are not great. A wild animal can develop some of these qualities in procuring food and in protecting its

young; taken from its natural environment its evolution may be retarded.

But we must not overlook one great opportunity of the pet, the opportunity of responding to human love and intelligence. A little effort in the intellectual training of animals has produced most marvelous results, as in the case of the Elberfeld horses, described by Maeterlinck in *Metropolitan* for May. A very ingenious alphabet of raps was invented, and Muhamed and Zarif, two Arab stallions, learned to spell phonetically any word spoken to them; they could add, multiply and even extract cube roots. Maeterlinck confesses, in his inimitable way, to the humiliating disgrace of his life in not being able to cope with Muhamed in cube roots. Zarif could frame intelligent sentences on his own initiative, volunteering information about what had happened in the stable during Herr Krall's absence.

When an animal is subjected to special training; or when, through association with man, his experience differs greatly from that of his fellow-animals, and his will, intellect or feelings are greatly stimulated by that experience, his life may be raised to such high vibration as to cause his portion of the group-soul to break away from the rest, forming for him a separate and permanent mental body.

Immediately upon breaking away from the group-soul, the animal enters upon a rapid individual evolution. He begins to make karma at this point, and is raised into the human kingdom, as he is now solely responsible for his own life. Before this he could only be said to make a group-karma, for which he was only in small measure

responsible, as the inner soul life was shared by all alike, and colored by the experience of all.

Man's karmic relations with the animal kingdom are too far-reaching to be longer ignored. The splendid work of the Humane Societies is even more beneficial to man than to the animals, if it can rouse him from his blind selfishness and cruelty. Animals are about to be emancipated by the advent of the steam, the electric and the dynaspheric age. Their age-long faithfulness should make us vigilant to suppress cruelty and hasten us to make reparation while there is yet opportunity.

Laura Slavens Wood.

All beings are beings through *the one*, both such as are primarily beings, and such as in any respect whaever are said to be classed in the order of beings. For what would they be, if they were not one? For if deprived of unity, they are no longer that which they were said to be. For neither would an army, or a choir, exist (as such), unless each of them was one. Nor would a herd exist, if it were not one. But neither would a house or a ship have an existence, unless they possess *the one*; since a house is no one thing, and also a ship, which one if they lose, the house will no longer be a house, nor the ship a ship. Continued magnitudes, therefore, unless *the one* is present with them, will not have an existence. Hence, when they are divided, so far as they lose *the one*, they change their existence. The bodies, also, of plants and animals, each of which is one, if they fly from *the one*, in consequence of being broken into multitude, lose the essence which they before possessed, no longer being that which they were, but becoming instead of it other things, and continuing to be these so long as they are one.

From Mead's Plotinus.

SLEEP

How, following the dictum of the poet, shall we learn the truth about reincarnation if we have no conscious memory of past lives? The belief is an universal human belief, and is only excluded from that small portion of humanity which is under the sway of a mechanical Christian theology. Yet even in Christendom the most thoughtful philosophers and poets hold to the truth of many earth lives.

Does not our daily experience tell us the truth about this thing?

The normal man in normal conditions looks with gladness to the silent hours of the night. If he dreads them it is because he doubts his ability to die out of the body into the land of shades. He fears sleeplessness, not sleep. On returning to earth activities, though his dreams leave a vague and confused impression on his brain, he is inclined, if he think of the matter at all, to regard the sleep hours not as a period of unconsciousness, but as one of intense subconscious activities. But with this difference: the activities of the day weary; the activities of the night, whatever their nature, rest.

When we awake it is with a certain regret that the night is over. Yet when we go to sleep we anticipate the return of the day, and we are always wiser and brighter in the early hours of the new day than later on. It is in the early morning hours that we have our best thoughts.

We congratulate those who have had very many days and years, notwithstanding that days are often burden-bringers and trouble-generators.

And while we half envy the aged their rich experience, we pity the young who have left us for the land of shadows, because their days were few.

All this is a parable to the wise, and is a witness to the numerous earth lives of the soul. As we wake and sleep to wake again, so we are born and die to be born afresh. Each new earth life, like each new day, is a new call to tasks, after a period of active restfulness, for each intervening death (or night) period had its own forgotten labors.

Our intellects forbid us ridiculing this. It may be true. Our defective morals prevent us endorsing it. We don't like it. We don't want to return to earth, and so we try to believe that after all it is the Cosmic Will that we shall not.

C. Spurgeon Medhurst.

THE CAUSE OF SORROW

The immediate cause of sorrow is a hidden thing. May it not often be found in some past life? How good it is that in this life it is our great privilege to forget, to be new, to work! The recording Over-Soul does not disturb us; each time the mind starts with a clean slate, till the spirit becomes strong enough to remember and to forgive himself. We are heirs of ourselves from generation to generation. So if we want some good thing waiting for us in this or other lives, we must plant the seed *now*. This is the secret of living—that we may some time be of the Brotherhood *who know*.

Alice L. Strong.

THE GREATEST SERVICE IN THE WORLD

The greatest Intelligence coming into actual contact with the Human Family is "The Great Architect of the Universe."

He Whom we mortals look upon as God, being an Architect—lays out the plans, but does not execute them. Seven times during the period that humanity shall call the Earth home, does the Great Architect prepare plans for the benefit of His children.

As the architect places his plans or designs in the hands of the builder for execution, so does the Great Architect entrust His designs to the care of the one He chooses. Each time He selects from the great intelligence around Him a Great Builder.

Each Great Plan is an outline of the progress that He desires His children to make during a certain period of time. The Builder, after studying these plans carefully and thoroughly, looks about him for the materials with which to begin his work. He finds that he can obtain one kind of material in one part of the world, and another kind in another part, and so on. His next step is to gather these different materials together, and make preparations for laying the foundation of the new structure.

Now, if it were possible for us to see these Great Plans as the Builder sees them we would find them to be a composite picture of his children as he wants them to be after thousands of years. The materials the Builder uses are these same children—you and I and our friends, in and out of the flesh: the White, the Black, the Red, the

Yellow—the whole family of human egos now dwelling on this planet.

His process of building is to direct these egos to take earth lives in places and at times which will best enable them by the life that they will lead, to grow just a little more like the Plan or Picture which the Great Architect has drawn.

He not only “places” his children where they can do the best for themselves, but he encourages and stimulates them by pouring down upon them all the love and watchful care that there is in his power to give.

Four times since man came to live upon this Earth has the Great Architect drawn His Plans and chosen His Builder. Three times have the Great Faithful Builders executed the Plans He placed in their hands. The Great Work for humanity on earth is a little more than half done.

Great has been the progress made by many. A few have even reached home. Multitudes are still toiling up the last steep slope that lies “in the brow of the hill.”

Brother, Sister, did anyone ever take you by the hand and say, “Come on,” and then lead you down through the meadow and up through the woods and out upon the point of some high cliff to “show you something”?

That is the intent of this little sketch. Now let us take a look at what we think could be made into a most beautiful picture. From here can you look back into the past and trace the first half of the seven-æon-league-path that humanity is travelling on its journey to perfection?

Can you see how wide the path was in the beginning—how they started almost abreast?

Look, how almost at once the path began to narrow, as a few broke from the ranks and ran ahead!

See how three of those leagues have been passed long ages ago and how the path is grown over and almost lost even in the memory of the wisest.

Now look at the path where humanity is travelling. Notice how narrow it is, how our brothers are struggling along over the whole distance of the fourth league. Some have just entered, tired, worn and dust-covered, but still struggling on, late because they would not try. Note the great mass near the middle, struggling, fighting, running to and fro, backward and forward, deaf to the Voice of the Leader and blind to the Way prepared.

Behold, once again; see, thousands are breaking away from that awful mob, have stopped and are listening to the Leader's Voice which is saying: "I am the Way." See the clenched hands relax, the eyes open, and with one glad cry they speed away straight as an arrow's flight to the Great Gates of the Fifth League.

Thousands upon thousands in that great crowd have heard and seen, and are struggling with all their might to free themselves from the deaf and the blind who are holding them back.

A. E. Landon.



GIVING AND RECEIVING

Balance is the law of nature; it is an aspect of the law of karma. Nature deals with quantities and materials which are not infinite, but limited in amount. This makes it quite inevitable that actions can not be one-sided. For every output there must be an equal input,—at least at some time.

Business is an artificial scheme of activities in which balance must be rigidly observed. It is artificial in the sense that it is established by man. It is natural because it copies after the universe, the larger scheme of things, and is governed by its laws in a very definite way. Orderly methods of work are made the prime requisite in the world of commerce.

In the life of man again appear the laws of nature, and especially the law of balance. If the life of the personality does not show out complete balance, then it is true that the life of the personality is an incomplete thing. If the life of the man shows injustice,—either on the part of nature, or on his part,—then other lives become necessary to make good the deficiency. For man is a part of nature, at least in his lower being, in the bodies of the personality.

The true man is a unit of consciousness, a center of life,—nothing more, nothing less. His lower bodies are not his own: they belong to nature. They serve him in his evolution,—and he serves the matter of which they are built up, and thereby serves nature. He may serve nature well or ill.

The true man, many ages ago, came into the

long process of changes in the world of nature. He came poor and penniless, and unclothed. He gets bodies, or rather, they are loaned to him, entrusted to his care. He uses them and gains valuable experience. The use of the bodies is continually developing his consciousness, his inner being, himself. After his human evolution the man returns to the higher spiritual worlds whence he came. He returns without any riches of the lower world. He returns, as far as nature is concerned, poor and penniless, and unclothed. But really, in a truer way, he returns with untold wealth, the riches of the spiritual life. He has gained the powers of Will, he has attained to Wisdom, and he has developed Harmony.

When the perfected man leaves the worlds of nature he leaves them as they were, as far as material is concerned. He had not brought anything down with him when he came; he has taken no matter away. There is perfect balance in this respect. Nature owes him nothing; he owes nothing to nature.

But the man who has obtained spiritual riches, who has finished his human evolution, has not accomplished this without giving to nature a full and just return. That return is of the same wealth which he received: it is Life, and Life more abundant. Thus the lower helps to produce wealth in the higher worlds of the universe.

Can we regard nature as something which has spiritual reality? Is it merely an illusion, a phenomenon, an ever-changing seeming? There is nothing anywhere which has not, or is not, reality, spirit, life. In nature the material forms are illusion; they are fleeting, transitory; they

are not realities. In nature the rigidity of atoms and molecules is much emphasised. Matter is indestructible, and in its minutest parts unchangeable,—so say the scientists. But, wonder of wonders, the atoms move, and the molecules move. They are alive! And their forms represent realities.

And the completed man, a reality of a higher kind, has made matter more alive. It is only the outer appearance of matter that is dead: within it is life and—dare we say it?—consciousness, though consciousness of a very different and unevolved kind than that which belongs to the evolving life of humanity and even the life of animals and plants. The life of man actually trains matter and develops new qualities within it, or rather it gives opportunity for liberating the qualities that already lie latent within matter. The matter of the rocks and earth has life which is below the life of plants, but it is only a stage below, and there are highly developed crystals which show such wonderful properties, ways of acting, that they seem almost to be living beings.

There is, then, a balance between giving and receiving in the case of human life and the life within unevolved matter. It is not an exchange of similar wealth, but it is a constant interaction in which spiritual qualities are brought into activity on both sides. What are spiritual qualities? They are the unseen but real modes of expression of the world-mystery, life. They are the fragrance of the rose, the majesty of strength and the wisdom of the wise.

There is a most practical lesson in the study of the larger evolution of life. The nearer the personal man can approach to the actualities of

his egoic life, the more truly will he live, and the better it will be for him and his fellow-beings. The more the personality is able to imitate the life of the ego, the more the personality can be a true expression for the ego, the more swiftly will the nature of the personality be spiritualised, or able to show out its spiritual qualities, even on earth. For these qualities are the "riches in heaven" which the Christian scriptures enjoin us to strive to gain, and they must be gained on earth.

Give, so that you may receive. Receive, for the reason that you may give. It is well to study and know something of the larger evolution, the life-cycle of the ego, in order that the life of the personality may be modeled after it. Whatever the personality may gain of worldly wealth, it can not be retained permanently, for the life-span of the personality is but a brief term.

One personality comes to an end, and after a time a new one results. There is a relation between the two, but they are not the same, nor is there a continuity between the two. One personality inherits from the preceding one, and in turn hands on its spiritual wealth to its successor, the ego in the causal body acting as the intermediate agency. So there is a giving and receiving carried on between the successive personalities of every human ego. The earlier one gives to the later one, which in turn gives to the next personality. But these things that are thus transmitted are the invisible things,—the qualities of developed character, the faculties for doing things similar to those that were done before, and the powers of using the energies of nature that had been used in past lives. C. S.

REINCARNATION LITERATURE

(Continued from page 218)

Professor Bertholet, in his book, *The Transmigration of Souls*, devotes a chapter of three short pages to "Metempsychosis Among the Celts." He says that

of Celtic ideas upon metempsychosis we know very little. Cæsar, however, in his *De Bello Gallico* (IV, xiv, 4) tells us that the Druids—the Celtic priests—believed that the soul did not die, but passed from one individual to another: they regarded this belief as a great stimulus to morality of life and felt no fear of death. A somewhat later writer, Diodorus Siculus, says, when describing the Gauls, that at meals they would often dispute about trifles and challenge one another to duels, "for of the end of life they make no account. In fact, the opinion of Pythagoras prevails among them, that the souls of men are immortal, and come to life again after a certain term of years, entering other bodies." (V, xxviii).

The author thinks that the first appearance in India of the belief in the transmigration of souls "can well be placed at a very early period, although the oldest monuments of the so-called Vedic literature show very clear traces of the belief":

In the Indian collection of fairy tales, the Pancatantra, to which we have already referred, the difference between a king and a god is marked: the king can reward good or bad actions at the time of their commission, while the god can only give rewards or punishments upon the occasion of a reincarnation.

Unfortunately Professor Bertholet has not been able to understand the subtleties of the Buddhist philosophy as to its teachings of reincarnation. He says, "Buddhism does not accept that which we have termed the first necessary condition

antecedent to a belief in the transmigration of souls, the existence of a personal soul. Buddhism directly rejects this conception, and for it there is no real ego: it admits only the existence of independent spiritual phenomena in constant succession." He speaks of popular Indian theory as not being deeply impressed with the inconsistency. However, the Buddhist philosophy of old did teach the existence of a "rebirth-consciousness" which persisted throughout the series of births and deaths. The great founder of Buddhism did not teach these truths in such a way that His followers could easily fall into the error of regarding the personality of man as a persisting entity. It was His especial aim to teach the great masses of the people to weaken their attachments to their personalities, to give up personal desire, so that a higher type of spiritual consciousness might be cultivated.

Buddhist doctrine even taught that he who would attain complete enlightenment must reach the moment when he succeeds in arousing recollection of his former states of existence by means of continued spiritual introspection. That recollection arose in Buddha, and in this respect he became a pattern and example to his followers: "In such a frame of mind, earnest, purified, cleansed, steady, freed from dross, docile, pliable, firm, impregnable, I directed my mind to gain knowledge by recollection of earlier states of existence. I remember many former states as one life, then as two lives . . . then as a hundred thousand lives: I remembered the times of many creations and many times of decay, of the world and death . . . there was I, such was my name, such my family, such and such my profession and my rank, such weal and woe did I experience, and such was the end of my life: there after death I re-entered life elsewhere: . . . dead, I re-entered life here. Thus I recalled many different forms of previous existence."

Coming to the "Greek Doctrine of Metempsychosis," the author says:

Historically, it can apparently be demonstrated to have first appeared in Thrace, upon the northern frontier of Greece. To Thrace belongs the legendary figure of the famous singer Orpheus, from whom the mysterious sect of the "Orphici" took their name. Their doctrines are highly coloured by poetical imagery, but the following are the main points which concern our present investigation: soul and body are united by a compact unequally binding upon either; the soul is divine, immortal, and aspires to freedom, while the body holds it in fetters as a prisoner. Death dissolves this compact, but only to re-imprison the liberated soul after a short time: for the wheel of birth revolves inexorably. "Thus the soul continues its journey, alternating between a separate, unrestrained existence and fresh reincarnation, round the wide circle of necessity, as the companion of many bodies of men and animals." (Erwin Rhode: *Psyche*). To these unfortunate prisoners Orpheus proclaims the message of liberation, that they stand in need of the grace of redeeming gods and of Dionysus in particular, and calls them to turn to God by ascetic piety of life and self-purification: the purer their lives, the higher will be their next reincarnation, until the soul has completed the spiral ascent of destiny, to live for ever as God, from whom it comes. The Orphic belief seems to have been widely current in the Greek colonies in southern Italy and Sicily.

We know that southern Italy was also the centre of Pythagoras' influence, the most famous exponent of metempsychosis among the Greeks. Here, again, the probably insoluble question arises, whether or to what extent a connection between the Pythagorean and Orphic teaching may be assumed. As a matter of fact, the theory of the soul adopted by either school of thought shows close affinity. The Pythagoreans also regarded the soul as temporarily imprisoned in the body, which it leaves at death; after a period of purification in the lower world it returns to earth (the Pythagoreans considered the air to be full of souls) and begins a new

career in a new body corresponding to its deeds in the former life. Pythagoras himself asserted that he had passed through four previous earthly lives in human form. He was able even to point out the place in the temple of the goddess Hera, where the shield hung, which he had used during his former life as Euphorbus at the siege of Troy, where he was killed by Menelaus. . . .

Pindar considered that the soul must pass through at least three earthly lives before it could escape the compulsion to reincarnation. Upon the last occasion when it was sent to the upper world by the queen of the lower world, it received the privilege of entering the body of a king, hero, or sage. After death the soul went to the Islands of the Blessed, where undisturbed enjoyment awaited it, and was honoured as a hero by men.

Under the heading "In the Bible and in Judaism," the Professor writes: "The belief in the transmigration of souls continually recurs sporadically even within religions in which such a belief should find no place." (!) He quotes and explains several Biblical passages, but admits that the Judaism of the time of Josephus was "by no means ignorant of the theory that souls existed before their incarnations in bodies."

The so-called "*Wisdom of Solomon*" represents King Solomon as saying: "For I was a witty child and had a good spirit; yea, rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled." (Ch. viii, 19f.).

Josephus personally, at least, declares his belief that the souls of the righteous, after a sojourn in the holiest part of heaven, may return in undefiled bodies after a certain lapse of time. (*Jewish War* III, viii, 5).

The great religions of the world, Islam and Christianity, have no official place for the reception of metempsychosis; the doctrine made its way, for the most part, into those sects which were especially open to foreign influence. Such, among the Mohammedans, were the sects of the so-called Mutazilites, the Druses and the Nossairians. Quite recently, an American, Samuel Ives Curtiss, ex-

plored the Hermon and Lebanon districts, the homes of the Druses and Nossairians, more thoroughly than any previous traveler, and extracts from his diaries provide some information upon their beliefs. It appears that, after the sacrifice of the usual offerings, the soul of the dead man may go forth by an opening over the house door and enter the body of a child on the eve of birth; only the soul of a good man can enter a human body: the souls of bad men enter animals.

In the Middle Ages the traditions of Manichæan gnosticism were continued by the numerous sects known collectively as Cathari. The acts of the Inquisition provide much interesting matter from which we may gain a knowledge of their theory of metempsychosis: these documents have been admirably co-ordinated by the famous ecclesiastical historian Ignaz von Döllinger in his "Contribution to the History of Mediæval Sectarianism." The Cathari believed that the soul was forced to migrate from body to body, until it became reincarnate in a member of the sect, that it might then be absolved of all guilt by the sacrament of the laying-on of hands, and be received into Paradise after death. "When souls," they taught, "leave men's bodies after death they are so tortured by the demons of the air that they yearn to find protection in some body."

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) . . . cannot be considered as a supporter of metempsychosis in the full sense of the term. But he evolved one idea, which is, for instance, the basis of the whole of the Indian system of belief, and carried it to its logical consequences with greater consistency than any other thinker: this was the idea that a man becomes after death what he is and what he does in his earthly life. Thus, for instance, he says: "All spirits in the hells appear in the form of their own evil: for everyone there is an effigy of his own evil, because the interiors and exteriors act in unity, and the interiors are visibly exhibited in the exteriors, which are the face, the body, the speech, and the gestures," etc.

A Student.

(To be concluded)

LETTERS FROM PRISONERS

Walla Walla, Washington.

Man's immortality and the endless activities of the soul must surely make us ponder on the All-great Principle, or source of life. Surely the Creator did not send us on this adventurous journey to be the victims of a demoniacal whim, to be tossed about and buffeted in the whirlpool of life, that we may appease an ever craving appetite, and desire for revenge. Surely He does not gloat and chuckle at our futile attempts in trying to solve the riddle. Surely He does not wish to drive us back in overwhelming defeat, blinded and tortured by an everlasting desire for revenge. What must we think who have never enjoyed the necessities of life, things that are essential in the educating and moral uplifting of the human race? When we look around and see the inequalities:—some gifted, as they would have it, the favorites of a special creation, born to have and command; and others to accept in a stoic way the inevitable end, something beyond their own conceptions,—what does it all mean? It is only when dazed and blinded by some human injustice, sometimes, that we question, Is there a God, and if there is, why does He allow the perpetrators of atrocities to rule supreme? It seems unjust and cruel, as it were, a thunderbolt from the blue strikes and leaves us in a dazed and helpless condition. We wonder what it all means, or if there is a meaning? Is there no way available to find the meaning?

Such are the thoughts of those who have felt the sting of human injustice. Unjust as it may seem to us, it is only the reaction of an inexorable law, something that we owe, debts that must be paid, so that the divine law may be accomplished. It is only in paying those debts, unjust as they may seem to us, that we can ever emerge from the clouds of ignorance to a true understanding of the truth, of the accuracy, of the law of divine love and justice. Everything that happens to us, whether seemingly good or bad, we ourselves have made. We are the makers of our own destinies: if we obey the laws of nature, they will be our servants. It is only by living in harmony with the laws of nature that man

can ever expect to enjoy the beauties and the gifts of life. That we have lived before should be apparent to all thoughtful people who study life. There is the continuity of the seasons, ever coming back, more rich and beautiful. Perfection is the aim in every phase of life. Surely man is no exception to the great immutable law. It is in reincarnating that we reach perfection, a paying back to ourselves in pain and remorse, for the follies of ignorance and indifference to the laws of nature. It is in paying back and complying with the laws of nature that God, in His great magnitude, is merciful to us.



Leavenworth, Kansas.

Your welcome letter and also the certificate is at hand. I am sorry I could not answer your letter sooner. But you may feel sure I shall do every thing I can to spread the teachings of karma and reincarnation. They are the grandest teachings that any one can take up if he or she has the cause of humanity at heart. When we make a study of them we can find answers to the problems of life. I am sorry I did not know of them long before I did. I have been studying these teachings now almost two years and have learned to put a value upon life. I am living to help my brothers here; and by helping them I am helping myself.

The one drawback in this great study is reading matter. I have no friends now: they have turned their backs upon me. But I send my best wishes to them. After rain comes sunshine. In the meantime, if you have any friends who care to correspond with a prisoner about these teachings, I shall be delighted to correspond.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

12) *What religions teach reincarnation?*

Two of the great religions teach the truth of reincarnation clearly and in detail: Brahmanism, or the Aryan religion, and its off-spring, Buddhism. They teach this truth with some differences, due to the different points of view, but fundamentally the teachings are very nearly the same. It is taught so generally that the masses of the people who follow one or the other of these religions know about reincarnation from birth and accept it as a vital fact of human life. The Jain religion, closely related to Buddhism, also teaches reincarnation logically and strongly.

Zoroastrianism, the religion of the modern Parsees, apparently does not teach reincarnation. The very ancient Persian divine wisdom included it, however.

Judaism has probably some references in its scriptures to reincarnation, and there appear to have been many learned men who knew of the teaching and accepted it. But the Hebrew religion does not seem to teach it to-day. Much of the religious philosophy of the Jews was derived from Chaldæan and Persian sources during the period of the Babylonian captivity.

Christianity has numerous references to reincarnation, and it seems that the teaching was known and accepted among the disciples of the Christ, but in the following centuries it was lost to the general body of Christians.

Mohammedanism also does not teach reincarnation in popular form. But it also has some scriptural information and there are various mystical and secret orders and the philosophers of the Sufi school who believe the teaching quite explicitly.

13) *What is the difference between personal, national and international karma?*

The term 'international karma' is not much used. If we did want to use it as a technical word in our philosophy of human life, we would logically also have to use the term 'inter-personal karma.' Then we would have four distinct conceptions: 1) personal karma is that part of a man's karma which he makes and which reacts

directly on his own personality, without involving other personalities; 2) inter-personal karma is that part which involves actions and reactions with other personalities; 3) national karma is that which is made by all the personalities composing the nation, not with reference to themselves or others, but with reference to the nation; and 4) international karma would be that karma which is made by one body of people acting as a unit, their nation, with another nation, or other nations.

When personal and inter-personal karma is considered, we have in mind one or more personalities which are considered as actors and receivers. When national and international karma are spoken of, we regard one or more nations as units in our discussion or reasoning.

Finally, to complete our technical terms, we have the term 'world karma.' This means all the vast mass of karma which belongs to humanity as a whole, and not yet definitely made personal or national.

Of course, all human karma is produced by personalities and ultimately reacts on personalities. But some personalities have authority to speak and act for a nation, and then the nation as a whole must take care of that karma. The nation usually has had much to do with placing their rulers or representatives in power, and is then responsible for those of their rulers' actions which affect the interests of the nation as a whole.

Usually we make use only of the terms 'personal karma,' 'national karma' and 'world karma.' These indicate the three different entities or units which we find convenient to speak of in problems of karma. They are either actors, or producers, of karma, or receivers of the reactions, or they may be both actors and receivers at the same time. These three units are: the personality, the nation, and the world.

14) *Are people justified in refusing to serve their country in time of war? Did not the Christ teach that we should not kill? Is not killing in war the same as murder?*

As a general rule we may say that the masses of the people of a nation owe certain duties to the nation, and one of the very fundamental and most important

ones is that of responding to the call of the nation in case of war. Therefore, generally people *should* support their state, and they are *not* justified in shirking the well-recognised duties of citizens.

The people who shirk service of their nation roughly fall into two classes: 1) the unevolved people who have not yet realised that they owe any duties of service and support to their country in return for the protection, education, and the many other advantages which the nation has given to them all along; and 2) the hyper-conscientious people who do recognise duties to the state but who have abnormally developed their scruples against killing, without developing at the same a proper common sense or discrimination which is able to decide for them under what circumstances it is wrong or right to kill.

In the first class are found the more ignorant lower classes and also those of the educated laboring classes who have been taught to fight—and sometimes fight to kill—for the selfish interests and apparent welfare of labor, but not for their nation. In both of these groups the national feelings and national consciousness are wanting. As a whole, it is to be hoped that labor does not belong in this class, that it is only a minority of laboring men who would use their organised strength to block such laws as may be passed to compel the service of citizens.

In the second class we are obliged to put the so-called 'pacifists.' They are as a rule highly educated and are among the best citizens of their country in times of peace. But when the nation is drawn into war, rightly or wrongly, they find themselves filled with 'humanitarian idealism' or 'moral scruples' and they refuse to give their services to the state. The first class of shirkers needs more education; for the second class there seems to be no remedy but hard experience of life, including public disapproval and contempt. The pacifist, if he is not altogether a moral coward, is usually too far in advance of his time. This is perhaps even less desirable than to be behind the times.

Perhaps the Christ taught that we should not kill. His teachings are those of love and gentleness. He was a wonderful idealist. But He had the common sense which the modern pacifist lacks. And it is to be doubted

whether he would approve of modern pacifism in its extreme form, which would lead to national impotence and degeneration, if not to national extinction. We can not sacrifice manhood to idealism, for true idealism without manhood and self-respect is an absurdity. If the Christ really taught that we should "turn the other cheek" to be struck a second blow, then we should prefer to interpret this teaching in a rational, common sense way, and not literally. In many cases of personal difficulties it works out well if we place ourselves in the hands of our opponent, giving him the responsibility of judging the difficulty for both sides and not merely looking out for his own rights and interests. But there are others with whom such a method would bring us into trouble.

It is a vastly different matter when our fundamental existence, either as personality or as a nation, is in danger. Self-preservation is the fundamental law of life in bodies. It is a duty; for without self-preservation there could be no meaning attached to the need for bodily existence. If a person is attacked, it is his privilege and also his duty to defend himself. If a nation is in danger of being overrun and conquered, it becomes its duty to maintain its integrity, by force, if necessary. If the nation yielded peacefully, it would be equivalent to an admission on its part that it has not yet earned the right to have a national existence. If a nation fights gallantly and yet is overcome and annihilated, then that nation, by its gallant resistance earns the right to its national existence, and the time will come for it to regain a national life and standing, if not in this present period of time, then in a reincarnation of the nation under more favorable circumstances. It is here that the philosophy of reincarnation offers a distinct contribution to the pressing problems of international relations.

It is true that we *should* not kill, but it not always advisable that we *shall* not kill. Non-killing is an ideal for us to try to reach, in all possible reasonable ways, but we must try to reach it with a liberal use of common sense, and not foolishly. We realise that a perfect world-civilisation would not permit war. But we are not yet perfect in our civilisation, and we will not reach perfection by living in the present age just as we shall

probably live many thousands or perhaps millions of years in advance of the present time. In our present state of society we need to have policing and criminal courts of law. If all the idealists lived truly in accordance with their ideals, they would soon be robbed of their possessions by those classes which are selfish and ignorant of national laws. Thus premature idealism is impossible, impracticable, self-destructive, and therefore not idealism at all. The value of an ideal lies in the fact that we may approach it; if we could put it into immediate realisation it would not be an ideal.

No, killing is not the same as murder. There are all degrees of taking life, from those in which no guilt whatever attaches to the one who kills, down to those murders which are fiendish and deliberate. Guilt is not a matter of human opinion, however educated. It is a matter of karmic problems of the man's past. The man who kills, does not always kill with deliberate intent and free will. He is drawn into the deed by karmic forces. Yet he must strive to hold his own against temptation. If he has himself generated these forces in past lives, he is still guilty, but not guilty in the way the world regards his case. Moreover, there are times when killing becomes a duty and brings no guilt to the one who takes life. When we see a man about to do something which would destroy innocent lives, and if it is necessary, we owe it to humanity to kill the man. Usually the law takes care of such cases, but sometimes there must be immediate action.

War is a condition in which killing without guilt may take place. If the soldier goes to war for the sake of duty and service to his state, if he kills as a matter of necessity and not as a matter of personal hate or cruelty—then no guilt attaches to him. People honor highly their national heroes and fighting men. Is it likely that they should be grossly in error, and that the extreme pacifists are right? It is not so. Man must learn to be a being who can destroy, if necessary, as well as construct and build. But he must destroy only in certain cases and under very definite rules.

15) *If karma is the Divine Law of Justice, does that not leave out the mercy of God and His forgiveness of sin?*

The fact that there is a wonderful law of justice in nature, by which every man reaps according to his sowing and gets exact compensation for every thing he does, thinks and feels,—this fact does not mean that there is no room for mercy, or that mercy has not also a place in the scheme of our human evolution.

What is justice, and what is mercy? Justice means that man must experience the consequences of all his actions,—those actions in consciousness which are feelings and thoughts to be included. Without this there could be no stability in the universe. It would destroy itself. Karma means that nature continually tends to re-adjust the conditions of disturbed balance. There is always a tendency to restore the normal state of things, whatever that may be, in everything. And the intensity of this tendency is proportional to the extent of the divergence from equilibrium. It may be illustrated by the stretching of a rubber band. If stretched only slightly, the tendency or force which would bring it back to its unstretched condition is small; if however the stretching is very great, then the restoring force is also very great. We may stretch the rubber band until it breaks. But in the workings of the law of karma this probably does not happen. What looks to us like a break is only a small dislocation and the time will come when things separated will again be brought together.

Now, let us consider mercy. There are some people who seem to have an incorrect idea of what mercy is. They regard it as something that does away with justice, that supersedes justice, that takes the place of justice. In other words, they think that justice and mercy are incompatible. They think that mercy means a remission of just punishment; that they are to be freed from the consequences of their actions. This is a grave error. Mercy of this kind would be a monstrosity; in fact it would not be merciful.

Justice sees that exact reactions follow actions so that the reactions may make the whole process complete in a large way. But justice does not determine the exact

way in which this shall be brought about. It only determines that the final condition shall again be normal, as it was before the changes and "stretchings" took place. Here, then, mercy may step in and control the way in which evil karma is to be visited upon the one who made it. And the method followed by mercy is to let the karmic reactions come in such a way that they may be borne with the least possible suffering which is consistent with the requirement that the man must learn his lesson.

Law could not be law unless it is uniform and inviolable.

Therefore man can not be permitted to escape those reactions which he has produced for himself. Even the human-made law holds to the principle that "Ignorance of the law excuses no one." But if this fixed law were to be applied quite mechanically, then justice would lose its beauty and its true meaning in evolution. Justice is to be administered with discrimination and the punishments are not to be inflicted arbitrarily, but to be delicately applied to suit the nature of the case and in such a way that the least harm shall come to the one who has acted contrary to the established order. Nay, the discharge upon him of his own karmic energies is to remove from him some of his evil tendencies. And this is mercy; it is the true mercy that supplements justice without making it injustice.

In nature and in human life we find justice secured by means of the law of karma. But there are intelligent beings who have to do with the karmic energies as they react upon actors, and they see to it that these reactions shall never be harder than the man can bear. The Law is carried out in the spirit of love and helpfulness.

The forgiveness of sins has an element of truth in it but the idea as presented by most religionists to the masses of the people is decidedly erroneous. In the first place the idea of sin is exaggerated, so that some special means must be imagined in order to remedy the exaggeration. This is done by the idea of vicarious atonement as popularly presented,—again an idea which has truth in it, but not in its usual presentation.

Sins are merely mistakes or errors in conduct. There is nothing inherently heinous or wicked about sin. Where-

ever the man stands in the scale of evolution some things will lead him on and these are good, and other things will lead him backward in evolution and they are bad. There is no reason to grieve about one's mistakes or "sins." The only attitude that really helps is to recognise that an error was committed and that in the future it shall be carefully avoided.

"Sins" are always forgiven (by nature) when the karma of the action is exhausted, that is, when the reaction of the deed has come back to the doer and has spent its energy upon him. To "repent from wrongdoing" is to turn away from the wrong to the right. To feel very sorry only makes matters worse. To pray for forgiveness is neither manly nor helpful, unless it has an uplifting effect upon the man.

The wisest way to have one's sins forgiven is to be willing to learn the lesson and not fall again into the same error, and also to be willing to bear whatever troubles and suffering may necessarily come as the karmic results of one's error. It finally comes to this, that we ourselves are the most important element in the forgiveness of our sins. As long as we grieve over our sins they are not forgiven. When we leave them behind us and bear whatever karma they bring to us, then they disappear. And we are the richer in experience for having made the mistake. C.S.

16) How is karma to be explained in connection with Christ the Redeemer and the sin of Adam?

Christ is the Redeemer who shows the way to live so that men may find the greater realities, the "riches in heaven." Christ redeems men from sin because of His teachings and example, and also because He has the power to regulate much of the karma of His followers. Mere belief that Christ will remove men from the consequences of their sins and errors, will not bring this about. The Christ will bear the cross (karma) of His Church until its members are able to bear it themselves.

The "sin of Adam" probably means the karma which belonged to the life of humanity at the time that it became human. It is the "original sin" which has no satisfactory explanation without the fact of reincarnation. C.S.

FIELD NOTES

A Letter from New Zealand

In response to your wish to let you know how my plans are working out, I am happy to state that the meetings in private homes have been most gratifying, the attendances being on an average of twenty-five persons.

The last meeting I consider the most satisfactory of all, as it was held at the home of a total stranger to me, . . . So much curiosity was aroused that we were bombarded with questions before the meeting actually started. There was a very good social feeling in the room, and many intelligent questions asked after the paper was delivered. An amusing verdict was given by one lady, that she would go home and cook a better dinner than she had ever cooked before! The hostess' sister, also a stranger to me, has asked for the next meeting to be held at her residence which is in quite a different district—so you see we are not confined to one area of the city. Later on I shall endeavour, as I find the interest deepens, to hold classes in private homes in the different suburbs.

At each meeting I depute a member, tactfully to get addresses of strangers, whom we shall try to keep in touch with, and at each successive meeting they shall receive cards bearing the *Legion's* symbol, and informing them of the next place of meeting and a cordial invitation to be present.

I find the social aspect of the meetings a great aid, a cup of tea seems to do wonders in breaking down barriers of reserve, and evoking congeniality and confidence.

I have not much literature, as I have not more than barely hinted at donations, so my funds are not large, but I am not afraid of the work languishing for lack of money. When I actually *must* have coin somehow it always comes.

I am inviting members to send me extracts from novels and magazines by popular authors bearing on the Principles of the *Legion*, which, if funds permit, I shall make use of as literature; should the extracts not

warrant cost of printing I shall type the most useful.

I wish we could give Stereopticon Lectures here; pictures are such a good way of impressing people! A member has a very good magic lantern, perhaps we could use that and get the slides from you. I should like to go to all the little townships along the Main Trunk Railway on a lecture tour to form and link up a number of Groups with the Headquarters Group here.

Miriam Hyams.

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Mrs. Louise van der Hell, *Legion* Representative for Dutch-speaking countries, writes from Holland:

"Again I have the pleasure to send you eighteen applications for membership and one application for a charter. Three persons at Apeldoorn wish to form a group, and soon they will enlarge their group with a few others. . . Our work is going well. I hope the *Legion* will soon be a strong organisation in Holland; everywhere there is interest and requests for light in the darkness."

It is a pleasure to note that the *Legion* work has been satisfactorily started in Shanghai, China, where there are now six members and an active Group will probably soon be chartered. Among the members are the well-known names of Wu Ting fang, former Chinese minister to the United States, and Rev. C. Spurgeon Medhurst.

Another country which has entered upon active work and membership in the *Legion* is Switzerland. Seven members have been enrolled and a charter has been issued for Geneva, with the names of Louis Junod, William Metford and Blanche Metford as charter members. There is a great field for fine work in Switzerland, the staunch little republic, now wholly surrounded by countries engaged in the struggle of the world war.

In the present month, again, a large number of certificates of membership have been issued. Thirty new members from New Zealand have been admitted, and will add strength to the work in that country.

The work of the *Legion* will go forward rapidly if every member will always look out to find new members.

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